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Health Pulse

City coffee-shop workers trained to treat drug overdoses

Employees at city coffee shops who were trained to reverse opioid overdoses felt more confident about their ability to help save a victim's life, according to a new study by researchers at the Center for Drug Use and HIV/HCV Research at New York University.

The study was funded by the National Institutes of Health and [published online Friday](#) in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. It taught 18 managers and other employees at coffee shops in Brooklyn and Manhattan how to identify signs of overdose, communicate with emergency services and administer the nasal spray naloxone. It also instructed them in "good Samaritan" laws that protect nonmedical interveners from criminal and civil liability.

The report comes as more drug users are overdosing in public bathrooms at businesses, parks and libraries. The researchers found in a prior study that 58% of the city's business managers reported encountering drug users in their bathrooms in the past six months and 14% "encountered someone who was unresponsive, presumably due to drug use."

But employees manning these public places are often unsure how to respond to overdoses, the researchers wrote. Brain damage can occur just three minutes after a person stops breathing and rapid intervention can improve survival rates.

Training allows employees "to empower themselves to be agents of change," said lead author Brett Wolfson-Stofko, a research scientist at the New York-based nonprofit National Development & Research Institutes and an affiliated investigator with the NYU center. "They want to be able to do something to help this person make it through and survive."

Researchers wrote that one participant reported "feeling confident and equipped to be an agent in saving someone's life" and another said addressing an overdose "seems a lot less scary now."