

THE INITIATIVE

Addressing Substance Use in Dare County



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Voices in Recovery

Facebook and news reports are full of the horrors of addiction. Addiction is despicable. A fact that is indisputable. It is not difficult to find an in-depth story chronicling the fall of an individual into the darkness that arises from substance dependence. The lying, the stealing, the manipulating, the overdosing, the dying. It is tragic. It is heartbreaking for the people who love the person. Make no mistake...despite it all...addicts are loved. They are loved by their partners, their children, their mothers, their grandparents, their co-workers, their friends; the list goes on and on.

Individuals with substance use disorders are in a fight for their life. They are fighting despite their own best resource--their brain--being impaired and unable to properly self-evaluate or process complex situations. Their brains are busy creating an unstable desire for the substance, a desire very similar to what individuals who are not dependent feel when they experience extreme hunger. Despite all that is against them, the truth is that most individuals don't die. Most individuals find a path to recovery.

The old adage does ring true. Most people do not change because they see the light, they change because they feel the fire. But once they feel the fire, how do they make the move toward recovery? For many, it would be like trying to build a house in the middle of a hurricane. Like most other significant chronic illnesses, they need treatment, support and compassion. Individuals do not get better because they gain insight that they are hopeless, a degenerate, a loser, a criminal. They begin the process of recovery when they find a ray of hope... when they start believing that the negative descriptions are not the truth of them . Rather, they are smart, strong, capable...and in spite of all else, loved.

Continued Inside

SAVING LIVES TASK FORCE

The Initiative is a quarterly newsletter presented by the Saving Lives Task Force, the goal of this publication is to educate, inform and engage residents of Dare County.

- **Our Task Force is**
a team of professionals and community members working toward the prevention of substance use disorders and the availability of effective treatment for all Dare county citizens in need of help.
- **Join us for our Virtual Meetings**
on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at 3:00 pm.
- **For More Information**
please contact Roxana Ballinger, Saving Lives Task Force Co-Chair, at 252.475.5619 or roxana.ballinger@darenc.com.

savinglivesobx.com
facebook.com/savinglivesobx

S M T W T F S

VIRTUAL HELP & MEETINGS

Ongoing Events

- Alcoholics Anonymous | Meetings 7 days a week | Visit the website AAOBX.com for current virtual meeting schedule**

Outer Banks AA Hotline: 252.256.0850
www.aaobx.com

- SMART Recovery Meeting | Virtual Meeting Sun 7:15 pm - 8:15 pm**

The SMART Recovery Meeting has been moved online and can be accessed by this link: <https://www.smartrecoverytest.org/local/meeting/kill-devil-hills-north-carolina-sunday-715-pm-to-815-pm/>

- Recovery Learning Circle | Mon & Thurs 2:00 pm | Tues & Fri 11:00 am**

Are you struggling with stress, isolation, depression, anxiety or just worried? Join the Recovery Learning Circle (virtually) sponsored by Dare County Department of Health & Human Services. For more information: Dave Edmonds 252.305.4056 | david.edmonds@darenc.com

- Women of Worth | Groups are being held virtually on Tues & Thurs from 11:00am-12:00pm**

The groups will focus on recovery from the evidence based curriculum, "Helping Women Recover". For more information: Catisha Bryant | catisha.bryant@darenc.com

- COVID-19 Emotional Support Line | Open Tues & Thurs 9:00 am - 3:00 pm | Call 252.473.8216**

Feeling anxious or down about the COVID-19 pandemic? Want to share your concerns? Talk to a counselor at the Dare County Department of Health & Human Services. While not a crisis line, this service offers support to those who need a listening ear and/or who need to access necessary resources.

- Breaking Through Task Force | 2nd Tues of the month | 8:30 am**

The Breaking Through Task Force is composed of community members who wish to address communication and stigma concerns about mental health conditions and substance use disorders. For more information: Rebecca rebecca.woods@darenc.com | www.BreaktheStigmaOBX.com.

- Dare Community Collaborative | 2nd Tues of the Month | 1:30 - 2:30 pm**

The Dare Collaborative is a partnership among providers and families of youth and adults with mental health or substance use issues. Together, they identify services, support needs and try to find ways to meet those needs. For more information: Keith Letchworth | keith.letchworth@trilliumnc.org.

- Most Therapists / Counselors in Dare are also seeing clients via Telehealth, call the specific therapist for details. www.darenc.com/telehealth**

- For additional resources related to COVID-19 in Dare County, please visit www.darenc.com/covidresources**

Partner Spotlight: Port Health

PORT Health, a nonprofit organization, is the largest provider of behavioral health services in Dare County. The primary office is located at 2808 S. Croatan Hwy in Nags Head and we have an additional office located in the Hatteras Medical Building on Hatteras Island. We serve a wide variety of individuals, ages six and up. PORT takes most major medical insurances in addition to Medicaid and Medicare. PORT is also approved to utilize the North Carolina State funds for individuals who are low-income and uninsured. Individuals who are eligible for state funding pay a small co-pay based on income. In addition, we are supported by grant funding from Dare County and generous donations of supportive citizens and organizations. We provide individual and group therapy as well as evaluation for medication management and ongoing prescribing services. Specialty services include Substance Abuse Intensive OutPatient program, Suboxone Treatment Services, and School-Based Mental Health Services. PORT Health does not provide DWI evaluation and treatment to meet the NC court requirements. In addition, our providers do not exclusively treat adult ADHD. Currently, services are being provided virtually while protocols are being developed to offer the option of in-person treatment.

Individuals interested in services should contact our office by calling 252-441-2324. Upon completing the intake paperwork, they will be scheduled with a licensed professional to discuss their specific needs and goals. A treatment plan will be developed according to each individual's needs.

PORT Health strives to provide services in a manner consistent with the "Three Pillars" that support our mission and values: Professionalism, Compassion, and Outcomes. The Three Pillars represent PORT Health's guiding principles and uphold the lofty ideals of our agency. Together with our mission and values, they form a sound and solid structure for the effective delivery of services.

Our Mission is to improve the lives, health and well-being of individuals and families dealing with substance use and mental health disorders by providing a comprehensive range of services that treat the whole person and empower patients to find their way forward.

For further information please contact Michelle Hawbaker, MA LCMHC, LCAS, CCS Dare County Supervisor at 252-441-2324

Voices in Recovery Continued from Cover

What you read below is what individuals in recovery want you to know about substance use and how to support them in recovery.

"I just want everyone to know that I need you to be supportive in all steps of recovery and not push me away or push yourself away."

"I want everyone to know to show patience. Life is chaotic and stressful and when you are trying to get clean, you need your family and friends to be understanding and have patience with you."

"I just want everyone to know that addiction encompasses your entire life. It becomes your life, not just a hobby, but your actual life"

"I want everyone to know it is not a choice. You can't just stop it or put it down. I don't want them to get mad or frustrated with me. And to know I am trying."

"I want everyone to know to just be there, no criticism-just be there."

"I just want to have understanding and not have everyone be so judgmental."

"I want everyone to know that I don't want you to turn your back on me. I need you to be there for me."

"I want everyone to know that past behavior does not define me. What I did 10 years ago does not represent who I am today. I am able to grow and change."

And from another local young woman, who certainly could have been the subject of one of the news stories sharing in explicit detail just how dark dependence can be:

"Addiction is not a choice. It comes through trauma and not knowing how to cope with those events. I am an "all around addict." What led me into recovery was ultimately seeing the damage it was doing not only to myself but all my loved ones as well. Losing people we can never get back and realizing life is worth so much more. I've been sober for about eight months now and it is still an everyday process. Going through recovery has brought me so much insight and regaining of knowledge that was lost. I have the will power and want to be better myself and my future in any way possible now. I have started regaining my self-worth back and I am learning tools to maintain my sobriety and lifelong happiness. I hope someone going through active addiction can read this message and gain just a little bit of hope, just enough hope for them to realize there IS a way out and YOU CAN be happy again. Recovery IS an option for ANYONE!! YOU will gain hope and the will to want to live again. I believe we all have the inner strive to want to be better, no matter how far it has been buried. I think it's time we start digging."

December

- Raising Responsible Teenagers Virtual Workshop | December 1 | 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

Children and Youth Partnership is offering a Raising Responsible Teenagers Virtual seminar. This session will also be offered over ZOOM and introduces parents to the formula for promoting healthy family relationships. For more information, and to register: Children and Youth Partnership | 252.441.0614, ext. 2 | cypobx@darekids.org

- Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)**

Triple P is a program for parents of elementary and middle school children. Triple P Online is a 8 module, interactive positive parenting program you can work through at your own pace. It shares some great ideas about parenting and how to help children develop. For more information: northcarolina.tripleponline.net

Saving Lives Task Force

Advocacy: The Good Samaritan Law Related to Overdoses

Drug abuse leading to overdose can occur in a variety of locations and circumstances. The user may be alone at home, at work, in a public area or even in their car. However, it is not uncommon for users to use in groups. In those circumstances, if a user overdoses there is often a reluctance on the part of the others to call for help. They fear repercussions for possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia, for violating probation and other entanglements with the legal system. The chance of surviving an overdose depends on how fast one receives medical assistance. The most common reason people cite for not calling 911 is fear of police involvement.

In 2013, North Carolina passed the "911 Good Samaritan" laws to help protect overdose victims by ensuring those who assist them will not be prosecuted for drug crimes. The 911 Good Samaritan laws state that individuals who experience a drug overdose or persons who witness an overdose and seek help for the victim can no longer be prosecuted for possession of small amounts of drugs, paraphernalia, or underage drinking. The purpose of the law is to remove the fear of criminal repercussions for calling 911 to report an overdose, and to instead focus efforts on getting help to the victim. Also, a person who seeks medical assistance for someone experiencing a drug overdose cannot be considered in violation of a condition of parole, probation, or post-release. The victim is also protected from prosecution. The caller must provide his/her name to 911 or law enforcement to qualify for the immunity.

There are also protections for third parties who render aid by administering naloxone to overdose victims. The naloxone access portion of the Samaritan law removes civil liabilities from doctors who prescribe and bystanders who administer naloxone. Naloxone, frequently referred to by the brand name "Narcan," is an opiate antidote which reverses drug overdose from opiates, thereby saving the life of the victim. The legislation also allows community-based organizations to dispense naloxone under the guidance of a medical provider. Officers may encounter people who use opiates and their loved ones carrying overdose reversal kits that may include naloxone vials. Pharmacists are also immune from civil or criminal liability for dispensing naloxone to people at risk of an opioid overdose.

These laws help save lives, but only when they are widely known. For example, one study from Washington State found that 88% of people who use opioids, after learning about the law, said they would be more likely and less afraid to call 911 in the event of a future overdose. It is important to have good laws to protect victims of overdose, but it is equally important to ensure the community is aware of the law. That awareness is, unfortunately, still lacking. In a 2020 Maryland study that surveyed 300 people who inject drugs, only (18.8%) knew what the Good Samaritan law addressed. This lack of awareness of Good Samaritan laws is a barrier to preventing overdose deaths.

This copy of The Initiative Newsletter was sponsored by:



THE INITIATIVE Resources:



savinglivesobx.com

PORT/New Horizons
2808 S Croatan Hwy,
Nags Head, NC 27959
252.441.2324

Trillium Health Resources
www.trilliumncaccesspoint.org
877.685.2415 – 24 Hours a Day

Mobile Crisis Team
24 Hours a Day / 7 Days a Week
866.437.1821

2-1-1 Directory
www.nc211.org

Community Care Clinic of Dare
Syringe Services Program
M-Th | 9 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
252.261.3041

Contact your insurance company to find out more information on local providers and your plan's benefits.