

***Together Lexington***  
***Courageous Conversations***  
***Drugs and Heroin***  
***March 2, 2017***



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**THE FACILITATION CENTER**

***FUNNELING IDEAS INTO ACTION***

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## Purpose and Outcomes

**Overall Purpose:** To encourage meaningful discussion and awareness among all members of our community.

**Meeting Purpose:** To identify community concerns regarding drugs in Lexington and share ideas on how to address them.

**Outcomes:**

- Prioritized list of key issues that need to be addressed regarding drugs and heroin in Lexington
- List of ideas for how these concerns/issues might be addressed
- Recommendations for next steps

## Introductory Activity and Opening Conversation

**When thinking about drugs in Lexington, what concerns you? What gives you hope?**

**Concerns**

- Drugs that have been laced with other substances
- Every zip code in Lexington is represented at the needle exchange program
- Have to have more education
- Heard a doctor prescribing prescription opioids to every patient in the emergency room
- Lack of a crisis center - need to have immediate placement; being ready when people are ready
- Lack of services available
- Opioids leading to deaths
- Paying attention only to the number of deaths versus how substance abuse impacts our society is a disservice to our community
- People who haven't been personally impacted don't understand it can happen to them
- Starting at a very young age
- Wasting lives, ability and talent
- We are all affected

**Hope**

- Advertising about these things
- Being at a treatment facility and seeing the effects
- Starting to talk about it
- Treatment centers being full shows that people are wanting to get help

## What are the most concerning types of drugs In Lexington?

- Bath salts and spices
  - Readily available to people on the streets
- Fentanyl
- Heroin
- Kratom (tea leaves)
- Methamphetamine
- Prescription opioids
- Xanax

## What impact are drugs having on the community?

- Brain Drain
- Crime
- Employability
- Financial drain on the community
- Gun violence
- Tearing families apart

## Additional Comments

- Reverse discrimination – doctors are not as likely to provide prescription drugs to men of color

## What are the key issues that need to be addressed regarding the drug problem in Lexington?

*Participants were asked to answer the key question within their small groups. Once all of their issues and concerns were listed, each small group was asked to identify the two most critical issues for the community to address. Their prioritized responses are presented below.*

## Critical Issues and Concerns

- Criminalize addiction versus treatment of addiction
- Lack of resources/recovery support/education
- Stigma (both small groups identified this as a prioritized concern)
- Unnecessary deaths

## Additional Issues and Concerns

- Addiction beginning at a young age
- Collateral damage to those outside of those immediately impacted
- Crime
  - Gang activity
  - Gun violence
  - Jail overcrowding
  - Prostitution
  - Theft
- Economic
- Family and friends suffer as well
- Financial burden
- Homelessness
- Lack of continuum of treatment
- Lack of coordination between judicial, law enforcement, treatment facilities, city government, and varying levels of treatment
- Lack of drug and alcohol free activities
- Lack of drug free job applicants
- Lack of treatment resources available
- People making the initial choice to use
- Polarization of treatment modalities
- Showing more compassion towards addicts
- Violence and crime

## What can be done to address these issues?

*Using their prioritized key issues, each small group was asked to answer the key question. Listed beneath each issue or concern are their ideas on how they can be addressed.*

### Criminalization

- Education about the cost of drug misuse and addiction
  - Real money and unrealized potential
- Greater coordinated conversations between players
  - Legislators, justice cabinet, law enforcement

- Voices of Hope
  - Advocates
  - Conversations with legislators, city council, and law enforcement leads to budgeted positions
- “We can’t arrest our way out of addiction”

### **Lack of Resources**

- Nontraditional sources of funding
- Seek out public and private possibilities

### **Stigma**

- Educate public about people’s stories through art, billboards, public service announcements (PSA’s), etc.
- Educate the educators
- Educate nurses and attendants in Emergency Rooms and Urgent Treatment facilities about how to deal with addicts
- Learn different language
  - Change the words that stigmatize and do damage

### **Unnecessary Deaths**

- Harm reduction education
- More accessible recovery options

## **Key Next Steps**

*Participants were asked to provide recommendations for next steps based on the conversations.*

- Are we, as a society, currently moving more toward treatment?
- Criminalize dealers
- Continue community conversations
  - Can we have something at Rupp Arena that displays ‘good examples’ of recovery and educators?

## Meeting Debrief

### Evaluation Questions/Responses

*To bring the session to a close, participants were asked to complete an evaluation. The complete evaluation results will be tabulated at the conclusion of the 12 conversations, but the closing three questions are included below to inform the remaining conversations. Duplicate responses are denoted with an asterisk.*

#### 1. What worked for you during tonight's session?

- The open environment to share\*
- Being in small groups!
- Discussions - both small and large groups
- Free exchange of ideas
- Great contributions from everyone!
- Listening to others thoughts
- Organization
- Talking about drugs here in Lexington

#### 2. What would have made tonight's session better?

- More attendees\*\*
- Have community talks more often
- Make this conversation a regular weekly/monthly event
- More diversity - please advertise this
- None

#### 3. Do you have any lingering comments and/or questions?

- It would be advantageous to sponsor a youth series on some of these same topics - would likely have to do it at schools to capture the right audience
- Smart people; caring participants; awesome cookies
- Thank you so much! Very much appreciated.
- Thanks for providing a space and opportunity to share