

Beyond Reversal: Integrating Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD), Behavioral Health, and Gambling Treatment to Strengthen Long-Term Overdose Prevention and Recovery

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this presentation, participants will be able to:

- 1. Identify evidence-based overdose prevention strategies** including MOUD, naloxone distribution, behavioral health interventions, and overdose prevention strategies.
- 2. Explain the role of integrated behavioral health treatment** in reducing relapse risk and supporting long-term recovery stability for individuals with substance use disorders.
- 3. Recognize the relationship between gambling and substance use disorders**, including the impact behavioral addictions can have on relapse risk, treatment engagement, and overdose prevention.
- 4. Describe the importance of multidisciplinary treatment teams** in improving communication, identifying early warning signs, strengthening treatment retention, and supporting whole-person recovery within MOUD programs.
- 5. Apply practical, team-based interventions** that enhance engagement, recovery stability, and overdose prevention outcomes in clinical practice.

Kentucky Overdose Data

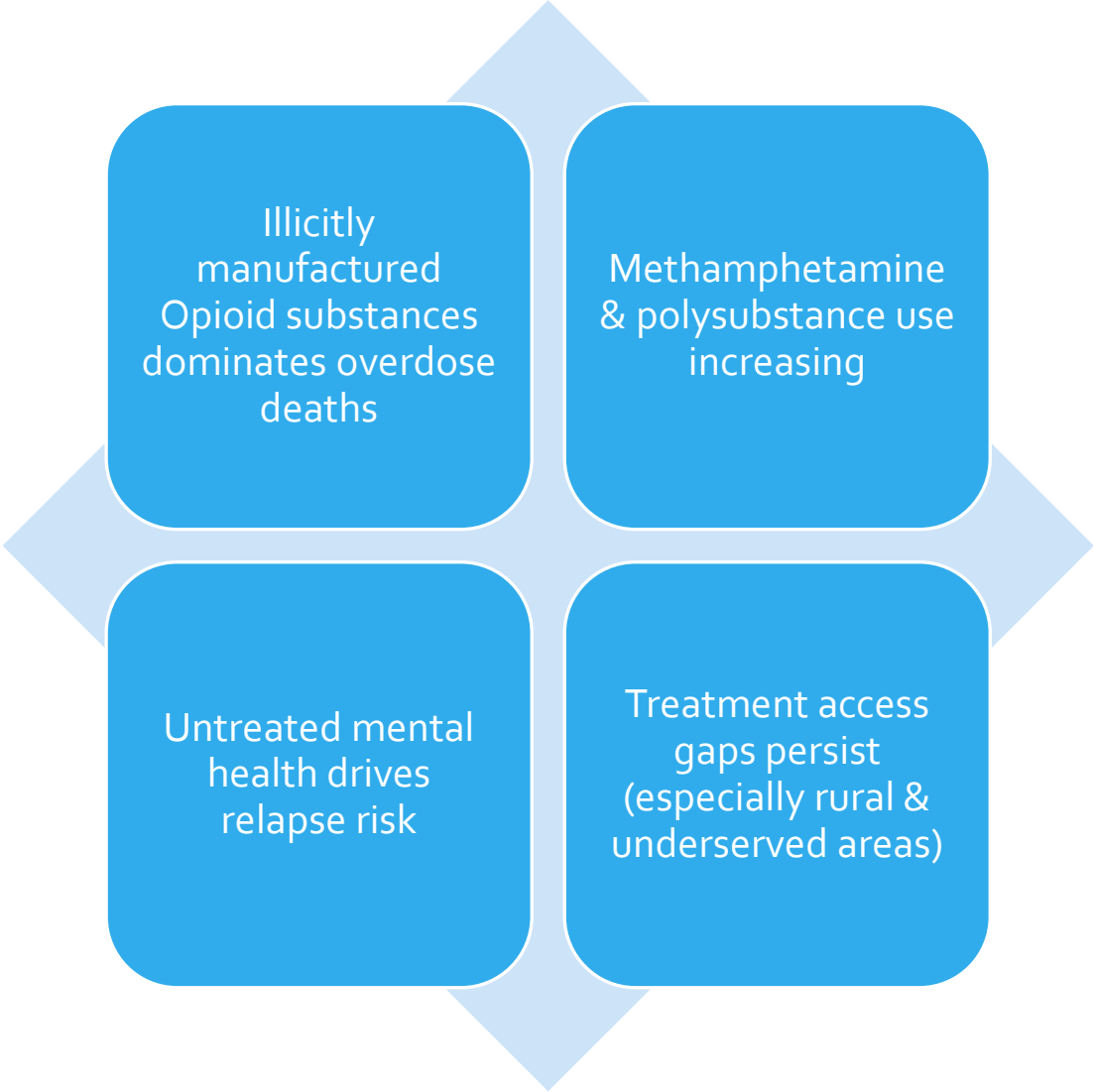
- In 2025, there were 1,110 overdose deaths. This is a decrease of 22.9% from 2024
- Methamphetamine was the most frequently identified substance in the toxicology results from 2025 overdose deaths, being found in 49.5% of total drug overdose deaths.
- Illicitly manufactured Opioid substances was present in 45.4% of overdose deaths

Poll Question:

“What do you think is the biggest driver of overdose right now?”

- Illicitly manufactured Opioid substances
- B. Mental health
- C. Polysubstance use
- D. Lack of treatment access





Illicitly
manufactured
Opioid substances
dominates overdose
deaths

Methamphetamine
& polysubstance use
increasing

Untreated mental
health drives
relapse risk

Treatment access
gaps persist
(especially rural &
underserved areas)

Reality:
It's All of
Them

What Prevents Overdose

MOUD (most effective intervention)

Naloxone access and training

Behavioral health treatment

Peer recovery support

Overdose Prevention strategies

Why MOUD Saves Lives

Reduces mortality risk by over 50%

Decreases cravings and withdrawal

Improves treatment retention

Reduces illicit opioid use

Overdose Prevention Strategies

- Naloxone distribution
- Safer use education
- Engagement without judgment

Naloxone Impact

Reverses overdose

Community
distribution works

Saves lives
immediately

Key tool in
overdose
prevention efforts

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graph TD; A[Reverses overdose] --- B[Community distribution works]; B --- C[Saves lives immediately]; C --- D[Key tool in overdose prevention efforts];
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The Critical Window

- Highest overdose risk after non-fatal overdose
- Increased risk after detox or incarceration
- Opportunity for immediate intervention



The NorthKey Model

We don't just treat substance use; we treat the
WHOLE person!

NorthKey MOUD Overview

- Buprenorphine → partial agonist, reduces cravings
- Naltrexone → antagonist, blocks opioid effects
- Injections- Sublocade (buprenorphine), Brixadi (buprenorphine), and Vivitrol (naltrexone)

- Case Management
- Therapy
- psychiatry Provider
- Peer Support
- Primary Care (Specialty APRNs)

Overdose Prevention in Practice



Naloxone
distribution

Education

Early relapse
detection

Behavioral
screening

What are Treatment Team Meetings?

A multidisciplinary group of professionals working collaboratively to support client care

Typically includes:

Medical providers (MOUD prescribers)

Therapists / counselors

Case managers

Peer support specialists

psychiatry Medical staff

Program leadership / supervisors

Meets regularly to review client progress, risks, and barriers

Shares information across roles to create a whole-person treatment approach

Focuses on coordinated, individualized care planning

Treatment Team Meetings matter!

Improves overdose prevention

- Identifies early warning signs (relapse risk, disengagement, stressors)

Supports treatment retention

- Clients are less likely to fall through gaps

Enhances communication across providers

- Reduces fragmented care

Addresses multiple needs at once

- Medical, mental health, social, and recovery supports

Strengthens problem-solving for high-risk clients

- Team brainstorming leads to more effective interventions

Provides accountability and consistency

- Ensures follow-through on care plans

Incorporates peer perspective

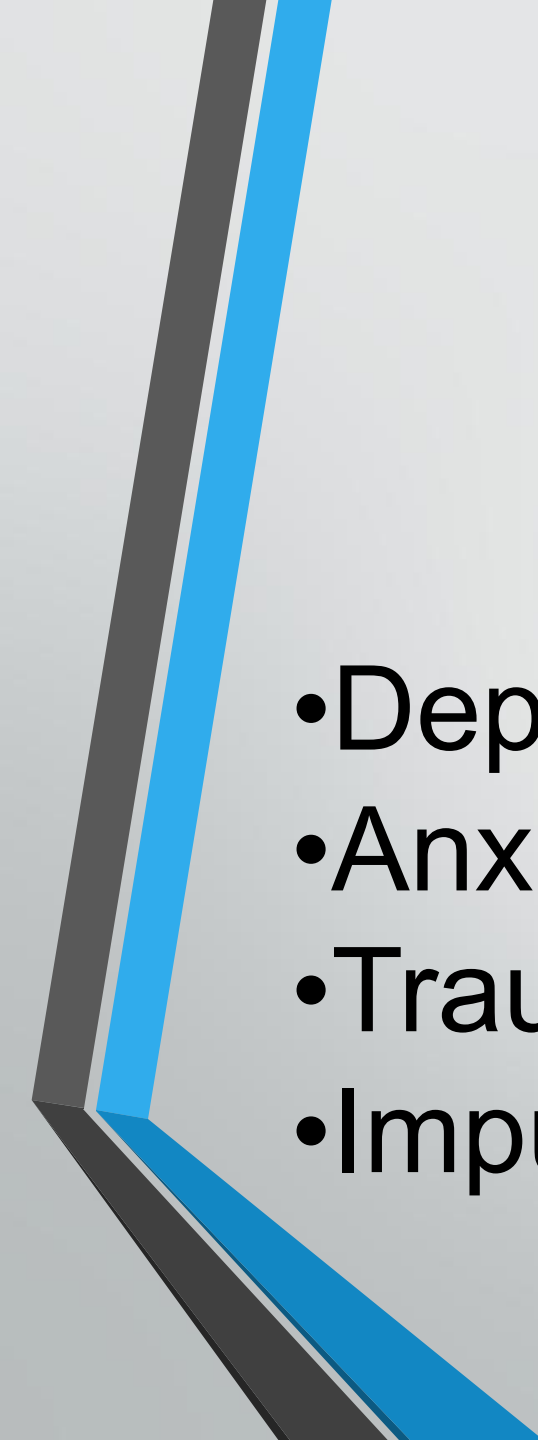
- Builds trust and engagement

Promotes whole-person recovery

- Not just medication, but long-term stability

A black and white photograph showing three hands of different sizes stacked together, palms up, in a gesture of support or care. The hands are positioned in the center-left of the frame. Overlaid on the right side of the image is the text "Client story" in a white, sans-serif font.

Client story



Behavioral Health Connection

- Depression → hopelessness, relapse risk
- Anxiety → self-medication
- Trauma → triggers and dysregulation
- Impulsivity → high-risk decision making

Gambling + Substance Use

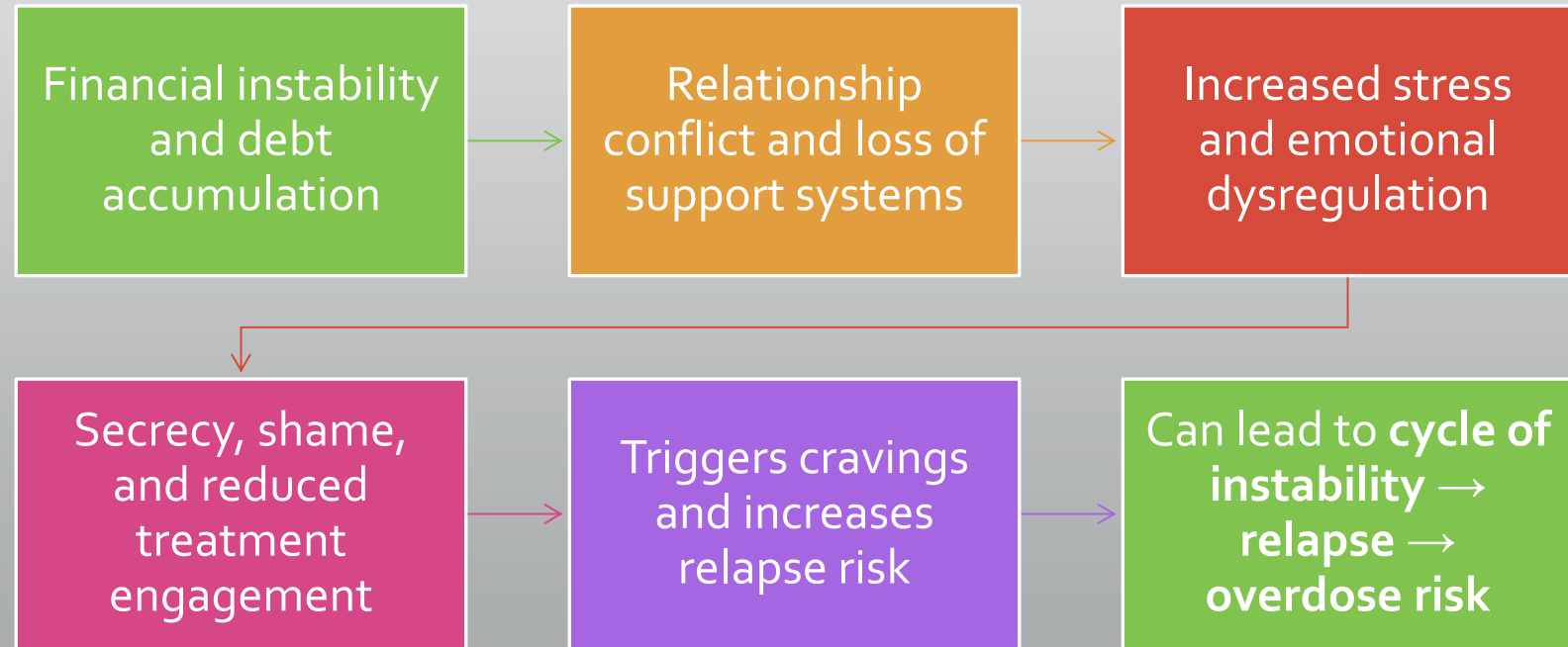
- Up to 50% of individuals with gambling disorder also have SUD
- 94% of people with Gambling problems will have at least 1 cooccurring mental health or addiction disorder
- Higher relapse rates when untreated
- Financial instability increases overdose risk

Brain Science: Addiction & Reward Pathways

- Both substances and gambling activate the **brain's reward system**
- Increased **dopamine release** reinforces behavior
- Repeated activation leads to **neuroadaptation** (brain changes over time)
- Decreased impulse control and decision-making ability
- Heightened sensitivity to **triggers and cues**



Real Impact on Recovery



Evidence-Based Therapies

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**
 - Identifies triggers and high-risk situations
 - Builds coping skills and relapse prevention strategies
- **Behavioral Change Interview**
 - Enhances readiness for change
 - Reduces resistance and increases engagement
- **Contingency Management (CM)**
 - Uses incentives to reinforce positive behaviors

What is Contingency Management

- Evidence-based behavioral intervention
 - Uses **positive reinforcement** to encourage progress
 - Rewards behaviors such as:
 - ✓ Treatment attendance
 - ✓ Medication adherence
 - Improves **engagement and retention in care**
- NorthKey Practice:**
- Weekly treatment team nominations
 - Staff identify clients showing progress
 - Clients receive **\$10 gift card incentive**
 - Reinforces even small steps toward recovery

Putting It All Together: Preventing Overdose Through Integrated Care

Overdose is
preventable

MOUD is the
**foundation of
effective
treatment**

Behavioral health
treatment
strengthens **long-
term recovery**

Gambling and
behavioral
addictions impact
recovery stability

Overdose
prevention
strategies **save
lives**

**Treatment teams
create
opportunities for
early intervention**

Recovery improves
when we **treat the
whole person, not
just substance use**

Wholistic Recovery
approach reduces
overdose risk!



What challenges are you seeing in overdose prevention?



Are you currently screening for behavioral addictions like gambling?



What strategies have been most effective in your setting?

Discussion
&
Questions?



Resources & Evidence-Based References

Treatment & MOUD

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) – TIP 63: Medications for Opioid Use Disorder

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – Overdose Prevention & Treatment Guidance

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) – Addiction Science & Behavioral Therapies

Behavioral Health & Treatment Approaches

JAMA Psychiatry – Research on MOUD & Contingency Management

American Psychiatric Association – Diagnostic criteria & behavioral health guidance

Gambling & Behavioral Addictions

National Council on Problem Gambling – Gambling disorder resources & data

National Center for Responsible Gaming – Research on gambling and brain function

State & Regional Data

Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy – Overdose Fatality Reports

Kentucky Department for Public Health – State overdose surveillance

“Overdose prevention is not just about saving lives in the moment; it’s about creating the conditions that make long-term recovery possible.”

