## Communiversity Developed and Tested Toolkit for Opioid Abuse Abatement



WORKBOOK to accompany the

## **OPIOID-ABATEMENT TOOLKIT**

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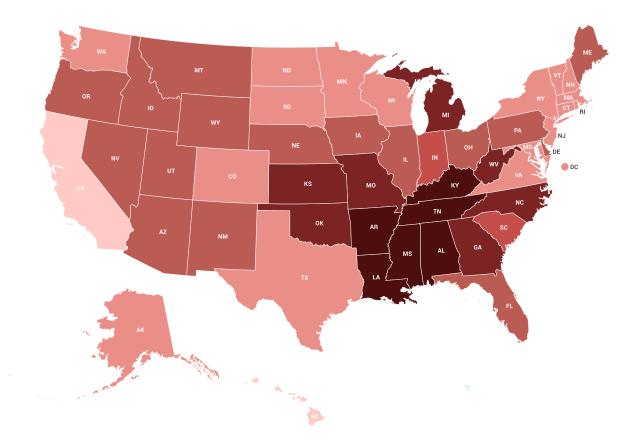
**Together for Resilient Youth (TRY)** 



Every person's loss is society's cost.

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#### Introduction

In Durham, 129 people died due to opioid poisoning in 2021. Since then, the number has continued to grow. In addition, many other people have overdosed on drugs such as fentanyl but have been saved. Durham Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responded to over 850 opioid overdoses in 2021, and that number has also continued to grow each year since then. About 60 percent of the overdoses have occurred in Black people, especially those aged 25-44. But no demographic group is immune to the problem. In fact, our democracy is at stake if a significant part of our nation is strung out on drugs.

#### Who is this Workbook for?

The current workbook and the modules at Opioid-abatement.com and the book with the same name are for those with a substance abuse problem, those whose loved ones have a problem, and those who might in the future have an opioid problem or know someone who does. We also want policymakers and politicians to know what opioid abuse entails so they can help us develop and run effective programs.

#### **Directions**

Most of the questions in this workbook are open-ended, with more than one right answer for each of them. However, we want you to think about YOUR answers and how they relate to the quality of your life. Answer these questions honestly as you reflect on your behavior. Please refer to the Opioid-Abatement.com modules, either online or in print, for further information on each topic. A lot of information is out there, but it is not all equally good. Our resources have been produced by researchers and subjected to rigorous evaluation to provide you with reliable and useful information.

website as references for your answers.	
1.	What do you know about the opioid crisis in United States?
2.	What ethnic and racial groups are most impacted by opioid abuse? Why do you think this is?
3.	What does inequality in treatment mean? What can you do about it?
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4.	What is the difference between equality and equity?
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# **Opioids 101 and Addiction: History and Terminology**

### Why do people use drugs?

The US Government spends billions of dollars on drug education and efforts to prevent and treat addiction. The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) is devoted exclusively to drugs and drug taking. NIDA suggests that drug use can start as a way to escape. But alcohol and other drugs offer a false escape—a dead end. They can quickly make your life worse. Besides making you feel unwell, different drugs affect your brain and body and can cause long-term trouble and/or short-term disasters, including accidents and death.

#### What is the cost of drug treatment?

Sometimes, treatment is free to you. Yes, there are some programs for those without insurance. Don't assume you can't afford treatment. Many programs have a sliding scale that you can handle, even with all your other expenses and financial commitments. Find out about your options before you conclude that you can't afford them. The cost varies depending on insurance coverage (or lack of insurance), type of addiction, treatment facility location, type of treatment and other details. More information is available in a recent article by the American Addiction Centers. https://americanaddictioncenters.org/drug-detox/cost.

#### **Drugs and Race**

We know that racial discrimination exists in our drug laws, in our police departments, and in our healthcare system. Still, we have the power to make choices other than using drugs. And, if we or our loved ones are misusing drugs, we have options to help them get off drugs and lead healthier lives. The modules are designed to provide information, but you need to have the resolve and the drive to use the information in ways that benefit you and your loved ones.

If you know someone who has died from an overdose, use your anger and grief to motivate you to help others. Yes, it takes patience. Sometimes treatment requires more than one round of treatment. Treatment may be necessary for many years.

Drugs excite the parts of the brain that make you feel good. But after you take a drug for a while, the feel-good parts of your brain get used to it. Then, you need to take more of the drug to get the same good feeling. Soon, your brain and body must have the drug to feel normal. You feel sick, awful, anxious, and irritable without the drug. You no longer have the good feelings that you had when you first used the drug. The lack of feeling good is true if you use illegal drugs or if you misuse prescription drugs. Misuse includes taking a drug differently than how your doctor tells you to (taking more or crushing pills to "shoot up" or snort), taking someone else's prescription, or taking it just to get "high."

Different drugs can affect your brain and body in several ways. Here are a few:

- Opioids, including prescription pain relievers, sedatives, or fentanyl: Your heart rate and breathing may slow to dangerous levels, leading to a coma or death. Fentanyl is so powerful that a small amount can kill you quickly unless someone administers naloxone. Get educated about fentanyl and other opioids and spread the word to help your family and community.
- **Alcohol:** When drinking alcohol, you might have trouble making decisions, solving problems, remembering, and learning.
- Marijuana: After smoking or ingesting marijuana, you might forget things you just learned or have trouble focusing.
- **Heroin:** It has similar effects to opioid pain relievers. Your heart rate and breathing may slow to dangerous levels, leading to a coma or death.
- Cocaine and methamphetamine: You may get violent, have panic attacks, feel paranoid, or have a heart attack.

Many drugs can make driving a car unsafe. Marijuana can slow reaction time, make you judge time and distance poorly, and decrease coordination (how you move your body). Cocaine and methamphetamine can make a driver aggressive and reckless. Certain kinds of sedatives, called benzodiazepines, can make you dizzy or drowsy. These effects can lead to crashes that can cause injuries and even death for you or others. Don't drive while under the influence of any drug, and don't ride with someone who is driving under the influence.

#### **Understanding Opioid Misuse**

Answer the questions below and reflect on what knowledge you have gained. Use the opioid-abatement.com website as references for your answers.

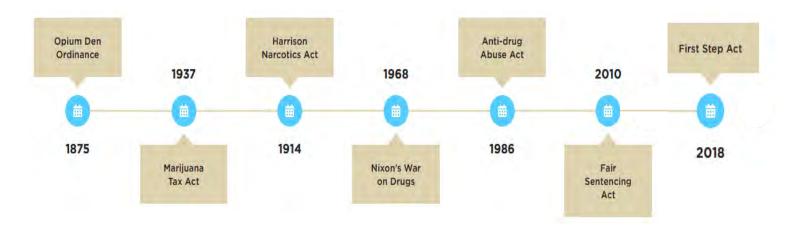
1.	What are the medical uses for opioids?
2.	When does opioid use become a problem?

3.	What are some of the common things that trigger misuse?
4.	Why do people continue to use opioids after a medical prescription order has been discontinued? If you had a relative taking drugs, what would you like to tell that person? Why?
5.	What things led you (your friend or family member) to abusing opioids? Think about each of the following:  A) What environmental factors contribute to your misuse?
	B) What circumstance or situation has caused continued use?
	C) Think about the people who may contribute to your continued use? How many people who are actively using do you spend time with?
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6.	Who are the people in your life who talk to you about drug abuse prevention? Or who is trying to help you stop using? If you have no one, who could you approach?		
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Just as you may not be able to wear someone else's shoes because your feet are different, in the same way, you may need a unique plan to help you avoid drugs or get treated for your drug problem. Learn about your options. Some choices may not sound good right now, but may lead to a better future.

#### **History of the Opioid Epidemic**





## **Building Community Coalitions** to Address Opioid Abatement

#### A Note to Politicians and Policymakers

Your responsibility is to help people thrive. After all, people must be alive to reelect you. We rely on leaders like you to help create the type of community where we all want to live. As a leader, we expect you to reach out to others to bring them to this community and enrich their lives by offering them hope and showing them how they can take the next step and the step after that.

Yes, you can build a constituency around finding alternatives to drugs and giving people hope that their lives can be better. When we see positive changes, we have hope. Alternatively, when people are defeated, drugs win. Then, the community loses. A frustrated, fed-up community is scary. It's also costly due to rising crime, more need for policing, and a need for additional repairs. It's to your advantage and that of your constituents to pay attention to the questions in this workbook and the content in the Opioid-Abatement.com modules. As community members, take note of which politicians are delivering on their promises. Work with them for the betterment of our community.

#### YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Here are some strategies you can use with families and neighbors.

- Inform yourself about opioids. The more you know, the more you can help save lives.
- Handle prescription pain medication with care. Safely remove excess medication from your home and encourage others to do the same.
- Lend a listening ear to an at-risk teen. Help them channel their time and effort into a community-building cause or object.
- Learn the signs of opioid misuse, withdrawal, and overdose.
- Carry Narcan; learn how and when to use it.
- Learn ways to motivate people to join in this effort.
- Help with treatment referral when needed.
- Share our resources.

website as references for your answers.	
1.	What are some things the community can do together to reduce the opioid crisis?
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2.	Why is it important for the community to come together to solve the opioid problem?
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3.	Describe what fentanyl has done to our community. Please list specific details.
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4.	Do you know anyone who has been affected by opioid abuse? Who? How has opioid abuse affected that person?
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5. —	What can we do about drugs in our community? How will our efforts make a difference?
6.	Why is opioid addiction or the war on drugs a social justice issue?
_	
<b>7.</b>	What can a family do if a family member has a drug addiction?
8.	What can communities and organizations do to help our communities thrive despite the raging opioid crisis?

9.	What can businesses and churches do? How can you prompt them to act?
10	What can government agencies do to help? What role can you play in this?
10	What can government agencies do to help? What role can you play in this?
10	
10	
10	
10	



## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Peer Pressure

#### YOU HAVE POWER!

This workbook is an attempt to help you use your power. We live in your community, and you live in our community. Our community will be better if we can all live healthy and productive lives. This workbook, combined with the modules on opioid-abatement.com, can lead you toward a new path.

We can be our brothers' keepers. Our brothers and sisters could be all those in our community. Yes, we can intervene and help them and hold out hope that will allow them to consider other options besides drugs.

#### **Note to My Neighbors**

Life has been hard for many of us. We may have been born poor and may have had some physical disabilities or had parents who were challenged. Some of us are impacted by ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences), making us more vulnerable to the lure of drugs.

We try to cope with the difficulties life presents, but the reality is that many people wake up depressed and find it hard to cope with each day. No magic pill will solve our problems, but there are steps we can take to create a path toward reclaiming life and living it fully, without dread or fear. Take a walk in a pretty area on a sunny day. Look around, breathe deeply and know that you are more fortunate than those who cannot walk, cannot breathe, or are suffering from a serious disease. Find someone worse off than you and help that person with something. Smile together and feel the blessings that come from looking beyond yourself.

Seek help for your substance abuse issues. Yes, there is help available and a path to reclaiming your role as a contributing member of society. You can create a better life for yourself with the right support. Be sure you vote for your leaders—even if you are not thrilled with the choices. Learn how people on the ballot differ and make a choice because their decisions could impact your life. We don't have to settle for lousy. We need you to be part of the solution. We care.

With gratitude for the effort you will be making, *Dasherline Johnson* 

website as references for your answers.	
1.	What are ACEs? How do they affect opioid misuse?
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2.	What are some individual risk factors for opioid misuse?
_	
3.	What are some family risk factors for opioid misuse?
4.	What are some community risk factors for opioid misuse?

5.	Substance misuse keeps people disempowered. It reinforces racism, poverty, isolation, a broken self, broken families, and devastated communities. The health of an individual, particularly a parent, is directly related to the health of our children and families, the neighborhood in which we live, and society at large.		
	How would you explain this statement to a person whose only focus is to "get the next high"?		
_	If you have a family with substance abuse problems, does that mean you are also doesed to be		
0.	If you have a family with substance abuse problems, does that mean you are also doomed to be addicted? What can you do to create a positive future for yourself?		
7.	What is resilience? How can you develop resilience despite coming from a family suffering from addiction and other issues?		
8.	What are cravings? How can you make a choice not to give in to cravings for drugs?		

9.	What is the link between sleep and substance abuse? How can this knowledge help you?
10	Sometimes, your emotions can get ahead of your reasoning. What can you do to "outsmart" your brain?
11.	In your view, how does substance misuse keep people disempowered? How would you discuss this with a policymaker?
12	To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "Substance abuse reinforces racism, poverty, isolation, a broken self, broken families, and devastated communities." What course of action would you recommend for your community to address these concerns?

13. What are some of your protective factors (factors that give you resilience and help you resist drug misuse)?
14. What are some protective factors you have gained from your family? If none, what can you do instead of relying on family?
15. What are some community protective factors? In other words, what would help make our community a better place where all of the people in the community can thrive?
16. How can you influence others in a positive way? (See examples of positive peer pressure in the toolkit.)

	meone you admire invites you to try drugs or liquor to be part of the crowd because "everyone is ag it," what would your response be? What if they made fun of you for refusing?
	hat areas do you have weak boundaries? How easy is it for others to dictate what you do? What can do to improve your boundary setting?
	would you respond to the following question? You've had an awful day—everything has gone wrong. y don't you just score some drugs so you can relax? Just this once.
to h	e you ever known someone who overdosed or died from drugs? What could have been done differently ave saved this person's life? If you don't know someone personally, think about what you might do to chart a better future for someone who appears to be headed down a dangerous path.



## Preventing Opioid Deaths: Availability and Use of Naloxone

Naloxone) known as Narcan) is an easily administered drug that can save the lives of people who have an opioid overdose. Sometimes, a person may need more than one dose. You can't be arrested for administering Naloxone, and you may save a life. Other life-saving suggestions: don't take drugs alone but be with others who can revive you, and don't mix drugs, including alcohol. Don't drink and take drugs. Use fentanyl test strips (FTS) to see how much fentanyl is in the drugs you are about to use. Fentanyl is a silent killer.





we	bsite as references for your answers.
1.	What do you know about opioid overdoses?
2.	What are the signs of an opioid an overdose?
3.	What is naloxone? Why is it important to know about it?
4.	Where can you get naloxone/Narcan?
5.	How do you use Narcan?
_	

6.	List the steps you should take when you see a person who is at risk of an overdose.
7.	In case of an overdose, what should you NOT do?
8.	Please list at least five risk factors that make it likely that a person may overdose.
9.	Those returning from jail and prison may be more likely to have an overdose if they take drugs again. (They have lost the tolerance they had built up.) How can you help a person form healthy/beneficial friendships as they reintegrate into the community?

10. What happens if a person stops taking opioids? What symptoms might the person have?
11. What does "tolerance" to drugs mean?
12. What is the danger of taking an alcoholic drink and an opioid at the same time?
12 What wala does are besin play in anioid addiction?
13. What role does our brain play in opioid addiction?

14. What can you do if someone you love is addicted to opioids or you fear they are becoming	; addicted?
5. How are treatment drugs such as buprenorphine different from illegal drugs (such as fent isn't using buprenorphine or methadone just substituting one drug for another?	anyl)? Why
6. Where do most illegal opioids come from?	
7. How do you safely dispose of left-over prescription drugs, including opioids?	

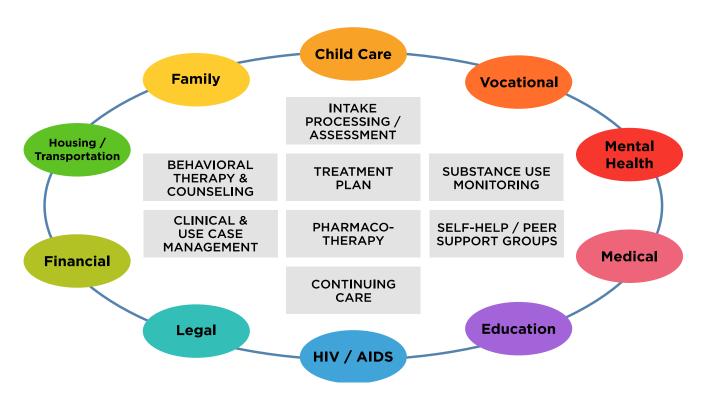
# **Understanding Treatment and Providing Support**

If you need help, reach out to your community and talk to a peer counselor, your doctor, or a health professional. Remember that some substances, including alcohol, benzodiazepines, and opioids can cause unpleasant and even dangerous withdrawal symptoms when you quit using them. Medically monitored inpatient programs for quitting use may be more costly, but they can also save lives. In general, outpatient care is less expensive than inpatient care, but inpatient care might be more effective.

#### **Point of View**

If your life is awful, then you may think that you need to escape, and drugs are one way to do that. But drugs are not a solution; they tend to create more problems than they solve.

Certainly, you can answer the questions in this workbook alone. However, you might benefit from discussing these questions in a support group, such as Al-Anon, AA, or NA, in individual and group therapy, or with a peer support person. The point of these questions is to get you to think about alternatives and how to choose a path with a better endpoint. We want you to be able to think about your choices and not settle for being a victim. Even if you've made some bad mistakes in the past, that doesn't mean you can't make better choices now. Remember the old saying, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." Make it count.



1.	What are the three FDA-approved medications to treat opioid use disorders?
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2.	What are other treatments for opioid abuse?
_	
_	
_	
3.	What are some myths about opioid treatment?
_	
4.	How have you learned to verify information about opioids?
_	
_	
_	

website as references for your answers.

5.	Explain why opioid addiction is a medical issue.
6.	How do you identify misinformation that leaves a person more vulnerable to misuse or overdose and lack of mental health treatment?
7.	What racial barriers may affect treatment? How can you help someone navigate through these?

ο.	now would you get the following message across to a teen or pre-teen mrting with recreational drugs:
	Opioids affect our ability to make good decisions. For Black and Brown people, opioids open you up to pitfalls within our justice system that may take away rights, resources, and the ability to take care of our families and ourselves. Opioids also tear our families apart, break down our communities, and reinforce racism.
9.	Why do you think substance abuse is common among people with mental health issues? Why is it important to pay attention to both mental health issues and substance abuse concerns?
_	
10	Experts say that medically assisted detoxification is only the first stage of addiction treatment and doe little to change long-term drug use. What would be a long-term solution?
_	
11	Do you want to stop using drugs? (Please check the answer that best reflects your thoughts and feelings today.)
	□ YES □ NO □ UNSURE

12. Place a checkmark next to the bad things about using that you have experienced.	ng drugs. Add to this list any other negative things
☐ I am disempowering myself, my family, and/or my community.	☐ I have increased stress and anxiety.
☐ I have lost respect or good relationships with my family and friends.	☐ I worry about my life. ☐ I feel ashamed.
☐ I feel tired, drained, or weak.	☐ I experience more sadness and fear than others
☐ I can't save money for my family's needs (a home, car, or things we need/want).	☐ I regret my actions. ☐ I fear failure.
☐ I continue to be dishonest with or lie to people	☐ I have poor health, sleep, and/or nutrition.
I care about or those who care about me.	☐ I am losing my dreams or my future.
☐ I have lost connections with friends and/or family.	
13. Do you want to stop using drugs? (Please place a checkmark by the answers that best r	reflect your thoughts and feelings today.)
☐ I want to empower myself, my family, and/or	☐ I will be less stressed, anxious, or tense.
my community.	☐ I will feel better about my life and less helpless.
☐ I want to feel that I am in control of my life.	☐ I will experience less sadness.
☐ I want to have better relationships with my family and friends.	☐ I will have fewer regrets about my actions.
☐ I want to feel stronger physically.	☐ I will feel successful and appreciated by family and friends.
☐ I want to save money for my family's needs (a home, car, or things we need/want).	☐ My health will improve.
☐ I want to be honest with myself and with people	☐ I will feel loved and supported.
I care about or those who care about me.	☐ I will be able to dream about and plan for a
☐ I want to enjoy time with my family and friends, doing things I used to enjoy or things we want to do together.	good future.

14. What are th	ne five most stressful	things that may encourage	e you to misuse opioids?	
15. If you are u to give then		up opioids, please write do	own any reasons why it would be hard	
16. Are you con	fident about your ab	oility to stop using? (Please o	heck what best reflects your thoughts toda	y.)
	YES	□NO	UNSURE	
If "No," plea	ase write down the r	reasons you have not stoppe	d misusing yet.	
If "Yes," ple	ease also list the reas	ons you have stopped.		

17. List the problems you have faced because of you	r opioid and/or alcohol misuse or abuse.
18. What are some of the things (triggers) that lead next to all that apply to you. Add any others tha	you to misuse or abuse opioids? Place a check mark are not listed.
☐ Seeing other people use opioids	☐ Seeing opioids or other drugs on TV
☐ Being around friends who use opioids	☐ My problems (list these)
19. Do people, things, and places make you use or a	buse opioids? If so, how could you avoid these triggers?

☐ Feeling bored/angry	☐ Feeling helpless	☐ Feeling stressed/anxious
☐ Feeling frustrated	☐ Feeling sad/depressed	
21. What negative thoughts come	to mind when you think about quit	tting opioids?
_		ill be mare least area
☐ I can't stop.	☐ This w	ill be my last use.
<ul><li>☐ I can't stop.</li><li>☐ Stopping or quitting is too l</li></ul>		t next week.
☐ Stopping or quitting is too l☐ I will try next year.	nard.	t next week.  doing this.
☐ Stopping or quitting is too l☐ I will try next year.	nard. $\square$ I'll qui	t next week.  doing this.
☐ Stopping or quitting is too l☐ I will try next year.	nard.	t next week.  doing this.
☐ Stopping or quitting is too l☐ I will try next year.	nard.	t next week.  doing this.
☐ Stopping or quitting is too l☐ I will try next year.	nard.	t next week.  doing this.
Stopping or quitting is too h I will try next year.  22. What people, things, or situat	nard.	t next week.  doing this.  using or abusing opioids?
Stopping or quitting is too h I will try next year.  22. What people, things, or situat	ions, would make you want to stop	t next week.  doing this.  using or abusing opioids?

24. What could you do to increase your support to quit? What activities could help you to avoid misusing drugs?
25. List the people to call who could support your giving up opioids.
26. List the things to do to avoid using opioids in each of these situations.
A) Going to party with friends
B) Getting paid/getting your benefits
C) When someone is mean to you.
D) When it's a three-day weekend

27. What works best for you to avoid using opioids?
28. What positive actions can you take to avoid using opioids?
29. When should you call people to support your decision not to use? Who should you call? Where could you go to avoid getting involved in drugs?
30. What self-soothing actions could you do to avoid using drugs?
31. What should you do when seeing a friend or family member from overdosing or using drugs?

32. How can you help loved ones or neighbors get into treatment?	
33. Why is it important to help someone you love get into treatment if they have an addiction?	
34. What if a person has no insurance—what treatment is available for that person?	
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35. You learn that a friend of yours is pregnant but continues to do drugs. What should you tell her How could you guide her to treatment?	r:

peer support specialists help veterans?	iave suitelea. How call
37. What else would be helpful to improve the physical and mental health of citiz	zens of Durham?
38. In learning about opioid abatement, what things surprised you or changed yo	our thinking?



## **Going Forward: Reflections**

#### **Your Personal Plan**

#### What Happens When Our Brains Are Hooked on Opioids?

Our brains decide what gives us pleasure. The way this occurs is through our neurons — nerve cells in our brain that send messages all over our body, much like a general directing his troops. These messages allow us to do everything — breathing, talking, eating, and thinking.

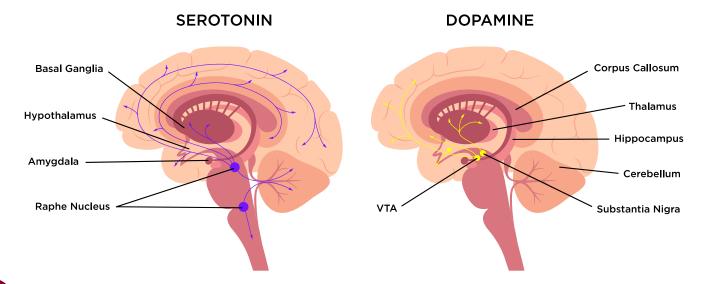
The brain sends and receives chemical and electrical signals throughout our body. Different signals control different processes, and our brain interprets each. Now, think of a coach calling the plays for a game. Some signals, for example, make you feel tired, while others make you feel pain.

Some messages are kept within the brain, like in the coach's playbook, while others are relayed through the spine and across the body's vast network of nerves to distant parts of the body. The body has its own Uber system – the central nervous system, to get these messages out and relies on billions of neurons (nerve cells) — the Uber drivers.

The brain has many players, including the GABA neurons. These are the best players. They are the gatekeepers and decide what gets into your brain. GABA neurons can slow down the messages your brain gets, which regulates your mood and anxiety. If GABA can't do its job, you might have problems with mental health.

When a person takes opioids, these drugs hold back the GABA neurons. They can't get out on the field. So, the home team, dopamine, another messenger group of neurons, can't get onto the field. Dopamine does a lot of things when it's able to circulate in our body. It gives us pleasure and is also responsible for many other things that we take for granted: learning, motivation, heart rate, sleep, and control of nausea and vomiting, among many other roles. So, if the dopamine routes are blocked, the body tries to do an end-run around the problem but gets blocked.

When opioids block or shut out the GABA neurons, the dopamine neurons demand attention. They lure the person to increase the opioids because they feel so good. So, the GABA can't do its job of regulating the mood and other important duties of the body. Just like the coach would bench a player who showed up drunk, the brain on opioids is like that drunk player — unable to make the needed plays.



we	website as references for your answers.	
1.	What were your childhood dreams?	
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2.	When you were sixteen, what dream(s) did you have?	
3.	Did you let go of those dreams? If so, why? How can you set new goals?	
4.	To what extent are you satisfied with how you're living your life now? How could you make it any better?	
_		
5.	What can you do to make the changes you want?	

6. H	Iow will your life be different when you stop using opioids?
7. V	What will give you the strength to keep working toward positive change?
8. I	f you had a magic wand, what would you do? Why?
9. Y	ou don't have magical powers, but what CAN you do to avoid or stop addiction?
10. V	What is the best reason you can think of to stop abusing opioids?

11. How will your life be different when you stop using/abusing?	
12. Create a support diagram or a picture to help you stop using.	
A) Who will be in your diagram?	
B) What do you want the people you listed above to do if you call them for help?	
C) When should you call a support person?	

D)	What will you ask for or say to them?
E)	List things to do with a support person and things you can do by yourself.
F)	Where can you go to avoid being tempted into doing drugs? In other words, where is a safe place for you?
G)	What are the thoughts you need to think to feel better?
H)	How can you recall these thoughts when you're feeling down?

13. How can you increase your support? How can you strengthen yourself?	
A) If you don't have support what can you do to get some support so you feel as if someone is in your compared	
A) If you don't have support, what can you do to get some support, so you feel as if someone is in your corner?	
B) What can you say to people you have wronged? How is an apology related to feeling better about yourself?	
C) How do you forgive those who have wronged you? Why should you forgive them?	
D) What is your best reason to stop abusing drugs?	

Go to Opioid-Abatement.com for targeted references.

SAMHSA's National Helpline is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental health and/or substance use disorders.

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

FindTreatment.gov ◆ Text 988 for help.

