Effects of Opioids on Communities and What Can Be Done
Grades 7 - 8
3 Class Periods

Program Segment(s)
- Addiction Affects Everyone (approximately 7 minutes)
- OPTIONAL – The Demand for Opioids (approximately 15 minutes) - play end of chapter for alternative pain treatments

Objectives
Students will be able to:
- Understand the dangers of opioids in communities.
- Understand that in some communities opioids have led to increased crime/danger, including domestic abuse, homicide, and suicide.
- Recognize the effects of opioids on families including children.
- Understand some alternative ways in which the opioid crisis could be controlled.
- Use critical thinking to find ways to help minimize the negative effect that the opioid epidemic has caused in communities.

Instructional Resources
- Understanding the Opioid Epidemic
- Poster Board (Large)
- Markers
- Pen/Pencil
- Community Action Plan Template (optional – this gives students items to think about to develop an action plan)

Procedures
CLASS PERIOD 1
1. Prior to viewing the Understanding the Opioid Epidemic segments, the teacher will ask these Focus Questions:
   - What are some of the problems that could affect a community that has been hit by the opioid epidemic?
   - What are the ways in which we can help minimize the negative effect that the opioid epidemic has caused in communities?
2. Students will watch Understanding the Opioid Epidemic segments and take notes.
3. After watching the video segments, the teacher will ask the same Focus Questions:
• What are some of the problems that could affect a community that has been hit by the opioid epidemic?
• What are the ways in which we can help minimize the negative effect that the opioid epidemic has caused in communities?

4. The teacher should be sure that some of the topics discussed are alternative treatment therapies, doctor education programs to make physicians aware of options other than opioid prescriptions, and increase government funds for treatment facilities. Students are free to brainstorm their own community solutions as well.

5. Students will be split into groups of 4 – 5 and be given the following task:

   You are volunteering as a social worker at an outreach center in a community that has been saturated by the use of opioids. You are given the task of presenting an action plan on how the community could go about eliminating/minimizing the opioid problem.

   You will create your action plan using the poster board and markers provided and present the action plan to the outreach center (your classmates and teacher).

   CLASS PERIOD 2

6. Students will be given the class period to work in small groups to create their action plan to present to the outreach center (classmates and teacher).

7. The Community Action Plan Template can be shared and the teacher will visit the groups giving advice as they create their action plans.

   CLASS PERIOD 3

8. Students will present their action plans to classmates and teachers as if they were the outreach center.

9. Teacher and students will watch the presentations and ask questions, as if they were outreach center and community representatives, as the presentations are taking place.

Assessment Task
Students will be assessed on their presentation and poster board action plan describing how it will help minimize the negative effect that the opioid epidemic has caused in communities.

Adaptations (Grades 9 – 12)
• Students could research their own communities looking for data about opioid prescription painkillers and the effect on their community. (Teachers should direct students to their state’s health department webpages to start their research. Here’s the New York State page as an example: https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/opioid/). The local data should be incorporated into their action plans and presentations.
• Students will write a letter to an influential member in their community (mayor, council member, or legislator). The letter should include detailed questions about the level of opioid use in their community and questions about how they are dealing with the opioid crisis. The letter should conclude by asking if there is any way in which the student can offer help to the community concerning the opioid epidemic.

**National Health Standards**

• Standard 1 – Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health.
• Standard 2 – Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.
• Standard 4 – Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
• Standard 5 – Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.
• Standard 6 – Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-settings skills to enhance health.
• Standard 8 – Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health.