



# POST-OVERDOSE SE RESPONSE TEAMS (PORT)

## WHAT IS A POST-OVERDOSE RESPONSE TEAM?

A post-overdose response team (PORT), also referred to as a Quick Response Team (QRT) or a Rapid Response Team (RRT), is an overdose follow-up program that allows agencies to visit a person who experienced an overdose within 24-72 hours of the incident. PORTs provide support, education, and access to evidence-based treatment such as medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and other life-saving resources.

## VALUES THAT DRIVE PORT PROGRAMS:

- Meeting people where they're at
- Offering dignity and respect
- Valuing human life
- Extending Compassion
- Building connection and relationships
- Committing to evidence-based practices such as syringe-service programs, MOUD, and naloxone distribution
- Empowering individuals to take control of their own health and wellness
- Providing non-judgmental, non-coercive care, allowing each individual to determine what they need and what services they want to use
- Improving quality of life, not necessarily cessation of use
- Valuing social justice
- Respecting everyone's self-determination

## WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

People who have experienced an overdose are exponentially more likely to experience another overdose.\* Interventions such as PORT programs provide individuals with the information and resources they need to improve their health and safety. They create relationships with people who use drugs in the community and can offer a variety of wraparound health and social services. In short, PORT programs save lives.

## HOW DO THEY WORK?

PORT programs identify people who have recently experienced an overdose and connect with them to provide support and access to life-saving services. PORT programs are able to identify these individuals through partnership and collaboration with organizations that respond to overdoses in their community, primarily Emergency Medical Services, law enforcement, and hospital emergency departments. PORTs **should always** follow the lead of the person who has experienced the overdose to guide frequency, type, and amount of follow-up and services. Programs typically use some combination of phone, text message, or in-person follow-up options to ensure participants have access to all the information they need to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.

## COMMON SERVICES PROVIDED BY PORT PROGRAMS

This list is not and should not be exhaustive. Programs should be designed to meet the unique and specific needs of each community.

- Harm reduction supplies, including naloxone, fentanyl testing strips, and connections to syringe service programs
- Education on overdose prevention and safer drug use practices
- Referrals and access to MOUD, such as methadone and buprenorphine
- Education and support around treatment and recovery options
- Referrals to detox facilities, inpatient treatment facilities, and outpatient treatment programs
- Case management for a variety of supportive services, such as housing resources, food, clothing, and healthcare
- Referrals to mental health services
- Referrals and access to communicable disease testing and treatment
- Most importantly: Love, care, and support

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you're interested in starting a PORT program in your area:

- Consult our Post-Overdose Response Team (PORT) Toolkit at <https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/Post-Overdose-Response-Toolkit.pdf>
- Email us at [PORTNC@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:PORTNC@dhhs.nc.gov) with any questions you may have
- Join our quarterly PORTNC call to build relationships and gain knowledge and support from other PORT programs throughout the state. Email us at [PORTNC@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:PORTNC@dhhs.nc.gov) and we will send you an invitation to those calls.

**Caring Connections Save Lives: Create a PORT Program in Your Area**

[www.mass.gov/service-details/opioid-overdose-risk-factors](http://www.mass.gov/service-details/opioid-overdose-risk-factors)



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