Opioid Overdose
Opioids (a drug class) include narcotics such as heroin, morphine, fentanyl, methadone, oxycodone, and codeine. People who misuse opioids (prescribed or obtained illegally) are at risk of opioid overdose (OD). Opioids affect the part of the brain that controls breathing, so when too much of an opioid is taken, breathing slows or stops. People at higher risk of OD include those starting or tapering opioid substitution therapy (ex. methadone), with comorbid conditions (e.g. HIV or liver disease), or with a period of non-use (e.g. released from prison or detox).

Naloxone
Death and injury from opioid OD are preventable with OD prevention, recognition and response education, and naloxone. Naloxone (Narcan®) reverses opioid OD, restoring breathing in a few minutes. It is not a narcotic, is non-addictive, and has no effect if no opioids are present. Naloxone is a safe medication, with few side effects. Although traditionally (for 40+ years) given by emergency responders, with minimal training laypeople can give naloxone. In fact, the World Health Organization recommends naloxone be made available to people likely to witness an opioid overdose (including family and friends of people who use opioids).

Take Home Naloxone Program
Saskatchewan residents who are at risk of an opioid overdose and successfully complete OD prevention, recognition and response training are eligible for a Take Home Naloxone kit. Training and kits are available at no charge. Friends and family of people who use opioids are also encouraged to go through training (since they may witness an OD).

This program is empowering. It gives peers, friends, and families of people who use drugs the chance to save a life, sending a clear message to those who use drugs that their lives matter.