



# WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT OVERDOSE.

31 AUGUST

—  
INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE  
AWARENESS DAY

It is mind-bending to believe that we have been intimately familiar with the phrase 'drug overdose' now for over 14 months. I still cannot really grasp it, even after spending the past 12 months learning about the causes of death by overdose, looking at the staggering statistics and trying to prevent more from occurring. And yet here we are, one year after attending our first International Overdose Awareness event, encouraging people to SPEAKUP ABOUT DRUGS to prevent others from experiencing this same fate. Last August we believed that approximately 145 people in the US every day lost their lives to drug overdose. Around the first of the year that number had shot up to 174 people per day. Based on the latest information released from the CDC (Centers For Disease Control) last week that number has again increased to an estimated 197 people, everyday in the US, dying from a drug overdose and that is likely to increase as more data comes in. If you think about it, this equivalent to one large commercial airplane crashing each day. If that

was the case, what would happen? The airline would be sidelined until a cause was found and the problem was eliminated. Yet we ARE losing that many people, in THIS country, to overdoses, every, single day. And WHAT is being done to eliminate the problem? Actually there are many new programs and activities that have recently gotten started which could help turn the tide; things like the increase in usage of the Prescription Drug Monitoring System, restrictions on prescriber rates, education for providers and pharmacists, enhanced scanning methods at places like airports and the postal service. But there is still MUCH work to be done. And unfortunately the black market continues to thrive in spite of tighter controls. So, WHAT DO WE DO? Educate ourselves and our loved ones, talk about the dangers of misuse of drugs and the increased potency of the more common drugs which can lead to psychosis and addiction, and keep our prescription drugs put away or locked up. Overdose does not discriminate and can happen to anyone. It's up to each of us to take a stand, to join in this movement to SPEAKUP ABOUT DRUGS and work together to save the lives of those we love.

Speaking of education, over the past few months I have had the opportunity to attend several Prescription Drug Summits held here in NWA and have met some terrific people who work across our state to help bring prevention efforts to our communities to educate youth and parents about the dangers of both prescription and illicit drug use. I meet with various coalitions and am in the process of developing a Prevention Planning Playbook that one community in Central Arkansas has asked for after a rash of overdose deaths in their small community. The most fascinating information I received was about the affect of opioid use on the brain and how these drugs hijack the brain and take over our mental functions. Having a deeper understanding of how various drugs attach to the different receptors in our brains makes it is easier to understand how drug misuse becomes a progressive and fatal disease.



This past weekend we took SPEAKUP ABOUT DRUGS on the road, this time to Benton, AR to Amplified Fest, a Christian music festival with close to 70,000 attendees. What a great event! Our booth was in the same tent as the Region 2, 3 and 6 Prevention Providers, the state Drug Director and several other organizations across the state that are working diligently to combat drug misuse and the opioid crisis. We had approximately 500 individuals visit us, heard many inspirational stories from folks in recovery and had a great time engaging with youth and families about ways they can SPEAKUP ABOUT DRUGS with their friends and loved ones.

As those of you who follow me on facebook know I recently completed the climb on Mt. Rainier that I had been training for since the start of the year. What an amazing experience! No, I did not summit at 14,400 ft. But I did make it to 11,200 ft on what is very technical terrain, achieved my personal goals and had the time of my life! It was truly a "mountain top experience" and I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to make this journey which, for me, was one of healing, pushing myself beyond my comfort zone and honoring the memory of

our son who was so fascinated with this mass of rock, snow and ice that is an active stratovolcano. If you are interested you can follow this link to see the 'long version' video of this experience or read the blog. [www.speakupaboutdrugs.org](http://www.speakupaboutdrugs.org)



We will be holding a video conference in early September for those who wish to join our Parent Coalition. Whether it's being a part of community events with a booth to provide information, sharing your personal story, being trained as a Parent Coach or advocating for common sense laws to drive positive social change, there are many ways that you can get involved in your area. If you would like to participate please contact me by email or phone and we'll add you to the list.

With thanks and gratitude,  
Gina & Pat Tadd & Tina

Jake & Koby



# Speakup About Drugs

Know drugs. No overdoses.



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