Module 4. Collect Your OFR Data

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Module
4

This module will assist the overdose fatality review (OFR) data manager in securely collecting and storing relevant case review data.

4A. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential for successful overdose fatality reviews. It maintains the trust of participating members and of the community in the OFR process. The lead agency should check state law and consult its legal authority before starting an OFR process. All team members (including guest members and observers) must sign a confidentiality agreement to attend.

Relevant federal laws that affect data protections

OFR teams must understand and adhere to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA; and 42 CFR) in addition to the confidentiality policies of other government-private institutions that serve children and other vulnerable populations to protect decedent information. Refer to the agency's record retention policy—what types of documents need to be retained and for what length of time.

Relevant state privacy laws

Many states have statutes and legislation supporting and guiding the OFR process and confidentiality, and every year more states introduce legislation to support and guide the review process.

Some states may have additional privacy laws for medical, substance use, and mental health records.

Interagency data sharing agreement

An interagency data sharing agreement is signed by the senior leadership of each participating agency/members (including any one-time members) that outlines the responsibilities of each party. In an interagency data sharing agreement, all parties agree to share certain information on an established timeline, adhere to certain data protection standards, and identify communication expectations. A sample interagency data sharing agreement is included in Appendix D. Interagency data sharing agreements should be updated annually and amended as new members are added to the OFR team.

Confidentiality agreement

A confidentiality agreement needs to be signed by members at the beginning of each review. This

agreement is at the person/participant level and includes the objectives of the OFR. It prohibits dissemination of information beyond the purpose of the review. A sample confidentiality agreement is included in Appendix D.

In addition to understanding federal and state laws around OFR and signing data sharing and confidentiality agreements, there are other steps needed to maintain confidentiality. It is recommended that you create a data sharing protocol for the distribution of case information and record-keeping expectations. A sample data sharing protocol is included in Appendix D.

When sharing any sensitive case-specific information outside of the meetings with any members, encrypt the emails or protect them with passwords. Hand delivery also maintains confidentiality.

4B. Data Collection Process

Before the Meeting: Data Collection Steps

The data collection process begins before the OFR meeting and is a key responsibility of the OFR coordinator. In addition to steps 4 and 6 (request case information and summarize case) of Section 2B. Meeting Preparation: Coordinator's Activities, the coordinator will want to be familiar with the type of information captured in the OFR database.

As documents and information are received, organize and save all files on a secure computer with restricted access. Examples of these data files may include the medical examiner's/coroner's report, the decedent's criminal history, signed confidentiality forms (collected from

> **Important:** Save all case-related documents and information on a secure computer with restricted access.

> **Tip:** Summarizing key activities along a timeline, ideally on a whiteboard, is a great way to focus the OFR team's discussion.

participants at the meeting), and all data collected prior to or at the review meeting.

As mentioned in step 4 of Section 2C. Meeting Preparation: Members' Activities (Prepare a summary), members will need to prepare a summary to verbally share during the OFR discussion. A member's guide to collecting case information and agency-specific data element recommendations are available in Appendix B.

During the Meeting: Data Collection Steps

The data collection process during the OFR meeting happens as the members report out and ask questions. The designated note taker (often the coordinator) will want to be familiar with the OFR database to make sure to capture pertinent information discussed in the meeting.

The facilitator summarizes in chronological order any significant case details shared in the meeting and elicits a discussion to focus participants on identifying

4C. OFR Database

The OFR database collects information about the cases reviewed and the recommendations developed. The OFR database needs to be secure and stored at a neutral agency. For consistency across cases and OFR teams, OFR teams may want to use the OFR database developed by the OFR National Data Workgroup. The OFR database is a REDCap database available to all OFR teams and contains four main sections:

1. OFR team meeting details
2. Decedent case information
   - Demographics
   - Cause of death
   - Overdose and death-scene investigation
   - Interventions following the overdose
   - History of life circumstances and immediate stressors before the overdose
3. Community context
4. Recommendations

missed opportunities for prevention and intervention. Section 3C. Meeting Agenda provides details on the types of information shared and discussed in the OFR meeting.

After the Meeting: Data Collection Steps

The OFR team data manager is responsible for managing the collection and entry of the data on reviewed cases and developed recommendations. Depending on the size of the jurisdiction and the resources available, the OFR facilitator or coordinator may be responsible for this task. The individual responsible for entering data needs to ensure that the data is entered consistently and accurately.

After the meeting, all the data from the meeting needs to be entered into the OFR database; learn more about the database in Section 4C. OFR Database. The facilitator or data manager may need to follow up with members to get missing data or information that needs more research outside of the review meeting. Any additional information provided will need to be entered into the OFR database.

To access and learn more about the **OFR database,** visit

www.cossapresources.org.