Aug. 18, 2017— Utah Public Radio is taking a look at Utah’s opioid epidemic in an upcoming original series.

“The opioid crisis is just that: a crisis,” Barbara Insley Crouch, the executive director of the Utah Poison Control Center, told UPR journalists. Indeed, Utah ranks 7th-highest in the nation for overdose deaths. Among older teens, overdose deaths have increased 19 percent in one year.

To help us better understand the allure and devastation of opioids, UPR staffers are seeking stories from Utahns about their own struggles.

According to assistant news director Dani Hayes, the stories abound of individuals’ own struggles or the tragedy that confronts a family when a son or daughter overdoses. This series provides “this opportunity to express to that person what you wish you would have known - the dangers and struggles — before opioids became a part of your life,” said Hayes.

“Express your love to that person. Tell them what you hope for them. And let them know how you are able to help.”

The UPR team has set up a hotline to record your stories. Whether the messages are anonymous or not, UPR staffers will use these stories only with your permission.