



August 29, 2013

Community News/Special Events

Prevention and Remembrance: International Overdose Awareness Day this Saturday

London, ON- The London InterCommunity Health Centre is marking International Overdose Awareness Day with an event at Campbell Memorial Park this Saturday, August 31, 2013. Organizers will provide a judgment-free space to mourn lost loved ones, raise public consciousness, and prevent overdose through education.

This free event will feature overdose prevention information from various community agencies, and a ceremony to acknowledge people who have died, been injured, or affected. In London, 100 people have died from overdose between 2008 and mid-2011. Organizers say that one of their steepest hurdles is getting people to change the way they view substance use and substance users.

“Stigma is a real barrier to health,” says Ted Town, Options Clinic Counsellor at London InterCommunity Health Centre. “A doctor can’t help you if you can’t say where it hurts or why it hurts, or if you’re doing something frowned upon to alleviate that hurt.” The way society views substance use can also prevent 9-1-1 calls in an overdose situation, because witnesses may fear police repercussions. The stigma can also prevent people using substances from seeking education about reducing health risk.

“We hope the event will have a positive impact on as many people as possible,” says Henry Eastabrook, Outreach and Advocate Worker at the London InterCommunity Health Centre. “There are a number of reasons we decided to do this, but the true inspiration is the number of preventable deaths of our clients”. The Health Centre has lost at least 39 clients to overdose in the past 7 years.

The Health Centre is pleased to work with a number of community members and partners on this new event, including First Nations singers, Regional HIV/AIDS Connection, Addictions Services Thames Valley, London Area Network of Substance Users (LANSU), London Homeless Coalition, and John Gordon Home.

The event, which starts at 1pm and ends at 3pm, will be held rain or shine at Campbell Memorial Park on Dundas Street (just west of Colborne). Refreshments will be provided.

For more information or to arrange an interview:

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