

Planned program discharges, client/patient decision discharges and/or program leaves are opportunities to support persons in taking *measures to prevent overdose*. This is of obvious, and particular concern, in the current context of the fentanyl (and other opioid) related harm and fatalities. Like all meaningful conversations, there is no ‘one size fits all’ formula; however, there are some key considerations about more effective engagement rooted in evidence and existing practice frameworks. Here are some *examples* that can be effectively explored in hosting overdose prevention conversations.

1. Start the conversation by *asking for permission* to explore plans to stay safe. *Imposing or forcing* the conversation risks alienating the person or trigger feeling threatened or shamed.
 - a. E.g. “Before you head-out, is it *ok if I speak with you* a bit about your plans to stay safe?”
2. Ask the person to help you understand *their level of concern* about the risk of overdose (personally, partner, family, friends...).
 - a. “What are *your thoughts or feelings* about the chance of overdose for you/family/friends...?”
 - b. “Have you ever experienced a personal overdose?”
 - c. “What concerns might you have about someone that you know overdosing?”
3. *Listen without judgement*. The objective is to provide an opportunity for the person to *safely explore* their experience and any concerns.
4. Continue to explore this area towards the point of reaching a *shared understanding* of what risk, if any, the person may be holding about themselves or others.
5. If indeed there is some level of concern, *invite the person to describe* what steps they have taken, in the past, to help keep themselves, or others, safe.
 - a. “What are some of things that *you do* to keep yourself, or others, safe?”
6. Gently invite the person to describe, based on their lived experience, what steps they could take to protect their safety (or others around them).
 - a. “Based on what *you know*, what are some of things that you might do or pay attention to, when you leave here, to help stay safe (or help others around you stay safe)?”
7. Invite the person to describe *what else* may be of benefit.
 - a. “What else would be helpful?”
8. Ask the person if they are open to *additional ideas or resources*?
 - a. “I wonder if you’d be open to hearing about take home naloxone and how to use it?”
 - b. “I wonder if I could show you one of these response kits.”
9. *Summarize* any discussed plans and resources
 - a. “How about we go over the ideas and resources that we talked about so far?”

10. Invite a *concluding conversation*
 - a. “*What else* would you welcome, or need, that would help you (or others) stay safe?”
 - b. “Please *feel free to reach-out* to _____ if you ever need any support...here is the number”
 - c. “How was this discussion *for you?*”
 - d. “I’m really glad *you and I* had a chance to talk about this...I’m thankful...”

In general, pay *mindful attention* to avoiding language that can come across as directive, parental, shaming, disqualifying or denigrating. Examples to avoid include:

- “*You should...*” - “*You need to...*” - “*If you don’t listen...*”
- “*The problem with addicts is that...*” - “*I don’t have time for this, so I need you to...*”

Overdose Prevention, Recognition and Response Resources

To ensure you have the more updated and accurate information about overdose prevention, recognition and responses to share with clients, patients and family members, visit these links and please download any resources as needed.

Fraser Health Web Resources

<http://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-info/health-topics/harm-reduction/overdose-prevention-and-response/>

http://www.fraserhealth.ca/media/Overdose_SchoolToolkit_FINAL.pdf

<http://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-info/health-topics/harm-reduction/overdose-prevention-and-response/overdose-for-schools-and-parents/>

British Columbia Center for Disease Control (BCCDC) Web Resources

<http://towardtheheart.com/naloxone/>

<http://towardtheheart.com/naloxone/siteresources/>

Ministry of Health Web Resources

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/overdose>

For more information and support regarding hosting overdose prevention conversations with clients, email Mark Goheen, Clinical Addictions Specialist, Fraser Health Mark.Goheen@fraserhealth.ca