

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: International Overdose Awareness Day**

International Overdose Awareness Day is a worldwide event that aims to raise awareness of overdose and reduce the stigma of drug-related death- acknowledging those who are grieving the deceased. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) database called Wonder, 69,029 people died of a drug overdose in 2019.

Drug abuse always carries the risk of serious side effects, including overdose. Whether you abuse alcohol, an illegal drug such as cocaine, or medications prescribed by a doctor—such as opioid painkillers—addiction development will always be a concern. And in many cases, if substance abuse behavior persists, there remains a real possibility of a drug overdose.

Any drug overdose can be either accidental or intentional. Accidental overdoses tend to happen when people take more of a prescription medication than originally intended to achieve certain results, or when they use too much of an illegal drug trying to get a better high. Intentional overdoses are usually a result of someone trying to commit suicide. Regardless of the intent, any loss of life due to an overdose is tragic and any overdose can have severe and lasting repercussions.

The importance of recognizing the signs and symptoms of a drug overdose so you can get the help you or a loved one needs—and possibly save a life. The physical and psychological signs of a drug overdose can vary depending on the type of drug taken, and whether the drug was taken in combination with other substances.

Some common signs and symptoms of a drug overdose can include: Dilated pupils; Unsteady walking; Chest pain. Severe difficulty breathing, shallow breathing, or complete cessation of breath; Gurgling sounds that indicate the person's airway is blocked; Blue lips or fingers; Nausea or vomiting; Abnormally high body temperature; Unresponsiveness; Unconsciousness; Death.

A person may not exhibit all or even most of these signs, but even a few of these symptoms can indicate a person is experiencing an overdose. If you or a loved one has potentially overdosed on drugs, seek immediate medical attention by calling 911 to receive emergency help right away. You might also

implement a few of the following procedures while waiting for medical personnel to arrive. However, be sure to avoid putting your own safety at risk since certain drugs can prompt violent or unpredictable behavior in the person taking them.

Check the person's breathing and heart rate; If the person is unconscious, try to get a response. Ask the person questions to assess their level of alertness and to calmly keep them engaged, if possible; If the person is not breathing, turn them on their side; If you are medically qualified to do so, provide CPR if necessary; Give first aid as directed by 911 operators; Do not allow the person to take any more of the substance; Obtain as much information as possible, including the dose and the last time the person took the drug; If prescription medications or otherwise labeled substances have been used, take the container with you to the ER, even if it is empty; Stay as calm as possible while waiting for medical personnel arrive; Assure the person that help is coming.

While there is no one-size-fits-all solution for helping a family member who is drinking too much, using drugs, or dealing with a mental illness, research shows that family support can play a major role in helping a loved one with mental and substance use disorders. When a family member is experiencing a mental or substance use disorder, it can affect more than just the person in need of recovery. Evidence has shown that some people have a genetic predisposition for developing mental and substance use disorders, and may be at greater risk based on environmental factors such as having grown up in a home affected by a family member's mental health or history of substance use. Families should be open to the options of support groups or family therapy and counseling, which can improve treatment effectiveness by supporting the whole family. Resources from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) can assist families in helping their loved one who is struggling with addiction.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a federal agency that conducts and supports health promotion, prevention and preparedness activities in the United States, with the goal of improving overall public health. To learn more about the CDC please visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is charged with improving the quality and availability of treatment and rehabilitative services in order to reduce illness, death, disability, and the cost to society resulting from substance abuse and mental illnesses. For more information about SAMHSA please visit [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov) or [www.samhsa.gov/families](http://www.samhsa.gov/families).

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled. "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](https://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).