

OPTIONS

SAVE LIVES

OPTIONS Liaisons: Video watch guide

Given the numbers of accidental overdoses and deaths across Maine, there is an urgent need to bring people together to talk about what we can do to save lives. The more we all know about the evidence-based strategies that work, the more effective we are at reaching and supporting people.

Substance use disorder (SUD) is a chronic health condition that changes the body, brain and behavior. It can happen to anyone. As SUD progresses, it becomes very difficult to stop using drugs, despite the negative consequences. Regardless of the personal impact on our lives, when we better understand SUD, we can better respond with empathy and compassion. We can reduce the stigma that makes it harder for people to seek and accept support.

Having social support and connection means a person is more likely to take steps to stay safe and to seek and maintain recovery. As a friend, family member or ally, you can play an important role in supporting your loved one to stay safe and healthy.

This watch guide was created to spark important conversations about SUD and how we can all be involved in solutions in Maine. After watching OPTIONS Liaison videos, we hope you:

- Hold **HOPE** that people struggling with SUD can make positive change
- **UNDERSTAND** that SUD is a treatable health condition, and recovery is possible
- Are **INSPIRED** to support the people in your life who use drugs to stay safe, get well and stay well
- **TRUST** the services the OPTIONS Liaisons offer, and know how to reach your local Liaison
- **KNOW** that if you are struggling with substances or love someone that is, you are not alone. Support is available from people who care

View all videos at [KnowYourOptions.ME/liaison-videos](https://www.knowyouroptions.me/liaison-videos)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

TOPIC #1: LIAISONS

Every county in Maine has at least one local Liaison that is a licensed behavioral health professional. Anyone can refer themselves or a loved one to their local Liaison. This support is free of charge. Liaisons often work alongside first responders like EMS and law enforcement to follow up with individuals who have experienced an overdose or are at risk of overdose. Liaisons can:

- Link a person to available harm reduction, treatment and recovery services.
- Connect people to essential resources like food, clothing, shelter and healthcare.
- Encourage harm reduction strategies like having naloxone on hand, never using alone, using sterile supplies.
- Educate communities about topics like stigma reduction, naloxone and overdose response, and Maine's Good Samaritan Law.



Any conversations we have are in confidence. Because of my licensing, I'm a certified alcohol and drug counselor, I am required to protect your confidentiality and discussions we have.

*Glenn Gordon,
BA, CADIC, Oxford
County Liaison*

DISCUSS

Who is your local Liaison (or Liaisons) in your community?

What new information did you learn about the Liaisons' services after watching the video?

In what cases is your OPTIONS Liaison(s) most helpful to people in your community? What types of barriers do people face when they need support for SUD?

What other resources are available in your community to help someone experiencing SUD?

TOPIC #2: STIGMA

Stigma comes in many forms and is a powerful influence on people living with SUD. Stigma makes it hard to accept or offer support.

DISCUSS

What are some ways you have seen stigma play out in your community or network?

How has stigma shaped your attitude or beliefs towards substance use? What are some ways to reduce the negative impact of stigma?

Can you remember a specific experience that changed your attitudes or beliefs in a positive way?

What are some of the ways we can work together to reduce stigma in our communities?

TOPIC #3: MEDICATION STIGMA

There are several FDA-approved medications to treat opioid use disorder (MOUD). The most common medications are buprenorphine and methadone. Often used in combination with counseling, MOUD is considered a gold standard of care, and may be used short- or long-term, depending on the person. Some people take medication for opioid use disorder for their lifetime, just as they would take medicine for other chronic illnesses.

DISCUSS

Why is there stigma around this type of treatment and recovery? Does stigma exist in our community around MOUD?

Has the stigma around MOUD changed at all recently in our community? Why or why not?

Why is MOUD an important option to help people get well and stay well?

TOPIC #4: HARM REDUCTION

Harm reduction is an approach that accepts that people will use substances, and strives to keep people safe and alive while they use. Some common harm reduction strategies are:

- Never drive while under the influence of any drug.
- Use in the presence of a trusted person or use a service that will call emergency medical assistance in case of an overdose.
- Only use sterile equipment.
- Checking drugs with fentanyl and/or xylazine test strips.
- Always have naloxone on hand and know how to use it, especially if you think someone is experiencing an overdose.

DISCUSS

How are people in your community supportive or unsupportive of efforts to reduce harm around substance use?

What misconceptions do people have about harm reduction? What do we know about its effectiveness? Where do misconceptions come from?

What resources exist in your community to help people who use drugs to stay safe?

What can we do in our community to reduce stigma or judgment on harm reduction practices?

To learn more about harm reduction, visit [KnowYourOptions.ME /safer-drug-practices/](https://www.knowyouroptionsme.org/safer-drug-practices/).

If you or someone you know may use drugs alone, you can call the Massachusetts Overdose Prevention Helpline at (800)972-0590. This service also covers Maine, and it is a free, trusted and anonymous option that uses volunteers who stay on the line with you and call emergency services if needed. For more information visit www.massoverdosehelpline.org.

TOPIC #5: OVERDOSE RESPONSE

Every second counts when someone is experiencing an overdose. It is important to recognize the signs and respond immediately. Call 9-1-1 and give naloxone if you think someone is overdosing.

DISCUSS

What are the signs of an overdose?

Where can you get naloxone in your community?

What form of naloxone is more commonly used in your community? Nasal or intramuscular (IM)?

How do you use naloxone?

How does the presence of xylazine impact an opioid emergency?

For more information on naloxone, visit [KnowYourOptions.ME/get-naloxone/](https://www.knowyouroptionsme.org/get-naloxone/). To learn how to recognize and respond to an overdose, visit [KnowYourOptions.ME/respond-to-overdose/](https://www.knowyouroptionsme.org/respond-to-overdose/).

**Have a suggested question to add to this watch guide?
Let us know at knowyouroptionsme@gmail.com**

Visit [KnowYourOptions.ME](https://www.knowyouroptionsme.org) for more information, resources, and educational materials.



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