

May 6, 2020

## **Overdose Deaths Spike during Coronavirus Pandemic**

*Help is available to those in need*

**WINCHESTER** – Eleven overdose deaths have been reported in the Northern Shenandoah Valley since April 1, including three deaths in the last five days. In addition, there have been 17 reported non-fatal overdoses since April 1. The latest overdoses bring the total number in 2020 to 24 fatalities and 59 injuries in the City of Winchester and counties of Frederick, Clarke, Shenandoah, Page and Warren. As of May 5<sup>th</sup> of last year there had been 14 deaths and 44 non-fatal overdoses reported, according to the Northwest Virginia Regional Drug and Gang Task Force.

Treatment experts believe isolation, stress, financial worries, and cancelation of some support group meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic are contributing to the increase in substance use.

Help is available, during this time, to those who need it. It is important for individuals in recovery from substance use disorders to create plans to protect their recovery during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Northern Shenandoah Valley Substance Abuse Coalition (NSVSAC) is offering the following ways individuals in recovery and those seeking recovery can support connection and ensure that isolation does not lead to relapse.

### ***Stay connected and create a sober network***

- Reach out to a sponsor, trusted friend, family member, or mental health professional for support.
- Call the Peer2Peer Regional Warm Line where local Certified Peer Recovery Specialists are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 1-833-626-1490
- Attend a virtual support group meeting. You can join online 12 step meetings through Narcotics Anonymous ([narcotics.com](http://narcotics.com)), Alcoholics Anonymous ([aa.org](http://aa.org)), or SMART Recovery ([smartrecovery.org](http://smartrecovery.org)). Many of the 12 step programs also offer phone or chat support. The Within Reach Peer Resource Center is also offering the following Peer-led virtual support group meetings:
  - Mondays 2 p.m.: FLY (Finally Loving Yourself). Focuses on positive affirmations, learning to love, accept, and take care of yourself and others. ID# 8533023431, or link up at <http://zoom.us/j/8533023431>
  - Tuesdays 10 a.m.: Just Breathe focuses on mindfulness and meditation. ID# 2718591808 or link up at <http://zoom.us/j/2718591808>
  - Tuesdays 2 p.m.: The Silver Lining Group, an open topic discussion group. ID# 6360856554 or link up at <https://zoom.us/j/6360856554>
  - Wednesdays 2 p.m.: Reflective Inspiration, inspirational reading and open discussion. ID# 2099953510 or link up at <https://zoom.us/j/2099953510>

- Thursdays 2 p.m.: the Silver Lining Group, open topic discussion group. ID# 6360856554 or link up at <https://zoom.us/j/6360856554>
- Fridays 2 p.m.: Art & Creativity, focuses on the benefits of art and creativity as coping strategies. ID# 8533023431 or link up at <https://zoom.us/j/8533023431>
- Download the “Connections” App on your smartphone which was launched by the Addiction Policy Forum.

### ***Create a daily schedule***

- A daily routine is critical for individuals living with addiction. Try to maintain a sense of structure, but allow your schedule to be flexible.
- Schedule time every day for something creative or something that brings you fulfillment without substances.

### ***Stay active – both for your physical and mental health***

- Have an exercise plan. You could go for a walk outside, while maintaining social distancing. You could also engage in exercises that can be found online or on TV.
- Meditate. There are free apps that offer guided meditation.

If you suspect that a friend or family member has a substance use disorder you should talk to the person about your concerns and offer help and support without being judgmental. You can receive free NARCAN from any of the Lord Fairfax Health District offices. Please call the office beforehand to schedule a pickup time. A list of the district offices and their contact information can be found here: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/lord-fairfax/district-offices/>.

For additional information and resources visit [www.roadtorecovery.info](http://www.roadtorecovery.info) and click on the treatment or resources tab at the top of the page.

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### **About NSVSAC**

The Northern Shenandoah Valley Substance Abuse Coalition collaborates with community partners to take the lead in identifying and developing effective resources to ensure that the necessary continuum of care for substance use and addiction services is available to all members of the community in the greater Winchester, Virginia area. Formed in 2014, the Coalition and its public and private sector partners have worked to compassionately reduce the stigma of addiction, improve access to substance use treatment services and decrease the number of overdoses to combat the opioid epidemic in Virginia. For more information on the Coalition, please visit [www.roadtorecovery.info](http://www.roadtorecovery.info).