



INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

Together we can

Overdose Awareness Day is an international campaign to end drug overdose and remember, without stigma, those who have died and acknowledge the grief of family and friends left behind.



Consider the sensitive nature of this topic and whether any of your corps members have been impacted by overdose. If you know someone has been impacted by this issue, consider how you can best support them and sensitively address this topic in your meeting. You might want to offer to pray for them specifically, invite them to pray during the service or ask them to contribute additional prayer points.

2024 theme

This year's theme is, 'Together we can' and highlights the power of our community when we all stand together.

History

Overdose Awareness Day was initiated in 2001 by Sally J Finn at The Salvation Army in St Kilda, Melbourne. Since then, many community members as well as government and non-government organisations have held events to raise awareness and commemorate those who have been impacted by drug overdose.

In 2012, the not-for-profit Australian public health organisation, Penington Institute, took on responsibility for the coordination of International Overdose Awareness Day. It is now a global event held every year on 31 August.

Facts

According to ['Australia's Annual Overdose Report'](#), one Australian dies as the result of drug overdose every four hours and in the past 20 years, over **37,000 people** have lost their lives in this manner.

- ▶ 75% of these deaths were accidental or unintentional
- ▶ On average, males account for 7/10 of these unintentional drug-induced deaths
- ▶ Drug overdose is one of the top three causes of death for Australian adults under the age of 50
- ▶ Unintentional drug-induced deaths have increased almost 300% for adults 50–59 years old over the past 20 years

We encourage you to take time to pray over this national concern, remember those affected and consider how we can work together to change these trends.



BELIEVE IN GOOD

Scripture

“Let your unfailing love surround us, Lord, for our hope is in you alone,” (Psalm 33:22, NLT).

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest,” (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid,” (John 14:27, NIV).

“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble,” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, NLT).

Prayer

Lord, you are the provider of our comfort and our peace. We pray now for your comfort to embrace those who have lost loved ones to overdose. May you draw near to them that they may know peace in your presence.

We mourn alongside them and seek your wisdom as these preventable deaths continue to rise across our country. May you unite us all in urgency and action in ending drug related deaths.

May trends start to shift and those facing challenges with addiction find connection with you. May they find hope in the knowledge of your overwhelming love for them. We ask for your Holy Spirit to refresh and strengthen those who work on the frontline of addiction services. May they sense your Spirit on the move and feel supported as they do their often unseen and hard-fought work.

Equip us all with eyes to see those struggling with addiction in our communities, ears to listen deeply, hearts to love powerfully, and faith to step where you call us.

Amen

Ways to respond

Stand together to remember people who have lost their lives to overdose:

- ☐ Pray for those who have lost a loved one due to an overdose
- ☐ Pray for those who are at risk of an overdose
- ☐ Host or attend an International Overdose Awareness Day event
- ☐ Post a tribute to a loved one who has passed away from an overdose
- ☐ Donate to raise awareness of overdose and spread the message that overdose is preventable
- ☐ Talk to your friends and family about the issues regarding overdoses

Additional resources:

- overdoseday.com
- [Australia's Annual Overdose Report](#)
- [2023 Report Reveals Alarming Trends: Urgent Action Needed to Address National Crisis](#)



BELIEVE IN GOOD