

Launching Local Overdose Fatality Reviews: Why Mock Reviews Are a Powerful First Step - Hybrid

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

NY ORS TEAM

*Supporting Overdose Fatality Reviews (OFR)
and the Mock OFR Toolkit*

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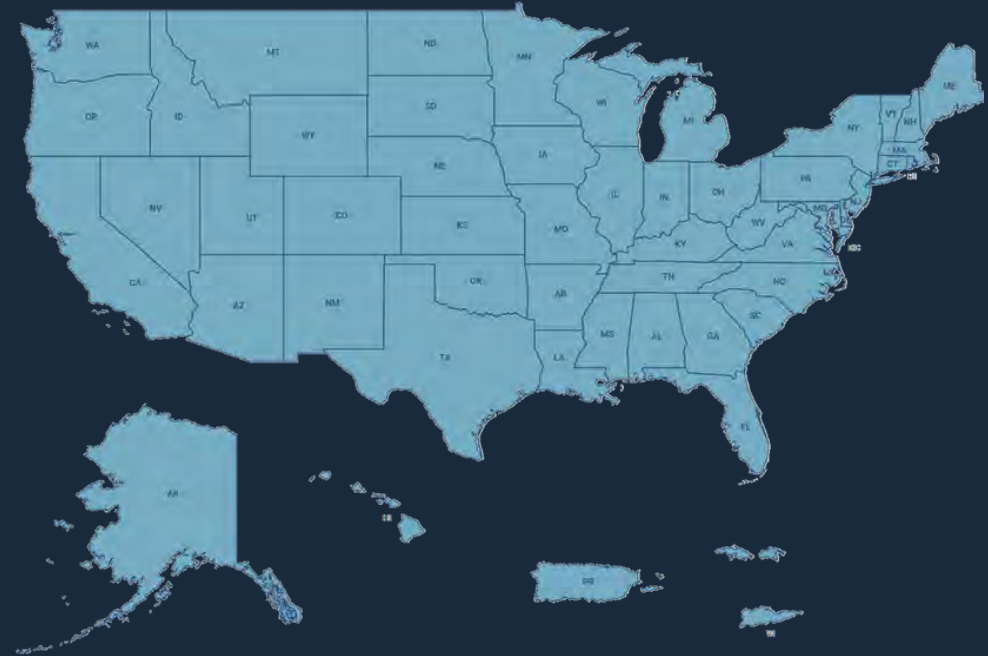
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What is the Overdose Response Strategy (ORS)?

- A collaboration between public health and public safety funded by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) High Intensity Drug Trafficking Agencies (HIDTA) and CDC Foundation.
- A two-person team of a Public Health Analyst and Drug Intelligence Officer in all 50 states, the District of Columbia (DC), Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Help communities reduce fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses by connecting public health and public safety agencies, sharing information and supporting evidence-based interventions.



NY ORS Strategies

- Collective focus at intersection of Public Health and Public Safety (PH/PS)
- Multi-sector engagement across the spectrum of responses (harm reduction, treatment, recovery, primary prevention)
- Framework for prioritizing initiatives that leverage communities' existing resources (i.e., "quick wins")



1 Enhancing Real-time Overdose and Drug Trend Surveillance to Support Data-Driven Local Responses



2 Promote Local Multi-Disciplined PH/PS Partnerships with Meaningful Engagement of People with Lived/Living Experience



3 Promote Peer Linkages to Low-Barrier and Evidence-Based Care



4 Expand Access to Naloxone



5 Promote Implementation of Overdose Fatality Reviews



6 Implement Evidence-Based Primary Prevention Initiatives Targeting Youth

Source: NY ORS Team Environmental Scan Report



Promote Implementation of OFRs



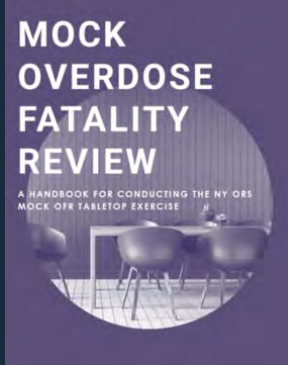
How Does the NY ORS Team Support OFR?

- Coordination with NYSDOH ODUH to expand OFR efforts in NYS through statewide communities of practice calls
- Connection to OFR national standards resources and technical support from national ORS and CDC OFR subject matter experts
- Facilitating access to law enforcement data through NY/NJ HIDTA Teams and regional crime analysis centers (CACs)
- One-on-one technical support for real-life and mock OFR
 - Created to help ease the load with ready-to-use materials
 - Hands-on practice-based exercise that build confidence and readiness for real-life OFR
 - Case is fictional, but built from a composition of real-life experiences
 - Ideal for communities that have done some initial planning



NY ORS Mock OFR Exercise Toolkit

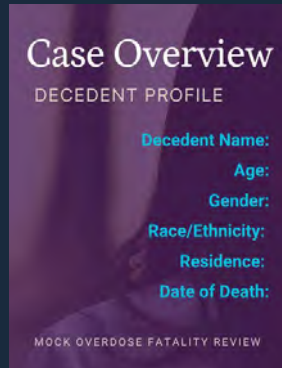
Mock OFR Handbook



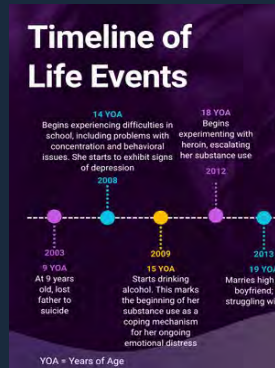
Annotated Meeting Agenda



Tabletop Exercise Slide Deck



Decedent Case Summary and Timeline



Supporting Case Reports



Panel Presenters' Orientation



Next of Kin Interview Summary



Thought-provoking Discussion Questions



ESSEX COUNTY – MOCK OVERDOSE FATALITY REVIEW TEAM (OFRT)

Strengths & Successes

Presented by: Linda Beers, Director of Public Health



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT



Mission &
Purpose
We did not try
to reinvent
the wheel –
the Mock
provided us
with all the
tools.

Mission: Improve
investigations and reduce
preventable overdose deaths

Purpose: Identify system
gaps, improve practices, and
recommend prevention
strategies



Prior to the Mock our county had well established coalition the Essex county Heroin ~~Opioid~~ Other –we all wanted to have an OFR but lacked the ability to “initiate the process”

- **Diverse Partnership:** The team is composed of partners from a wide range of agencies, including the Health Department, law enforcement, mental health, substance use treatment, and emergency services.
- **Unique Perspectives:** The team also includes a harm-reduction professional, a drug intelligence officer, and someone with lived experience, which gives them a different perspective.
- **Working Together:** A formal agreement helps everyone share information and coordinate their efforts seamlessly

Through the Mock we learned quickly that having secure trusted documentation policies and procedures as to store data would be a barrier to data collection and a stumbling block for partners sharing data.

- Strict Policies: All members must sign a confidentiality and non-disclosure agreement before participating.
 - Respect for the individuals and families at the center of this work.
- Data Security: Data is stored on a secure, password-protected county server.
- Secure Procedures: The policy outlines a process for accessing, downloading, and storing data from outside sources, with strict rules against unauthorized transmission.
- Automatic Purging: Data is automatically purged after three years to protect sensitive information further.



The Mock provided the Training we needed.

It allowed our team to draw from the experience and produce tangible solutions to initiating people to care.

The process was seamless, and we always received excellent support from Jim and Lisa.

The aha moment came at the end of the mock when the team realized how realistic the scenario was and that solutions from this fictitious case aligned with our real-life experiences.



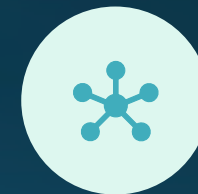
Promotes shared understanding and reduces stigma



Promotes policies and practices that prevent overdose deaths.



Raises public awareness through education and advocacy



Creates stronger linkages between services and support systems



HEALTH
DEPARTMENT



Mock Overdose Fatality Review

Intent & Impact



Shanna Siegel, RN, BSN
Supervising Public Health Educator
Putnam County Department of Health



Why We *Thought* We Needed a Mock OFR

Drill our planning team's preparedness and continue to build the skills necessary for successful SOFR work

Introduce partners to the process and their distinct roles

Identify areas for improvement prior to launching first official SOFR



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Preventing Overdose Deaths in Putnam

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portance of using real-life experiences to inform systemic change.

"When an individual is referred to me after a non-fatal overdose or other substance-involved crisis, I work with them and their families to help connect them to appropriate support and identify treatment barriers," she said. "Establishing a fatality review team gives us an opportunity to analyze some of these struggles I see daily and make applicable recommendations for systems-level change."

Behler drew on her experience with the county's Child Fatality Review Team.

"Preventable deaths, including overdose and suicide, devastate families," she said. "Examining in closer detail the facets of a person's life and their interactions with our system of care is one small way we can honor the memories of those lost while working to prevent these tragedies in the future."

The SOFR initiative is supported by the Putnam County

BR:DGE Alliance in collaboration with state and federal partners, including the Overdose Response Strategy — a national partnership between public health and public safety agencies that aims to reduce overdoses through data-sharing and innovative prevention strategies.

New York ORS team members Lisa Worden, public health analyst with the CDC Foundation, and Jim Hawley, drug intelligence officer with the New York/New Jersey High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, provided support for the mock review.

In a joint statement, they said: "Putnam County's mock OFR showcased a dynamic partnership in action. Their multidisciplinary team engaged in a thoughtful and compassionate analysis of the simulated case, reflecting a deep commitment to understanding and addressing the complexities of overdose response. They approached the exercise as a hands-on opportunity to build critical skills and foster meaningful connections essential for conducting real-life OFRs... Their commitment, synergy, and robust cross-sector collaboration are impressive and position them as a leading example of an OFR team in the state."

Paul Tang, director of mental health and SOFR Team facilitator,

highlighted the group's mission.

"This team is charged with identifying gaps and improvements to drive meaningful local interventions, and we remain committed to person-centered approaches," he said. "We accomplish all of this through honest dialogue about our respective agency roles and always honoring the life of each person, and respecting surviving loved ones."

"This initiative demonstrates our county's proactive approach to confronting one of the most urgent public health challenges of our time," added County Executive Kevin Byrne. "We are proud to support this collaborative work, which is rooted in data, compassion, and a shared commitment to saving lives and strengthening our communities."

The BR:DGE Alliance was launched in March 2023 to create a sustainable and equitable community of providers and residents to expand person-centered services, enhance awareness, and promote health and safety for people who use drugs. It encourages anyone struggling or who loves someone struggling with mental health or substance use challenges to reach out for help.

Resources for Putnam residents can be found at putnamcounty.com/thebridge.

Preventing Overdose Deaths in Putnam Specialized Multi-Sector Team Created

Putnam County has taken another step in its ongoing efforts to address the opioid crisis, with the establishment of a Suicide & Overdose Fatality Review Team. The newly formed, multi-disciplinary group is designed to conduct in-depth reviews of select local deaths in an effort to better understand and prevent future tragedies.

Earlier this month, the SOFR Team held a preparatory drill using a fictional case to simulate the overdose fatality review process. The exercise allowed team members to assess their readiness and engage in the type of careful, collaborative analysis required to address the many complex factors that can contribute to preventable deaths.

Team leadership includes Director of Mental Health Paul Tang, Dual Recovery Coordinator Lauren

Johnson, Director of the Child Advocacy Center Marla Behler, the county's entire Department of Mental Health, and Megan Castellano of Guardian Homefront.

"While fewer lives are being lost to overdose, that may not necessarily mean fewer people are at risk," said Shanna Siegel, RN, education supervisor at the health department and co-coordinator of the SOFR Team. "The rate of opioid

overdose deaths in Putnam varies year to year. We are also monitoring non-fatal overdoses, which increase a person's likelihood of experiencing a fatal overdose. This known risk was a catalyst for our creation of the SOFR team."

Johnson emphasized the im-

"While fewer lives are being lost to overdose, that may not necessarily mean fewer people are at risk." Shanna Siegel, co-coordinator of the SOFR Team

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SOFR Team Member Agencies

Mental Health Department*

Emergency Services

Public Health Department*

Coroner's Office+

Harm Reduction Agency

Hospital

Probation

Law Enforcement Agencies

NY/NJ HIDTA

Community-Based Organizations*

** Team Leadership*

+ Transformative Partnership



Why We *Actually* Needed a Mock OFR

Public health rarely gets an opportunity to repair the roof when the sun is shining.

The exercise transformed an abstract outline into a tangible process.

Our synergy is our strength. Champions are all around us.

Planning Team Feedback



“Members of Putnam County's Bridge Alliance are still talking about the meaningful impact of the OFR TTX and the expertise of those involved. Through the collaboration with ORS, we now are confident that our team leadership as well as our broader community are prepared for launch. Lisa and Jim empowered Putnam to individuate the scenario to truly reflect local elements, and their guidance enabled us to construct and formalize this new-to-us process. Our partners are eager to participate in our first official fatality review, slated for Fall 2025.”

Oswego County Mock OFR

Lessons Learned

Planning Group

- Drug Intelligence Officer HIDTA
- Director of Public Health
- Associate Public Health Educator
- Public Health Educator
- Epidemiologist

Public Health and Safety Team

- Established April 2023
- 28 agencies, county departments

Overdose Fatality Review Team

- 13 permanent members

Barriers

- Legal
- Novel approach

Outcomes

- New connections
- Buy-in
- New data source



Questions?