Overdose Data to Action Success Stories

Effective Drug Overdose Prevention Through Strategic Storytelling

Whether the goal is to increase awareness, demonstrate improved outcomes, or advocate for support, **storytelling can be a useful tactic** to connect with specific groups of people in the community about important issues.

As you progress through the reporting process, we encourage you to regularly update the portal with success stories from your program. By sharing your success stories, you'll not only strengthen relationships with key stakeholders but also contribute to a collective knowledge base, enhancing the overall impact of OD2A initiatives.

Why Share Success Stories?

- Strengthen relationships with leaders, officials, funders, and partners.
- Demonstrate improved outcomes and advocate for support.
- Provide a blueprint or proven path for achieving specific goals.

Tips for Crafting Engaging Success Stories

- Use concise, easy-to-read formats (1-2 pages or digital testimonials).
- Tailor the story to your intended audience (e.g., government official overseeing policy, community leader responsible for public engagement).
- Focus on stigma-free, inclusive, and person-first language.
- Include a clear call to action.
- Use impact driven content.
- Highlight key milestones, goals met, and measurable system change.
  For example, instead of including how many people were trained, how many reports were published, or how many educational materials were handed out, focus on communicating why having OD2A data matters or how the data led to action that will save lives and reduce harms.

We encourage you to use your story to make your strongest case for why and how the work is succeeding and to advocate for its continuation as well as your reader's involvement, and do so in short, digestible paragraphs and points.

Resources to Inspire Your Storytelling

- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s Share Your Story tools** include tips about how to create a digital story, video trainings, and completed stories like Faces & Voices of Recovery.
- **DEA's (Drug Enforcement Administration) Just Think Twice** has personal stories that create relatable connections with readers.
- **CDC's Overdose Data to Action Stories**

Questions?

- Contact: AHS.VDHod2a@vermont.gov

Storytelling Checklist

Does the title…

- ☐ Capture the attention of a reader?
- ☐ Contain a verb?

Does the problem statement…

- ☐ Have a strong lead sentence that states the issue/burden clearly and up front?
- ☐ Tie the challenge to a cost burden, if possible?
- ☐ Specify the affected population?

Does the story content…

- ☐ Describe briefly what the intervention/solution is?
- ☐ Identify who conducted the intervention?
- ☐ Identify where and how the intervention occurred?

Does the impact statement/results section…

- ☐ Demonstrate specific outcomes? (e.g. how was data used to inform something, leverage additional resources, lead to new policies or laws proposed)
- ☐ Avoid broad sweeping statements?

General formatting tips:

- ☐ Avoid wordiness, passive language, and grammatical and spelling errors.
- ☐ Use terms that are understood by an 8th grader – avoid jargon.
- ☐ Avoid acronyms.

Your stories will inspire and inform others in the OD2A community.

Thank you for helping foster a collaborative environment that drives positive change!