
Exposure to fatalities*

Service providers may experience a fatality at any time, which highlights the need to be attuned to the reality that confronting death is part of working on the front lines of the epidemic. For some people, this is a purely mental exercise, but for many, there is a spiritual element to being aware of the constant possibility of a fatality. Here are some of the ways that exposure to someone's death may occur:

- A person dying during a rescue attempt in which staff is directly involved.
- Staff being informed by law enforcement or other officials that someone has died.
- Staff being told of a person's death (soon after the death or some period of time afterward) by a client, family member, or other source .
- Staff learning of a person's death when they resupply someone with naloxone
- A death being reported in the media or social media.
- Staff experiencing a death in their family, among their acquaintances or friends, and in their community.

*Excerpted with permission from *Coping with Overdose Fatalities: Tools for Public Health Workers*, Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Addiction Services. Downloaded at bit.ly/odfatalities.