



Overdose Prevention and Response Plan

Introduction

Prevention / Awareness

In 2016, the Province of British Columbia declared a public health emergency following a sharp rise in drug-related overdoses and deaths. The ongoing toxic drug crisis—driven primarily by a highly potent and unregulated supply of illicit drugs—remains a complex and evolving public health challenge. Over the past eight years, more than **15,000 British Columbians** have lost their lives due to toxic drugs, with **fentanyl**, a synthetic opioid, detected in over **80% of unregulated drug deaths** annually.

In **May 2024**, the **Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills** established a **Post-Secondary Overdose Prevention and Response Steering Committee** to examine the crisis and its impact across B.C.'s post-secondary institutions. Recognizing the unique needs of college and university communities, the committee developed provincial guidelines focusing on three key objectives:

- Increasing awareness of the toxic drug crisis.
- Strengthening emergency response procedures.
- Ensuring widespread access to **Naloxone**, a life-saving medication that reverses opioid overdoses.

DEA Canadian College has developed its **Overdose Prevention and Response Plan** based on these best-practice frameworks. The College is deeply committed to the health and safety of its community, aiming to reduce the risk of drug overdoses through education, awareness, and effective response procedures. The plan ensures that **easy-to-use Naloxone kits** are available at all main campuses and off-site learning locations.

The **Safety, Security, and Risk Management (SSRM)** department oversees the implementation and maintenance of this plan in coordination with the **Student Services Department, Facilities, and Human Resources**. This collaborative approach aligns with DEA

Canadian College's overall **Health, Safety, and Emergency Response Programs**, ensuring a unified and effective system for overdose prevention and response.

An overdose impacts everyone, and **DEA Canadian College** is dedicated to raising awareness about the opioid crisis while helping our community learn how to **prevent, identify, and respond** to an overdose.

The **BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC)**, in collaboration with **BC Health Authorities** and community partners, offers a **free, real-time text alert service** through **Toward the Heart**. This anonymous service provides timely updates about **toxic drug alerts**, as well as information on **where to access naloxone** and **how to get drugs tested** to reduce the risk of harm within the community.

Opioids

Opioids are a class of drug or medication that includes morphine, heroin, methadone, fentanyl and oxycodone. Opioids are prescribed for pain relief and are safe when correctly used and in ways that are well understood and managed.

Opioid Overdose

An opioid overdose occurs when a person takes more opioids than their body can handle. Breathing may become irregular and slow, and a person may not respond to stimulation. If someone cannot breathe, or is not breathing enough, the oxygen levels in the blood decrease. This can lead to brain injury, cardiac arrest and death.

Fentanyl

Fentanyl and carfentanyl's presence is not limited to opioids but has also been found in stimulants and depressants, often mixed with benzodiazepines, leading to abnormal symptoms consistent with overdose. A tiny amount of fentanyl, equivalent to three grains of salt, can cause a fatal overdose, especially in first-time users.

Safer Drug Use Tips

- Use drugs in the presence of others, stagger use with friends so someone can respond if needed
- If you are using substances that are unregulated, testing them can help determine if there are harmful or deadly contaminants that drugs may contain such as fentanyl
- Take a small amount, wait and see how it feels
- Mixing substances increases the risk of overdose (including alcohol and prescription drugs)
- Find local harm reduction services www.towardtheheart.com/site-finder
- Get your drugs checked www.fraserhealth.ca/drugchecking
- Carry naloxone and get trained on how to use it

Naloxone

Naloxone, sometimes known by the brand name Narcan, is a medication that can quickly and temporarily reverse the effects of an overdose from opioids. It is available in B.C. without a prescription in injectable and nasal spray. Naloxone can reverse slowed breathing within 3 to 5 minutes. One dose may not be enough so additional doses should be administered every 3 minutes until normal breathing is restored. The effects of naloxone can wear off after 20 – 90 minutes.

Naloxone has no effect if you have not taken opioids. It does cause a 'high' or cause addiction or dependence. If a person has developed a tolerance to opioids, naloxone may cause them to experience withdrawal symptoms. In rare cases, some people may have an allergy to naloxone.

Signs and Symptoms of an Overdose

- Cannot be woken up or unresponsive
- Breathing slow or absent (less than 1 breath every 5 seconds)
- Snoring sounds or coughing, gurgling, or choking sounds
- Pupils extremely small
- Discolouration of lips and nails (blue or grey)
- Cold or clammy skin

The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act

This Federal Act became law on May 4, 2017 and provides some legal protection for individuals who seek emergency help during an overdose, whether it is the person experiencing the overdose or a witness. As part of the Canadian Drugs and Substances Strategy, this harm reduction strategy was to help reduce fear of police attending overdose events and encourage people to save lives without fear of repercussion. If a person is at the scene of an overdose and someone calls 9-1-1 to get medical assistance, they are not to be charged with simple possession (possession for your own personal use) of an illegal substance. They are also not to be charged for breach of probation or parole relating to simple drug possession.

Access to Naloxone

All BC residents can obtain naloxone kits, at no charge from participating local pharmacies.

The College provides nasal naloxone (Narcan) around its campuses and sites.

All contracted personnel who are the first aid providers on our campuses are trained in the recognition of an overdose and the use of naloxone.

Naloxone can be found in:

- All first aid kits
- Naloxone cabinets on Campus
- Naloxone kits are available for sign out with first aid kits for off campus activities

and events

Naloxone kit

Each naloxone kit contains:

- A CPR face shield
- Non-latex gloves
- 'SAVE-ME' instructions
- 2x Naloxone nasal spray

Naloxone should be stored at room temperature and has an expiry date. Management conducts monthly inspections of naloxone kits and oversee the distribution and management of the kits. Any time a kit is utilized, or tampered with it needs to be reported to director@deacollege.ca to ensure repair and or replenishment can be coordinated.

Emergency Response

Overdoses and drug poisoning are serious medical events in which time is of the essence.

1. If you suspect an overdose call 9-1-1 immediately
2. Then follow the S-A-V-E-M-E steps and administer naloxone, stay with the patient until help arrives.

FOLLOW THE **SAVE ME** STEPS BELOW TO SAVE A LIFE.



If the person must be left unattended at any time, put them in the recovery position.



STIMULATE
Unresponsive?
CALL 911



AIRWAY
Check and
Open



VENTILATE
1 breath every
5 seconds



EVALUATE
Breathing?



MEDICATION
1 dose of
Naloxone



**EVALUATE
& SUPPORT**
Wait another
3 minutes.

Another dose? Alternate
nostrils with each dose

One dose of intranasal (nasal) naloxone should be sprayed into one nostril

HOW TO USE NALOXONE



1
Peel package open. Avoid touching the tip. Do not press until ready to give Naloxone.



2
Place the tip in the nostril.



3
Press firmly. Dispose of used naloxone spray safely.

3. You need to get someone to contact security or first aid for further assistance and support.

Post Incident Response

It is important to recognise that once naloxone has been administered to a person who has suffered an opioid overdose that their response to the naloxone may be varied, which may include them flailing their arms, being disorientated and sometimes upset that they are no longer in a 'high'. As part of the College's response to an incident of naloxone being administered, management will follow up to ensure referrals are made for support to any community member that is affected by the incident.

Supports and Resources

BC Government: [Overdose prevention and response](#)

BC Government: [Find a naloxone kit in BC](#)

Toward the Heart: [Towardtheheart.com](#)

First Nations Health Authority: [Naloxone](#)

College of Pharmacists of BC: [Use Emergency-use Naloxone to Save a Life](#)

Opioid Treatment Access Line:

- 1-833-804-8111, 9 – 4 PM every day
- Is a free and confidential service to access medication that prevents withdrawal symptoms and reduces the risk of overdose.

Here2Talk:

- Connects post-secondary students with access to free, confidential counselling and community services via app, phone and web. Language specific support is available upon request.

9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline:

- Is a safe space to talk, 24 hours a day, every day of the year.
- Call or text 9-8-8.