

Overdose Prevention & Harm Minimisation Agenda

Learning Objectives, Agenda & Capability Framework Alignment

A 3 hour online course examining the causes of drug-related deaths, polydrug use risks, harm reduction for injecting users, naloxone administration, and working in partnership to reduce overdose risk

Trainer: Tony D'Agostino

Company: TD Consultancy

Delivery: Online — 3 hours

Edition: 2026

Aims & Objectives of the Course

- Have a basic understanding of the possible causes of drug-related deaths and current national statistics
- Understand the risks associated with drugs used in combination, including pregabalin, alcohol, methadone, heroin, benzodiazepines, crack cocaine and synthetic opioids (fentanyl, nitazenes)
- Increase knowledge of needle and syringe programmes and basic harm reduction for people who inject drugs
- Understand overdose prevention and how to recognise and respond to an overdose
- Have a clear understanding of how to administer naloxone in an emergency
- Increase knowledge of harm reduction approaches for crack and cocaine use
- Understand the importance of working in partnership and referring to specialist services

Session Agenda

Overdose Prevention & Harm Minimisation: Polydrug Risks, Naloxone & Harm Reduction

10:00am Start — Welcome & Course Overview

10:10am National picture — drug-related deaths, current statistics and trends

10:30am Polydrug use & risk — pregabalin, alcohol, methadone, heroin, benzodiazepines, crack cocaine

10:55am Synthetic opioids — fentanyl, nitazenes and the emerging overdose risk

11:15am Break (15 minutes)

11:30am Harm reduction for crack & heroin — practical approaches in line with NICE NG225

11:50am Overdose prevention & safer injecting — NSP, BBV and risk reduction

12:10pm Recognising & responding to overdose — signs, symptoms and emergency response

12:25pm Administering naloxone — demonstration and practice guidance

12:45pm Working in partnership — referral pathways and specialist services

1:00pm Close & Q&A

Capability Framework Alignment

This course aligns with the Capability Framework for the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce (NHS England/OHID, 2024), which underpins the 10-Year Strategic Plan for the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Workforce 2024–2034.

Capability Domain (NHS England / OHID, 2024)	Framework Section
Knowledge of the causes and risk factors associated with drug-related deaths in England and Wales, including the role of polydrug use, synthetic opioids (fentanyl, nitazenes) and individual vulnerability factors	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Application of Knowledge</i>
Knowledge of the harm associated with drugs used in combination, including opiates, pregabalin, benzodiazepines, alcohol, methadone and crack cocaine, and ability to explain these risks clearly to clients	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Application of Knowledge</i>
Ability to provide evidence-based harm reduction interventions for people who inject drugs, including NSP, BBV prevention and safer injecting guidance in line with NICE NG225 (2024)	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Harm Reduction, Treatment and Recovery</i>
Ability to provide evidence-based harm reduction advice for crack cocaine and stimulant users, including safer smoking and wound care guidance	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Harm Reduction, Treatment and Recovery</i>
Ability to recognise the signs and symptoms of overdose and respond appropriately, including the safe administration of naloxone in an emergency	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Harm Reduction, Treatment and Recovery</i>
Ability to distribute and train clients and carers in the use of take-home naloxone as part of a broader overdose prevention strategy	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Harm Reduction, Treatment and Recovery</i>
Ability to work in partnership with specialist services and apply clear referral pathways to support people at highest risk of drug-related death	<i>Drug and Alcohol Worker: Engagement, Assessment and Care Planning</i>
Recovery-oriented approach — supporting people who use drugs to reduce risk and build safety alongside recovery goals	<i>Underpinning Principle: All Roles</i>
Challenging stigma — recognising how stigma can be a barrier to people accessing overdose prevention and harm reduction services	<i>Underpinning Principle: All Roles</i>

Underpinning Principles Embedded in This Course

Trauma-informed care • Recovery-oriented approach • Evidence-based practice • Person-centred working • Forming a working alliance • Therapeutic optimism • Challenging stigma • Co-occurring needs and multidisciplinary working

Note: National Occupational Standards (DANOS/NOS) are retained within the National Occupational Standards library but are no longer the primary workforce development reference for the drug and alcohol treatment and recovery sector. This course uses the NHS England / OHID Capability Framework (2024) as its primary alignment standard.