

# INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY 2023

## Media Support Kit: Media Guide for Event Holders

## ABOUT INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD), observed annually on August 31, is a campaign to end overdose, remember without stigma those who have died and acknowledge the grief of family and friends left behind. The awareness day was first started in Melbourne in 2001 and the campaign has been convened by Penington Institute since 2012 after being transferred from the Salvation Army.

## WHY MEDIA MATTERS FOR IOAD

Our IOAD community has contributed to some truly momentous advances in policy, healthcare, and community attitudes. The media has played a key role in our success by helping to bring overdose out of the shadows and into the public eye.

Getting your event covered in print, digital, or broadcast media helps IOAD gain the visibility needed to maximize impact and create change. This document contains tips and tricks to help you get the media interested in your event.

## GETTING THE MEDIA'S ATTENTION

Even if a journalist is interested in your story, they will only cover it if they (and their editor) decide it is newsworthy. What does newsworthy mean, and how can you apply it to your event? Here are some tips...

**Significance:** Reporters are always on the lookout for 'big' stories, ones that will turn heads and appeal to the widest possible audience. Think big crowds, big statistics, sweeping policy changes.

You might be an individual or community organization running your event on a micro-budget, but that shouldn't stop you. When you're speaking to the media, it's important to frame your event in the context of the wider IOAD campaign — a global movement sparked by an unprecedented health crisis.

**Local relevance:** While journalists might be impressed by global significance, they will also want to know how this issue affects your community specifically. This will be especially important for publications targeting a local audience, like community newspapers.

**Human interest:** As with the point on local relevance, a big news item will have greater impact if it is tied to a concrete example to give it weight and emotional resonance.

Nothing achieves relatability like a human face. If you have been impacted by overdose and are willing to speak openly about your experience, it can help audiences connect with the issue on a personal level.

**Novelty:** News, by definition, is new information. The media are drawn to events that are unprecedented, surprising, or unique, and they avoid stories that have already been covered extensively.

## STEP 1: FIND YOUR HOOK

Whatever story they're covering, reporters will try to find an angle or 'hook' to capture their audience's attention. To do this, they might emphasize one or more of the newsworthy elements mentioned above.

Here are some other things you can think about when creating your hook...

- An aspect of the overdose crisis that typically gets overlooked
- How the overdose crisis affects a particular community or population
- A surprising fact about overdose that runs counter to common stereotypes or assumptions
- Connect your IOAD event with a current news item, eg. policy changes around naloxone access

## STEP 2: MAKE A MEDIA LIST

Whatever story they're covering, reporters will try to find an angle or 'hook' to capture their audience's attention. To do this, they might emphasize one or more of the newsworthy elements mentioned above.

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## STEP 3: SEND OUT A MEDIA RELEASE

A strong media release is crucial to any media campaign. A media release is a short document that gives reporters all the important facts about your event with the aim of getting them interested in creating a story.

We've included more details on how to write a media release along with a template in the How to Write a Media Release document in this package.

## OTHER IDEAS

Besides sending a media release, there are other ways you can try to get your event covered in the press. One would be to pitch an opinion piece (op-ed) to your local newspaper. It often helps if you have a qualification or job that makes you an expert on overdose (or a related field, like public health), but this is not necessary. If you have lived experience of overdose, either personally or through friends or family, or you are simply a passionate community member, that's plenty. All that is needed is a strong and informed opinion and the ability to argue your point well.

## PARTING WORDS

We hope we have given you some ideas on how to get media coverage for your event and made the process a little less daunting. Here are a few thoughts to leave you with...

- Always be as concise and direct as possible when speaking to the media
- Have someone (or multiple people) proofread anything you plan to share with the media
- Include references for all your facts and stats, and make sure your proofreader checks them thoroughly too
- Be realistic about what you can achieve with the time and resources you have

It's important to realize you might not get any media coverage for your event, and that's completely fine. Professional PR consultants spend years building relationships with the media, so think of this as preparation for next year and beyond. If you spoke to one reporter who sounded interested, stay in touch.

## RESOURCES

Overdose Facts & Stats

Global Overdose Snapshot 2022 by Penington Institute

For more advice on media engagement, contact the IOAD campaign team at:  
[info@overdoseday.com](mailto:info@overdoseday.com)

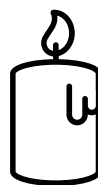
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