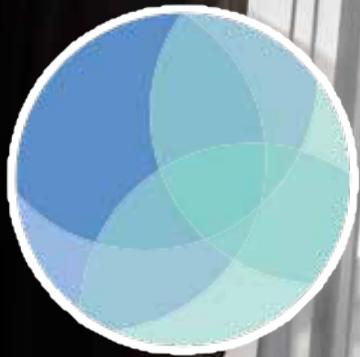


The Opioid Epidemic



**Mental Health
Recovery Board**
Serving Warren & Clinton Counties



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Signs of Opioid Use Disorder

Over the years, researchers looking into substance use have developed guidelines for doctors to watch for when they suspect a problem. Here are some of the things your doctor may consider in diagnosing opioid use disorder:

- Using more of an opioid or using it longer than intended
- Inability to control or cut down on use
- Spending lots of time finding drugs or recovering from use
- Having a strong desire or urge to use
- Use of opioids despite legal or social problems
- Stopping or cutting down on important activities
- Use while doing something dangerous, like driving
- Use despite physical or mental health problems
- Having withdrawal symptoms when trying to stop

Source: webmd.com



What **opioids** are **and why they're so dangerous**



Chances are you or someone you care for has used an opiate at some point in their lives. If you had surgery, for example, or if you had some other kind of acute pain that is short-lived, your doctor may have prescribed it to help you control the pain.

But when used in any other way, opiates can be dangerous and even deadly.

So what are they and why can they be so dangerous?

According to the Mayo Clinic, opioids are a class of drugs meant to relieve pain. They are made from the poppy plant or created in a lab. When used by physicians, they help to muffle how you feel pain and boost a sense of pleasure.

But they become dangerous when misused. People who misuse and overdose on opioids can experience slower breathing and heart rate – even death. Addiction can happen when the pleasurable feelings of opioids leaves a person wanting more

and more of it.

What can reduce the chances of addiction?

First, if you're prescribed an opioid for pain, follow your doctor's orders very carefully. Take the medication exactly the way they tell you, and ensure that your doctor is aware of all of the other medicines you take.

If you have any opioid medications around your home, dispose of them properly to keep them from getting into the wrong hands. Many local police departments have drop boxes for this purpose. You can also find a location to drop off your old medications during two annual Drug Take Back Days in April and October. Find the nearest one to you at takebackday.dea.gov.

With proper use and education, opioids can be helpful. But be careful. Always talk with your doctor about proper use.

*With information from the Mayo Clinic website, mayoclinic.org.

Preventing Opioid Use Disorder



There are a variety of ways to help reduce exposure to opioids and prevent opioid use disorder, such as:

- Prescription drug monitoring programs
- State prescription drug laws
- Formulary management strategies in insurance programs, such as prior authorization, quantity limits, and drug utilization review
- Academic detailing to educate providers about opioid prescribing guidelines and facilitating conversations with patients about the risks and benefits of pain treatment options
- Quality improvement programs in health care systems to increase implementation of recommended prescribing practices
- Patient education on the safe storage and disposal of prescription opioids
- Improve awareness and share resources about the risks of prescription opioids, and the cost of overdose on patients and families.

Source: CDC.gov



Addiction's effects go well beyond the person with the addiction

John Cummings,

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Mental Health Recovery Board Serving Warren & Clinton Counties

You've probably seen them – those “before and after” mugshots of people arrested on drug charges. One shows how they looked at an early offense, the other shows how they looked months or years later at the time of another offense.

The change is often striking. Missing teeth, drawn faces, pale skin tone. It certainly looks like life hasn't been kind to them.

But that's not the only way that addiction affects people. It goes even further, drawing in the loved ones, the coworkers, the neighbors and friends of a person living with a drug addiction. Let's take a look at a few:

Loved ones. Some say addiction is a “family disease”, and they're not far off. If the person addicted is a parent, their child may not have basic needs met like food or shelter. Nurturing needs aren't met, leading a child to potential bouts of rage, or even withdrawal from favorite fun activities.

Spouses and partners, too, may try to help cover up a problem, and family finances can suffer because money once used to pay bills is now directed toward feeding the addiction. Many homes have been lost for this very reason.

Coworkers. It's no secret that a person with an addiction may find ways to function at work. But the effects aren't far behind – things like absenteeism, increased healthcare costs, and lost productivity. When the person with the addiction misses work, someone has to take up the slack – especially when projects are coming due.

Neighbors and friends. Friends may find themselves trying to help the person who's living with an addiction. Bringing food or offering to come clean or mow the lawn are just a few things that friends may offer to help. But having to do those things many times over can strain friendships. Sometimes, they even get broken and tattered.

So what can you do? Step in. It's hard to give tough love sometimes, but in the case of the person who is addicted, it could be the difference between life and death.

Don't enable them. Don't provide resources that can keep the addiction going. Find support from your local board to see what agencies in your area offer services to combat addiction. Talk to other family members and friends for help and advice.

And one more thing – be supportive of intervention and treatment. Let your loved one with an addiction know that you care and care deeply what happens to them. Let them know you are supporting them by urging them to seek treatment and help.

None of us gets through life doing everything alone. Friends, coworkers and family are all in our lives for a reason. Let's help each other to keep making our lives the best they can be and make living on this planet more enjoyable.

Sources:

1. <https://discoveryplace.info/addiction-blog/opioid/5-tips-for-family-and-friends-of-an-opiate-addict/>
2. <https://www.addictioncenter.com/addiction/workplace/>
3. <https://www.drugaddictiontreatment.com/addiction-in-the-news/addiction-news/how-does-addiction-affect-the-family/>

Addicted seniors a serious problem:

Opioid use among the older population



The public is quickly learning that drug abuse goes beyond the illegal substances that are purchased on the street. Abuse of drugs extends to the prescription medications sitting in many medicine cabinets.

While teenagers and young adults may be the first to be stereotyped as prescription drug abusers, seniors may have unwittingly become mixed up in one of the most misused prescription classes: opioid pain relievers.

The problem of opioid abuse has been a growing issue for years. The National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates 2.1 million people in the United States suffer from substance abuse of opioid pain relievers. Older patients are increasingly and repeatedly prescribed opioids to address chronic pain from arthritis, cancer and other problems that become more apparent as people age.

Data from U.S. Medicare recipients found that, in 2011, roughly 15 percent of seniors were prescribed an opioid after being discharged from the hospital. When followed up on

three months later, 42 percent were still taking the medication. Fast forward to 2015, and almost one-third of all Medicare patients were prescribed opioid painkillers by their physicians, says AARP. The Canadian Institute for Health Information says adults between the ages of 45 and 64 and seniors age 65 and older had the highest rates of hospitalizations due to opioid poisoning over the past 10 years.

AARP also indicates nearly three million Americans age 50 or older have started to take painkillers for reasons beyond what their doctors prescribed. Experts from the Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing warn that dependence on opioids can set in after just a few days. Discomfort and side effects can occur when the pills are stopped. Opioids can decrease pain at first, but many people find they can be less effective over time. As a result, patients need to take greater amounts. Although many people can take opioids in small doses for short periods of time without problems, many

find themselves overcome by a troubling addiction. Some doctors prefer not to use opioids as a first line of treatment for chronic pain.

Another possible risk of opioids among seniors is that the medication can cause disorientation that may lead to falls and fractures. The senior care resource A Place for Mom also says that prescription narcotics may increase risk of respiratory arrest. What's more, an older body may not absorb and filter medicines as effectively as younger bodies can. This means that older adults might become addicted to or have side effects from a prescription drug at a lower dose.

Seniors concerned about opioids can discuss other options with their doctors, such as nonopioid medications and alternative therapies for pain management, like massage or acupuncture. If opioids are prescribed, ask for the lowest dose and don't exceed the time frame for taking the medicine. Only take the pills when absolutely necessary, and never mix opioids with alcohol or other substances.



Where to find help for addiction

MHRBWCC partner provider agencies in Clinton County



**602 S. South St.
Wilmington, OH 45177
(937) 414-2016**

Open Access Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays
starting at 1PM and Fridays starting at 9AM
Office Hours: 8:30AM - 5 PM, Mon - Fri
talberthouse.org

**953 S. South St.
Wilmington, OH 45177
(937) 383-4441**

Open Access Hours: Monday - Thursday 1 - 4PM
Office Hours: 9 AM - 5 PM, Mon - Fri
solutionsccrc.org



SOLUTIONS
Community Counseling and Recovery Centers

Helping hope take root.



For the person seeking help for mental health or addiction issues, hope is everything.

It means a path forward. It means a future with the things in life that matter - family, friends, maybe even work or school.

Our purpose at Mental Health Recovery Services of Warren & Clinton Counties is to help create the space for hope to grow. Our job is to plan, fund and monitor services and programs that prevent mental health or addiction issues from taking hold, and if they do, to help residents take steps toward recovery and build the life they want to live.

We do that through a system of partners - agencies, coalitions and other groups - where hope is planted and nurtured.

Learn more about us at mhrbwcc.org.

Crisis Hotline: (877) 695-NEED (6333)

Crisis Text Line: text '4hope' to 741741

mhrsonline.org

(513) 695-1695



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