

Your guide to hosting an online event

COVID-19

Restrictions on public gatherings and events as a result of coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) will mean that many people are considering holding their events online.

Everyone hopes that by the 31st of August, restrictions will be loosened and our lives can return to normal. However, we must all be prepared for current restrictions to continue.

The pandemic might make it harder for us to be together physically. But we can stay connected using technology.

This is your guide to what you need to know to stage a successful IOAD 2020 event during coronavirus, including some digital campaign ideas and Frequently Asked Questions about holding an event this year.

Even if restrictions are no longer in place, there are lots of ideas here to inspire you in 2020.

Digital campaign ideas

Write to your elected officials

Many elected officials, especially in communities that have been hit hard by the overdose crisis, support the goals of International Overdose Awareness Day – even if they don't know about our campaign.

Writing to them can be very powerful – especially if you are joined by other people and write with a clear goal in mind.

What will you ask them to do? Maybe it will be making naloxone (Narcan) more accessible for people who use drugs. Perhaps it will be to officially recognise International Overdose Awareness Day. Or perhaps there are drug treatment or advocacy organisations in your area that could use more funding. These are just three ideas – we're sure you will have many more.

Talk with your friends and IOAD collaborators to decide on your goal, your key "asks", and try to encourage as many people as you can to also write.

Check our website soon for template letters you can use to write to your local official.

Start a petition or fundraiser

Online petitions are a great way to harness community support and draw attention to your cause. They can make a very powerful statement that things need to change.

Consider the many different campaigns that can be represented by a petition.

You could start a petition calling on local police to de-prioritise low-level drug possession and put more resources toward directing people to treatment. Or one that calls on your local authorities to make naloxone (Narcan) able to be handed out more easily.

There are lots of websites where you can easily create an online petition: the two most popular are [Avaaz](#) and [Change](#). You can also create one yourself using [Google Forms](#).

Once your petition has finished, present the results to your local officials.

You could also start a fundraiser.

A fundraiser is another great way to draw attention to your cause.

Maybe a drug treatment or advocacy organisation in your community needs funding to keep their doors open. Perhaps you have a great idea for a community awareness campaign but need some money to get it started. Or maybe there is a local family that has been affected by overdose that needs some support to get back on their feet.

There are lots of different fundraising platforms out there – find the one that is best for you!

Write to us with your idea for a petition or fundraiser and we can help you develop and promote it.

Hold an online workshop or webinar

Every community faces different challenges when it comes to drug use and overdose.

It is very important to increase knowledge and understanding of these issues.

Hosting an online webinar or workshop featuring experts and the stories of people with lived experience is a great way to promote International Overdose Awareness Day and generate more support for overdose as an issue.

Start your own social media campaign and get others to join in

Even if you are not confident at social media, you can create change simply by showing your support for IOAD on social media.

We use three of our own hashtags on Facebook and Twitter -- **#EndOverdose**, **#OverdoseAware** and **#IOAD2020**. You can use them to amplify the power of your message or start your own and get your friends and collaborators to join in.

Apart from sharing hashtags, you could encourage your followers to share their thoughts about the overdose crisis, or include a photo or video of you wearing purple and/or some of our IOAD merchandise.

Be creative! It will help you get more outside interest and more attention to your cause.

We are planning to develop new digital resources for this year's IOAD, including "frames" you can use to show your support on social media.

Post a tribute to a loved one on our new Instagram page

Inspired by similar successful pages and our own Tributes section on our website, we have created a new Instagram page where you can send photos and biographical details about a loved one who has passed away or been affected by overdose.

It is called the [Overdose Tribute](#).

We want this to be a virtual memorial wall where you can remember your loved one and help to share their story.

If you have previously submitted a tribute for our website, or if you would simply like to share someone's story, send us a photo of them and some information about them to info@overdoseday.com and we will share it to our page.

Do you have more cool ideas for a digital campaign? We want to hear about them! Write to us on social media or send us an email.

Frequently asked questions

Will I need to switch to a virtual event?

Not necessarily. If your physical event is safe and in line with COVID-19 restrictions, it can still go ahead. But keep in mind that, under current restrictions, many in-person IOAD 2020 events would not be allowed today.

Our advice is to contact your local health authorities to check if there are plans to ease restrictions on public events – and to plan accordingly.

I have been planning a physical IOAD event. What should I do now?

The most important thing is to have a back-up plan.

Ask yourself this question: if I had to cancel my physical event, how much time would I need to successfully switch to an online event?

The answer to that question is how much time you need to give yourself to decide if you need to switch to an online event.

Right now, lots of events – not only for IOAD – are being rescheduled or cancelled.

It's always better to start preparing sooner than later.

How hard will it be to switch from a physical event to an online event?

That depends on what kind of event you are planning – and what your goals are.

Let's say you were planning to hold an overdose awareness rally at a municipal building, with speakers and a big crowd.

Switching an event like this to be online might be a challenge. You would need to find the right digital platform (like Facebook), make sure your speakers can still be there, and probably do a dress rehearsal to make sure there are no technical difficulties.

But the challenge of switching to an online event can also create new opportunities.

An online event means there is no limit to the size of your audience – and no limit to the difference your event makes.

Can I still have the same activities even if my event is online?

Yes – you can still hold many of the same physical activities online.

Vigils, tributes, speeches, musical performances, naloxone (Narcan) training, fundraising events – they can all happen online!

Your only limit is your imagination.

What technology should I use for my virtual event?

Now is the right time to explore how you can technology to improve your event.

There are many platforms which could be used for an online event, including:



There are also many tools and features of social media and video conferencing that are worth learning about. Here are just some examples:

Screen sharing

Screen sharing means that people in the audience will see what is on your screen. This is perfect for sharing tribute videos, training videos, infographics and slides, and other things.

Multi-speaker broadcasting

Cross between your host, your local mayor and an overdose prevention speaker. Split your screen and interview a speaker live.

Audience interaction

Your audience might be physically separated but they can still connect with you and each other at your online IOAD event. Facilitate this by adding live polling, live comments, group chats, and video Q&A sessions.

How should I broadcast my event?

Live streaming

Live streaming involves screening your event as it happens. It's popular on social media and conferencing platforms. This is the best broadcast method if you want to involve your audience but be aware you will have to solve any technical issues as they happen!

Live playback

Record your event live – but ahead of time and then broadcast it on the day of the event. This gives you time to edit and polish after you record, but before you publish. You can still present your event as live too.

Pre-recorded for on-demand viewing

This is a good option for educational videos. Shoot, splice, and edit until you have the package you want. Broadcast it on the day of your event and then re-publish it somewhere (like on our IOAD website) so more people can watch it at a later time.

All of the above

A combination of the above will be the best solution for many virtual events. That might mean that you host your event live but (for example) screen pre-recorded Mayoral Proclamations, tribute songs and guest speeches.

What do I need to know about production quality?

New technology can be hard to understand. Here are some general tips that can help you make sure you stage the best event you can.

- ▶ Take care with your audio and lighting, even if you're shooting video from your phone.
- ▶ Buy, borrow or hire equipment such as USB microphones and tripods if you think it will improve the quality of your event. See if there is someone locally who can help you cover the costs.
- ▶ Frame your shots carefully so that everyone looks their best.
- ▶ Think about your setting. A basket of washing in the background might be distracting. Video conferencing platforms offer lots of backgrounds to choose from, including your own custom images. Explore if you might be able to use these to enhance your event.
- ▶ Encourage your speakers to practice and prepare – especially if they are inexperienced, and your event is live.

What are the benefits of switching to a virtual event?

Switching to a virtual IOAD event can help you reach a wider audience, which is great for awareness raising.

You can also save on expenses such as hiring a venue.

Online registrations can provide you with more insights about how your event went and communicate with your audience afterwards.

Watching the recording of your event back can help you identify improvements or new ideas.

Re-purpose and re-use your best content after your event.

Do you have questions or would like to share information with us? Send us an email at info@overdoseday.com or get in touch on social media.