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# The Opioid Crisis

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# Client Population of Interest

- ▶ Opioid-related overdose contributed to over 67,000 deaths from September 2016 to August 2017, a 13.3% increase from the previous year.
- ▶ 80% of new heroin users report previously misusing prescription opioids.
- ▶ Most opioid dependence cases and overdoses occur in those who are either uninsured, unemployed or have a low income.
- ▶ The United States faces an opioid epidemic.
- ▶ The presentation is focused on opioid abusers and the crises they face.

# What is an Opioid

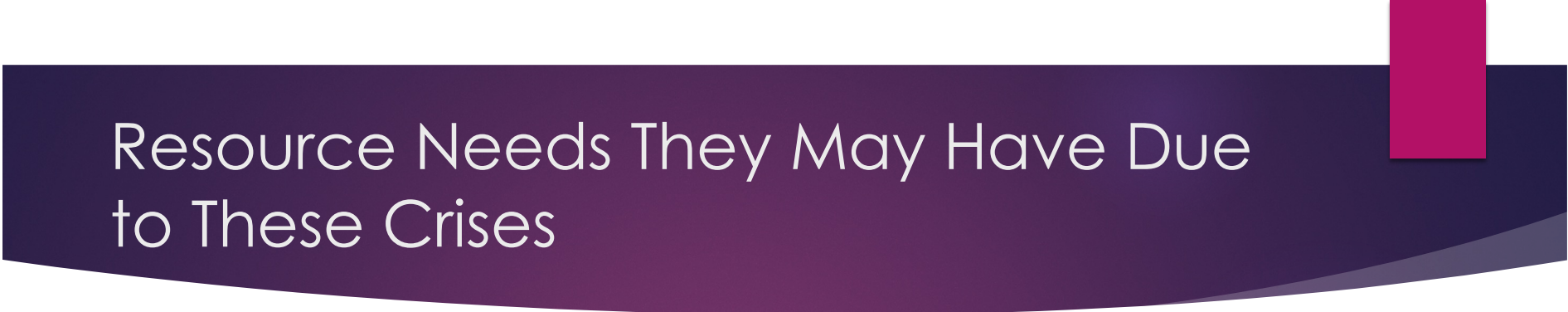
- ▶ Opioids are a class of drugs with high abuse potential that include:
- ▶ 1) pain relievers legally available via prescription, such as codeine, morphine, oxycodone, and hydrocodone
- ▶ 2) illegal drugs such as heroin
- ▶ 3) legally available and illegal synthetic opioids such as fentanyl.

# Three Phases of Injury Prevention

- ▶ Preventing the drug from reaching the host (pre-event)
- ▶ Minimizing the likelihood of injury when drug and host interact (event)
- ▶ Minimizing the subsequent harms (post-event)

# Types of Crises Opioid Abusers May Encounter and Why

- ▶ Addiction (Do not forget heroin) (pre-event)
- ▶ Overdose (physical tolerance for opioids, which can be built up over time with regular use, decreases rapidly during periods of abstinence...as a consequence, rates of overdose are high) (event)
- ▶ Loss of Home (post-event)
- ▶ Children being removed from the homes of addicted parents (failure to meet a child's immediate needs (caretaking impairment), presence of a drug-exposed infant, cognitive deficiency). (post-event)
- ▶ Dual Diagnosis (impacts pre-event, event, and post-event)



# Resource Needs They May Have Due to These Crises

- ▶ Substance Abuse Counseling
- ▶ Mental Health Counseling due to dual diagnosis
- ▶ Medical treatment (naloxone – lifesaving treatment works to reverse an overdose)
- ▶ Peer counseling – clients have a strong preference for peer workers over emergency medical professionals based on trust issues and past negative experiences (health professionals frequently lack adequate training in substance use, and commonly hold negative/stereotypical view of individuals with drug related problems.
- ▶ Supervised Consumption Rooms (to reduce the number of overdoses)
- ▶ Better health insurance plans and reduction of social, ethnic and financial inequalities

# National Resources

- ▶ <https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/>
  - National Helpline 1-800-662-4357 (24/7)
  - Find Treatment Near You
  - Discusses prevention, treatment, and recovery from opioids
- ▶ Samhsa.gov – Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
  - Same National helpline number 1-800-662-4357
  - Opioid treatment program directory by state and city

# Local Resources

- ▶ Southlight.org – engages, educates, and empowers those living with substance use and mental health challenges
  - Open 7 days a week, 365 days a year (919-787-6131)
  - Serves an average of 600 people per day
  - Treats co-occurring disorders – both mental health and substance abuse
  - Individuals improve their physical, mental and social well-being and gain skills and resources to sustain their addiction recovery.
- ▶ Morepowerfulinc.org
  - Finding treatment, recovery resources, Naloxone 101



# Applying These Resources to My Practicum and Internship

- ▶ My practicum is taking place at Southlight
- ▶ I will be participating in group therapy for drug addiction
- ▶ I will be dealing directly with opioid addiction and dual disorders and will be able to apply these resources on a daily basis

# References

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