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# How Cross-Sector Partnerships Create Healthier Communities

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*Overdose Response Strategy, CDC Foundation*

Funded by the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

SHARE & CONNECT • COLLABORATE • INFORM & PROMOTE • HELP & IMPLEMENT

# About Me



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# Federal Acknowledgment

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# Learning Objectives

I. Describe how cross-sector partnerships among healthcare, public health, community organizations and people with lived experience can strengthen community health initiatives and improve outcomes.
II. Recognize opportunities to strengthen collaboration, community-clinical partnerships and referral pathways across organizations serving individuals with complex health and social needs.
III. Identify practical strategies for breaking down silos, leveraging complementary expertise and engaging diverse stakeholders in coalition and community health efforts.

# What is the Overdose Response Strategy (ORS)?

The Overdose Response Strategy (ORS) is a **nationally coordinated**, **cross-sector collaboration** between public health and public safety.

# ORS Mission Statement

The **mission** of the ORS is to **help communities reduce fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses** by connecting public health and public safety agencies, sharing information and pertinent intelligence and supporting effective* strategies.

** The term "effective" encompasses both "evidence-based" and "promising" practices in the context of overdose prevention.*

# THE OVERDOSE RESPONSE STRATEGY (ORS)

PUBLIC HEALTH | PUBLIC SAFETY | PARTNERSHIP

The **mission** of the ORS is to help communities **reduce fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses**. The ORS carries out this mission by using **four strategies** designed to strengthen community capacity to prevent fatal and non-fatal overdoses and facilitate access to treatment and long-term recovery support.

## ORS STRATEGIES

### SHARE & CONNECT

Expand access and quality of cross-sector data, insights and trends to inform a coordinated response to the overdose crisis.

### COLLABORATE

Build sustained cross-sector coordination and collaboration to enhance overdose prevention and response efforts.

### INFORM & PROMOTE

Educate and train community members and partners on effective overdose prevention, treatment and recovery strategies.

### HELP & IMPLEMENT

Help partners implement, improve and expand access to effective overdose prevention, treatment and recovery support services.

**Community members and partners report greater awareness,** improved skills and a stronger commitment to respond to and prevent overdoses.

**Public health and public safety collaborate effectively** to respond to and prevent overdoses.

**COMMUNITIES ARE BETTER EQUIPPED TO PREVENT FATAL AND NON-FATAL OVERDOSES**
and facilitate access to treatment and long-term recovery support.

**REDUCE FATAL AND NON-FATAL OVERDOSES**



October 2025

# Overdose Response Strategy



**SHARE AND CONNECT** cross-sector data to drive coordinated overdose response



**COLLABORATE** across sectors to improve overdose prevention and response



**INFORM AND PROMOTE** overdose awareness to equip communities and partners



**HELP AND IMPLEMENT** solutions to strengthen overdose prevention efforts

# ORS Program Strategies

1. Expand access and quality of **cross-sector data, insights and trends** to inform a coordinated response to the overdose crisis.
2. Build sustained **cross-sector coordination and collaboration** to enhance overdose prevention and response efforts.
3. **Educate and train** community members and partners on effective overdose prevention, treatment and recovery strategies.
4. Help partners **implement, improve and expand** access to effective overdose prevention, treatment and recovery support services.

# ORS Teams



GUIDE



CONNECTOR



BRIDGE

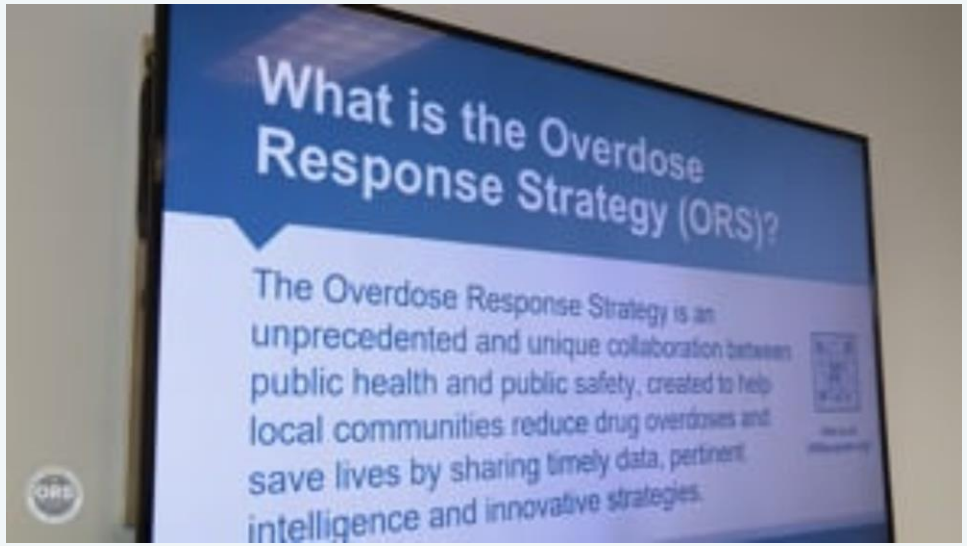


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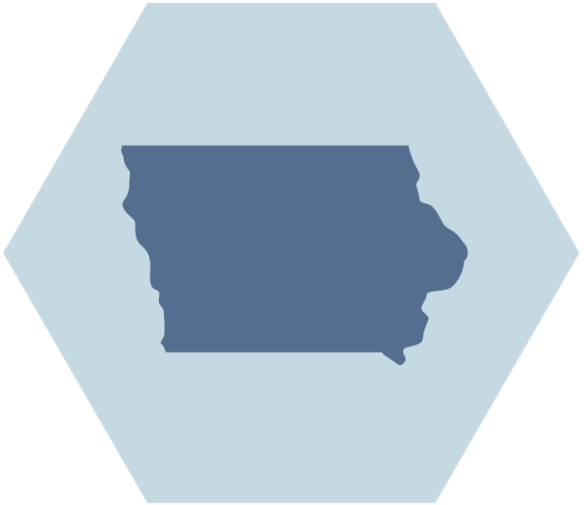
# Learn More About the ORS:




**Click the video above to learn more about the ORS, see the ORS Video Hub for additional videos on the ORS program.**

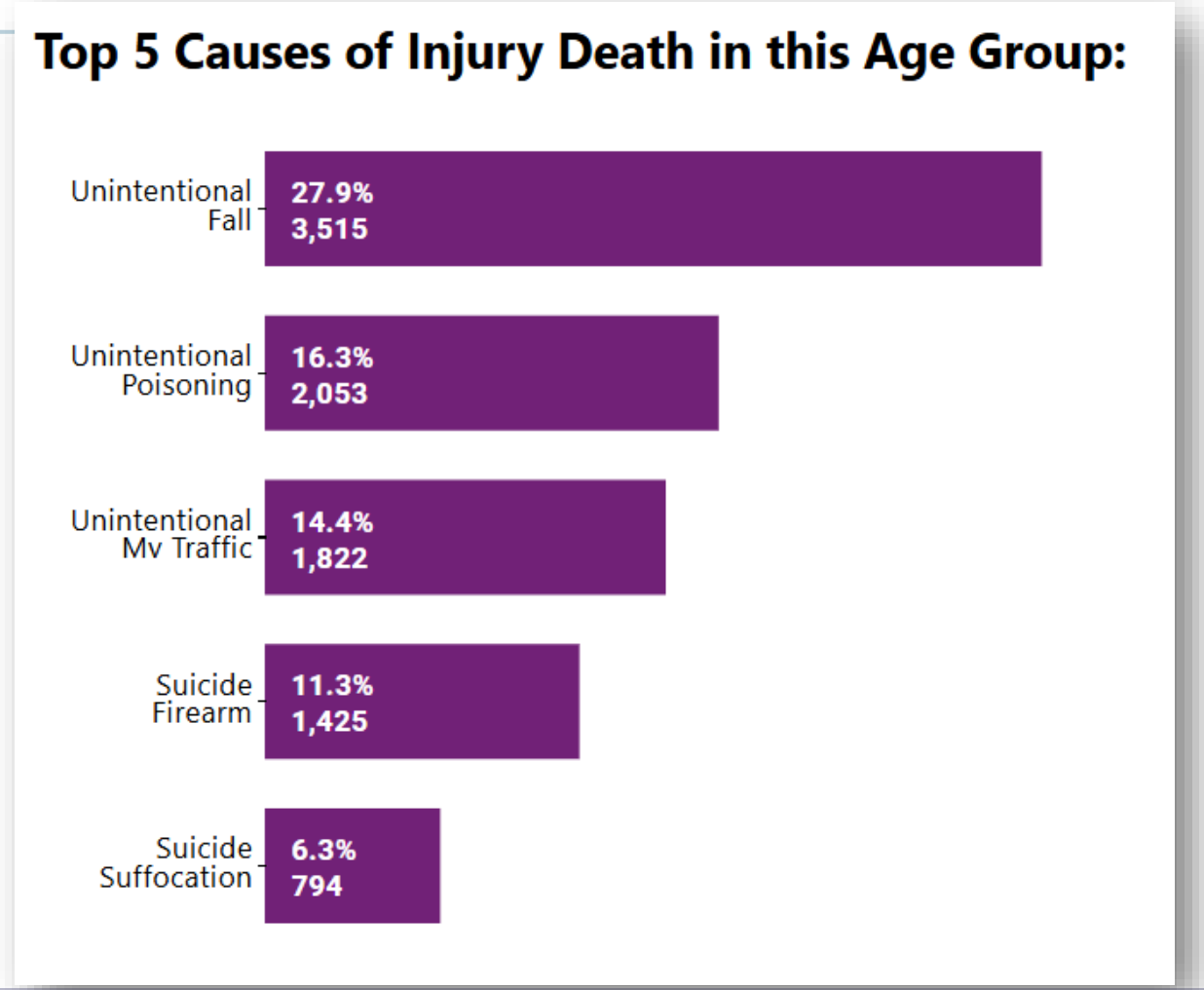
**Visit us at ORSprogram.org!**

# Injury Deaths In Iowa



## Unintentional Deaths due to All Injury among Persons Aged All Ages Years, 2020 to 2024, Iowa

*Source, CDC WISQARS - https://wisqars.cdc.gov/*



# Community Touchpoints

- Healthcare
- Public health
- Aging services
- Behavioral health agencies
- Pharmacies
- Community organizations
- Recovery supports
- Family caregivers



# Consequences of Working in Silos

- Duplicate Efforts
- Missed Referrals
- Service Gaps
- Confusing Systems
- Missed Opportunities

# Different Types of Expertise

## Professional Expertise

- Education
- Research
- Licensure
- Training

## Community Expertise

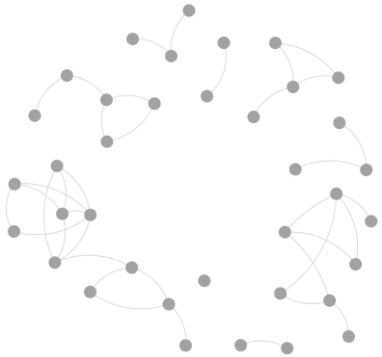
- Local Knowledge
- Service Delivery Experience

## Lived Expertise

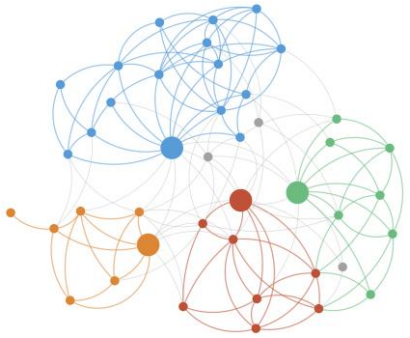
- Navigating Systems
- Recovery Experience
- Barriers to care

# Developing Collective Understanding

**Scattered Fragments of Connectivity**



**Desired, Increased Connectivity and Collaboration**



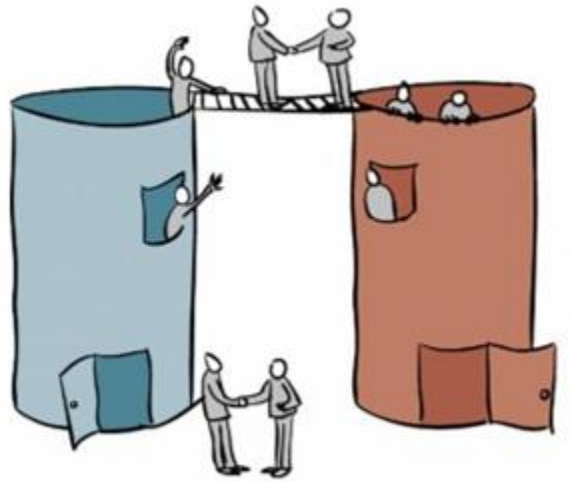
- Through the gathering of community stakeholders, service providers and leadership, additional steps are necessary to understand not just the challenges, but what available resources can impact those challenges, and what gaps exist
  - A broad cross-section of individual and organizations to address the identified purpose is necessary
  - Engage participants who possess the authority, autonomy, resources and experiences necessary to contribute effectively to the network
- An aligned purpose is critical to success
- To develop a strategy and goals, engaged partners need to become better informed of each other's roles and responsibilities

**Source:** Ehrlichman, D. Impact Networks: Create Connection, Spark Collaboration, and Catalyze Systemic Change. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2021; State of Vermont Public Safety Enhancement Team, *Process Overview,* 2024.

# Strategies for Breaking Down Barriers

**Interagency Committees**: Effective community collaboration involves the establishment of interagency committees that facilitate communication and partnership among different sectors, ensuring a unified approach to public health and safety.

**Shared Data Systems**: Implementing shared data systems allows for the seamless exchange of information among agencies. This transparency enhances decision-making and resource allocation.

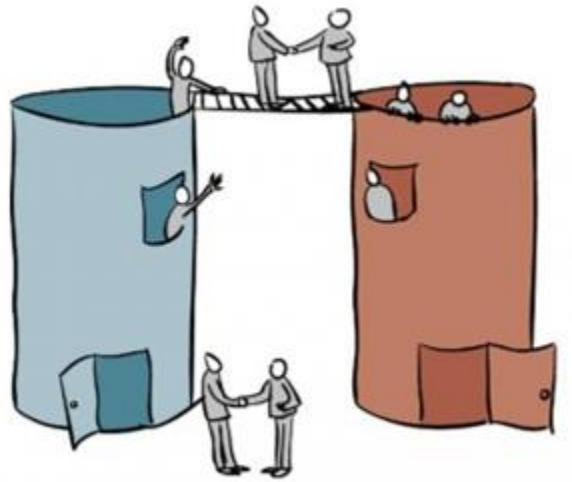


**Source**: Eagle Times, *Project ACTION seeks intersection of public health, public safety, 2024;* Tulane University School of Public Health., *Decision-Making for Health Administrators*, 2022; Image – drawingoutideas.ca; Sidor, M. & Dubin, K., Sweet Institute, *Bridging Divides: Collaborating with Communities to Break Down Barriers,* January 27, 2024.

# Strategies for Breaking Down Barriers

**Joint Training Programs**: Providing joint training programs helps staff from different sectors understand each other's roles and challenges, fostering a more cohesive and coordinated response.

**Community Engagement**: Involving community members in planning and implementing interventions ensures that they are tailored to the specific needs of the community, building trust and support for collaborative efforts.

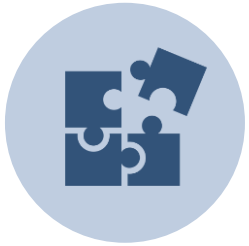


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# Strategies for Breaking Down Barriers



**Comprehensive Care:** Integrated services ensure that individuals receive holistic care addressing multiple aspects of their well-being. By integrating mental health services with primary care, for example, Project ACTION can improve early detection and treatment of mental health issues, leading to better overall health outcomes.



**Efficiency and Resource Allocation:** Collaborative efforts allow for pooling resources and expertise, making interventions more efficient and cost-effective. Integrated services reduce duplication of efforts and direct resources where they are most needed

**Source**: World Health Organization, *Health Equity,* 2024*;* Tulane University School of Public Health., *Decision-Making for Health Administrators*, 2022; Sidor, M. & Dubin, K., Sweet Institute, *Bridging Divides: Collaborating with Communities to Break Down Barriers,* January 27, 2024.

# Strategies for Breaking Down Barriers



**Improved Access to Services:** Collaboration among sectors enhances access to services by creating a more seamless system of care. For instance, individuals experiencing homelessness can benefit from integrated housing, healthcare and employment services, helping them achieve stability and self-sufficiency.

**Population Health:** Often there are unfair, avoidable or remediable differences among groups of people, in terms of access to care and service. Improving access, and reducing barriers to that access has economic, social, societal and public health benefits to population health which can have a generational impact on communities and families.

**Source**: World Health Organization, *Health Equity,* 2024*;* Tulane University School of Public Health., *Decision-Making for Health Administrators*, 2022; Sidor, M. & Dubin, K., Sweet Institute, *Bridging Divides: Collaborating with Communities to Break Down Barriers,* January 27, 2024.

# Key Elements to Foster Trust and Communication

**Clear Communication**: Establishing transparent and open communication channels is crucial. This involves proactively sharing information, setting clear expectations and being responsive to inquiries.

**Consistent and Reliable Performance**: Delivering on promises and commitments consistently helps build trust over time.

**Mutual Respect and Understanding**: Recognizing and valuing each partner's contributions fosters a positive working relationship.

**Shared Goals and Vision**: Aligning on common objectives ensures that all parties are working towards the same end goal.



**Source:** Ehrlichman, David. Impact Networks: Create Connection, Spark Collaboration, and Catalyze Systemic Change. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2021; Eagle Times, *Project ACTION seeks intersection of public health, public safety*, October 22, 2024.

# Key Elements to Foster Trust and Communication





**Regular Feedback and Evaluation**: Providing constructive feedback and regularly evaluating progress helps maintain accountability and continuous improvement.
**Engagement:** Engage participants that possess the authority, autonomy, resources and experiences necessary to contribute effectively to the network.
**Encouragement**: Encourage and support participants to develop strong and meaningful relationships that will assist in sharing of information in an open and timely manner.
**Strong Relationships:** Build strong relationships that allow for important and difficult conversations to address the purpose of the network.

***Collaborative leadership and community engagement are vital for achieving shared goals.***

**Source:** Ehrlichman, David. Impact Networks: Create Connection, Spark Collaboration, and Catalyze Systemic Change. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2021; Eagle Times, *Project ACTION seeks intersection of public health, public safety*, October 22, 2024.

# Strategies for Engaging Stakeholders

**Community Advisory Committees**: Forming committees that include community members ensures that their voices are heard in decision-making processes. These committees can provide valuable insights and feedback on project initiatives.

**Community Needs Assessments**: Conducting assessments to identify the specific needs and priorities of the community helps tailor interventions to be more effective and relevant.

**Community Events and Workshops**: Organizing events and workshops fosters engagement and allows community members to actively participate in discussions and activities related to the project.

**Collaboration with Local Organizations**: Partnering with established local organizations can leverage existing resources and networks to reach a broader audience and maximize impact.



**Source:** The Council of State Governments, Justice Center, *Community Engagement and Collaboration with Key Stakeholders, 2023.*

# Strategies for Engaging Stakeholders



**Enhanced Innovation and Creativity**: Diverse teams bring a wide range of perspectives and experiences, which can lead to innovative solutions and better decision-making.
**Improved Problem-Solving**: Inclusive collaboration ensures that all voices are heard, reducing the risk of groupthink and fostering a culture of critical analysis and diverse viewpoints.
**Increased Community Trust and Support**: When community members see that their diverse backgrounds and opinions are valued and included, it builds trust and encourages greater participation and support for the project.
**Planning:** Utilize partnerships and information collected to inform a strategic plan to ensure forward progress, assessment and evaluation.

***By implementing these techniques and emphasizing representation, community collaboration can create a more effective and sustainable approach to improving public health and safety outcomes.***

**Source:** The Council of State Governments, Justice Center, *Community Engagement and Collaboration with Key Stakeholders, 2023.*

# Shared Populations, Shared Opportunities



- Healthcare
- Public health
- Aging services
- Behavioral health
- Pharmacies
- Community organizations
- Recovery supports
- Family caregivers

# Building Better Referral Pathways



- Who serves the same populations?
- What services are available?
- Where are handoffs occurring?
- Where are people getting lost?

# Assessment to Implementation



## Data Informs Action



## Relationships Help Create Action

# Public Health and Safety Team Cycle

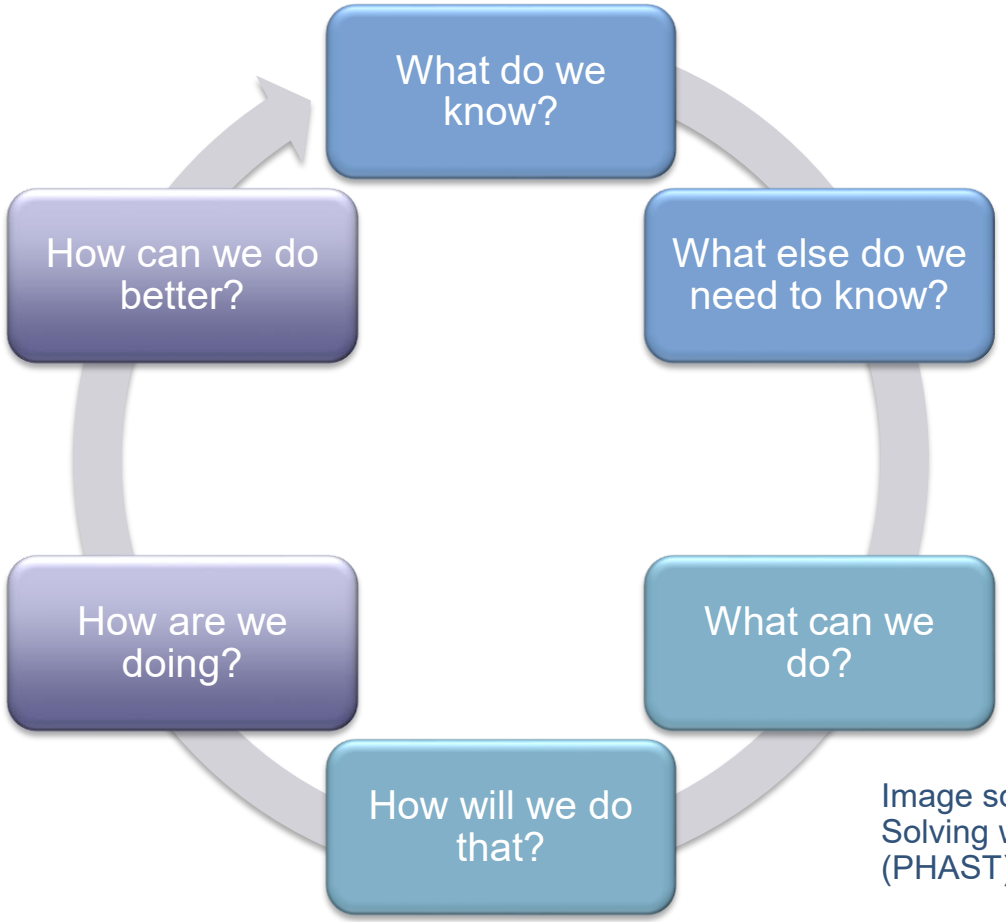



Image source: S. Roe. (2022, Mar. 23). Data and Problem Solving with the Public Health and Public Safety Team (PHAST) Approach. [Presentation.]

# Key Takeaways

1. Complex community challenges require cross-sector collaboration.
2. Strong partnerships improve communication, coordination and outcomes.
3. Communities benefit when diverse perspectives and expertise are included.
4. Small improvements in collaboration can have a significant impact.

# Thank you!

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