



RESEARCH BRIEF

EVALUATING STOP TO LIVE

PREVENTING OPIOID MISUSE AMONG CHILDREN AND TEENS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

OBJECTIVES

- *STOP to Live will increase students' knowledge in wellness & medication awareness, making good choices, reading a prescription drug label, and understanding uniqueness of medications.*
- *Youth will display skills to avoid harmful use of medications.*

OSU's Role in Evaluating Stop to Live

We are evaluating Stop to Live, a developmentally appropriate prescription drug use and misuse curriculum designed specifically for students with special needs to learn not to share their prescription medications or use medications prescribed to someone else.

The Stop to Live curriculum is embedded in a program model that makes use of simulation (role-play), repetition and reinforcement at LifeTown Columbus (lifetowncolumbus.org). Throughout the 2018–19 academic year, students and staff at The Ohio State University will participate as “nurses” that administer pre- and post- tests to students when they visit the medical office. The curriculum is delivered by trained LifeTown volunteers. We will assess whether students receiving the curriculum increased their knowledge about how to treat prescription medication or increased their use of skills to refuse the use of inappropriate prescription medication. Yes/no measures allow participation by as many students as possible, including those with limited mobility or verbal abilities. The evaluation will provide meaningful information regarding future program success and offer suggestions on how to improve delivery to achieve sustained knowledge and skills gained for this vulnerable population.

Youth with Developmental Disabilities and Opioids

While the opioid epidemic impacts youth of all backgrounds, studies report that youth with disabilities have higher rates of substance use, including illicit drug use, than youth without disabilities.¹ Three of four people who use heroin reported first misusing prescription opiates.² Since the Ohio Department of Education mandates schools provide prescription drug abuse education to combat the opioid epidemic, this study is pivotal in ensuring that children with different abilities—an understudied population in regard to substance misuse—have access to quality and effective education on substance use that meets their diverse needs.



Photo courtesy of LifeTown Columbus

References

¹ Washington State Department of Health. (2009). Youth with Disabilities: Risk Factors for Substance Use.; ² Cicero, T. J., Ellis, M. S., Surratt, H. L., & Kurtz, S. P. (2014). The Changing Face of Heroin Use in the United States: A Retrospective Analysis of the Past 50 Years. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 821-826.

ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

Bridget Freisthler, Christy Kranich, and Ian Murphy will conduct the evaluation of the Stop to Live program. **Dr. Freisthler** is a leader in understanding the role of substance use among child welfare populations and is currently co-PI of two Ohio-based projects addressing the opioid epidemic. **Christy Kranich, MSW, LSW** brings experience in project and data management with broad interests in child welfare. **Ian Murphy, MPH**, specializes in community health research and has experience on projects related to child development.

Contact information: lifetowneval@osu.edu

CONTACT US

The Ohio State University
College of Social Work
Stillman Hall, 1947 College Rd.
Columbus, OH 43210-1162
csw.osu.edu/research
Phone: 614-292-9229