Supporting Youth and Families Impacted by Opioid Abuse

America is in the grip of an addiction crisis. Powerful synthetic drugs like fentanyl and a reemergence of methamphetamines are compounding the damage caused by illicit opioid use, which accounted for almost 70 percent of the nearly 67,400 drug overdose deaths in 2018.\(^1\) In 2017, more than 4,000 deaths among youth ages 15–24 were attributed to opioid overdose.\(^2\) Opioid dependency and abuse have disrupted public safety and increased the burden on law enforcement as well as on the healthcare, child welfare, and juvenile and criminal justice systems.

Through opioid-focused programs and specialized training and technical assistance, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) is working to break the cycles of addiction and crime and help save lives. In addition, OJJDP's drug courts provide services to youth and families with all types of substance abuse challenges, including those related to opioid abuse or co-occurring mental health disorders.

Programs

**Opioid Affected Youth Initiative**
Grantees provide integrated services that support youth and families through treatment and recovery and help reduce youth's involvement in the juvenile justice and foster care systems. Training and technical assistance helps the grantees analyze data and outcome measures to improve their services.

**Mentoring for Youth Impacted by Opioids and Drug Addiction**
This program funds mentoring for substance-abusing youth and those at risk for abusing substances, as well as youth with family members who misuse drugs. The Office supports local, regional, and national organizations as they strengthen and expand their mentoring services for these vulnerable youth.

**Training and Technical Assistance**

**Child Abuse Training for Judicial and Court Personnel**
This training helps improve participants’ response to child abuse cases, including cases that involve children impacted by opioid abuse. The training emphasizes evidence-based treatment, family engagement and reunification when it is in the best interest of the child, and information sharing across the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

For More Information

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\(^2\) Wide-ranging online data for epidemiologic research (WONDER), 2017. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics.

\(^3\) In fiscal year 2017, efforts to combat opioid abuse were supported through funding for drug courts.