



# Know More to No More



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## **Introduction**

In late 2017, my journalism professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania asked me join his team as communications director for a project he was starting through the Mid-Atlantic Research and Training Institute for Community and Behavioral Health. The public awareness campaign focused on substance abuse in Indiana and Armstrong Counties in Pennsylvania, as they are 8th and 4th in the ranking of drug-related overdose deaths per 100,000 people in Pennsylvania, according to the Drug Enforcement Administration Philadelphia Division and the University of Pittsburgh. Our goals were to educate the public on opioid use and identify common misconceptions about the stigma surrounding use and users. We called our campaign Know More to No More, meaning that the general public needs to know more about addiction for there to be no more lives lost to it.

## **Audience**

We aimed our efforts toward members of the community who may not have strong ties to someone with an addiction disorder. Family and friends of someone with a substance use disorder (SUD) see firsthand how addiction can take over a person. Those without that experience could be influenced by the stigma surrounding addiction to look down on someone with an SUD, lessening that person's ability to get the help and support they need through recovery. Geographically, we afforded our time to Indiana and Armstrong County residents. Since data did not suggest that there was a strong correlation between age and opioid usage, we did not have a strict age range; however, we focused on adults since children were already receiving some drug and alcohol education in their schools.

## **Methods**

The main method was TalkAboutAddiction.TV. Indiana and Armstrong County locals shared their own experiences with addiction in short videos. We gave them this prompt: what is the most important thing you want someone to know about addiction? Many of those who participated were certified recovery specialists, individuals who have gone through addiction and recovery themselves and now help others on their paths to recovery. We also created educational videos with our team to explain the neuroscience behind addiction. We shared the videos on our social media, with Facebook being the most successful of our efforts. All videos linked back to our website.

Our message across platforms reiterated that addiction is a disease and it does not discriminate. We ran one-minute public service announcements through two Renda Broadcasting talk radio stations in Indiana County. We also sent news releases to the local newspapers when promoting events, such as International Overdose Awareness Day.

We distributed our message on social media, sharing the videos as well as general information and statistics about addiction. In the example to the right, we shared a quote and picture of a community member who helped organize Indiana's 2018 International Overdose Awareness Day. We also placed flyers around Indiana and Kittanning (both the largest towns in their respective counties) to promote our videos and website, and we designed and bought advertisements in local papers directing viewers to our site as well as other helpful resources.



"People have said things like 'I never would have thought.' Well, me neither, but here we are. So what are we going to do about it?"

## Survey/Results

We conducted a survey of residents in Indiana and Armstrong Counties, asking them questions about addiction and their feelings toward someone with an addiction. We sent out the survey before we launched our campaign to measure its success. We hoped to find that our campaign lessened negative feelings and stigma toward people suffering from addiction. The initial responses showed—what we expected—that a number of people look down on those with an addiction and trust them less than someone without an addiction. When we sent the survey again after the campaign had run its course, the results showed that our efforts had made a difference. Some of the same people who had responded negatively before had shifted some of their answers to a more supportive and understanding tone. Through videos, radio, newspapers, and social media, we were able to help create a more positive and supportive community for those recovering from SUD.

## Beyond TalkAboutAddiction.TV

After our Know More to No More campaign, we turned to parents specifically to educate them on addiction and the warning signs. We created PtPDrugFree.com. The website acts as a platform for our virtual workshop, which our professor held in person at local middle and junior high schools. Our team branded and constructed the in-person workshops. The workshops then evolved into DecodingTodaysYouth.com, a blog highlighting what parents should know about their kids today. This ranges in topic from drugs and alcohol to technology to pop culture. This site has gotten more than 32,000 views since it was created in December 2018, and we continue to produce regular content.