Facilitation Guide for Conversations in Fairfax County

"If we're going to heal this stigma, I don't need to know what you think of me. I need you to know what I think of me. I want you to see what I see when I look at myself. I see a person. An interesting one. Not sick, and not stigmatized. Not even needing your pity. Just surviving — and lucky to be telling my own story instead of being part of yours."

- Claire Rudy Foster

Message from the Health Director

The opioid crisis has left a trail of broken lives, families, and communities across the nation. In response, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has made significant investments to address the crisis in our community. County agencies, together with the non-profit sector and concerned community members, are working to increase access to treatment; promote proper drug storage, disposal, and monitoring; improve the county's approach to enforcement and criminal justice; strengthen data sharing and program monitoring; and increase awareness.

The documentary film *Written Off* is a powerful tool which we can use to educate our community and reshape the conversation about opioids. Beyond the statistics and news stories we read every day, it provides a gripping look into the human side of opioid use disorder and challenges commonly held perceptions that fuel the stigma associated with substance use disorder.

Stigma, the negative attitudes and beliefs directed towards people with substance use disorder and mental illness, has negative consequences on individuals, families, and the community. Everyone contributes towards community stigma. By watching the film together as a community, we can break the silence of stigma by sharing conversations afterwards that will change attitudes and promote nurturing environments, resiliency, and healing. If each of us does our part to end stigma, we can become a community where someone who needs treatment for mental illness or substance use disorder is empowered to ask for help.

This guide outlines how you can discuss stigma with the people in your community using the documentary. It defines words you will need for the conversation, provides questions for consideration, and outlines actions all of us can take to fight and end stigma. I hope that you will commit to champion the movement.

Gloria Addo-Ayensu, MD, MPH
Director of Health
Fairfax County Health Department
October 10, 2018

Using this Guide

This guide contains information and suggestions on using the documentary *Written Off* to initiate community conversations about the stigma related to mental illness and substance use disorder. It provides background on the opioid crisis and stigma, describes the steps for planning a screening, and lists questions that can be used to facilitate a discussion about stigma in the community. **Please visit** https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/news/2018/written-off-documentary if you have questions about this guide.

Background

Opioid Data & Local Actions

Drug overdose is a large and growing public health crisis in the United States. Nationally, opioids were involved in 42,249 deaths in 2016, and opioid overdose deaths were five times higher in 2016 than in 1999. A similar increase in deaths can be seen in both Virginia and Fairfax County.

As the opioid crisis has unfolded over the last twenty years, there have been actions taken to address the various causes and contributors to the epidemic. While approaches to address the crisis come from many angles – law enforcement, treatment, and prescribing practices – there is one area that has not been adequately leveraged, and that is mobilizing community to fight stigma.

The local response to the opioid crisis in Fairfax County is described in the Fairfax County Opioid Task Force Plan, adopted in January 2018. The Opioid Plan describes a five-pronged approach to addressing the problem: education and awareness; drug storage, disposal, and monitoring; treatment; enforcement and criminal justice; and data and monitoring. The Fairfax County Opioid Task Force is comprised of subject matter experts from county agencies and the non-profit sector, as well as concerned community members. There are subcommittees for each of the five areas of the plan. A Steering Group of county leadership from health and human service agencies, public safety, the Office of Public Affairs, and Fairfax County Public Schools provides general guidance and oversight.

This guide and anti-stigma effort are part of education and awareness. The impact of stigma on the opioid crisis is significant and often prevents individuals, families, and friends from recognizing the warning signs of substance use disorder. And even after they do, stigma can keep them from seeking care.

Stigma

Stigma is defined as a "mark of shame or discredit." It refers to the negative beliefs that a group or society holds about a topic or group of people. It is based on fear – fear that a disease can't be treated or that people with a disease are dangerous.

Stigma can come from self or from others. While it might not be conscious or intentional, stigma exists when the following components come together:

- 1. We label differences.
- 2. We link undesirable attributes to the identified characteristic.
- 3. We separate 'us' from 'them'.
- 4. Labeled persons experience status loss and discrimination. iii

Stigma has many negative effects. When people suffer in silence and fear that others will view them negatively, they don't seek the treatment they need. It can leave people feeling isolated and disconnected. Beyond that, stigma can keep people from working or having a place to live. In a U.S. survey of individuals with psychiatric disabilities, one-quarter to one-half of respondents reported the experience of discrimination in social arenas, including employment (52%), housing (32%), law enforcement (27%), and education (24%).^{iv}

Mental Illness & Substance Use Disorder

Mental illnesses are conditions that affect a person's thinking, feeling, mood, or behavior, such as depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a number of factors can contribute to risk for mental illness, including trauma or a history of abuse, biological factors, and loneliness or isolation. Mental illnesses are common: one in five Americans will experience a mental illness in a given year.

Substance use disorder is sometimes called addiction. While the term "addiction" is widely used, there have been recent efforts by the medical community and government agencies to use language that focuses on the clinical aspects of substance use rather than the suggestion that people choose the disorder or that their lack of willpower is a moral failing. Vii

Substance use disorders occur when the recurrent use of alcohol and/or drugs causes significant impairment, such as health problems, disability, and failure to meet major responsibilities at work, school, or home. Viii Substance use disorder is a chronic illness that changes brain chemistry and function. Brain images of people with substance use disorder show changes that affect judgment and behavior control. Scientists believe that these structural changes in the brain may help explain the compulsive and destructive behaviors associated with substance use disorder. Since it is a chronic condition, treating substance use disorder involves bringing it into remission rather than curing it. Matt, the main character in the *Written Off* documentary, had substance use disorder.

According to the CDC, "mental illnesses and substance use disorders often occur together. Sometimes one disorder can be a contributing factor to or can make the other worse. Sometimes they simply occur at the same time."

Written Off Documentary Summary (Reprinted with permission)

Matt Edwards grew up in the Northwoods of Wisconsin. His first high came from pills prescribed by a doctor for a botched toe surgery. What followed was a decade sweating out shift after shift in restaurant kitchens, working twice as many hours as anyone else, so he could pay rent and feed his addiction. Matt was driven by a desperate need to get a fix – more often to avoid withdrawal than to get "high" in a recreational sense. To get what he needed he spun a web of fiction. He was a magnificent liar – smart, creative, and persuasive – his lies fed his addiction as much as the actual drugs. But Matt told the truth to himself in two spiral bound journals. He chronicled his daily drug use in cc's, milligrams, and dollars. His journals also tell the story of his countless attempts to quit.

Told through the eyes of the people who knew and loved him, Matt's story explores relationships impacted by addiction. How did his mother not know? What should his best friend, who knew everything, and the love of his life, an exchange student from Poland, have done? As Matt's trip to Poland, where opioids were nearly impossible to acquire points out, it's a uniquely American problem. Every day there is another front-page tragedy detailing another spectacular fall from grace. What is missing is real understanding of the complicated personal experience within addiction. How does a smart, loving, promising kid move from acting in the high school play to putting a needle in his arm? Written Off reveals that journey, in Matt's own words. Behind the addiction, there is a person – all at once lovable and despicable, funny and pathetic, young and old, destructive and aware of his failings.*

Event Planning

Once you are ready to fight stigma in your community using *Written Off*, **please visit**https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/news/2018/written-off-documentary. Below are considerations for planning an event.

- First, consider the audience for your event. Determine the time and place you will screen Written Off. Find a place that is accessible to many people at a time convenient for them.
- Promote your screening. For marketing materials, visit the Written Off website at https://www.written-off.com/. Click on 'Screening Kit' at the top of the page. There you will find invitations, postcards, and posters (see an



- example to the right), as well as a screening toolkit and post-film discussion guide.
- 3. Visit the venue to make sure it has the supplies and equipment you need. Test audiovisual equipment.
- 4. Print the flyers at the end of this guide.

Screening & Discussion

How to Have a Productive Discussion

Facilitate

The most effective facilitator will engage people, create a safe environment, and be knowledgeable about stigma. If you are unable to fill that role, find a facilitator that the audience can trust. It is important that people feel comfortable and heard.

Prepare

Read this entire guide to become familiar with preparation and post-film discussion topics. Watch *Written Off* before facilitating an event so that you have had time to reflect on it before engaging an audience.

Be flexible

Tailor the language you use to the audience you have. Frame the issues to their knowledge and experiences to make the discussion meaningful to them.

Sample Agenda (2 Hours)

The goal of the event is to begin the conversation about the stigma associated with substance use disorder using the documentary *Written Off*.

By the end of this event, participants will learn to

- 1. Explain the nature of substance use disorder (addiction) as a disease.
- 2. Describe the negative consequences of stigma.
- 3. Identify specific actions they can take to reduce stigma.

Agenda At-A-Glance

Opening Exercise &	Introductions
Welcome (5 min)	Opening exercise
Screening	Show the documentary
(1 hour, 15 min)	
Discussion (35 min)	Ask questions and discuss
	stigma
Closing	 Identify actions attendees can
(5 min)	take to reduce stigma
(5 min)	take to reduce stigma Thank people for attending

The following sections expand on each area of the agenda.

Opening Exercise

Introduce yourself and your organization, if you belong to one. You can begin by engaging with the following exercise. xi

Ask the following questions sequentially

Please raise your hand if:

- 1. You went to a doctor's appointment in the past year.
- 2. You were admitted to a hospital for any reason over the past year.
- 3. You took any medication over the past year.

How did it feel to answer these questions in a group setting?

Now, you do not need to raise your hand this time. How would you feel if I asked you to raise your hand if:

- 1. You have seen a mental health professional over the last year.
- 2. You took any psychiatric medications in the last year.

How are these questions different from the previous ones? What makes them different?

We are here today to start a conversation about mental illness and substance use disorder so that talking about these issues will be the same as talking about diabetes, cancer, or any other disease.

Welcome

(Reprinted with permission)

Welcome to this screening of *Written Off*. This film tells one story, but many of you will recognize yourselves or your loved ones in it. The opioid crisis is a tragedy made up of human lives, people who love each other, and stories that will break your heart. Behind every addiction there is a person fighting a deadly disease, usually without sympathy or understanding. This is a story about secrets and lies, shame and stigma, that will challenge most of what you think about addiction.

I chose to champion this screening of Written Off because

I'd like to thank some of the people who made tonight possible _____.

Finally, after the credits roll, we'll turn up the lights and have a conversation about the movie.

And now, Written Off.xii

Screening

Show *Written Off*. It is 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 min) long.

Discussion

Below are discussion questions you could use after the viewing to get people to talk about what they saw, what they learned, and what changes they can make to combat stigma. You can choose from the questions depending on the time available for discussion.

- How has this film changed your perspective?
- What stood out to you in the film and why?
- What examples of stigma did you see in the documentary?
- In your opinion, what led to Matt's death?
- Some people think of drug users as lazy or partiers. Does Matt's story fit with that description?
- What is the impact of labeling someone an 'addict' rather than 'a person with substance use disorder'?
- If Matt and the people around him had understood his addiction as a disease, how do you think things might have gone differently?
- What were the points in time where the people close to Matt could have intervened?

Closing

Remind the audience that you hope each of them will help to end stigma. It's important to identify who contributes to stigma and who can change it – and that's all of us. Together we can build a community that is resilient, nurturing, and healing.

Here are five things each of us can do to fight stigma:

- 1. Learn more about mental illness and substance use disorder.
- Listen without judgment, and support the people you know who seek treatment for mental illness and/or substance use disorder.
- Use "person first" language. Referring to someone as a person with substance use disorder suggests the person has a problem that can be addressed. Labeling someone a 'drug abuser' or 'addict' implies that the person is the problem.
- 4. Speak up when you see someone being mistreated because of their mental illness or substance use disorder.
- 5. Have conversations about stigma in your community with the people you know.

It is important for your audience to know there is help available locally. The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board provides treatment, recovery, and peer support services, and can also help people find other resources available in the community. If you or someone you know is struggling with a substance use disorder or mental illness, please call 703-383-8500. In an emergency, call 703-573-5679.

If you have made copies of the handouts at the end of this guide, encourage attendees to take them home.

Thank attendees for coming.

Resources

There are many online resources where you can learn more about stigma, mental illness, and substance use disorder. We hope you will use them and share them with others.

- Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board: https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/heroin-opioids
- Know the RxSK Use with Caution (Northern Virginia): https://knowrx.org/resources/
- Virginia Task Force on Prescription Drug and Heroin Abuse: http://curbthecrisis.com/
- Virginia Department of Health: http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/commissioner/opioid-addiction-in-virginia/
- National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI): https://www.nami.org/
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): https://www.samhsa.gov/disorders
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/learn/index.htm

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Behavioral Health Services for Adults

For overcoming mental health challenges and substance use disorders

What are behavioral health services?

Behavioral health services help individuals and families manage challenges related to mental illness and substance use disorders. People often struggle with mental health disorders and dependence on substances like drugs or alcohol at the same time. Our staff is trained to help people with these "co-occurring" conditions.

The goal of our behavioral health services is to help you live a fuller, healthier life. Recovery IS possible. You CAN feel better!

What is the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board?

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, or "CSB" as it is commonly called, is one of 40 such agencies throughout Virginia that provide services for mental illness, substance use disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Fairfax-Falls Church CSB operates as an agency of the Fairfax County government.

How do I find out if CSB services are for me?

If you or someone you care about needs help because of challenges related to mental health and/or substance use, our Entry and Referral staff can talk with you about your situation and suggest services that may be of help.

You can either call our staff at **703-383-8500** or just come in, without appointment, to the CSB Merrifield Center, at 8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive in Fairfax. Call center and walk-in hours are Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free parking is available in the garage behind the building. Bring personal identification, such as a driver's license or other proof that you are a resident of Fairfax County or the cities of Fairfax or Falls Church.

What if it's an emergency?

The CSB provides emergency behavioral health services 24/7, 365 days a year for all residents of Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

You can call CSB Emergency Services at **703-573-5679**. Or just come directly to Emergency Services at the Merrifield Center, day or night, without appointment. CSB Emergency Services is located on the lower level (back entrance) of the Merrifield Center, at 8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive in Fairfax, near Inova Fairfax Hospital.

For substance use emergencies, you can call the Fairfax Detoxification Center at **703-502-7000**. This number is also answered 24/7, 365 days a year.

If the situation is immediately life-threatening, dial 911 and ask for a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) officer.

 \rightarrow Turn the page over to learn about different types of services and what you can expect.

What types of services are available?

Screening and assessment staff help identify the problem and work with you to develop a plan to support you with your recovery. Emergency services and crisis supports are there to help you get through the immediate crisis. Turning Point, a program for young adults (ages 16-25), provides rapid intervention after a first episode of psychosis and subsequent wraparound services. Our staff goes out into the community to help people who are homeless or not yet engaged in services. People who are in recovery themselves and understand what it's like to live with behavioral health challenges provide peer support. Outpatient therapy can help you better understand and manage challenges and support your recovery. Case management helps you access practical resources important to your recovery.

Other services include: psychiatry and medication services; psychosocial rehabilitation to help you learn or refresh social and self-care skills; employment services to help you prepare for, find, get, and keep a job; and residential support to help you learn and practice skills that will equip you to live successfully in the community.

CSB services are provided at various locations throughout the community.

Our staff can also help you connect with other resources and people in the community to help you build your network of support for sustained recovery.

Will I have to pay for my services?

Fees are charged to offset the cost of providing treatment services. The CSB also accepts insurance (including Medicaid) and other sources of payment. Fees are based on a sliding scale, according to your ability to pay. You will not be denied services If you are not able to pay. Most of the funding for CSB services comes from local tax dollars.

What else can I expect with CSB behavioral health services?

You will be deciding, with the help of your counselor, which services you think best meet your needs and goals. You will be fully involved in decisions about your care. This is your life, your service plan.

If you receive medication as a part of your treatment, you can expect to receive educational information with the medication. You are encouraged to ask questions and share any concerns you may have with the prescribing physician.

You can expect to be treated with dignity and respect, and your confidentiality will be carefully protected.

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board

May 2018

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. Call 703-324-7000, TTY 711.

REVIVE!

Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Education



Did you know...

- Overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in the United States?
- The only way to reverse an opioid overdose is to administer naloxone?
- You can be trained to administer this life-saving medication?



Revive trains individuals on what to do and not do in an overdose situation, how to administer the lifesaving opioid overdose reversal drug naloxone, and what to do afterwards.

Each attendee receives a free Revive kit, which includes all the supplies needed to administer naloxone. The medication itself can be acquired at a pharmacy after completing the training. Attendees also receive a safety plan to help individuals prevent overdose if they relapse.

The 60-90 minute Revive trainings are **free** and open to everyone. If you or someone you know uses opioids, **PLEASE ATTEND!**

Go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov and search "revive" for upcoming training dates and more information.

Don't see a class that fits your schedule, or have a group you'd like to have trained?

To schedule a custom Revive training for your group, please contact Berkeley Gerstner at Berkeley.Gerstner@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-449-6313.



USING NARCAN (NALOXONE):

Naloxone (often called by a brand name, Narcan) is an easily administered drug that can reverse an opioid overdose. Naloxone has saved thousands of lives. You can get a prescription for Naloxone in Virginia. REVIVE! provides training to families, friends, professionals and others on how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose emergency with the administration of naloxone. Take a class and be ready to save a life.



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PREVENTION MATTERS WHEN A LOVED ONE OVERDOSES

AN OVERDOSE OF HEROIN OR OPIOID PAINKILLERS LIKE OXYCONTIN OR PERCOCET CAN BE LETHAL. KNOW WHAT TO DO IN CASE SOMEONE YOU ARE WITH ODS.



You can get a prescription for Naloxone in Virginia.

respond to an opioid overdose emergency with the administration of naloxone. Visit: http://bit.ly/ffxREVIVE

REVIVE! provides training to families, friends, professionals, and others on how to recognize and

SIGNS OF AN OPIOID OVERDOSE:

- shallow breathing or not breathing at all
- snoring or gurgling sounds (this can mean that a person's airway is partly blocked)
- blue lips or fingertips
- floppy arms and legs
- no response to stimulus
- disorientation
- unrousable (can't be woken up)/unconscious.

If you can't get a response from someone, don't assume they are asleep. Not all overdoses happen quickly and sometimes it can take hours for someone to die. Action taken in those hours could save a life.

THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY: Call 911 immediately.

CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.

- Stay with the person.
- If Naloxone is available and you've been trained to use it, do so. If it's available and you haven't been trained, let the 911 operator know you have it available and ask for instructions.

APPLY "OLD SCHOOL" REMEDIES

- Put the person in a cold bath Inject them with salt water or stimulant drugs (methamphetamine).
- Have them walk it off.
- Sleep it off.
- Induce vomiting.

- Virginia law provides anyone who calls 911 or otherwise alerts the authorities in the case of an overdose a "safe harbor" affirmative defense.
- Virginia law provides immunity for anyone who administers Naloxone in good faith.

FIND TREATMENT

- The best way to prevent overdose is to not use drugs.
- Treatment is available. It works. Recovery is possible.
- Call CSB Entry and Referral at 703-383-8500 for help finding

If you or someone you love needs help to overcome drug dependence: Call the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board at 703-383-8500.

Or come in person to the Merrifield Center at 8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Dr., Fairfax. No appointment needed. Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., M-F. In an emergency, call CSB Emergency Services at 703-573-5679 or the Fairfax Detoxification Center at 703-502-7000. Both numbers are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. In a life-threatening emergency, call 911.

For more information and additional resources, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/heroin-opiates/



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations publication will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711. July 2016

A Fairfax County, Va.,

