

# BLUEGUARD

a product-service system to protect drug users from overdose and connect them to counseling

## OVERVIEW

Ninety-one Americans die every day from an opioid (i.e. heroin, OxyContin, et. al.) overdose. As of 2016, drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in America, exceeding that of car accidents and firearm-related deaths. As the problem continues to get worse, it is becoming increasingly clear that public policy-driven approaches to this crisis are failing.

The "war on drugs" has treated this issue as one of criminal justice rather than healthcare. This has only compounded the stigma surrounding this issue, furthering the perception of drug users as hedonists and moral failures. Even among the services that are provided, most take an abstinence-focused approach. This leaves those who continue to use drugs with access to few, if any, healthcare services.

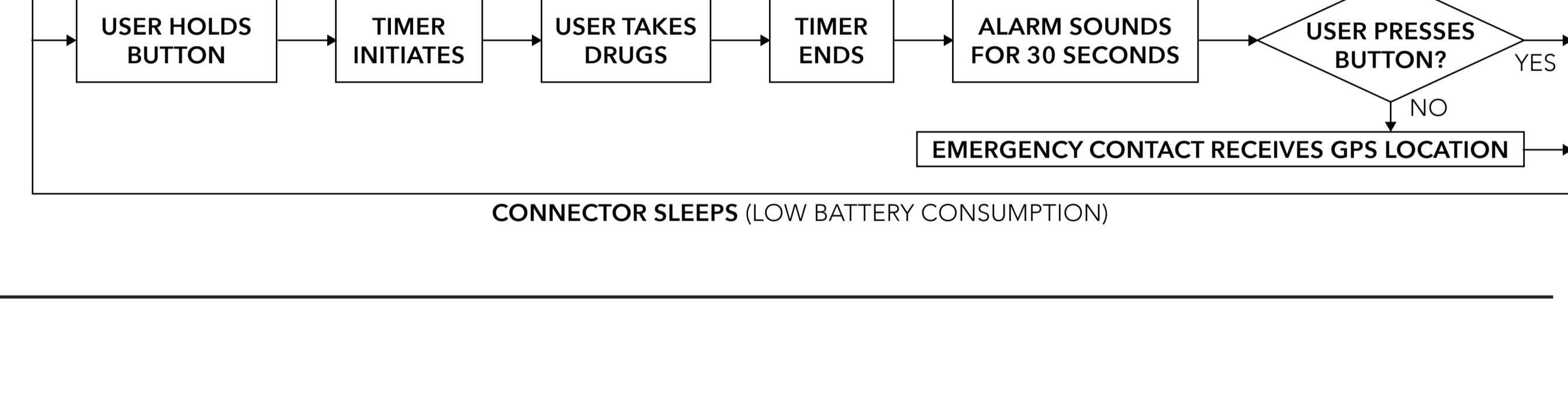
In response to this pressing public health crisis, we developed **BlueGuard**, a product-service system to protect drug users from overdose death and connect them to counseling services. The centerpiece of this offering is the BlueGuard Connector, a pocket-sized, internet and GPS-enabled device. It functions as an overdose monitor (something desired by many opiate users, as confirmed by research) with the ability to request a call from a non-judgmental counselor (called a "BlueGuard") with just the push of a button.

The use of an overdose monitor would lead to more overdoses being reversed, reducing the rate of accidental death among drug users. Further, we believe that by pairing a counseling service offering with an overdose monitor, participation in counseling would increase, leading to better health outcomes among opiate users.

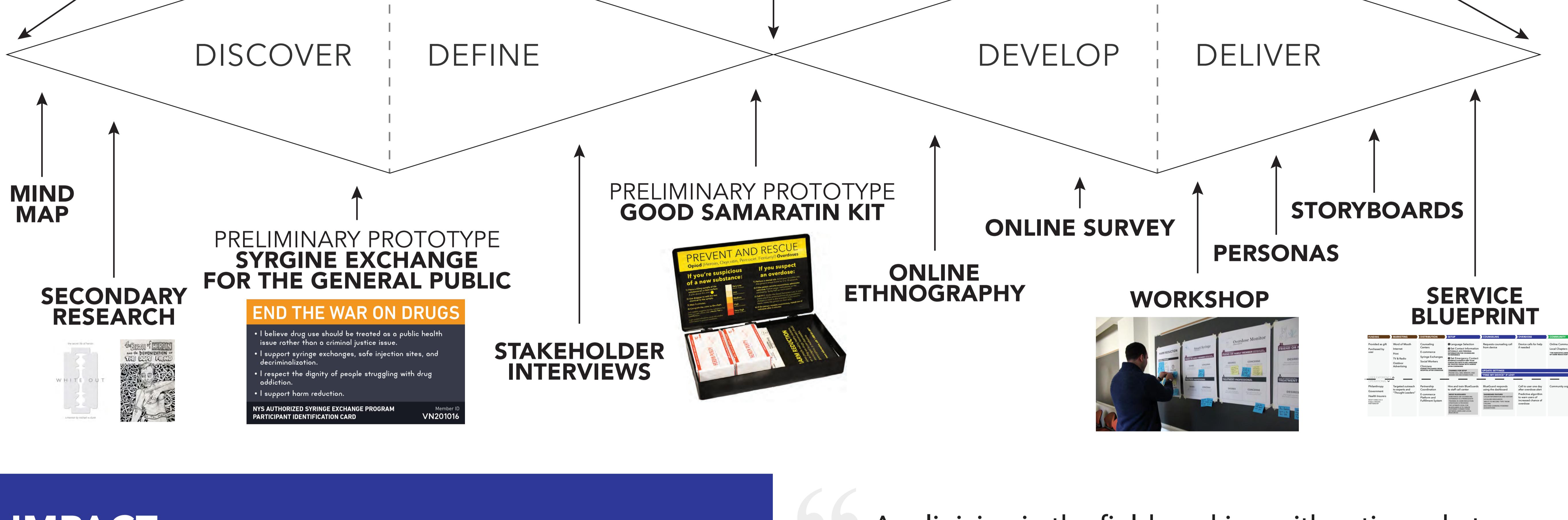
## THE BLUEGUARD CONNECTOR



### BLUEGUARD CONNECTOR FUNCTIONALITY



## PROCESS



## IMPACT

There is currently no widely distributed tool for drug users to contact emergency services in the event of an overdose while using alone. BlueGuard would not only create a new channel for overdose reversal, but deliver counseling services in a form most likely to be adopted and appreciated by drug users.

Due to issues of liability, the functional prototype could not be deployed among users in the course of this project. But the concept has been validated through affirmation from experts and stakeholders.

“As clinician in the field working with active substance users, I feel that **BlueGuard is much needed and will undoubtedly save lives**. We need better tools to engage active substance users and also work towards connecting them to community supports. What is most impressive about BlueGuard is that it not only provides a way to mitigate the impact of an opiate overdose, but it also facilitates the engagement of the user with counseling services.”

– Jenifer Talley, PhD  
Clinical Psychologist at The Center for Optimal Living

## HYPOTHETICAL USER JOURNEY ENABLED BY BLUEGUARD



After her fourth trip to rehab followed by a relapse, Samantha is arguing with her father about what should be done next. She decides to move in with a romantic partner, deeming herself to be too much of a burden on her family.



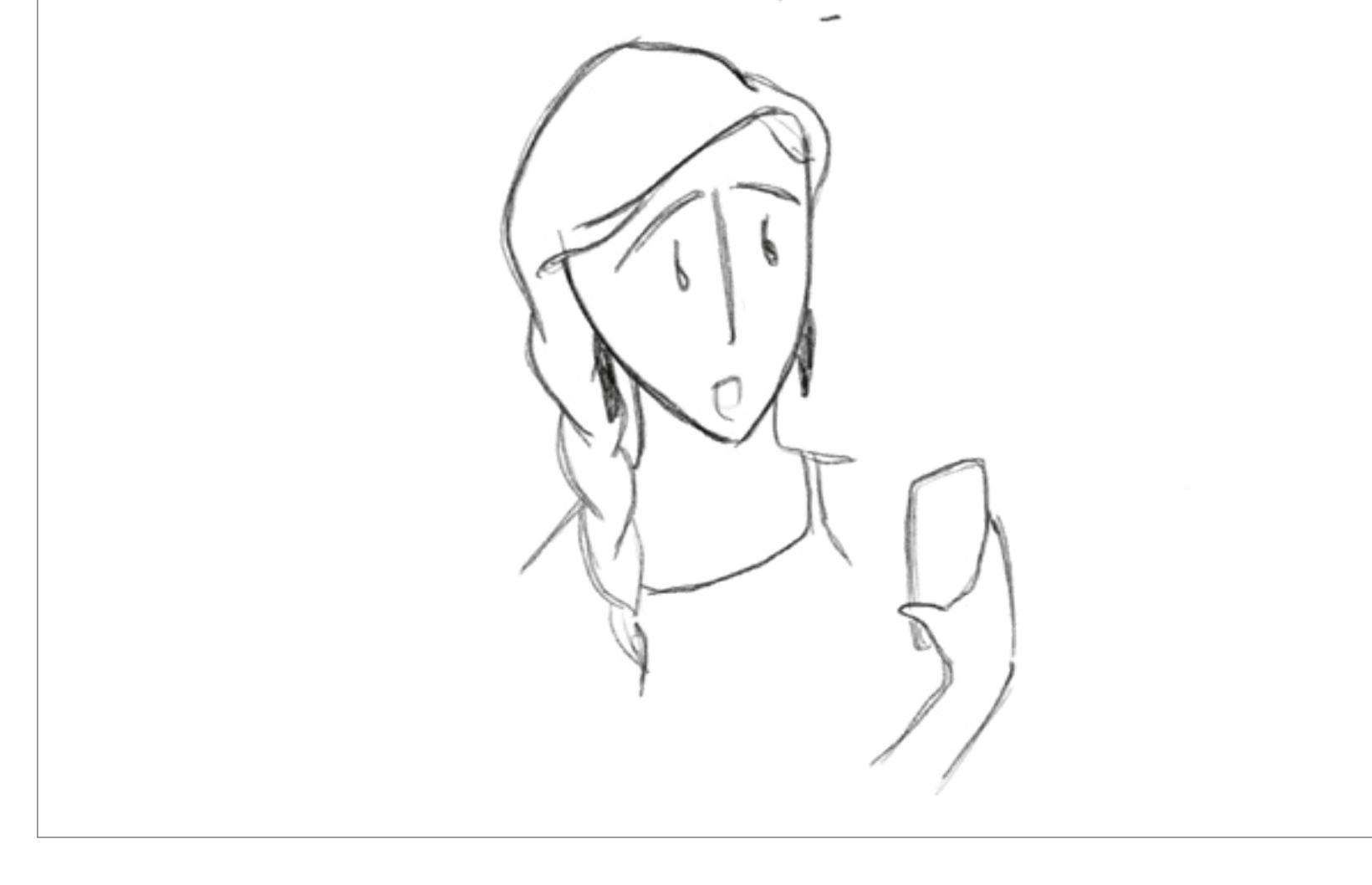
Samantha's father realizes that he is unable to stop her. He doesn't want to abandon her so he searches the internet for something he could provide her with. He discovers BlueGuard.



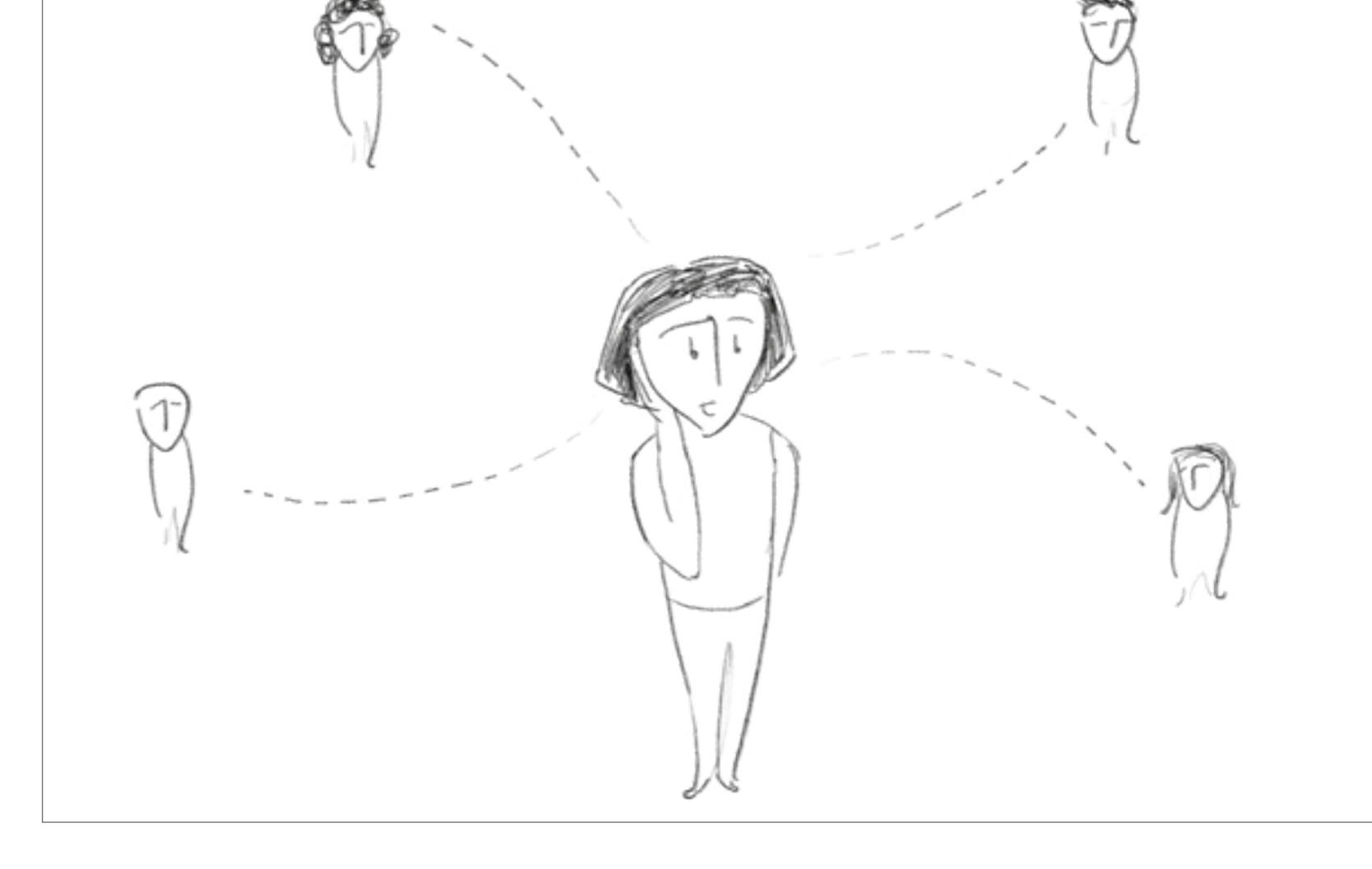
Samantha's father gifts a BlueGuard Connector to Samantha before she leaves, explaining that her safety and well-being is his ultimate concern.



Because Samantha fears the authorities, she configures the device to use a friend as her emergency contact. This friend is also an opiate user and always carries naloxone.



One day, Samantha overdoses from a fentanyl-laced supply of heroin. The device contacts her friend who saves her life.



Samantha and her friend contact their community of users to warn them of the heroin provided from that dealer, potentially saving their lives as well.