



Jackson County Department of Public Health

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Overdose Awareness Event in Jackson County

For the first time, Jackson County will have an Overdose Awareness Day event on Saturday, August 27th from 9 AM – 12 Noon at the Bridge Park in Sylva. International Overdose Awareness Day is a global event held annually to honor and remember our loved ones who were taken from us too soon. The Jackson County event will have live music, educational handouts and resources, and a memorial wall. Please bring your favorite picture of your loved one(s) to place on the wall. The event will be a safe, non-judgmental space to honor those who have been tragically lost due to overdose, and will also aim to provide resources, support, and encouragement for individuals in recovery or active substance use and their families. The event has been organized by Bill and Sherry Cabe with the support of local churches, the Raleigh Family, Jackson County Sheriff's Office and Department of Public Health.

Overdose deaths and substance use disorder touches the lives of us all, whether we are aware of it or not. Substance use disorder is a diagnosed disease that needs treatment and takes on-going assistance to navigate and continuously battle. One of the ways we can help our community members take positive steps forward is by reducing stigma around substance use. Stigma, defined as a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality or person, is a large barrier for those using substances to seek help. Stigma is found in families, workplaces, doctor's offices, and society in general. Every person who uses substances or has lost their lives due to an overdose is loved. They may be a son or daughter, parent, friend, family member and are deserving of love and respect.

Overdose deaths cause pain, suffering, and loss to individuals, families, and communities across all demographics and regardless of socioeconomic status, that can never be measured. Let's all join together on August 27th at 9 AM at the Bridge Park to honor those who have been tragically lost to overdose and to end the stigma.

For more information, please contact Janelle Messer, Health Education Supervisor at 828-587-8238 or janellemesser@jacksonnc.org.

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