

Hello ACEs community and guests, we hope you are staying cool this summer and for those that are back in school, we hope your new school year is off to a great start.

As summer transitions into fall, we are reminded of the importance of connection, compassion, and support during times of loss and healing. This August and September, the AZ ACES Consortium recognizes the profound impact that grief can have on individuals, families, and communities, while also honoring International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31—a global observance dedicated to remembering those lost to overdose, reducing stigma, and promoting prevention and recovery efforts.

Grief touches each of us differently, whether through the loss of a loved one, changes in life circumstances, or the challenges experienced within our communities. By fostering understanding and creating spaces for healing, we can strengthen resilience and support those navigating difficult journeys. Throughout this edition, you'll find resources, educational opportunities, and community initiatives that highlight the importance of trauma-informed care, recovery support, and strategies for building connected, healthy communities.

Thank you for your continued commitment to advancing awareness, prevention, and healing across Arizona. Together, we can help ensure that individuals and families affected by loss are met with empathy, support, and hope.

"Each person's grief is as unique as their fingerprint. But what everyone has in common is that no matter how they grieve, they share a need for their grief to be witnessed. That doesn't mean needing someone to try to lessen it or reframe it for them. The need is for someone to be fully present to the magnitude of their loss without trying to point out the silver lining."

— David Kessler, *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*

Resources

[Sonoran Prevention Works: Building a healthy Arizona with people who use drugs](#)

[Training and Consulting](#)

[Staying Safe and Healthy](#)



Awareness Observation Days/Months

August

- International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, August 9th
- Grief Awareness Day, August 30th
- International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31st

September

- Positive Thinking Day, September 13th
- Suicide Prevention Week, September 8th – 14th
- Suicide Prevention Month



International Overdose Awareness Day

Every year on August 31, communities across the globe mark International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD). It's the world's largest campaign to end overdose, remember those who have died, and support families and friends left behind. IOAD also calls for action: raising awareness, reducing stigma, and expanding access to lifesaving prevention and treatment.



Community Corner

Avondale Family Education and Resource

The Avondale Family Education and Resource Program (AFERP) provides resources and programs for parents with children ages 0-5, with a focus on promoting social-emotional development.

Car Seat Distribution and Safety Classes

AFERP offers Car Seat distribution as well as Safety classes by appointment only. You must attend a Safety class prior to receiving a car seat free of charge. Click [here](#) to register.

All program dates and registration information can be found on their *Calendar of Events* by clicking [here](#).

Arizona Complete Health Avondale Resource Center

995 E. Riley Dr., Avondale, AZ 85323 | (623)333-2703 | resourcecenter@avondaleaz.gov

For an additional resource on car seats, please reach out the Phoenix Children's Hospital at 602-933-3350.

Did You Know?!

Grief Awareness Day is August 30th

Angie Cartwright founded **National Grief Awareness Day** in 2014. Familiar with loss, Cartwright too became lost in grief. She has become dedicated to bringing support to those who have suffered like her and enlightening others to the realities of bereavement.

Over 100,000 overdose deaths occur in the U.S. each year.

Many people affected by substance use disorders have histories of trauma and childhood adversity, showing how untreated ACEs can increase long-term health risks.

Individuals with 4 or more ACEs are up to 10 times more likely to develop substance use disorders.

Early life stress can disrupt brain development and coping skills, increasing vulnerability to addiction later in life.

Fentanyl is involved in most overdose deaths in recent years.

People with high ACE exposure may be more likely to encounter high-risk environments, including substance misuse and unsafe drug supply exposure.

Prevention and early intervention can significantly reduce overdose risk.

Supportive childhood environments—safe relationships, stable homes, and mental health support—can buffer the long-term effects of ACEs and reduce substance use outcomes.

Grief Awareness FAQ

Q. Does grief always involve death?

A. No. Many circumstances may cause a person grief. We may grieve the loss of a job or income. Physical or mental trauma may cause us grief. We also experience grief when dramatic changes occur in our life - divorce, a breakup, empty nesting, a health event, or an unexpected discovery can all cause grief.

Q. Does everyone experience grief the same?

A. No. While many people will go through the same stages, it may take one person longer to navigate one stage while another person experiences the stage quickly.

Q. Does grief end?

A. Grief lessens but it may never go away. Sometimes a memory or event will bring up feelings of grief long after death or trauma. Over time, we become better equipped to deal with these moments.

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