



# Storytelling for Community Impact

Moderated by Annmarie Pagliano, Associate Program Officer  
RIZE Massachusetts Foundation



# Storytelling for Community Impact

RIZE Massachusetts

October 8, 2025



**FISHING PARTNERSHIP**



**SUPPORT SERVICES®**

Stigma is a story.



Stigma is a story.

Your programs are a story.



Stigma is a story.

Your programs are a story.

Your data are a story.



Stigma is a story.

The words you use are a story.

Your programs are a story.

Your data are a story.



Stigma is a story.

The words you use are a story.

How you dress is a story.

Your programs are a story.

Your data are a story.



Stigma is a story.

How you live your life is a story.

The words you use are a story.

How you dress is a story.

Your programs are a story.

Your data are a story.





Stigma is a story.

How you live your life is a story.

The words you use are a story.

Your videos are a story.

How you dress is a story.

Your programs are a story.

Your data are a story.



Stigma is a story.

How you live your life is a story.

The words you use are a story.

Your photos are a story.

Your videos are a story.

How you dress is a story.

Your programs are a story.

Your data are a story.



Stigma is a story.

How you live your life is a story.

Your budget is a story.

The words you use are a story.

Your photos are a story.

Your videos are a story.

How you dress is a story.

Your programs are a story.

Your data are a story.



Stigma is a story.

How you live your life is a story.

Your budget is a story.

The words you use are a story.

Your photos are a story.

Your videos are a story.

How you dress is a story.

Your programs are a story.

**Your staff pay and  
benefits are a story.**

Your data are a story.



Stigma is a story.

How you live your life is a story.

Your budget is a story.

The words you use are a story.

Your photos are a story.

# KNOW YOUR

How you live your life is a story.

# STORIES

How you dress is a story.

Your programs are a story.

Your staff pay and  
benefits are a story.

Your data are a story.



## OUR MISSION

Guided by the fishing families we are honored to serve, the mission of Fishing Partnership Support Services is to improve the health, safety, and economic security of commercial fishermen, their families, and their communities.

Fishing Partnership is proud to provide essential programming to support the heroes who feed us.



Commercial fishermen contribute to our **nation's food security** and are the bedrock of a **robust economic engine**



The commercial fishing industry is among the most dangerous with a **fatality rate 40x higher** than the national average



Fluctuating incomes, changing regulations, and other outside forces contribute to a **lack of predictability and job stability** and contribute to disproportionate rates of **uninsurance or underinsurance**



Unique workplace conditions including pain and injury, trauma, and unpredictability have led to fishermen being **adversely impacted** by substance use disorders and in greater need of behavioral health interventions





“

There is no human resources office at sea.  
We strengthen our communities by  
providing support services that otherwise  
do not exist or are impossible to reach.”

– Shannon Eldredge, Fishing Partnership Navigator,  
Former Commercial Fisherman



# BY THE COMMUNITY



**Live in the coastal  
communities  
we serve**



**Have lived  
fishing  
experience**



**Develop  
programming  
in response to  
community needs**

# FOR THE COMMUNITY

Massachusetts defines a Community Health Worker as a “*public health worker who applies his or her unique understanding of the experience, language and culture of the populations he or she serves.*”





# WHERE WE ARE

## NORTH SHORE

2 Blackburn Center, Gloucester  
978-282-4847

## SOUTH SHORE

139 Court St., 101A, Plymouth  
508-746-5400

## NEW BEDFORD

398 County St., New Bedford  
508-991-3043 (FP Main Office)

## CAPE & ISLANDS

894 Main St., Chatham  
774-840-9393

## POINT JUDITH

Point Judith  
*Coming Soon!*



# HEALTH & WELLNESS

To be healthy and well, fishing families need equal access to affordable healthcare coverage and evidence-based healthcare services, including behavioral health, as well as a trusting relationship with a primary care physician.



Our Navigators are trained Community Health Workers (CHWs) who understand the unique needs of fishermen, their families, and the coastal communities we serve. We work with our partners to provide access to affordable healthcare coverage, preventative health services and interventions, and behavioral health support.

## SERVICES

- Access to Affordable Health Insurance
- Assistance with Finding a Primary Care Physician
- Oral Health Access
- Preventive Healthcare Programs
- Trauma Support
- Opioid Overdose Education & Naloxone Distribution
- Recovery Coaching
- Mental Health Support
- Support Treating Substance Use Disorders

# SAFETY AT SEA

To be safe, fishermen must have access to safety training, investment in their safety infrastructure, and regulations that do not force them to put themselves in danger to earn a living.



With education and preparedness, fishermen can be safer at sea. Reducing the risk of injury and fatalities at sea happens through a holistic approach to programming. Our Community Health Workers, instructors, and staff work with partners to provide a range of services that are accessible to fishermen, and adapted to suit the unique needs of their work at sea.

## SERVICES

### TRAINING

- Safety & Survival Course
- Drill Conductor Certification
- Fishermen's First Aid/CPR/AED Certification
- Fishing Vessel Stability Awareness Course
- Ergonomics Training
- Marine Safety Instructor Training
- Safety Training Videos

### SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- Lifejackets for Fishermen Rebate Program
- First Aid Kits Personalized for Fishing Vessels

### ADVOCACY

- Fishing Regulations and Government Infrastructure that Prioritize Safety of Life at Sea



# 2024 SAFETY, STABILITY, & FIRST AID TRAINING LOCATIONS



## MAINE

Boothbay Harbor (x2)  
Portland (x2)

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

Portsmouth

## MASSACHUSETTS

Gloucester (x3)  
Sandwich  
Chatham  
New Bedford (x4)  
Dedham  
Plymouth

## RHODE ISLAND

Point Judith (x4)

## CONNECTICUT

Groton

## NEW JERSEY

Cape May (x3)  
Barnegat Light (x2)  
Atlantic City

## MARYLAND

Ocean City (x2)

## SOUTH CAROLINA

McClellanville

# ECONOMIC SECURITY

To be financially secure, fishing families need to make enough profit to live a dignified life as stewards of their own economic future.

Essential to mitigating the effects of income instability, workplace seasonality, and external forces outside a fisherman's control, FP is committed to improving the economic security of fishing families by providing programming to increase financial resilience.

## SERVICES

- Financial Planning Workshops
- Deckhand Development & Training
- Ted Williams Memorial Scholarship Program
- Captain's License Program
- Support With Accessing Government & Private Resources



# Ben's Story

## Our Community Health Worker Navigator Model Evolves with Fishermen

For fishing families, Navigators represent their go-to support system when challenges, tragedy, or even life's happy moments arise. Ben Travers was first introduced to FP by his father Frank who reached out for assistance enrolling his family in a Health Connector Plan. At 15, Ben came to his first Safety & Survival training, beginning his own relationship with our team. Over the years, Ben has reached out numerous times; his experience is indicative of our ability to provide ongoing resources and respond to both changing life and industry needs.



### AGE 15

First individual interactions with FP Navigators/Attends 1st Safety & Survival Training

Attends 2nd Safety & Survival Training & Drill Conductor

### AGE 16

Attends CPR/First Aid Certification

### AGE 18

Attends 3rd Safety & Survival Training & Drill Conductor

Speaks with Navigator about Health Insurance

### AGE 20

Attends 4th Safety & Survival Training

### AGE 21

Reaches out for help to access financial resources – COVID-19 Loan Assistance

### AGE 22

Involved in a traumatic event – accesses Riverside Trauma Service/Navigator Psychological First Aid

### AGE 23

Buys own boat, first child is born, and is feeling secure for his future - continues to check-in for small business resources

Identified need for his crew to be trained during COVID-19 – his outreach encouraged the FP safety team to figure out how to train and save lives during a global pandemic





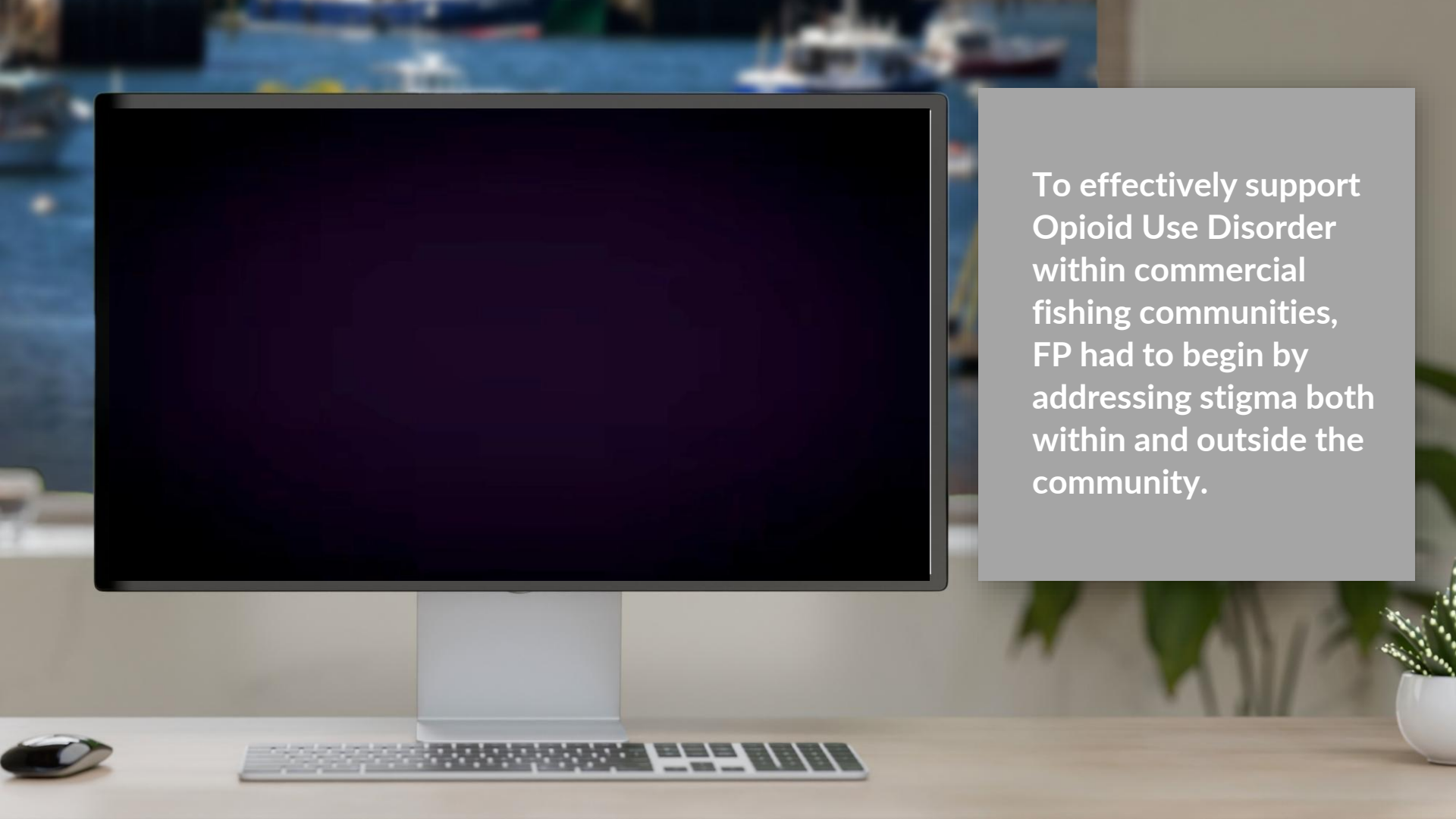
OVERDOSE EDUCATION AND  
NAXALONE DISTRIBUTION TRAINING

END

2016

9 trained



A computer monitor with a black screen sits on a light-colored wooden desk. In the background, a harbor scene with several boats is visible through a window. To the right of the monitor, a grey rectangular box contains white text. A small potted plant is visible on the far right edge of the desk.

To effectively support  
Opioid Use Disorder  
within commercial  
fishing communities,  
FP had to begin by  
addressing stigma both  
within and outside the  
community.



Who is in danger  
of developing  
Substance Use  
Disorder?



Who is in danger  
of developing  
Substance Use  
Disorder?

A typical  
landlubber



A commercial  
fisherman\*



*\*most likely to die of an opioid overdose*

### MYTH

- All fishermen use opioids.
- A majority of fishermen will die by overdose.



### TRUTH

- Fishermen are **disproportionately impacted** by opioid overdose
- STILL, the vast majority of fishermen have never and **WILL NEVER** suffer from SUD







*After myth-busting,*

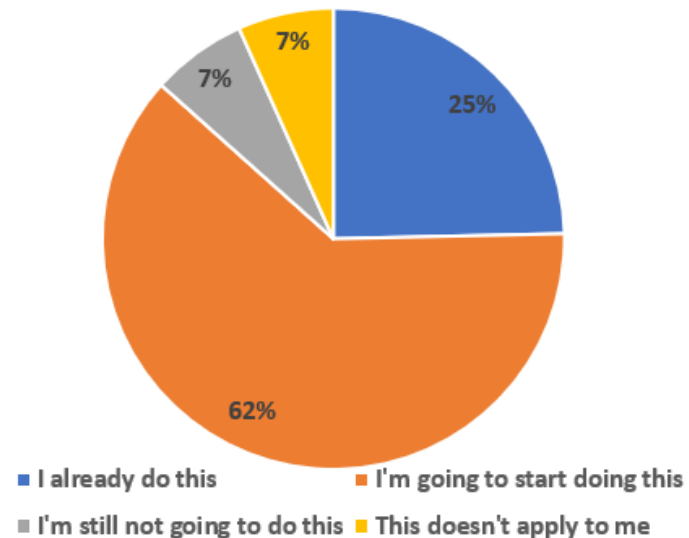
**Deb promotes commercial fishermen as:**

**First Responders at Sea**





After today's training are you likely to **Carry Narcan?**





# OVERDOSE EDUCATION AND NAXALONE DISTRIBUTION TRAINING

# OEND

**2016**  
9 trained

**2017**  
121 trained

**2018**  
405 trained

**2019**  
253 trained

**2020**  
225 trained

**2021**  
523 trained

**2022**  
727 trained

**2023**  
777 trained

**2024**  
667 trained

“

The fishing industry and the relationship to substance use is the story of pain, mental and physical pain, and the lack of access to support.”

- J.J. Bartlett

## Fishing Partnership's First Responders Training is empowering one fisherman at a time with the skills to be first responders at sea, and in their communities.

“The opioid epidemic has made fishing, already a dangerous job, even more deadly. When there’s an overdose at sea, fishermen have to take care of one another.”

- C.J. Chivers

*The New York Times Magazine, June 9, 2024;  
New Bedford commercial fisherman Hollis  
Nevells at the helm*



The New York Times Magazine



Fishing Partnership is a regional leader,  
proud to support the heroes who feed us.

# Thank you.

## OUR MISSION

Fishing partnership support  
services improves the health,  
safety, and economic security of  
commercial fishermen, their  
families, and their communities.

**FISHING PARTNERSHIP**



**SUPPORT SERVICES**





BOSTON BULLPEN PROJECT

**HALO**

HEALING AFTER LOSS TO OVERDOSE | INITIATIVES

# ETHICAL STORYTELLING

WITH PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS/EXPERIENCE  
HOMELESSNESS

BRENDAN LITTLE

# Leveraging Storytelling for Impact

**Allie Hunter**

Co-founder  
Community Syringe Redemption Program





# About Me

- Co-founder, CSRP
- Clearinghouse Director, HRiA
- Board Member, Learn 2 Cope

Former Director of Community Programs,  
Emergent BioSolutions

Former Executive Director, PAARI

views expressed are my own



# Acknowledgements

CSRP CAMBRIDGE

- Cambridge Health Department
- RIZE Massachusetts





# Program Overview

## COMMUNITY SYRINGE REDEMPTION PROGRAM

- How it started
- How it works
- Where we are now



**Why  
storytelling  
is essential  
for impact**

# Gothamist

**A NYC program trades cash for used needles. It's paying out thousands of dollars.**



The Boston Globe 



An unusual program has cleaned up hundreds of thousands of discarded needles in Boston by buying them from people who collect them from streets and parks, city officials say.

CAMBRIDGE

5,413 syringes collected  
43 participants

since 8/6/2025

ALL SITES

5,792,285 syringes collected  
4,915 participants

as of 10/6/2025



*They're gone. You used to see needles all the time, but you don't see them anymore. It's like, clean.*

*I used to throw them in the garbage. But now I keep them in my container to bring to you guys.*

*Our streets are cleaner so kids won't step on any needles. People see us cleaning the streets and helping the neighborhood.*

*This keeps me busy, gives me something to do. And I like to help the neighborhood.*

*I am used to robbing and stealing or selling drugs, and I haven't done that at all since you guys have been around. So, for me, it's a great help.*

*You care about us. You don't look down on us. You treat us like humans.*

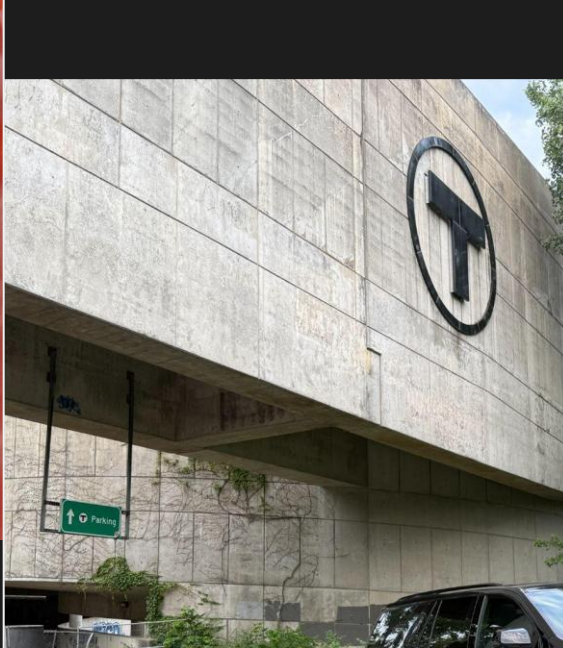




I KNOW IT MIGHT SOUND STRANGE,  
BUT THE NEEDLE EXCHANGE HELP ME CHANGE.  
I FOUND SOME NEEDLES GAVE THEM SOME.  
THEY TOOK MY LIFE AND GAVE ME ONE.  
WHAT A TRADE!  
WHAT A TRADE!  
ONE I COULD NOT FIND WORDS TO EXPLAIN,  
SO INSTEAD I DREAMED OF WHAT REAL CHANGE COULD MEAN.  
NO MORE SLEEP ON HARD CONCRETE.  
NO MORE PAIN.  
NO MORE SICK AND INSANE.  
THERE WAS A TIME WHERE JUST TO DREAM WAS TOUGH ENOUGH.  
NOW I CALL THAT WHITE VAN MY OMNIBUS.  
THE QUESTION IS.  
WHY NOT US?  
ALL IT TAKES IS ONE TO BELIEVE IN SOMEONE.  
I HOPE MY STORY WILL HELP CHANGE PEOPLE.  
UNTIL THEN, I'LL RID THE STREETS OF DIRTY NEEDLES.  
AND I'LL BE THERE BEFORE SUNRISE.  
WAITING PATIENTLY FOR THE NEEDLE GUYS.



Combining  
quantitative and  
qualitative  
storytelling



Using stories for  
funding, policy, and  
stigma reduction



Tips for small orgs  
on low-cost, high-  
impact storytelling

# Ethical storytelling



→ **Thank you**

[allie@addictionresponse.com](mailto:allie@addictionresponse.com)  
[addictionresponse.com](http://addictionresponse.com)



# Q & A



**mosaic**  
opioid recovery partnership

**Thank You**

[mosaic.rizema.org](https://mosaic.rizema.org)

