

Gainesville Overdose Prevention Plan Project



City of Gainesville - Gainesville Fire Rescue

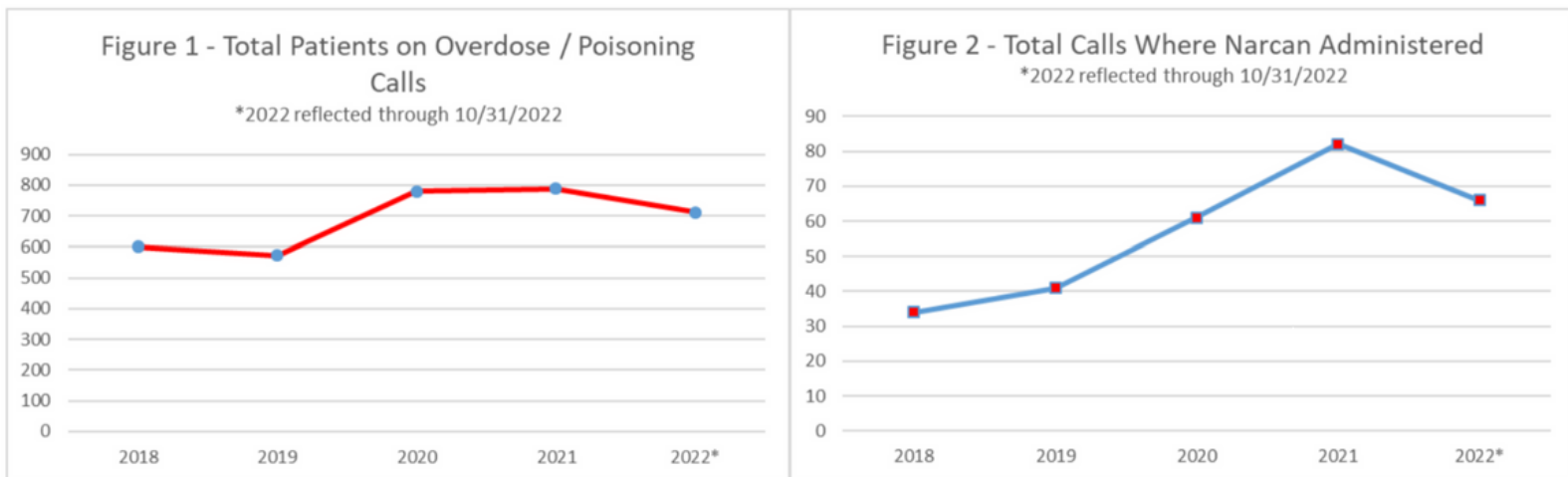
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1. Introduction



Gainesville is a small city within Alachua County, Florida with a population of over 140,000. The municipal government is comprised of multiple departments, including Gainesville Fire Rescue (GFR) and the Gainesville Police Department, across six Charter Officers. Like much of the United States, Gainesville Fire Rescue has seen an increase in overdose/poisoning EMS calls since 2018 (Figure 1). Additionally, there has been an increase in the number of EMS calls where Gainesville Fire Rescue has administered Narcan (Figure 2).



GFR has worked toward improved public health in the City of Gainesville for many years. The Community Resource Paramedicine Program (CRP) program operates under Gainesville Fire Rescue, working with high-frequency 911 callers to address and resolve social determinants of health and integrate patients into the non-emergent health care system.

Particularly for residents with low socioeconomic status, the CRP program drastically increases patient treatment outcomes by increasing patient accountability and health literacy. Program staff are extremely well-connected to the patients they serve and many healthcare and social services providers in the community.



The Community Resource Paramedicine Program often partners with the Gainesville Police Department's (GPD) Co-Responder Team. They work together to address the underlying mental health and substance use concerns of patients. The complement of a Paramedic, Resource Technician, Crisis Intervention-Trained Law Enforcement Officer, and a licensed mental health Clinician provide a holistic approach to patient care and advocacy.

In the last year, the Co-Responder Team and the Community Resource Paramedicine Team have assisted over a dozen patients in receiving voluntary detox and in-patient substance abuse therapy at a mental health receiving facility, diverting arrests and/or emergency room visits. As well as direct patient contact, both teams work with family members and friends of patients as well as community partners to educate them on the signs of an overdose, how to use Narcan, and what to do if a suspected overdose occurs.

In addition to GFR and GPD, local organizations are working to combat overdoses in other ways. This includes harm reduction strategies like fentanyl test strips, syringe exchange, and Narcan leave-behind programs. Other resources include re-entry programs and treatment services. With these resources, there is an abundance of data across sectors. To best inform programming and resource allocation, a coordinated effort of data analysis and community-driven planning was needed. With that, Gainesville Fire Rescue's Community Health Division applied for and was awarded the 2022 Combatting Overdose Through Community-Level Intervention (COCLI) subaward through the University of Baltimore for a project titled the "Gainesville Overdose Prevention Plan Project."



COCLI is a program funded through a partnership between the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The University of Baltimore's Center for Drug Policy and Prevention (CDPP) oversees the Combating Opioid Overdose through Community-Level Intervention (COCLI) grant program.

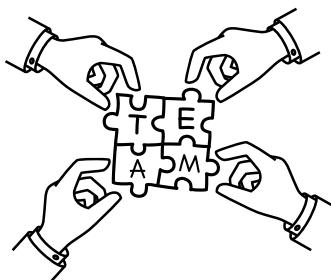


2. Gainesville Overdose Prevention Plan Project Overview

The Gainesville Overdose Prevention Plan Project utilized MAP-IT framework, a public health planning model¹. The one-year funding period allowed for the completion of the first three phases – mobilize, assess, and plan.

To mobilize, a community stakeholder working group was established at the beginning of the year 2023. The stakeholder group included law enforcement, EMS personnel, local nonprofits, and impacted community members. As part of the mobilization, a part-time Project Coordinator with was hired in May of 2023.

For the assess phase, the Project Coordinator met with each stakeholder organization to gather available overdose-related data. The stakeholders collect valuable information on substance use and overdoses in Gainesville. Each sector's data is necessary to understand the full picture of substance misuse in the community – from prevention education to 911 calls for treatment resources and outcomes. The working group gathered to determine the goals for data analysis – with particular attention to gaps in information needed to link individuals to care in the community. The data was compiled and analyzed to be provided in this report. Moreover, findings were used to generate focus group questions. Focus groups were held in the summer of 2023 with three stakeholder groups - impacted members of the community, community partners working in the substance use space, and first responders.



In the plan phase, Gainesville Fire Rescue hosted an open community symposium to share the report and focus group themes with the community. Together, the attendees and working group developed an action plan of high-priority goals and objectives to meet the needs expressed through the assess phase.

The final phases of the MAP-IT model, implement and track, will occur after the conclusion of the 2022 funding period. The Gainesville Overdose Prevention Plan will be used by the working group to advocate for additional resources for implementation and to direct current resources to appropriate programs. Program performance measures such as linkage to care, recidivism reduction, treatment outcomes, and others can be tracked and incorporated into the data report developed in the assess phase. This process allows for iterative assess and plan phases as the landscape of the community overdose prevention efforts changes.

3. Working Group



To mobilize, the community stakeholder working group was established and included Alachua County Fire Rescue, Alachua County Community Support Services, Community Spring, Gainesville Fire Rescue Community Resource Paramedicine Program, Gainesville Police Department, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, North Florida High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), Out of Harm's Reach and Released.

The working group met the last Wednesday of every month to discuss the project's progress and direction. In the one-hour meeting, the Project Coordinator provided up-to-date data analysis presentations to the community partners in the working group and received feedback. The primary goal of the working group was to provide guidance and make decisions that set the course for the subsequent phases of the project.



4. Data Analysis

Data was gathered and compiled from most organizations involved in the working group, along with other community partners. The data analyzed through this project is from calendar year 2022, due to the timing of the project and robust nature of the available data.



Gainesville Fire Rescue

Gainesville Fire Rescue encompasses a range of essential services and units, such as Fire Assessment, Fire Codes Inspections, the Firefighter recruitment process, Hydrant and Station information, coordination with Emergency Agencies, Training Courses for the community, and Community Resource Paramedicine. Within GFR, specialized units like Risk Reduction, Training and Community Education, and Community Resource Paramedicine (CRP) play a pivotal role in our mission to ensure public safety and wellbeing². The Gainesville community is divided into four quadrants northwest (NW), southwest (SW), northeast (NE), and northwest (NW). The axis points for the four quadrants are University Avenue and Main Street.

Gainesville Fire Rescue ran 27,670 emergency calls within the City limits in 2022, 74% of which were Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

Data analyzed for the purposes of this project were all calls in 2022 that were categorized as “overdose” or “poisoning.”

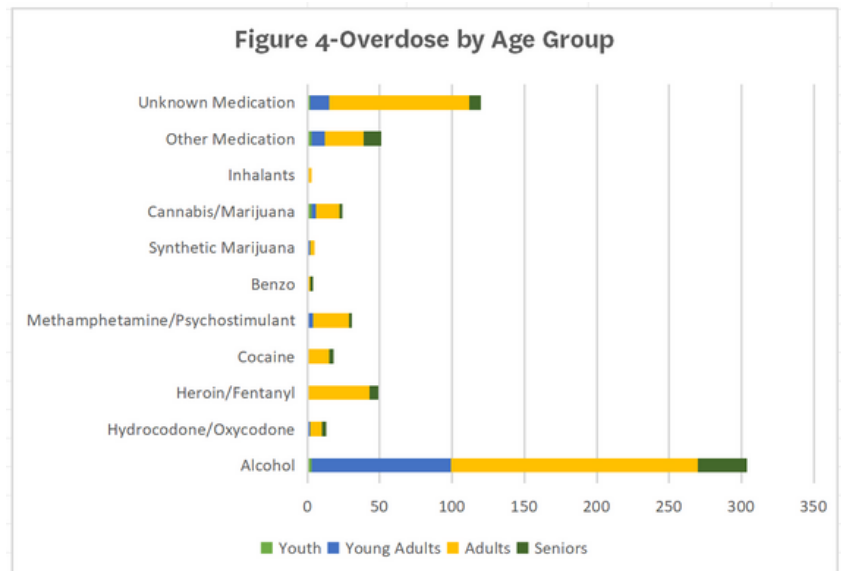
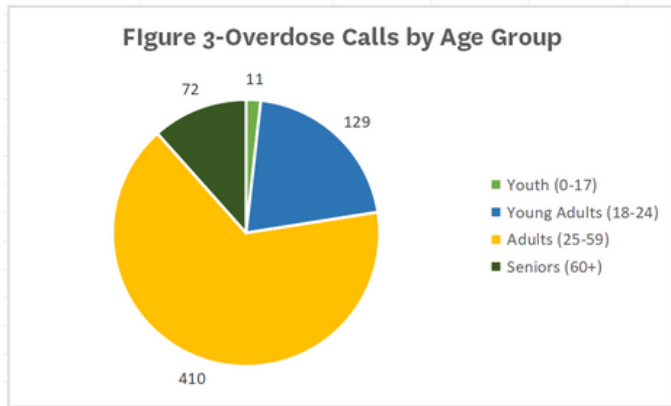


Figure 3 indicates total overdose calls by different age groups. With a total of 410 overdose calls, adults ages 25 to 59 made up the majority of calls. Figure 4 indicates the different overdose types by age group. The most frequency overdose call type was alcohol with mostly adults and young adults involved. The second highest overdose call type was an “unknown medication” with adults ages 25 to 59 with the highest number. The “unknown medication” category refers to the EMS crew being unable to identify the substance, the patient not knowing the substance, or the patient is unable to articulate the substance.

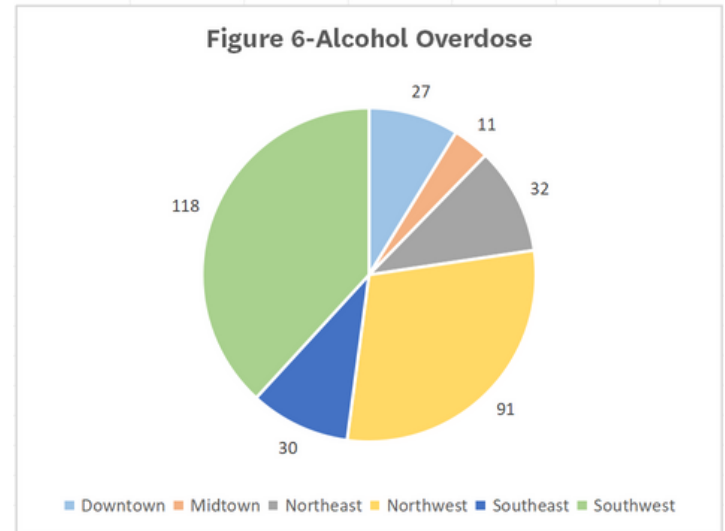
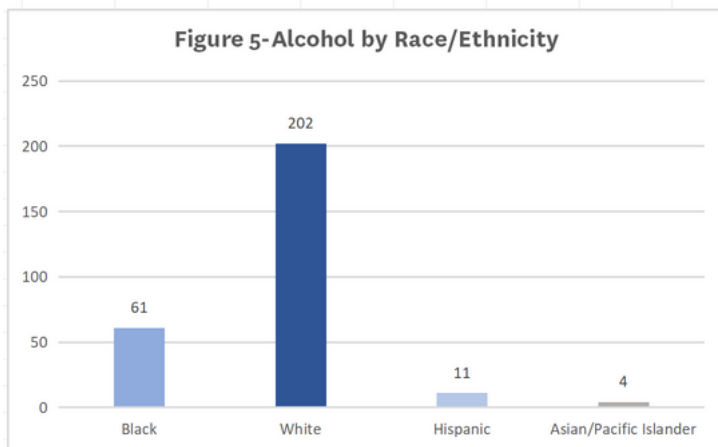
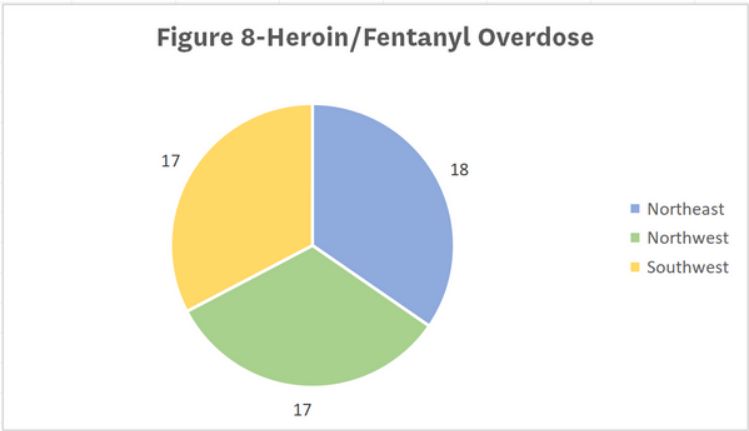
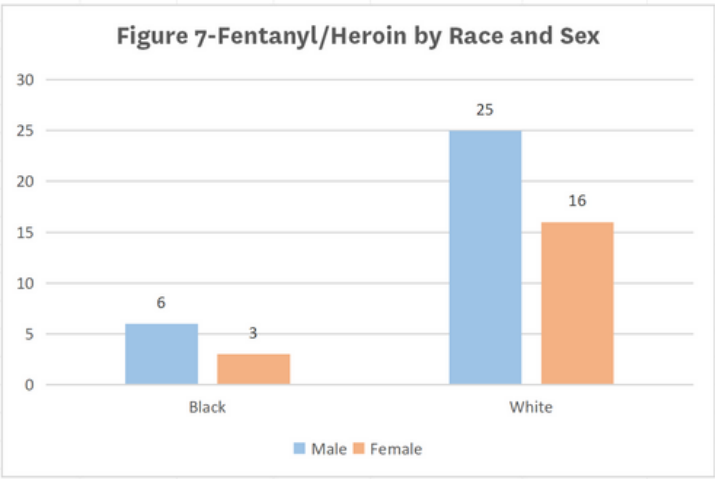


Figure 5 shows a closer look at calls involving alcohol overdose by race/ethnicity with White having 202 total calls and Black having 61 total calls. Figure 6 indicates alcohol overdose calls by area of the city. The top three quadrants were southwest (with 118 total calls), northwest (with 91 total calls), and northeast (with 32 total calls). Among all alcohol calls, 32% had a Law Enforcement Agency involved, and 86% of calls were transported to a medical facility.



GFR data also provides information on fentanyl/heroin. Figure 7 indicates the fentanyl/heroin overdose calls by race and sex. Specifically, white males made up 25 fentanyl/heroin overdose calls, white females had 16 fentanyl/heroin overdose calls, black males had 6 fentanyl/heroin overdose calls, and black females had 3 fentanyl/heroin overdose calls. Figure 8 indicates the fentanyl/heroin overdose calls by area of the city. The top three quadrants were southwest (with 17 total calls), northwest (with 17 total calls), and northeast (with 18 total calls). Among all calls, 35% had a Law Enforcement Agency involved, and 94% of calls were transported to a medical facility.

Narcan Effectiveness Rate	
Bystander	70%
GFR Only	88%
ACFR Only	82%
ACFR & GFR	71%

Narcan is a medicine that rapidly reverses an opioid-related overdose. The percentage of effectiveness with Narcan is defined as either when the patient regains consciousness or improves in vitals/alertness. In 2022, Narcan was administered by bystanders, GFR only, ACFR only, and both ACFR & GFR 96 times, Narcan was effectively used 77 times. The overall effectiveness rate was 82%. The table above shows the specific Narcan effectiveness rate among each group.



Figure 9-Unknown Medication

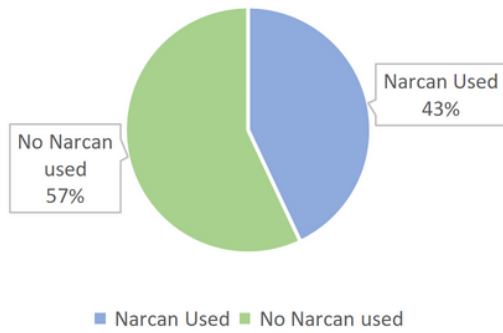


Figure 9 shows all calls involving “Unknown Medication.” Among the total of 130, 43% of calls used Narcan, and 57% of calls did not use Narcan. The calls involving unknown medication where Narcan was used implies a suspected opioid analog or derivative.

Figure 10-Overdose Call Volume by Month

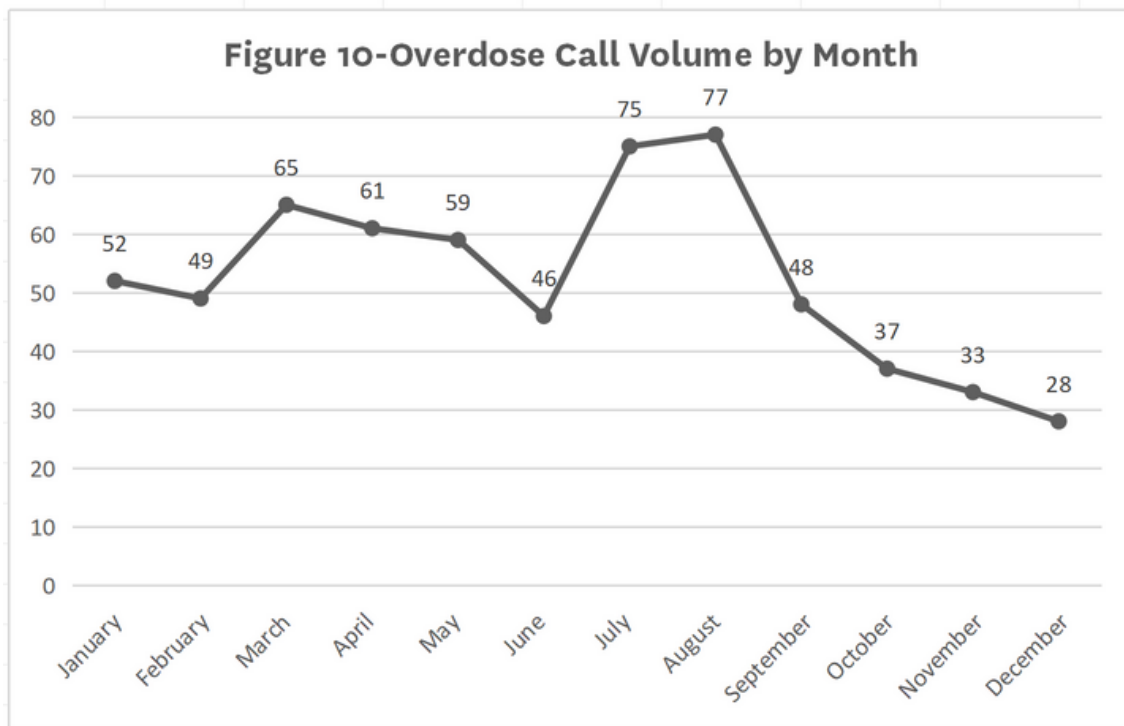
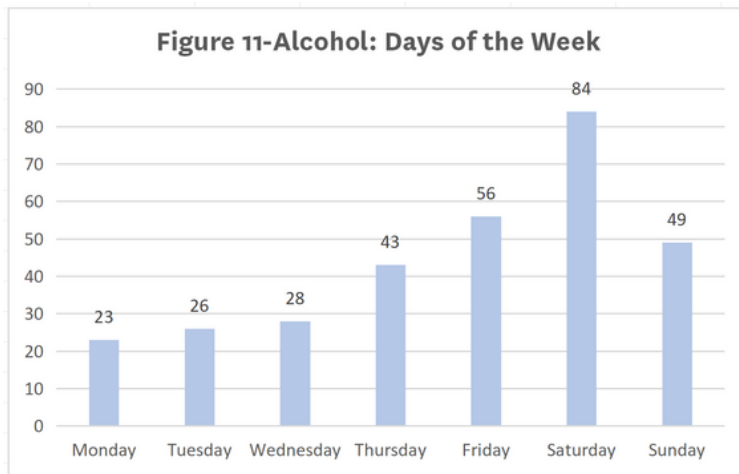


Figure 10 above indicates the total overdose call volume by month. The highest peak is during the summer with August having a total of 77 overdose calls and July having a total of 75 calls.





Figures 11 and 12 display alcohol and heroin/fentanyl calls by day of the week. Specifically, figure 11 shows alcohol overdose calls by day of the week with Saturday having the highest percentage (27.18%). Then, Friday and Sunday at 18.12% and 15.86%, respectively.

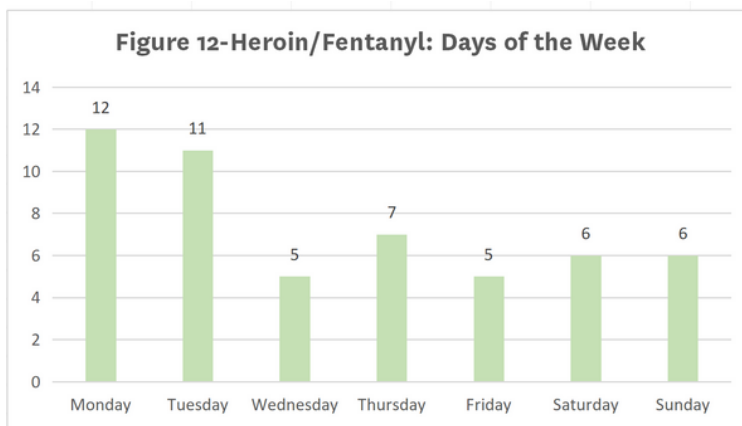


Figure 12 shows heroin/fentanyl overdose calls by the day of the week with Monday having the highest percentage (23.08%). Tuesday and Thursday had the next highest frequency at 21.15% and 13.46%, respectively.

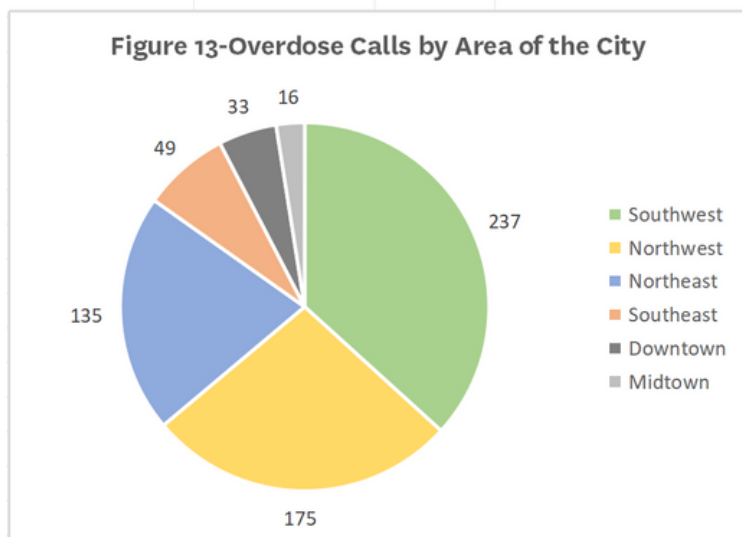


Figure 13 shows the total overdose calls by area of the city. The top three quadrants are southwest with a total of 237 overdose calls (37%), northwest with a total of 175 overdose calls (27%), and northeast with a total of 135 overdose calls (21%).



GFR Data Summary and Limitations

According to Gainesville Fire Rescue 2022 data, the top three quadrants for overdose calls are SW, NW, and NE, with the highest call volume occurring in July and August. Alcohol was involved in 54% of these calls, with Saturdays having the highest call volume. White males comprised around 40% of overdose cases, particularly in instances involving Fentanyl and alcohol. Narcan administration was effective in 82% of cases. However, it's important to note that there are limitations to this data, as demographic and medication information can be unknown, due to the nature of EMS calls. Additionally, the data only includes calls categorized as "overdose/poisoning," potentially missing cases where overdose was present but not the initial reason for the 911 call.



University of Florida HealthStreet



UF HealthStreet is an innovative community engagement program at the University of Florida. The mission is to reduce disparities in healthcare and research through community and other stakeholder engagement. UF HealthStreet has four pillars: listen, serve the community, educate/learn, and build trustworthiness. The community health workers from HealthStreet help bridge the gap between community members and resources available to them, including medical and social services and opportunities to participate in research that is relevant in their health concerns and conditions .

Figure 14-Monthly Narcan Tracking

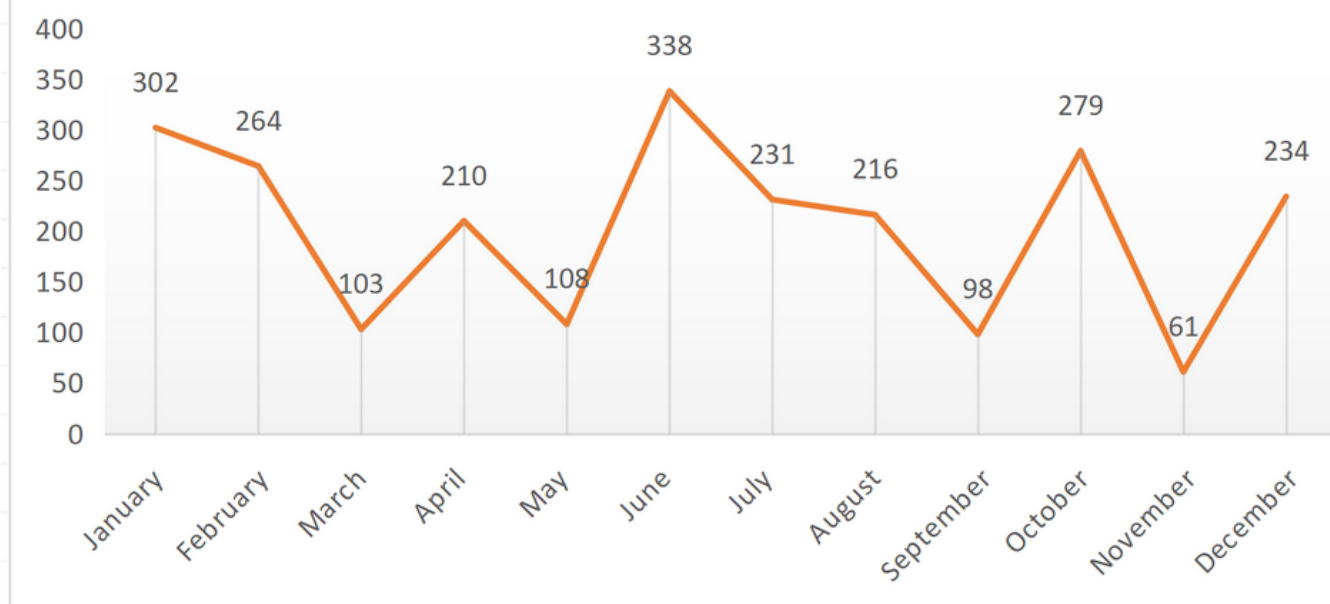
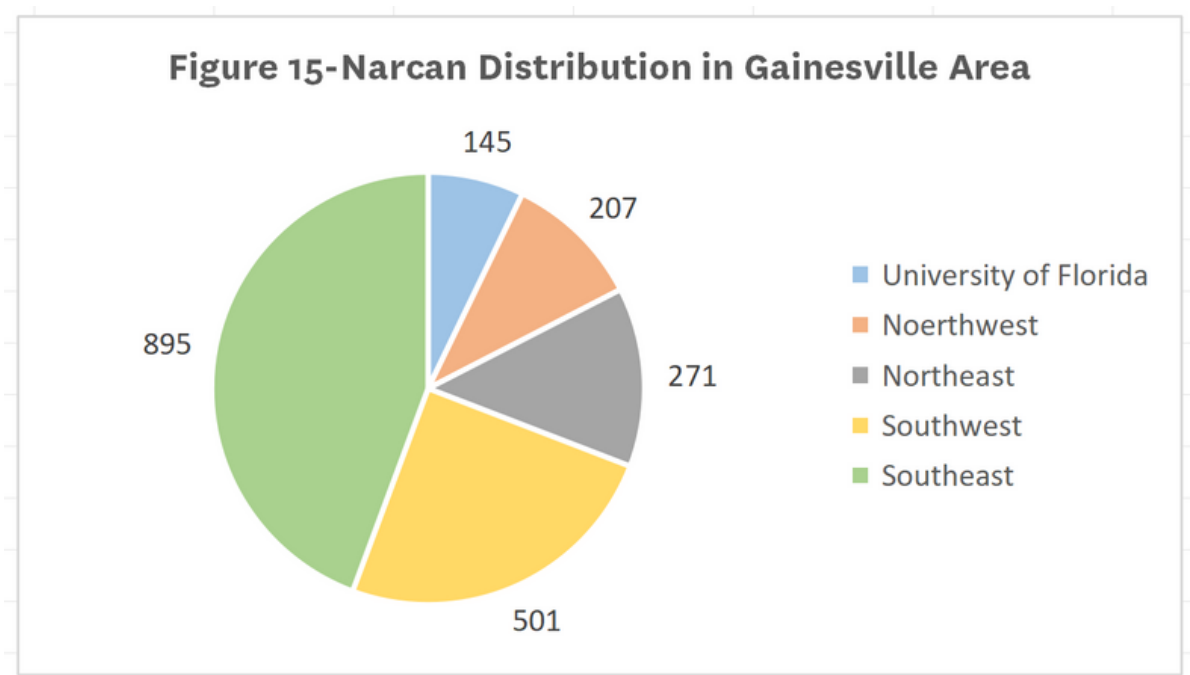


Figure 14 shows the Narcan given by UF Healthstreet by month in 2022. In June 2022, there were 338 Narcan kits given to the community. In January 2022, there were 302 Narcan kits given to the community.



Looking at Healthstreet’s distribution throughout the City, the highest frequency area was in the southeast with 895 (44.33%) Narcan kits given to community members. A total of 501 (24.81%) Narcan kits were given to the southwest area.

Alachua County

Alachua County is dedicated to providing an extensive range of countywide services aimed at enhancing the overall well-being of its residents. These services include critical areas such as Emergency Management, Animal Services, the Crisis Center, the Cooperative Extension Service, and Victim Services, demonstrating our commitment to the safety and welfare of the community. In addition to these essential offerings, the County is devoted to delivering urban services in the unincorporated parts of the County, as well as in select cities. These urban services encompass Fire Rescue, Solid Waste management, Parks and Land Conservation, and Road and Bridge maintenance, reflecting our comprehensive approach to improving the quality of life for all residents within the diverse jurisdiction⁴.



Alachua County Fire Rescue is a diverse group of public servants dedicated to providing emergency and non-emergency services through excellent customer service to the citizens and visitors of Alachua County. The mission of Alachua County Fire Rescue is “public servants are dedicated to enhancing and caring for the lives of those in our community through preparedness and immediate response to all of life's emergencies⁵.”

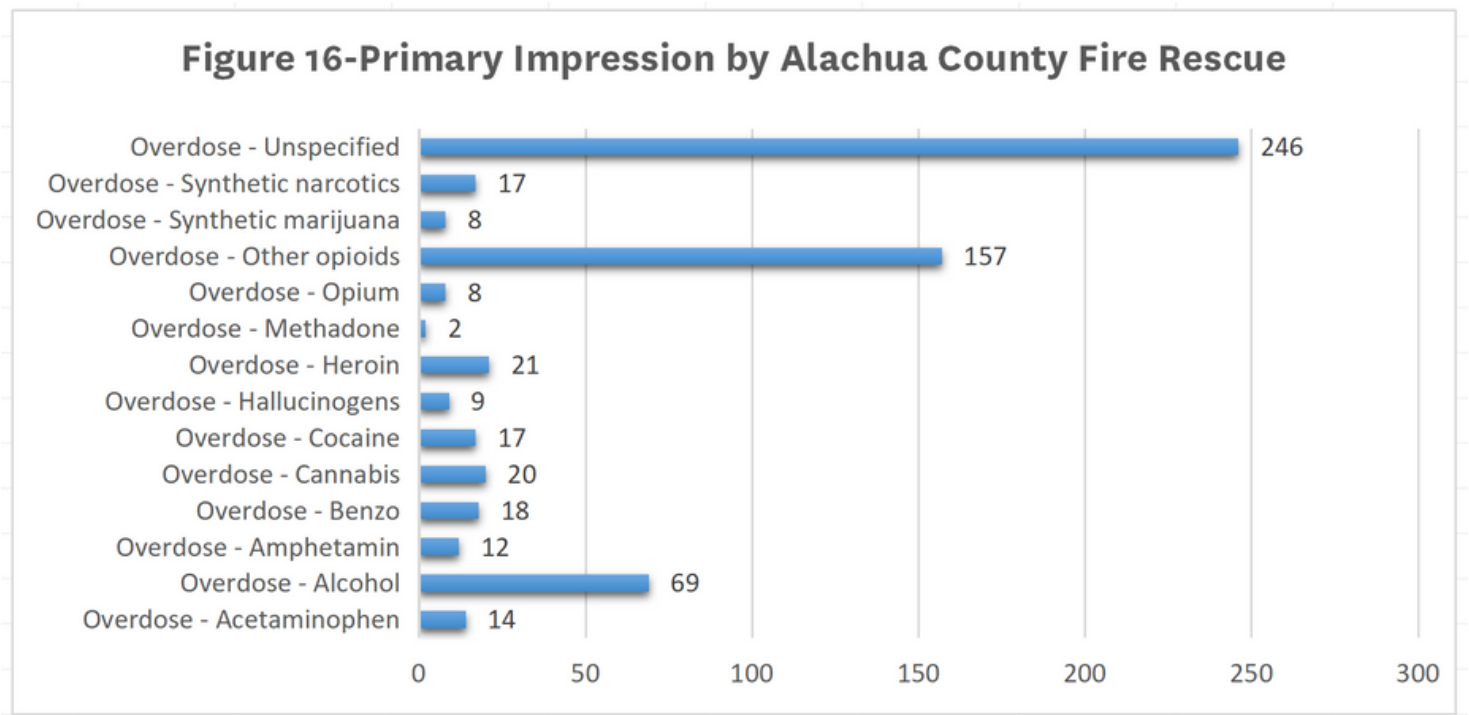
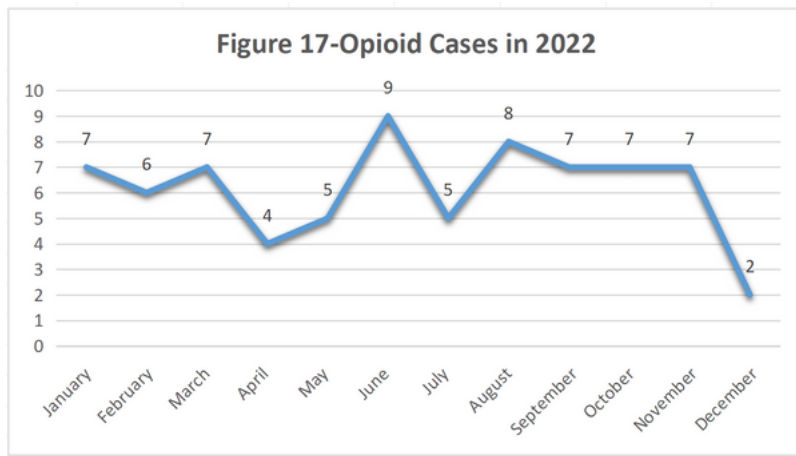


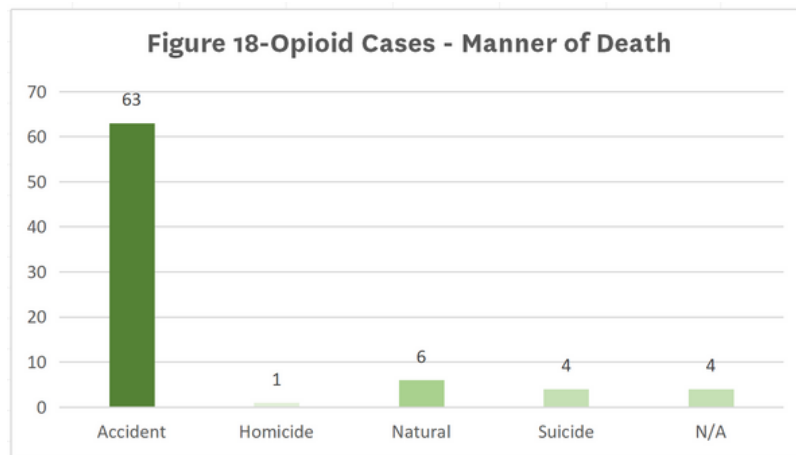
Figure 16 above shows the primary impression from Alachua County Fire Rescue on calls categorized as overdose. The "primary impression" within documentation is to convey what the primary concern is on scene. The top three overdose types are unspecified with a total of 246 calls (39.81%), other opioids with a total of 157 calls (25.40%), and alcohol with a total of 69 calls (11.17%).

Note: Alachua County Fire Rescue and Gainesville Fire Rescue occasionally respond to the same emergency calls, resulting in varying primary impression statuses recorded by each department due to differences in their assessments and reporting systems.





Data was provided by the **Medical Examiner**, displaying overdose-related fatalities in 2022. Figure 17 indicates the number of opioid fatalities. Fatalities were highest in June with a total of 9 and the lowest in December with a total of 2.



The manner of death for opioid cases is categorized as an accident, homicide, natural, or suicide. Natural deaths are typically related to deaths with no medical care. Homicide deaths are defined as the unlawful killing of one person by another. Sixty-three (85%) opioid deaths were ruled accidental.

Out of Harm's Reach

Out of Harm's Reach (OOHR) is a volunteer-led organization run by people with lived experience with substance use. The mission is to reduce the number of accidental deaths and injuries due to substance use in our community through education, advocacy, and empowerment. The values include compassion, dignity, respect, and autonomy. Out of Harm's Reach provides the following services: Narcan distribution and overdose recognition and response training, Harm reduction basics training, Peer-to-peer support services, Rapid HIV testing and linkage to care, and Safer use education materials.



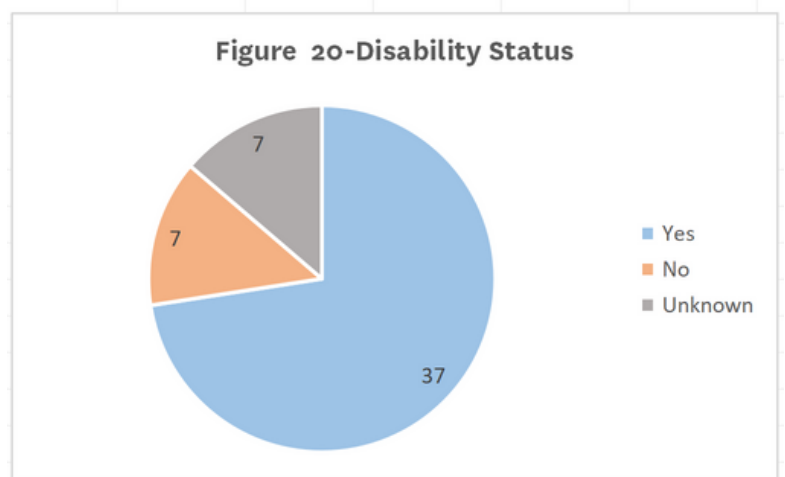
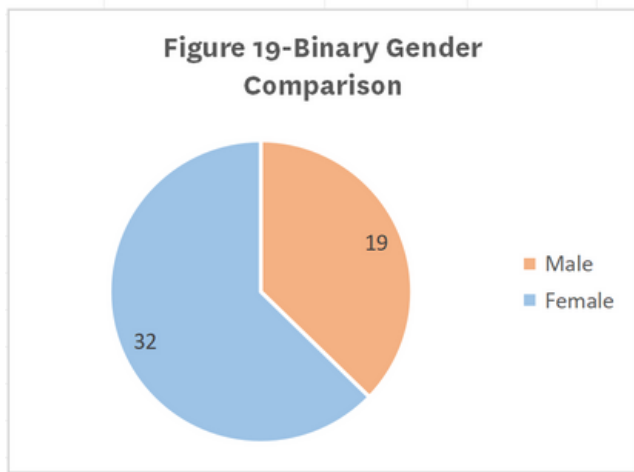


Figure 19 shows the binary gender comparison from clients of Out of Harm's Reach, with 19 males (63%) and 32 females (37%). Figure 20 shows the self-reported disability status of clients of Out of Harm's Reach, with 37 (84%) clients reporting a disability.

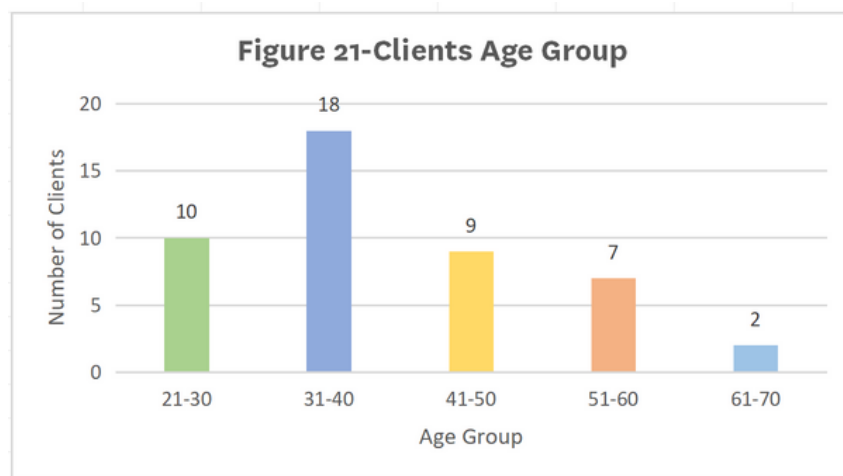


Figure 21 shows the client's by age group in 2022. The majority of clients are ages 31-40 years old (39%).



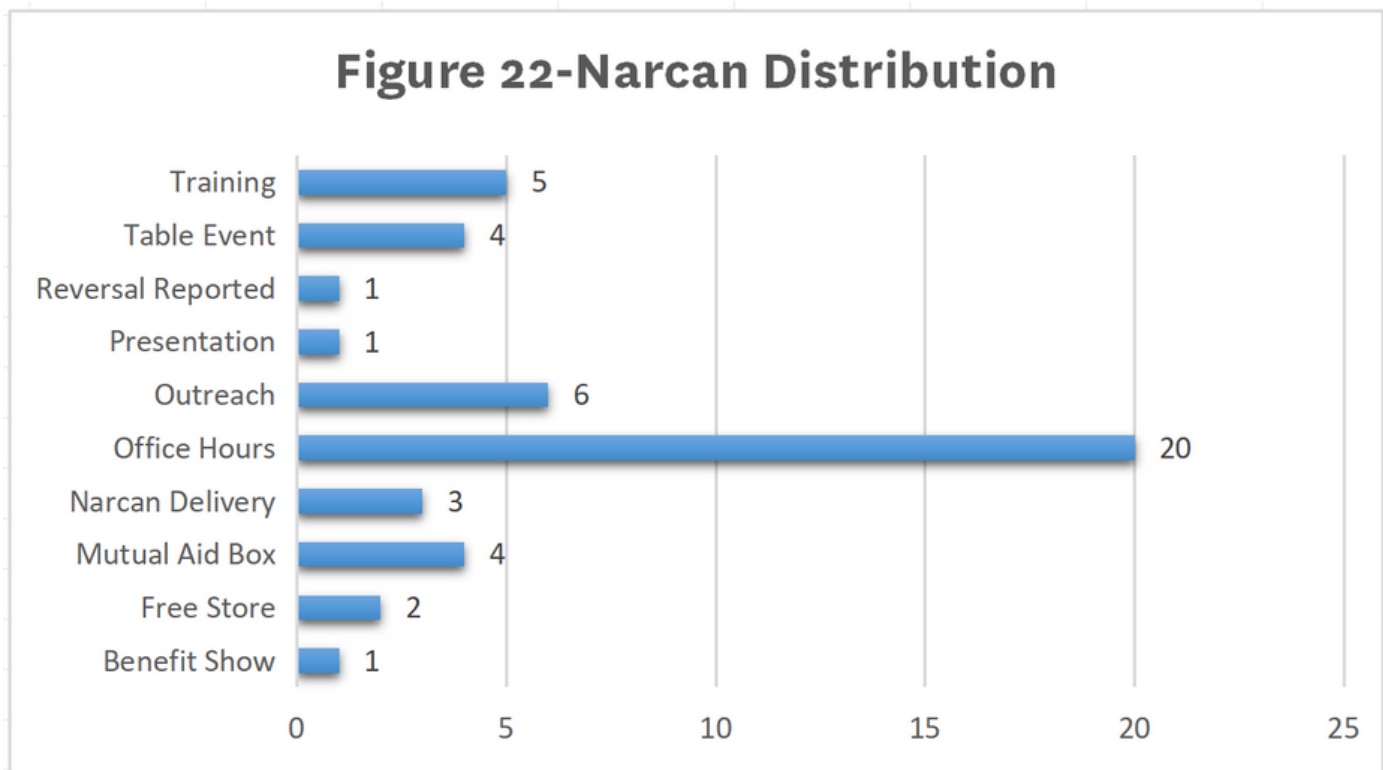


Figure 22 above shows Out of Harm’s Reach Narcan distribution methods. OOHR distributed 47 Narcan doses in 2022. Office hours were the most popular method of Narcan distribution with a total of 20 (45.45%) Narcan kits followed by outreach with a total of 6 (13.64%).

Gainesville Police Department – Drug Task Force Team

The Gainesville Police Department’s Drug Task Force focuses on addressing illicit drug-related activities. The first involves investigating drug-related crimes at the street level, encompassing Gainesville and Alachua County. Detectives within street-level Narcotics Squads work to apprehend individuals who are involved in drug sales within neighborhoods, thereby negatively affecting residents' quality of life. The investigations of mid- and upper-level suppliers often develop from street-level cases made by the Narcotics Unit when working community problems⁶.



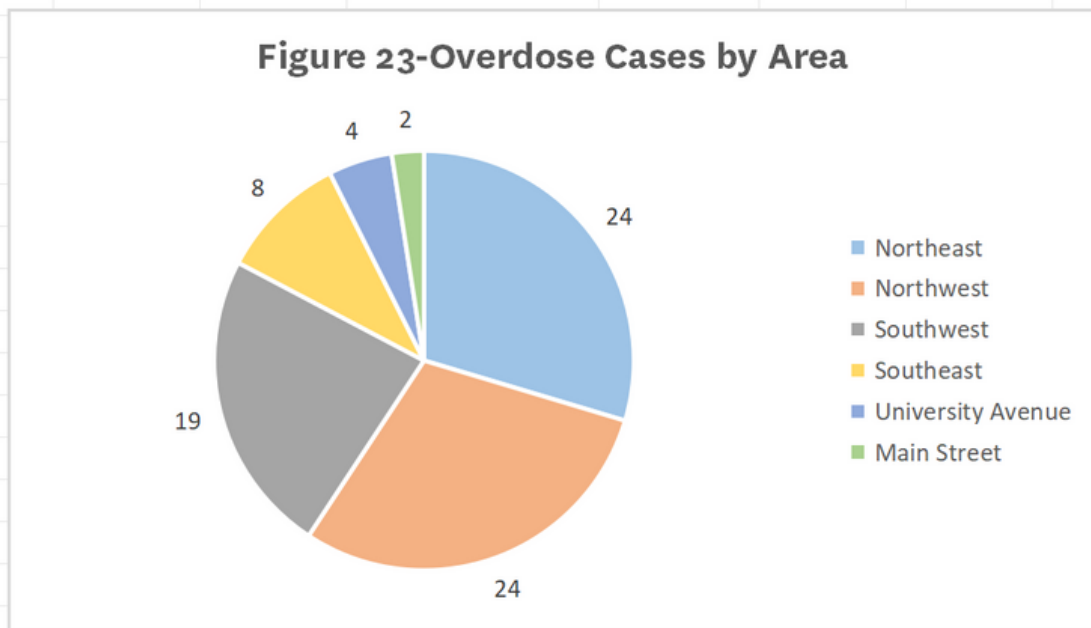
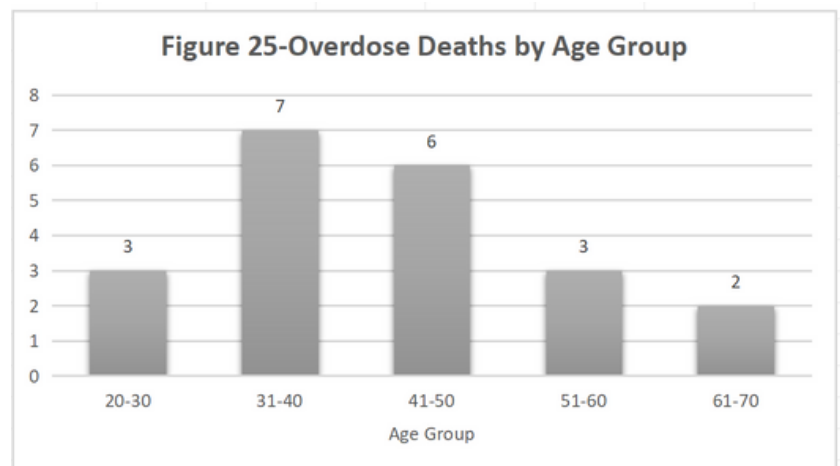
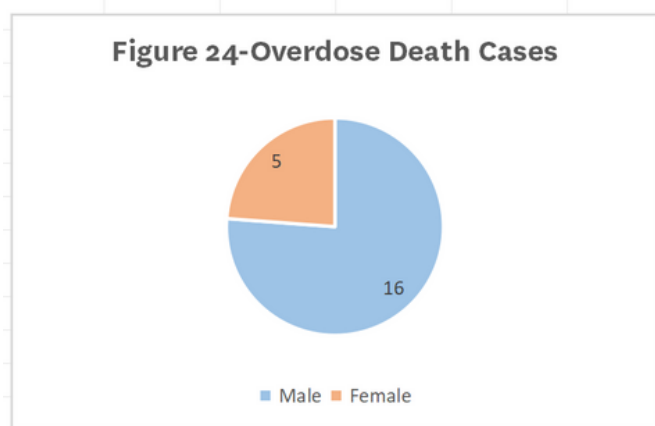


Figure 23 above shows the total overdose cases by area of the city in the year 2022 from the Drug Task Force Team. The northeast and northwest quadrants had a total number of 24 cases (29.63%), and Southwest had a total number of 19 cases (23.46%).



There were a total of 81 overdose investigations that happened in 2022, and a total of 21 overdose fatalities in 2022. About 33.33% of death cases were in people between 31 and 40 years old. The second highest frequency death by age group (about 28.57%) was in people between 41 and 50 years old.



Gainesville Police Department – Co-Responder Team

Co-Responder Teams consist of two members: a specially trained police officer and a master’s level mental health clinician from Meridian Behavioral Healthcare. They work together in a flexible 40-hour shift and use a marked police vehicle to respond to calls related to mental health issues and emotional crises. They mainly respond to community calls and meetings with various providers to help people who use justice, substance use, and mental health services. More than that, they work to connect individuals with treatment at the earliest stage possible to prevent mental health crises.

The data presented does not represent all substance use and mental health calls for GPD services, only the calls involving the Co-Responder Teams. Also, the teams are not 24/7, but operate 7 days a week with someone available Monday to Thursday 7:30am to 10pm and Friday to Sunday 9am to 7pm.

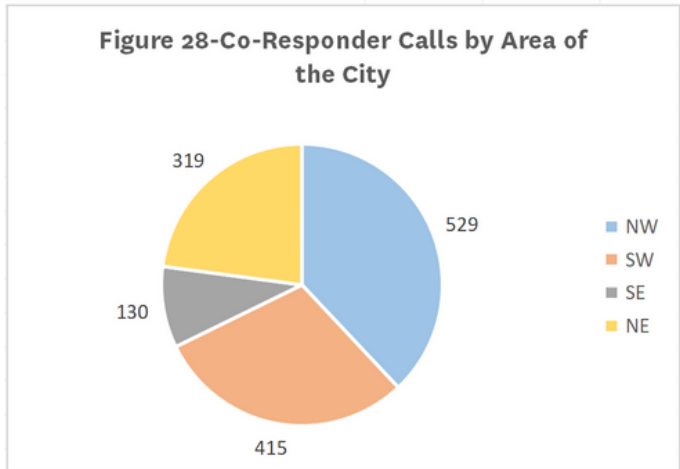
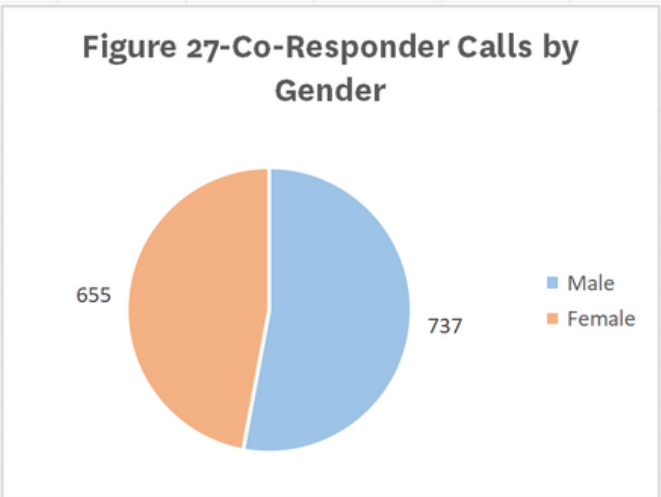
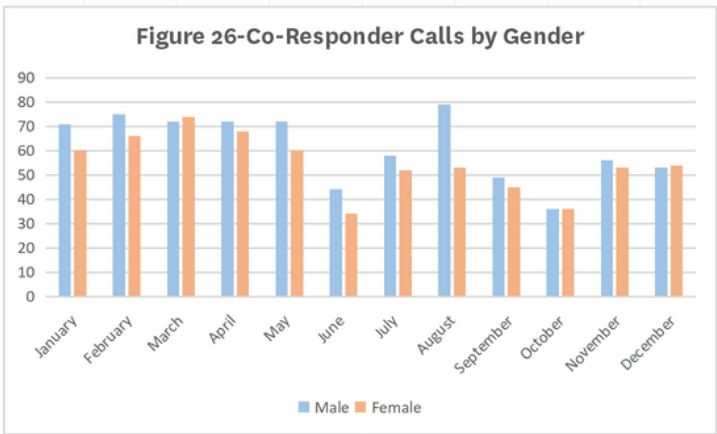


Figure 26 above shows the binary gender comparison from the Gainesville Police Department – Co-Responder Teams. Figure 26 indicates the gender comparison by month and the right pie chart indicates the total number of calls from males and females. In August, males and females had the largest difference in overdose calls. In 2022, males made up 737 or 53% of calls, and females were 655 or 47% of calls.

Figure 28 shows the GPD Co-Responder Team calls by area of the city. The northwest quadrant had the most calls with a total of 529 (38%), southwest had 415 calls (30%), northeast had 319 calls (23%), and southeast had 130 calls (9%) total.

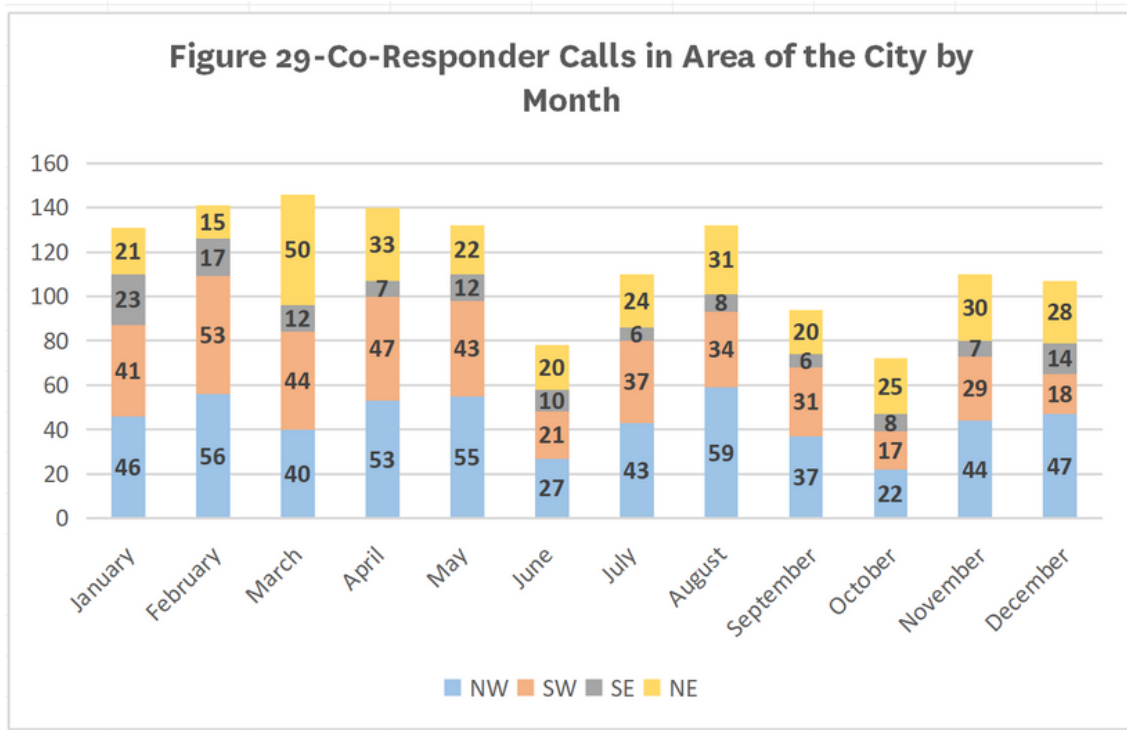


Figure 29 above shows further detail of calls by area of the city and month in 2022. The northwest and southwest quadrants had relatively more calls compared to other quadrants. In 2022, the first half of the year had relatively more calls than the second half of the year.

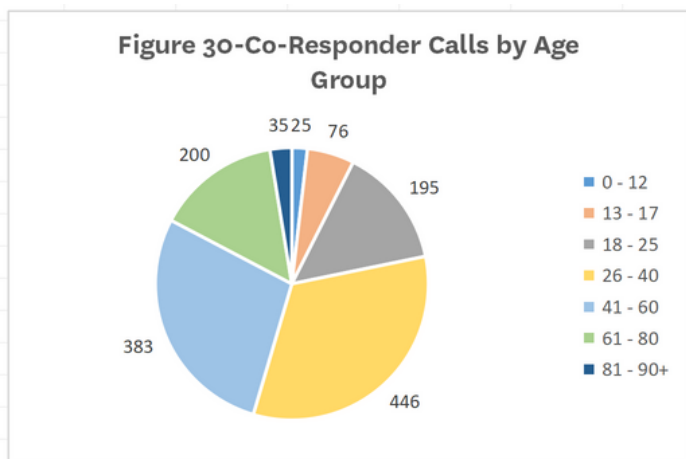


Figure 30 shows GPD Co-Responder calls by age group. The highest frequency call volume is from people ages 26 to 40, with a total number of 446 calls.

The second highest frequency of calls fell between those ages 41-60, with a total number of 383. Moreover, there is a slightly larger number of calls among people ages 61-80 than those people ages 18-25.



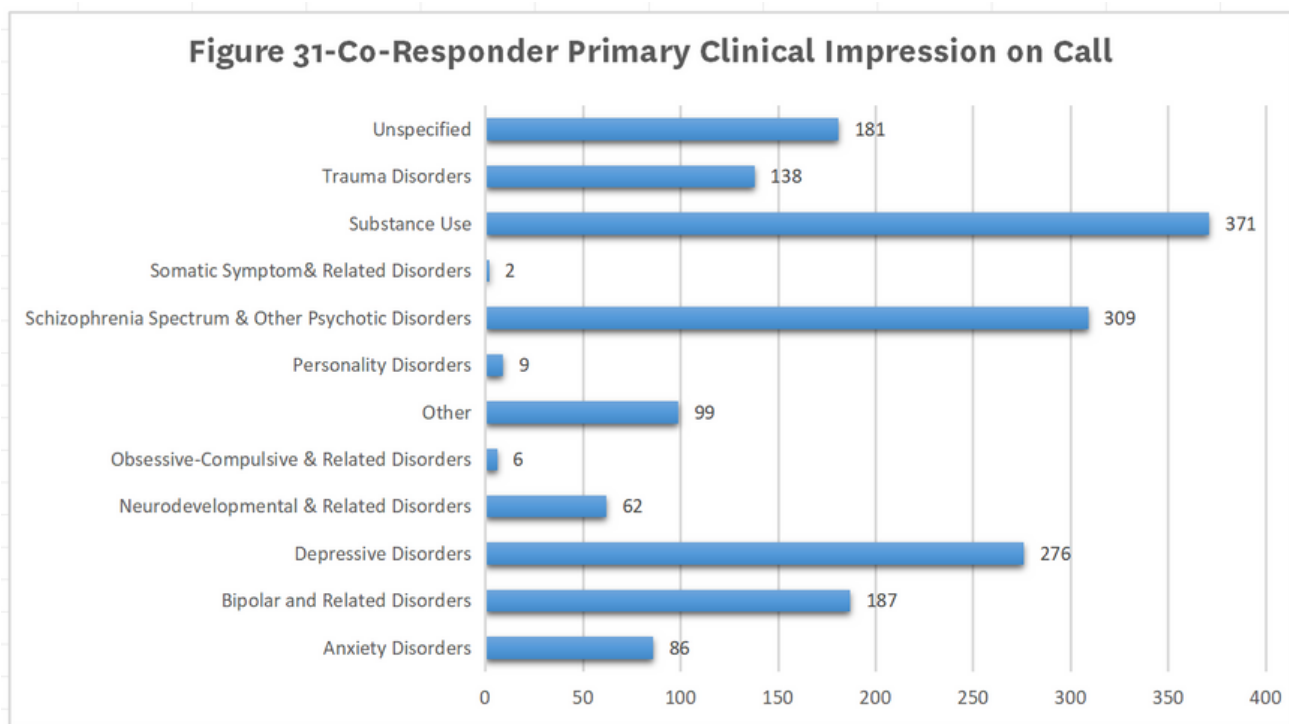


Figure 31 above shows the primary clinical impression on a call. This is the licensed mental health clinician's assessment of the individual's primary mental health or substance use challenge, likely the reason for the call. The substance use type has the most calls with a total number of 371. Among all calls, 379 people stated co-occurring mental health and substance use challenges. The "other" category refers to any other DSM-V diagnosis including depressive disorders, eating and feeding disorders, personality disorders, and trauma- and stressor-related disorders. Meridian Behavioral Health does not have those listed in the data reporting platform.

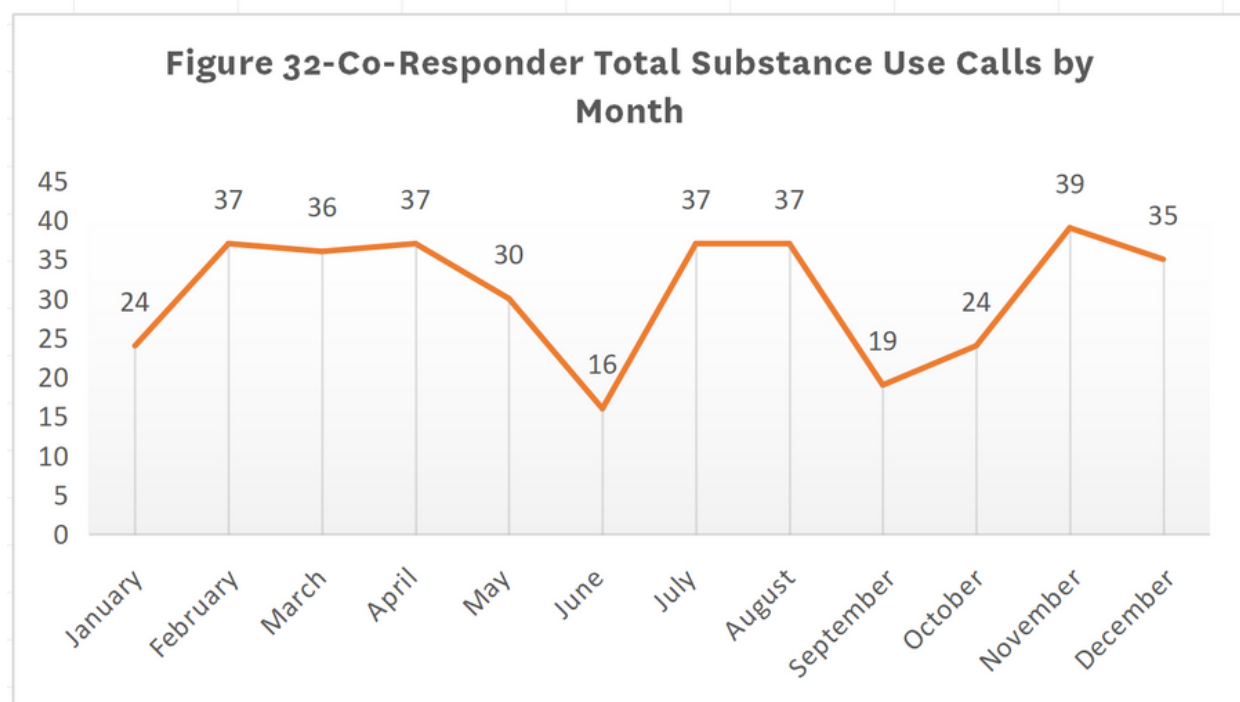


Figure 32 shows the monthly substance use calls from the Gainesville Police Department – Co-Responder Teams. The highest frequency of substance use calls was in November (39 calls), February (37 calls), April (37 calls), July (37 calls), and August (37 calls).

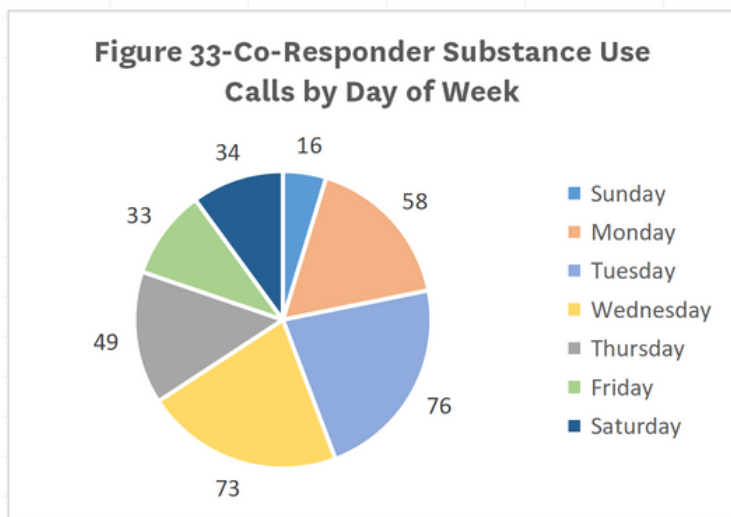


Figure 33 shows the substance use calls by day of the week. The most substance use calls were on Tuesday and Wednesday, with a total of 76 (22.42%) calls and 73 (21.53%) calls respectively. Monday and Thursday followed, with a total of 58 (17.11%) calls and 49 (14.45%) calls respectively.

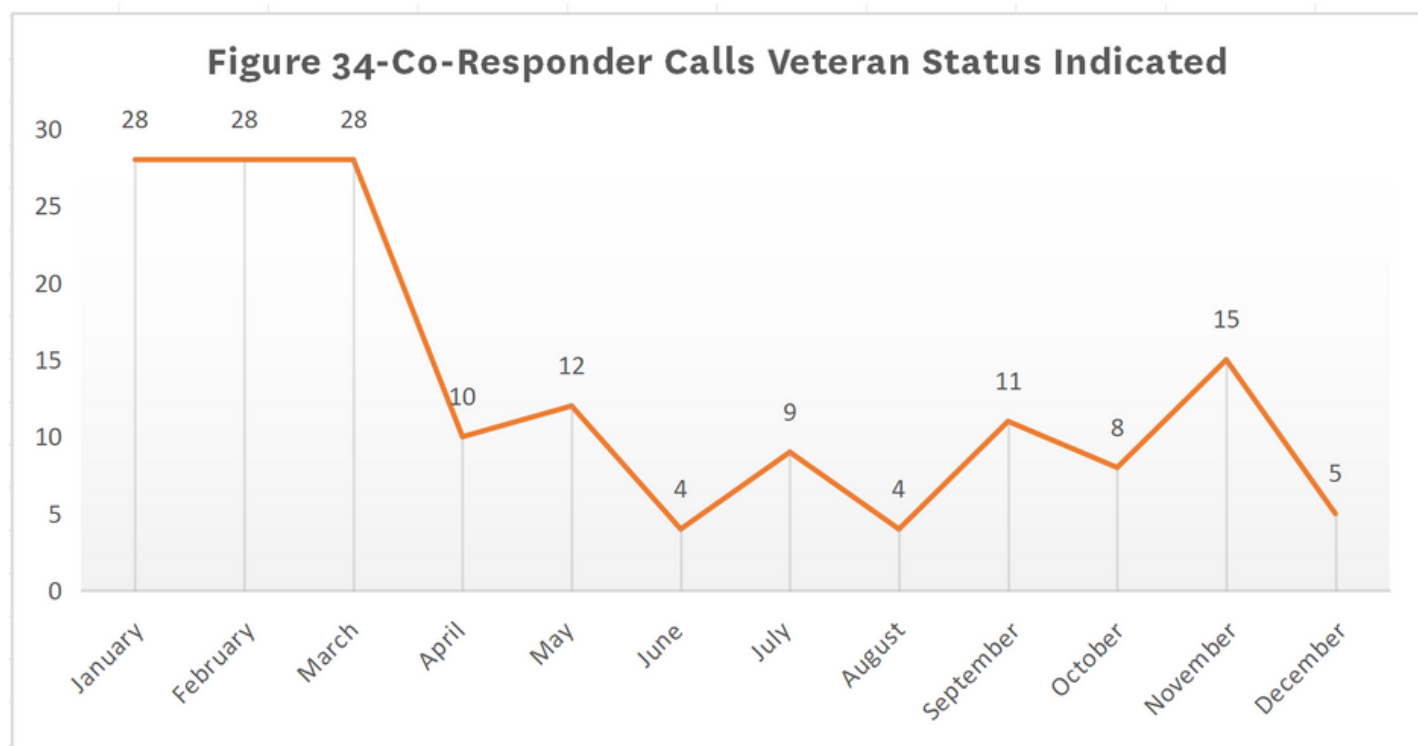


Figure 34 above shows self-reported veteran status of GPD co-responder clients in the year 2022. From January to March, there were 28 calls per month involving veterans.



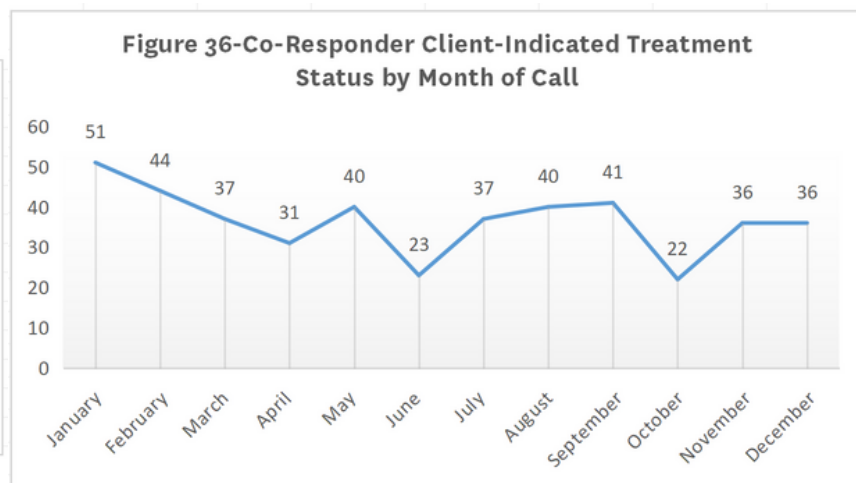
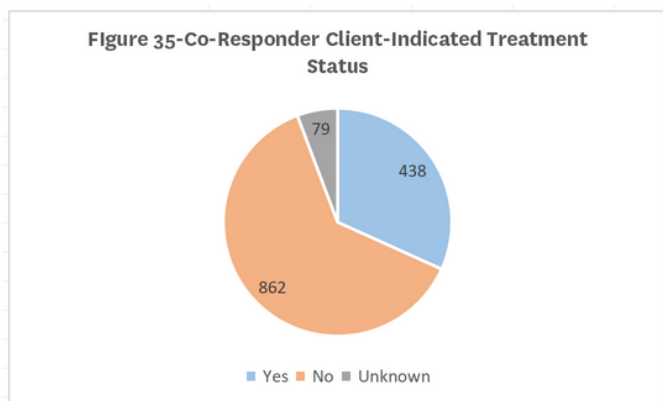


Figure 35 shows the self-reported treatment status from individuals involved in calls. Treatment is subjective to individual's answers on how they receive mental health therapy or substance use related treatment. In 2022, there were 862 people (62%) who reported they were currently in treatment and 438 people (32%) reported they were not currently in treatment. Seventy-nine people's (6%) treatment status was unknown. Figure 36 shows the monthly trends for people who reported they were currently in treatment with the highest number being in January.

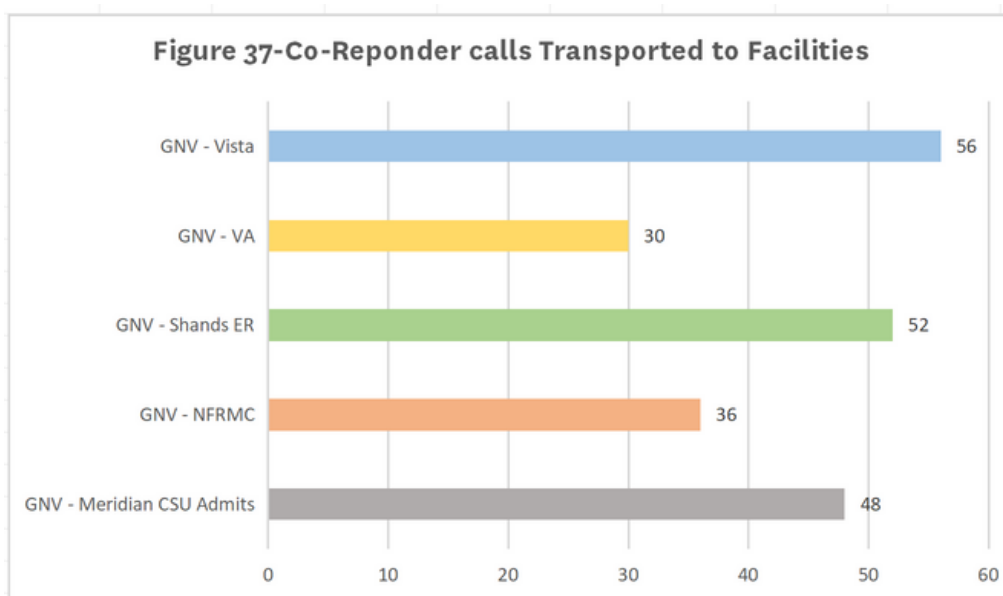


Figure 37 shows calls transported to different facilities. The Baker Act is a Florida law that enables families or loved ones to provide temporary treatment detention for people who are unable to determine their needs. The prior Baker Act transportation form stated, "Delivering to (Nearest Receiving Facility)⁷." The new form that was updated in July 2023 now states "Delivered to (appropriate facility within the behavioral health receiving system and pursuant to the approved transportation plan)⁷." As of now, people have the choice to go to any facilities they prefer or to where they have received treatment in the past. Transportation to these facilities is also highly dependent on whether there are medical needs that need to be addressed first and if it is overall safe/er to transport to a behavioral health receiving facility.

Gainesville Receiving Facilities

Gainesville has multiple facilities to serve individuals with mental health or substance use challenges. Vista refers to UF Health Psychiatric Hospital, which encompasses various specialized units, including child/adolescent, adult addiction, adult psychiatric, and geriatric psychiatry units, each committed to delivering secure and closely supervised inpatient care for effective treatment. UF Health Psychiatric Hospital prioritizes short-term, focused treatment with the primary objectives of stabilizing patients in crisis and addressing the immediate issues that necessitate their inpatient care, enabling them to function safely and with reduced distress upon returning to their regular lives⁸.

In Gainesville, the Veterans Affairs Medical Center offers a wide range of healthcare services, encompassing primary care and specialized fields such as mental health, gastroenterology, optometry, audiology, oncology, nutrition counseling, prescription services, and various other medical services to cater to the needs of veterans and their healthcare requirements⁹.

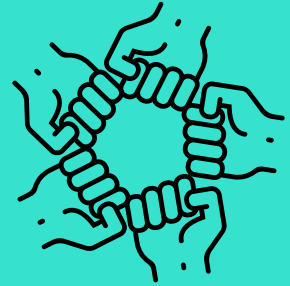
UF Health Shands E.R. provides extensive emergency services tailored to adults and houses the nationally certified UF Health Shands Comprehensive Stroke Center, endorsed by The Joint Commission for delivering the highest level of care to stroke patients. It's crucial to be aware of indicators necessitating an emergency room visit, which can encompass symptoms like difficulty breathing, chest or upper abdominal pain, fainting, sudden weakness, visual changes, severe pain, uncontrolled bleeding, persistent vomiting of blood, or experiencing suicidal or homicidal thoughts¹⁰.

North Florida Regional Medical Center, now named HCA Florida North Florida Hospital, is situated just 3.5 miles from the University of Florida campus. HCA Florida North Florida Hospital is a comprehensive medical facility with 510 beds, providing a full spectrum of medical and surgical acute care services to North Central Florida. Their services encompass cardiovascular care, oncology, orthopedics, women's healthcare, and wound therapy. Additionally, HCA Florida Healthcare is in the process of constructing a new standalone emergency room and hospital, an initiative aimed at extending access to top-tier healthcare services for the North Central Florida community¹¹.

Meridian Behavioral Healthcare Crisis Stabilization Units (CSUs) play a crucial role in offering brief stabilization services for adults (40 beds) and children (10 beds) dealing with acute mental health crises. These units also serve as Baker Act Receiving Facilities, welcoming patients who meet the Baker Act criteria. They deliver both physical and psychiatric evaluations, medication management, counseling, and discharge planning. When necessary, CSUs can petition the court for extended treatment. Furthermore, clients may receive follow-up psychiatric and clinical services in their county of residence, either through Meridian or a provider of their preference, ensuring ongoing care and support¹².

5. Additional Community Partner Information

- Alachua County Health Promotion and Wellness Coalition
- Community Spring
- Community Resource Paramedicine Program
- Gatorwell Health Promotion Services
- Released
- University of Florida Academics



Alachua County Health Promotion and Wellness Coalition

In 2022, the main activities of the Alachua County Health Promotion and Wellness Coalition to prevent youth substance use include educating the community, reducing access to substances, and providing alternative activities. The education programs include the 4th Annual Run with 132 participants, DEA Drug Take Back Day with a total of 112 lbs of unused or expired prescriptions, online virtual escape room activities teaching about vaping and alcohol, and many others.

Moreover, Alachua County Health Promotion and Wellness Coalition offers valuable family support through a comprehensive parent toolkit, which includes the Operation Parent Handbook, tamper-proof alcohol seals, and SAMHSA's "Talk, They Hear You" program. These resources are made freely available to parents, grandparents, or legal guardians, equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate the challenges of parenting and substance use prevention effectively. The toolkit serves as an essential resource to empower and assist families in promoting healthy and safe environments for their children.

Community Spring

The mission of Community Spring is to dismantle structural poverty and promote economic mobility at the grassroots level, striving for a more just and equitable society. To achieve this, they run economic justice campaigns that are spearheaded by individuals directly affected by poverty. One of their key initiatives is the "Links Not Locks" campaign, aimed at establishing an alternative first responder program. This innovative program involves teams of mental health clinicians and medics who can be called upon through the 911 system to address low-risk, non-emergency situations, prioritizing care and support over punitive measures and incarceration.



Gainesville Fire Rescue Community Resource Paramedicine Program

The Community Resource Paramedicine (CRP) Program seeks to bridge the gap, by maximizing use of call data in the existing emergency response infrastructure to notify the Recovery Response Team for every overdose related call within the City. The initiative involves receiving and triaging all overdose related calls, visiting impacted individuals, and the integration of a dedicated GPD Co-Responder Team. The program aims to foster partnerships with various community stakeholders by emphasizing a comprehensive approach.

After receiving the notification from overdose calls, CRP conducts thorough intakes to assess the patient's care and follow-up needs. Subsequently, CRP engages with the patient, providing necessary follow-ups and connecting them with tailored recovery services. The program's overarching goals include offering non-judgmental support throughout the individual's recovery journey, connecting to appropriate resources, advocating for patients, reinforcing support systems, and providing health education.

Additionally, CRP incorporates case management by linking patients to essential social resources within the community, encompassing transportation, food services, housing, and other vital support structures. Through these multifaceted strategies, CRP endeavors to contribute significantly to the well-being and recovery of individuals in need.



GatorWell Health Promotion Services

Housed in the UF Division of Student Life, GatorWell offers a wide array of services and events designed to enhance the well-being and success of students. These services include Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, Group Wellness Coaching, Presentation and Workshop Requests, Tabling Requests, HIV Testing, Mindfulness Workshops, Bulk Condom Requests, and the Alcohol Skills Training Program. Moreover, they provide training in alcohol and cannabis use through the BASICS/CASICS program¹³.

Notably, the organization's 2022 events have garnered substantial participation, such as the Alcohol Skills Training Program (ATSP) with 136 participants, Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students with 25 participants, Drink Safety Prevention Events with 230 participants, Medication Take Back Day with 180 participants, and the Adderall Awareness Safety Event with 145 participants. The Peer Education Program continues to promote substance use prevention throughout the year, with year-round outreach efforts through tabling ensuring ongoing accessibility to their services.

Released

Released Inc. provides a comprehensive range of support and education services for individuals with both experiences in jail/prison and overdose, provided by a dedicated team of peers who understand these challenges firsthand. The Warm-Line offers peer support from Monday to Friday, between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. Additionally, there are weekly Psychoeducational Groups within the Alachua County Jail, providing vital information and guidance. Monthly Substance Use Management and Overdose Prevention Workshops are also held within the jail. For those interested in contributing to the cause, the Justice-Impact Collaborative conducts monthly open meetings on the first Wednesday of each month from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Headquarters Library, making these essential services and collaborative opportunities accessible to the community at large.

University of Florida Academics

The University of Florida offers a diverse range of courses addressing substance use and overdose across various departments and colleges. In the College of Public Health and Health Professions, students can engage with courses like RCS 4451, focusing on Rehabilitation Aspects of Substance Abuse. The College of Pharmacy provides a comprehensive understanding of this topic with courses such as PHA 6840 (Medicinal Chemistry of Drugs of Abuse), PHA 6541 (Pharmacodynamic Consequences of Drugs of Abuse), and PHA 6275 (Federal Regulations of Controlled Substances)¹⁴. The Department of Psychology offers insights into the psychological aspects through courses like PSY 6930 (Psychology of Substance Abuse), PB 5445 (Drug Use and Abuse), and PSB 6930 (Neurobiology of Substance Abuse). Furthermore, the Department of Health Education & Behavior provides valuable education on drug-related issues with courses like HSC 4143 (Drug Education and Behavior) and HSC 6935 (Seminar in the Translational Science of Alcohol and HIV Infection), ensuring a comprehensive academic approach to this critical area¹⁴.

6. Focus Group Findings



In July 2023, three focus groups were hosted to further explore overdose in our community. Focus groups were held for first responders, community partners, and impacted individuals. In every focus group, there was one facilitator and one note-taker. The focus group questions were intentionally crafted for each group, with a set of eight to ten discussion questions for each.

The University of Florida’s Master of Public Health (MPH) program partnered with the project to facilitate focus groups, by actively engaging in the recruitment of student volunteers. Moreover, the MPH Director assisted by providing essential focus group training to those student volunteers. These collaborative efforts have enhanced the quality and impact of focus group research. A summary overview of findings is included here.

Focus Group Popular Responses:

What events have you seen be a precursor to substance use?

- Drinking
- Anger
- Watching Friends
- Social Lubricant

What factors can play into someone’s first use of substances?

- Boredom and Curiosity
- Trauma
- Peer Pressure
- Availability

What are the challenges that exist when it comes to substance use resources in the community?

- Accessibility
- Discrimination and Stigma
- Social Disparity
- Income and Economics

How have you seen substance use change over the past few years?

- Increase of using Narcan and Molly
- Substance use as coping mechanism
- Synthetic products legally sold

If your organization could provide additional services, what would those be?

- Refusal Skills Program
- Peer Education
- Healthy Relationship Education
- Safe Consumption Sites

What type of substance use training would your organization's staff benefit from?

- Trauma-Informed Training
- Crisis Intervention Training
- Motivational Interviewing
- Narcan Training



7. Community Symposium

The Gainesville Overdose Prevention Community Symposium was hosted successfully on September 30th at the Santa Fe College Blount Center in Downtown Gainesville. The event included an hour of community partner tabling, the community data presentation, planning, and an hour and fifteen minutes of action and goal setting.

A harm reduction kit was given to every participants at the event. This included a mini sharps containers, a single dose of Narcan, and a Detera Drug Deactivation pouch.



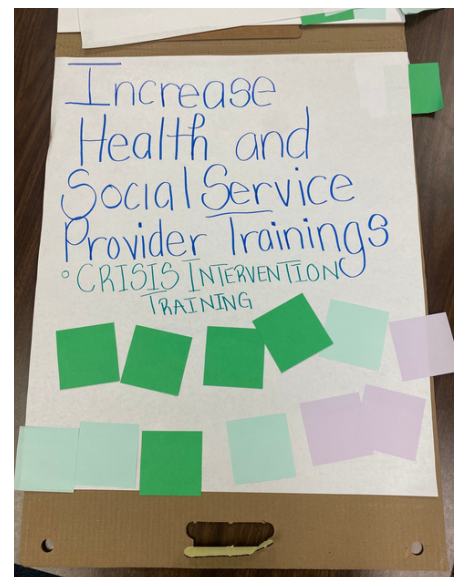
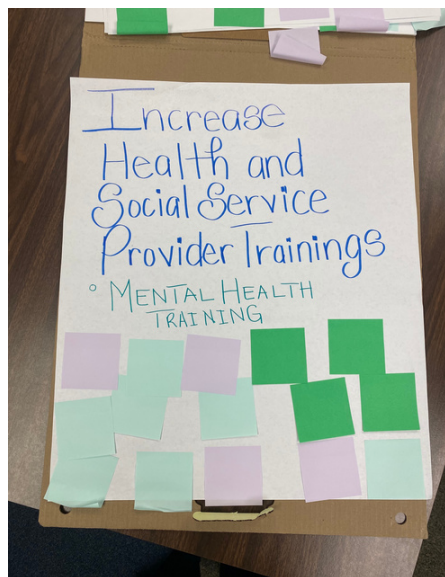
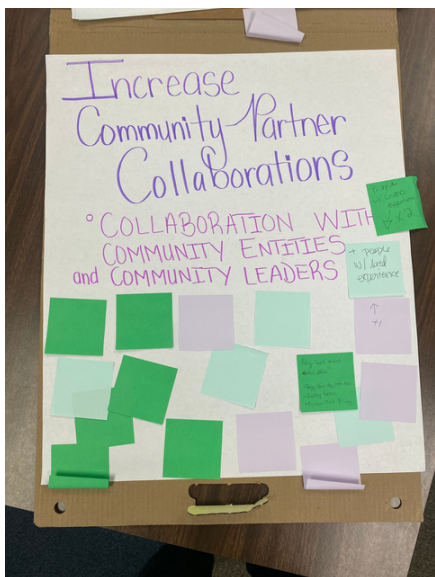
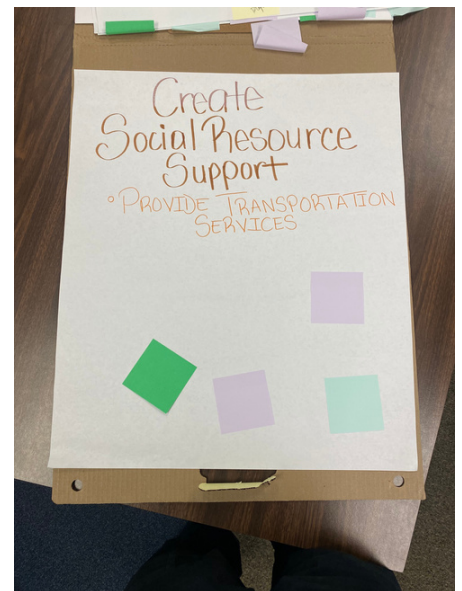
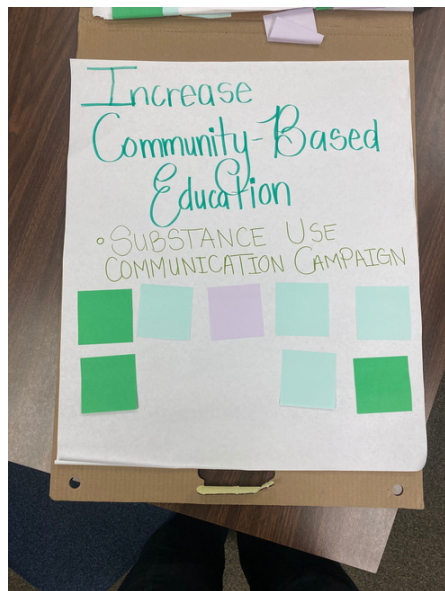
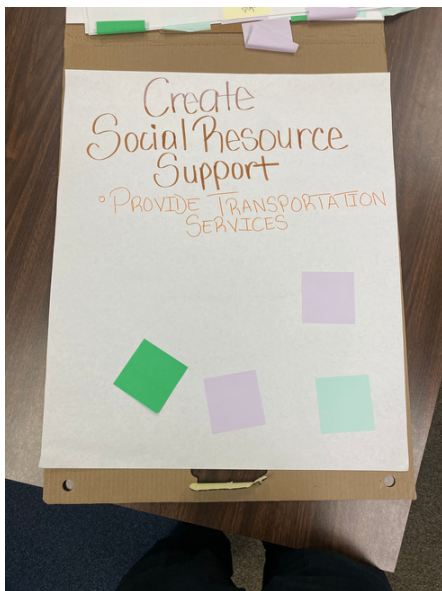
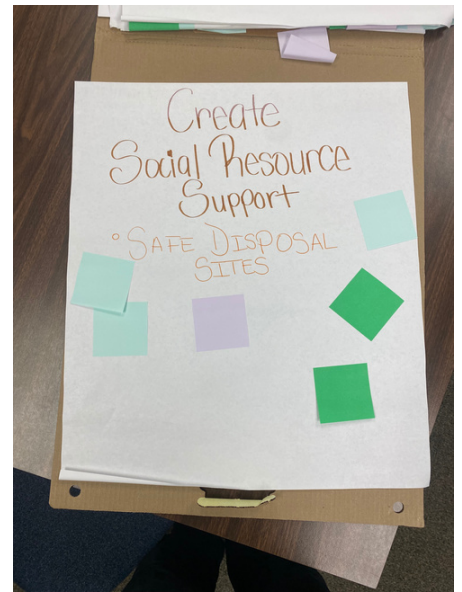
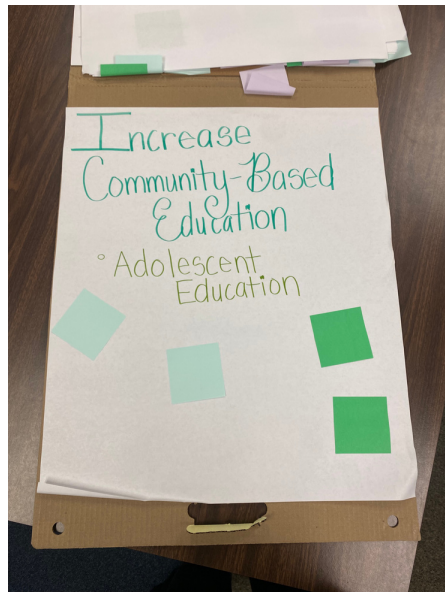
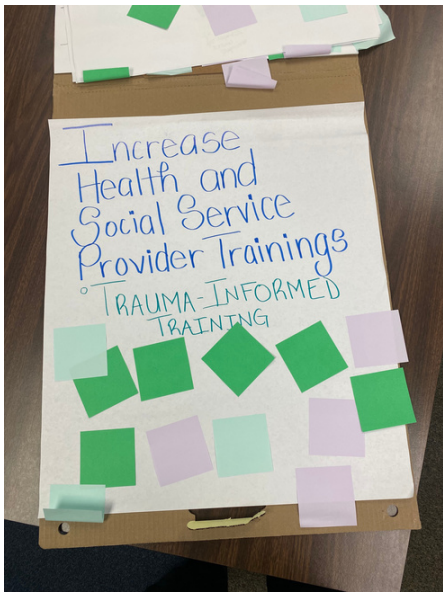
In the Gainesville Prevention Plan Community Symposium, attendees participated in “Community Priority Ranking.” The goal was to gather input from everyone in the room and collectively prioritize the most important actions for our community around overdose prevention. Participants were provided with sticky notes to place on the ideas they reviewed as highest priority. Following the activity, the groups discussed the top-ranking ideas were made. ASL and Spanish interpretation were available during the symposium. Photos displaying the activity are included below.

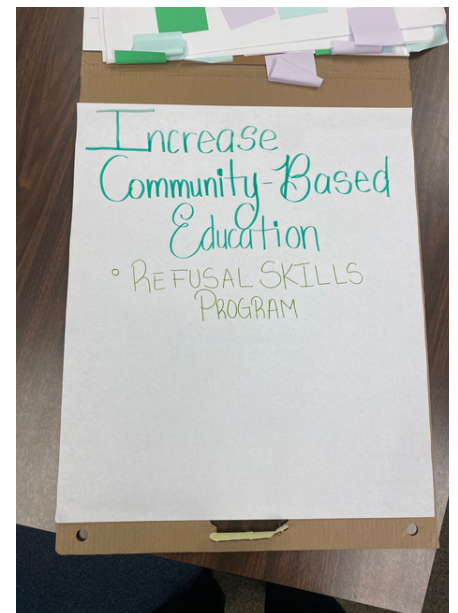
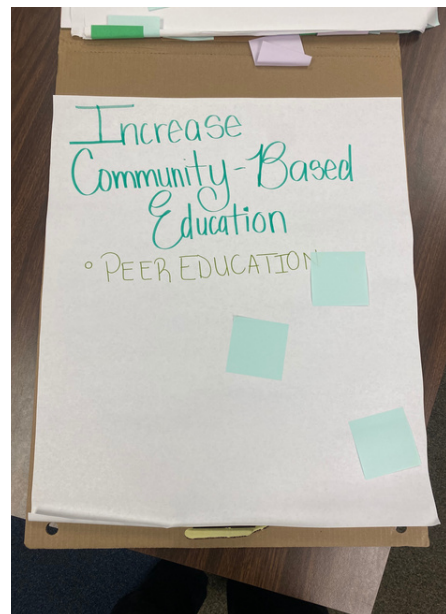
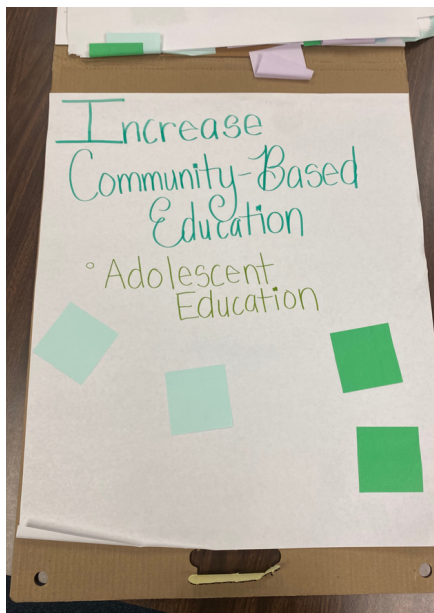
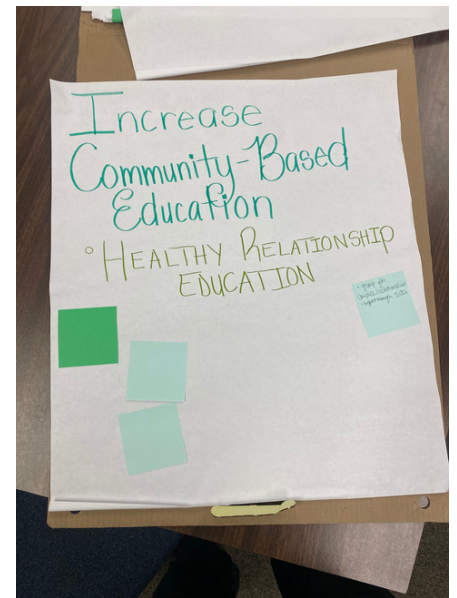
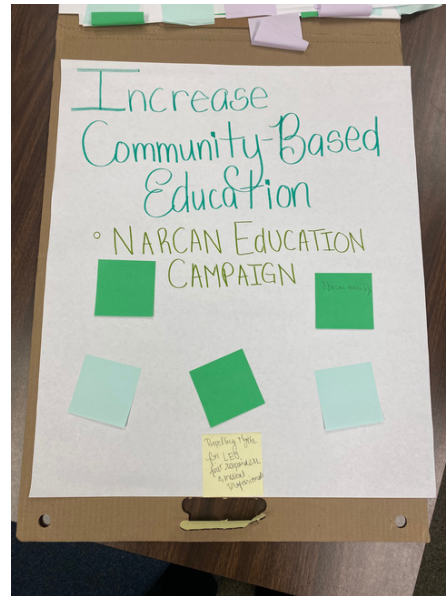
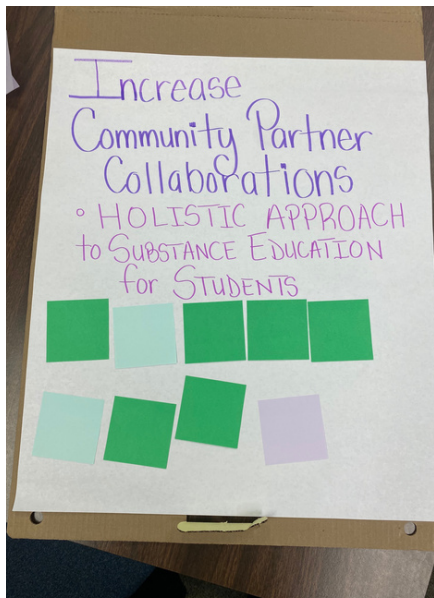
Four Possible Goals for Community Overdose Prevention:

There were four large goals presented to attendees that were identified through the data analysis and focus groups:

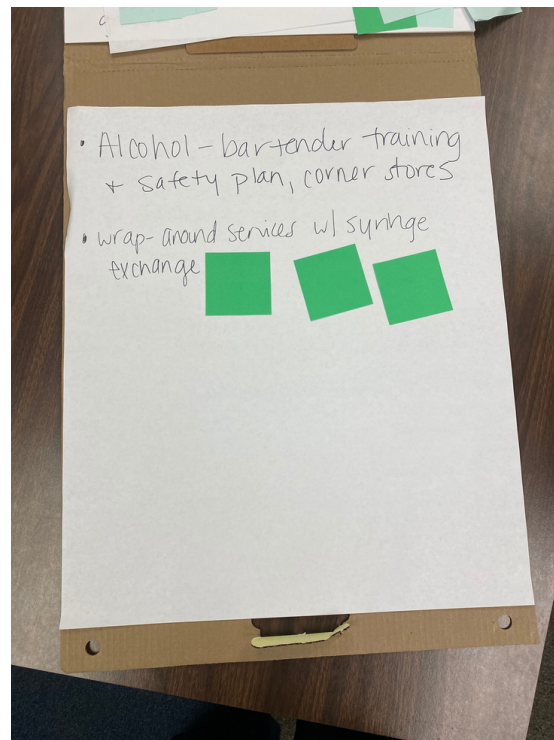
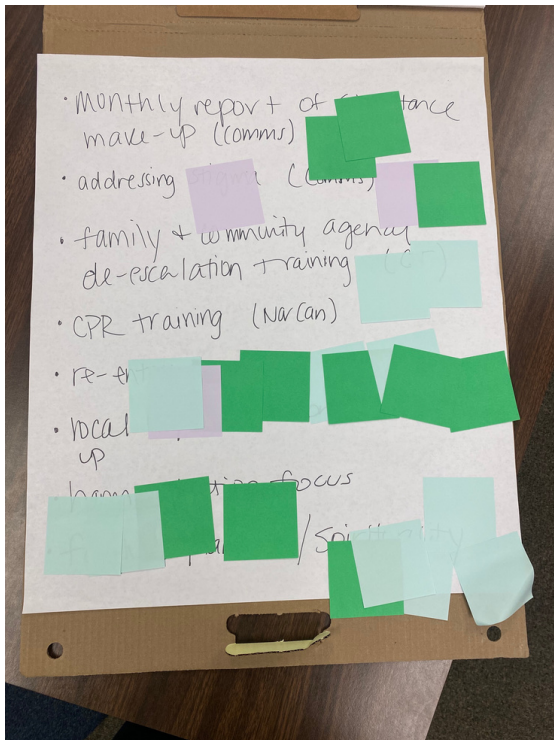
- 1. Increase Community Partner Collaborations**
- 2. Increase Health and Social Services Provider Trainings**
- 3. Increase Community-Based Education**
- 4. Create Social Resource Support**







Note: Before the activity, participants came up with other potential overdose prevention action items. All ideas were written on an additional poster paper, so that participants may engage with those strategies as well.



Other ideas discussed include:

- Monthly report of comprehensive substance use data for the community
- Activities and education campaigns to address stigma
- Harm reduction focus
- Re-entry services
- CPR and Narcan Training
- Alcohol Bartender Training and Safety Plans
- Wrap-around services with syringe exchange

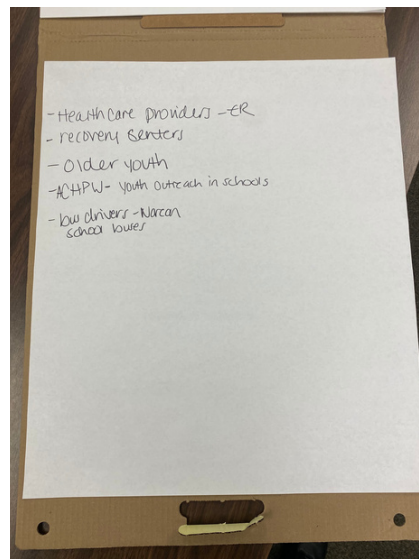
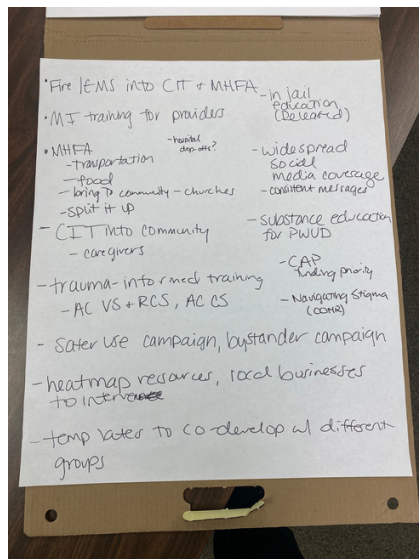


The top actions were included:

- **Crisis Intervention Training**
- **Mental Health First Aid Training**
- **Trauma-Informed Training**
- **Substance Use Campaign**

For the top 3-5 actions identified, we then discussed:

- **What resources are needed to make it happen?**
- **Who could be involved?**
- **Where could it happen?**
- **When could it happen?**



8. Action Plan

The four goals - increase health and social service provider training, increase community-based education, increase community partner collaborations, and create social resource support were synthesized with the discussed strategies and methods to create an action plan for overdose prevention in Gainesville for 2024 and beyond.



For increased health and social service provider training, ideas that were discussed consist of crisis intervention training, trauma-informed training, and mental health training. For increased community-based education, ideas like healthy relationship education, a Narcan education campaign, adolescent education, a refusal skills program, a substance use communication campaign, and peer education came up.

For increasing community partner collaborations, a holistic approach to substance education for students, and collaboration with community entities, community leaders, and people with lived experiences was important. For creating social resource support, ideas included providing transportation services and safe consumption sites.

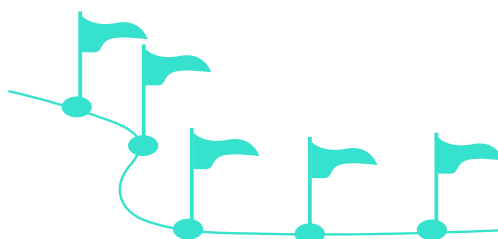
Among all goals, collaboration with community entities, community leaders, and people with lived experiences ranked as the top action from community symposium participants. After that, trauma-informed training and mental health training ranked as the second and the third most important actions for the Gainesville community.

In addition to attendees' prioritized action items during the symposium, we documented key points.

Noteworthy among these were objectives such as equipping the Fire Department with crisis intervention/de-escalation and Mental Health First Aid training, establishing comprehensive overdose information dissemination through social media platforms with consistent messaging; implementing initiatives such as a Safer Use and Bystander Campaign; introducing heatmap resources and develop intervention program by local businesses; and providing alcohol-bartender training, developing safety plans, and engaging corner stores in the effort.

Other objectives included the creation of wrap-around series in collaboration with syringe exchange programs, generating monthly data reports on substance use for the community, addressing and combating stigma, providing de-escalation training for family and community agencies, offering CPR and Narcan training, emphasizing harm reduction strategies, focusing on re-entry support, and exploring the dynamics of family in the context of substance use.

More than that, one key theme that emerged was the importance of providing motivational interviewing training to healthcare providers, empowering them to effectively engage and support individuals struggling with substance use.



In addition, the symposium emphasized the need for crisis intervention/de-escalation training and mental health first aid training for both community members and caregivers, enabling them to respond promptly and empathetically in overdose-related situations. The suggestion to create templates for information sharing with diverse groups was also highlighted, promoting efficient and effective coordination in overdose prevention.

The symposium highlighted the importance of trauma-informed training for professionals, including health and social service providers and others, to ensure a sensitive and compassionate approach to individuals dealing with trauma.

Lastly, there were calls for innovative measures, such as providing Narcan to bus drivers and expanding school-based efforts to encompass youth outreach. There was priority placed on including recovery centers and healthcare providers, thereby creating a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to overdose prevention.

Implementation Strategies

Based on available resources and the discussed ideas, the following action plan was created.

Goal 1: Increase the knowledge and skills of community members and health/social services providers to assist individuals struggling with mental health and substance use challenges.

- **Objective 1:** Reduce barriers to attending Mental Health First Aid trainings by providing food and space coordination for 3 trainings.
- **Objective 2:** Increase accessibility of CIDT to community members and health/social service providers via convenient locations and provision of food.
- **Objective 3:** Plan and Host a Trauma-Informed Care Day Event



Goal 2: Develop a robust substance education campaign for the Gainesville community focused on stigma associated with substance use, promoting harm reduction practices, and highlighting current trends.

- **Objective 1:** Identify and message test content for communication campaign including data and statistics.
- **Objective 2:** Edit and revise campaign based on message testing feedback
- **Objective 3:** Design and create communication campaign
- **Objective 4:** Conduct final message testing and finalize campaign content

Goal 3: Increase support and knowledge for individuals on a recovery journey.

- **Objective 1:** Provide peer recovery support services for 10 hrs/month to patients in the Community Resource Paramedicine Program
- **Objective 2:** Provide specialized support for those who have been impacted by both the carceral system and the opioid epidemic

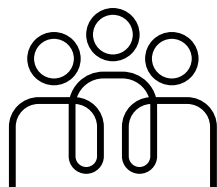
9. Appendices

- **Appendix A: Focus Group Questions**
 - First Responders
 - Community Partners
 - Impacted Individuals
- **Appendix B: Project Activity Fliers**
- **Appendix C: Community Symposium Slides and Pictures**



First Responder Focus Group Questions

1. How have you seen substance use change over the past few years?
 - Where have you seen it?
 - What substance have you seen?
 - Have you ever noticed differences in substance use as a result of COVID-19?
2. What substance-use resources are available to people in our county?
 - What do people think of those resources?
3. What does our community do well when it comes to substance use?
4. What are the challenges/barriers that exist when it comes to substance use resources in the community?
 - Community partners suggested missing appointments and lack of transportation are the biggest barriers for those seeking services. What are ways our community can address this?
 - How can we make these services more accessible?
5. What types of services are most beneficial for individuals who use substances?
6. What alternative destinations exist in our community? (other than emergency rooms)
 - What do people think of those entities?
7. How have you seen first responders like fire/EMS and law enforcement positively impact the field of substance use?
 - If your organization could provide additional services, what would those be?
8. How has your organization built relationships/partnerships to support substance use prevention or treatment efforts?
 - What challenges has the organization faced with this relationship/partnership?
9. What type of substance use training would your organization's staff benefit from?
 - What education would be helpful to better respond to substance use and overdose prevention?
10. Are there other questions that are not on our list but you would like to discuss?



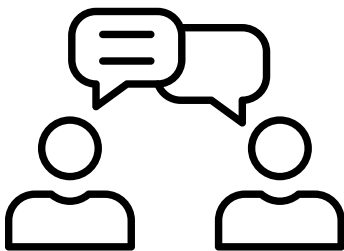
Community Partners Focus Group Questions

1. How have you seen substance use change over the past few years?
 - Where have you seen it?
 - What substance have you seen?
 - Have you noticed differences in substance use as a result of COVID-19?
2. What does our community do well when it comes to substance use? (5 minutes)
3. What are the challenges/barriers that exist when it comes to substance use resources in the community?
 - Community partners suggested missing appointments and lack of transportation are the biggest barriers for those seeking services. What are ways our community can address this?
 - How can we make these services more accessible?
4. What types of services in our community are most beneficial for individuals who use substances?
 - How easy is it for people to connect to those resources?
5. What alternative destinations exist in our community? (other than emergency rooms)
 - What do people think of those entities?
6. What are beneficial ways for providers to build rapport with those experiencing substance use challenges?
7. If your organization could provide additional services, what would those be?
8. How has your organization built relationships/partnerships to support substance use prevention or treatment efforts?
 - What challenges has the organization faced with these relationships/partnerships?
9. What type of substance use training would your organization's staff benefit from?
 - What education would be helpful to better respond to substance use and overdose prevention?
10. Are there other questions that are not on our list but you would like to discuss?



Impacted Individual Focus Group Question

1. How have you seen substance use change over the past few years?
 - Where have you seen it?
 - What substances have you seen?
 - Have you noticed differences in substance use as a result of COVID-19?
2. What does our community do well when it comes to substance use?
3. What are the challenges that exist when it comes to substance use resources in the community?
4. What types of services in our community are most beneficial for individuals who use substances?
 - How easy is it for people to connect to those resources?
5. What educational opportunities would you like to see for our community around substance use?
6. What events have you seen be a precursor to substance use?
7. What factors can play into someone's first use of substances?
8. If you could add one additional service for substance use in our community, what would it be?
 - What support do you believe will be helpful?
9. Are there other questions that are not on our list but you would like to discuss?



Project Activity Fliers

- Focus Group Volunteer Recruiting



Focus Group Volunteers Recruiting!

Gainesville Overdose Prevention Plan Project aims to better understand substance use in Gainesville. Three focus groups will be hosted among first response organizations, community groups, and people with lived experience. We would love your help to facilitate the focus group meetings.

Focus group training will be hosted on Tuesday, July 18th from 9:30 am to 10:30 am, UF campus HPNP G101

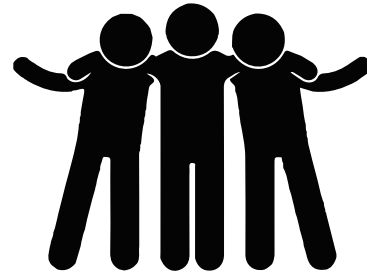
Interested? Please register no later than 5:00 PM on Monday, July 17th

Dinner will be provided.

MONDAY 7/24, FIRST RESPONDERS
TUESDAY 7/25, COMMUNITY GROUPS
WEDNESDAY 7/26, IMPACTED INDIVIDUALS
4:00 PM TO 6:00 PM FOR ALL THREE DAYS

QTEC ROOM 107
2153 SE HAWTHORNE RD # 101
ON BUS ROUTE #2

INTERESTED? CONTACT
Kate Sheng at (352)214-7315 or
Shengy1@cityofgainesville.org



- Focus Group Recruiting

- First Responders on July 24th
- Community Partners on July 25th
- Impacted Individuals on July 26th





We want to learn from you!

Do you work in Law Enforcement or Fire/EMS? Have you noticed an increase in overdose related calls in our community? Share your thoughts to inform a community action plan.

Dinner will be provided to participants.

MONDAY 7/24
4:00 PM TO 6:00 PM
GTEC ROOM 107
2153 SE HAWTHORNE RD # 101
ON BUS ROUTE #2

SIGN-UP REQUIRED. SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT [BIT.LY/303W6DD](https://bit.ly/303W6DD)

Questions? Contact Kate Sheng at (352)214-7315




We want to learn from you!

Do you work with a nonprofit or community organization in the substance use field? Share your thoughts to inform a community action plan.

Dinner will be provided to participants.

TUESDAY 7/25
4:00 PM TO 6:00 PM
GTEC ROOM 107
2153 SE HAWTHORNE RD # 101
ON BUS ROUTE #2

SIGN-UP REQUIRED. SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT [BIT.LY/303W6DD](https://bit.ly/303W6DD)

Questions? Contact Kate Sheng at (352)214-7315




We want to learn from you!

Do you or a loved one have experience with overdose or substance use? Share your thoughts to inform a community action plan.

Dinner and \$50 gift card will be provided to participants.

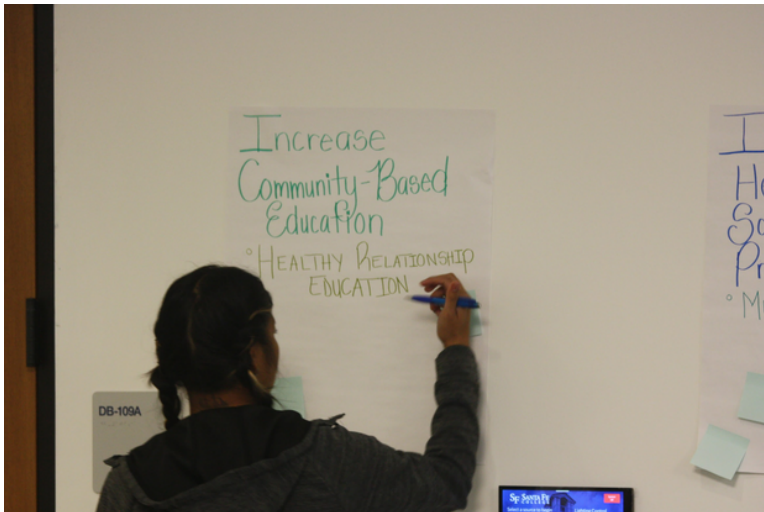
WEDNESDAY 7/26
4:00 PM TO 6:00 PM
GTEC ROOM 107
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ON BUS ROUTE #2

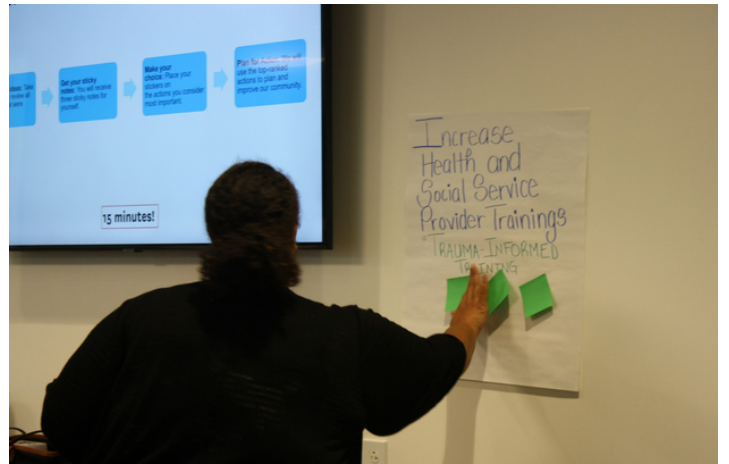
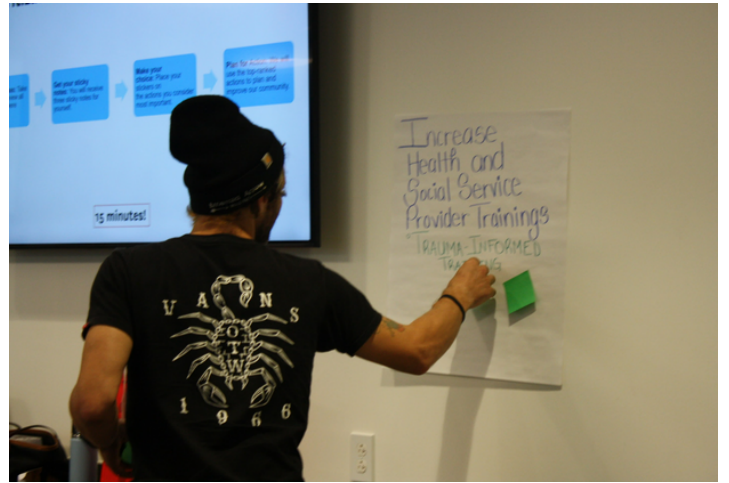
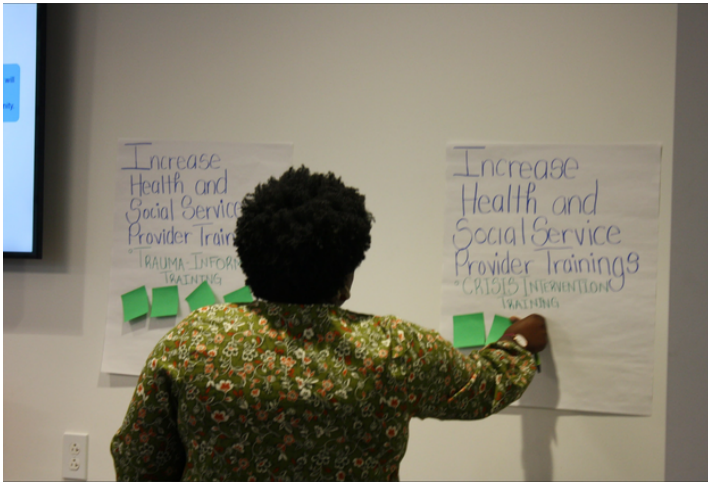
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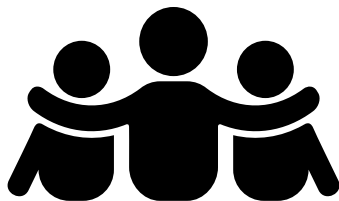
Questions? Contact Kate Sheng at (352)214-7315



- Community Symposium Pictures

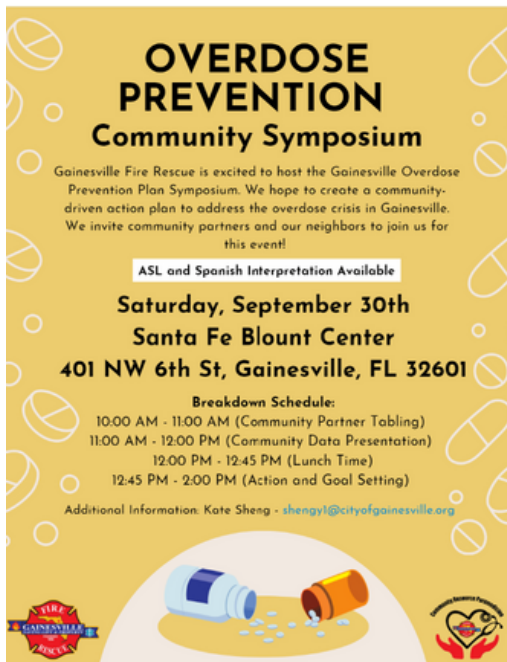






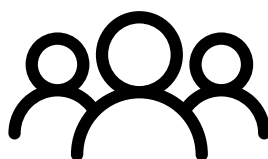


- Community Symposium Flier Review



- Overdose Prevention Community Symposium Slides:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qppqTyvN8csiHpNTb36OGFjDcSRrWJ9K/view>



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