Linking CORE Leaders: A Distance-Based Curriculum to Address the Intersection of the Opioid Epidemic and COVID-19
Introduction

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Our team would also like to acknowledge the contributions of our partners, advisory group, and pilot participants.
Problems Addressed

- Health inequities exasperated in rural communities
  - Need for innovative approaches to community problems
- Intersection of public health emergencies (i.e. COVID-19 and Opioid epidemic)
- Stigma, medical mistrust, misinformation
Key Tasks

- Develop 12-week curriculum addressing relevant topics relative to OUD and COVID-19 using a health equity lens
- Recruit county-representative NCLs to participate in 12-week program
- Work with NCLs to create unique, individualized community plans
- Create impact report complete with state-level policy recommendations based on evaluation findings
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Project Goal

*Linking C.O.R.E. Leaders* seeks to mitigate long-term harm associated with the intersecting epidemic of opioid misuse and abuse and COVID-19 in rural counties via distance-learning mechanisms targeted at Natural Community Leaders (NCLs).

Natural Community Leader

*natural community leader*

*noun:* A person who is dedicated to taking on an issue in their community and is fearless in raising awareness for and improving community health.
12-WEEK PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Intro to Health Equity
Substance Use Disorder and Preventive Efforts
Harm Reduction and Supporting Recovery
Navigating Stigma and Cultural Competence

An Opioid Crisis Amid a Pandemic
Medical Mistrust and Misinformation
Impact on Mental Health

Action Planning in Response to Community Crisis
Community Organizing and Mobilization
Planning for Sustainability and Continuing the Conversation
Evaluating Success & Next Steps
Program Delivery

- 50/50 blended delivery model
- Learning Management System (LMS) and Zoom
- Workbook and toolkit for optimal engagement
- Person in recovery recruited to ensure perspective was trauma-informed and accurate to individual experiences
Best Practices and Lessons Learned

1. Maximize opportunities for engagement to support participant retention and enthusiasm from week to week.

2. Be flexible in definitions of success; elicit regular feedback and prepare to pivot based on communicated need and existing participant knowledge.

3. Create opportunities for participant networking, which can support program sustainability and collaboration amongst similar communities.

4. Participate in shared learning to ensure material can be effectively applied to participants’ communities.
I got so much more out of this program than I expected to. It was incredibly valuable, and I would recommend it to anyone who is new to community-level work!

- Natural Community Leader, Allison
  Show Low, AZ
Questions?

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www.makinghealthhappen.org/courses/linking-c-o-r-e-leaders