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RESOURCE CENTER

PHILADELPHIA OVERDOSE GRIEF

KEY FINDINGS AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH & FAMILIES



In 2023, an overdose
death occurred
Every 5 hours
in the **Greater**
Philadelphia region^{1,2}



The devastating toll of overdose deaths in Philadelphia has left countless families grappling with profound grief and loss. With thousands of lives cut short each year, the epidemic ripples through communities leaving a lasting impact on children, teens, and families.

In 2023 alone, the Greater Philadelphia region faced nearly **1,900** overdose fatalities—a stark reminder of the urgency to address the drug crisis and support those affected.

As a tool to raise awareness and advocate for change, this infographic explores key statistics & strategies to address overdose deaths in Philadelphia and the surrounding 5 county region (Greater Philadelphia).

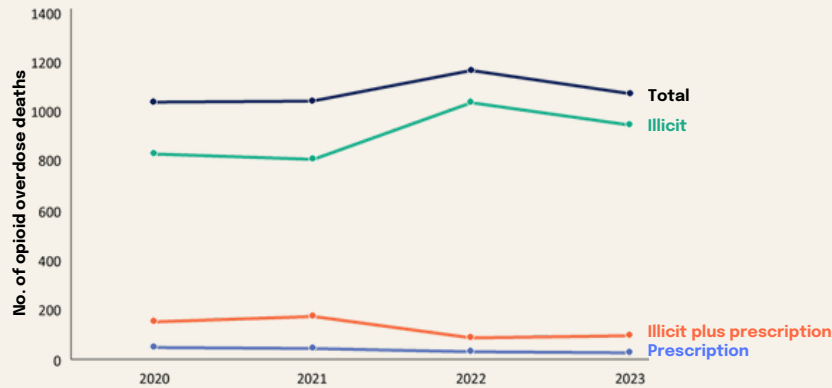
***“Together, we can build a stronger
network of care & resilience for
Philadelphia youth & families”***

PA SUDORS disclaimer: The majority of data in this infographic was supplied by the Office of Drug Surveillance and Misuse Prevention, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Health specifically disclaims responsibility for any analyses, interpretations, or conclusions.
Read full citations on page 3.

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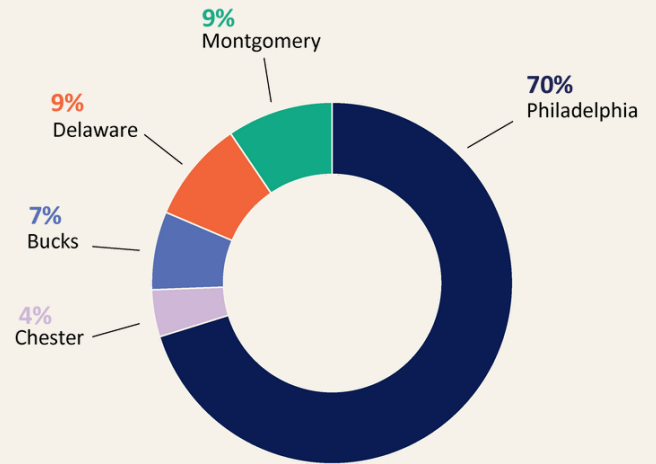
KEY FINDINGS AND SUPPORT FOR YOUTH & FAMILIES

Number of opioid related overdose deaths in Philadelphia county by drug category, 2020-2023^{1,2}



Over three years' time, **illicit** drug use has contributed to over seventy-five percent of all opioid overdose deaths in Philadelphia county among individuals 15 to 65+ years old.

Proportion of overdose related deaths in the Greater Philadelphia region, 2023^{1,2}



Approximately three-fourths of overdose deaths in the Greater Philadelphia region occurred in Philadelphia county in 2023.

Proportion of circumstances associated w/ overdose related deaths in Greater Philadelphia, 2023^{1,2}

	Philadelphia	Chester	Bucks	Delaware	Montgomery
Died within one month of release from jail	1%	*	5%	*	*
Died within one month of release from an institution	6%	17%	9%	11%	13%
Evidence of ever receiving substance abuse treatment	18%	20%	19%	27%	22%
Evidence of current substance abuse treatment	10%	8%	8%	10%	6%
Evidence of Naloxone administration	6%	23%	25%	20%	30%
Evidence of recent relapse	5%	17%	14%	6%	19%
Evidence of a bystander present at time of overdose	49%	66%	53%	34%	67%
Evidence of a prior overdose	2%	15%	9%	6%	15%
Mental health diagnosis	18%	49%	31%	23%	34%
Fatal drug use witnessed	6%	*	*	5%	7%
Recent ED - urgent care visit	3%	14%	5%	7%	15%

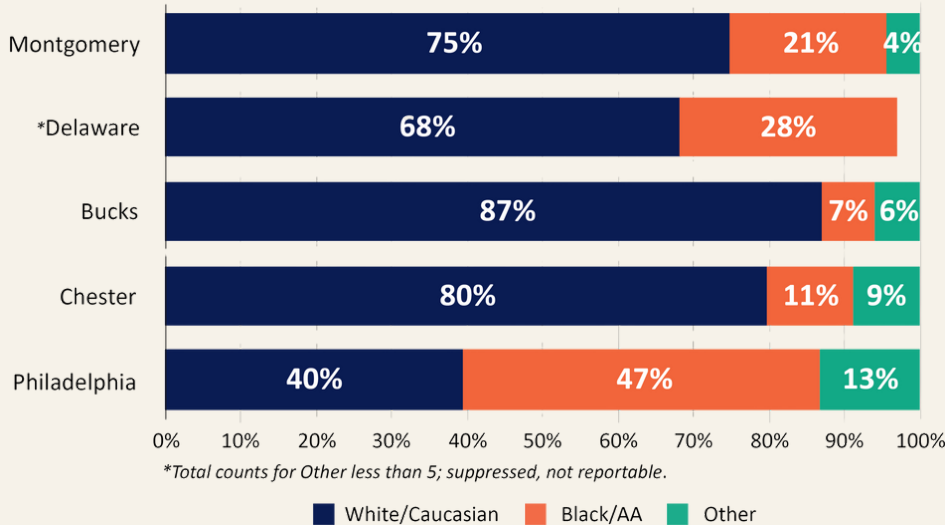
Note: * indicates counts less than 5; not reportable.

In 2023, sixty-five percent (65%) of Philadelphia county overdose deaths had at least *one* opportunity for intervention, underscoring the need for targeted prevention and timely support measures.

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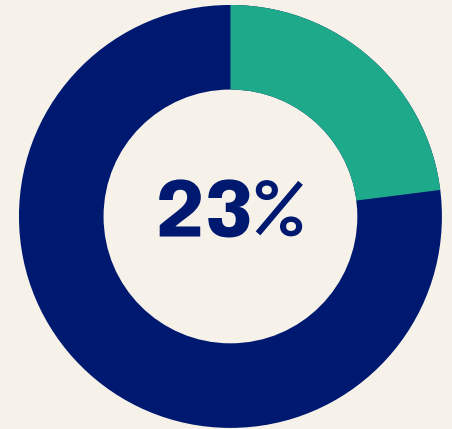
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County-level proportions of overdose related deaths in the Greater Philadelphia region by race, 2023^{1,2}



Death caused by overdose does not discriminate by race or geography in the Greater Philadelphia region. There was no significant difference in prevalence between White/Caucasian versus Black/AA in Philadelphia county.

Foster Youth in Philadelphia County placed due to substance use in the family³



The most recent data (from Oct 2021 – Sept 2022) shows that **22.9%** of Foster Children in Philadelphia County were placed due to alcohol or drug use in the family.



Camp Mariposa is a free year-round addiction prevention and youth mentoring program for ages 9-17 who are affected by the substance use of a family member. Camp Mariposa runs six times per year and offers fun camp activities alongside education and support sessions that build resiliency and ultimately break the cycle of addiction. Additional social and educational activities are offered for youth, alumni and their families throughout the year.

34 youth attended Camp Mariposa Philadelphia in 2023

100%

of Philadelphia campers surveyed in 2023 agree or strongly agree that⁴



I feel safe when involved in Camp Mariposa activities



Adults at Camp Mariposa listen to what I have to say



At least 1 Camp Mariposa staff/mentor will support me

Citations:

1. Pennsylvania Department of Health, Office of Drug Surveillance and Misuse Prevention, Pennsylvania ODSMP [Drug Overdose Surveillance Interactive Data Report](#), 2024
2. Pennsylvania Department of Health, Office of Drug Surveillance and Misuse Prevention, State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS) data, 2024.
3. [PPC analysis](#) of AFCARS longitudinal file produced by Public Consulting Group for Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families.
4. Eluna's Camp Mariposa Survey Data, 2023



Community Care

Community care involves neighbors, family, friends, coworkers and organizations coming together to provide emotional support, practical help, and understanding. By fostering connection and mutual aid, community care alleviates isolation, channels resilience, and uplifts the human spirit. ***Self-care is community care***

Scan here to request **personalized care** and community resources in your area.



Trauma-Informed Care

When grieving a loss from overdose, affected youth and families may experience guilt, shame, resentment, and fear. By addressing these feelings with compassion, trauma-informed care can help foster healthy coping mechanisms, and ensure that emotional support is available to navigate grief and reduce the long-term effects of trauma.

Scan here for trauma-informed support strategies for youth organized by **developmental ages & stages**.



Advocacy

Limited data on the impact of overdose grief on **youth** highlights a significant gap in understanding and addressing their needs. This gap underscores the importance of conducting studies to shed light on the unique challenges they face and ensure access to programs providing grief support and trauma-informed community care.

Contact Eluna to join our cause to support youth & families impacted by grief and addiction.



Education & Prevention

Early education & prevention can provide practical tools to manage stress, build resilience, and make healthy choices. By addressing unique needs and supporting the whole family, prevention can help reduce the cycle of substance use.

The **Eluna Resource Center** offers recommended books, videos, & activities - free to access, save, and download to support prevention & education efforts.



Mentoring

Research tells us that connecting with a caring adult mentor is one of the best strategies for prevention and support for youth affected by a family member's substance misuse. Youth who connect with a mentor earlier in life get the most benefit.

Camp Mariposa Philadelphia is a year-round prevention & mentorship program for youth ages 9 -17 impacted by a family member's substance use, offered at no cost.



Grief Support

Grief support is vital for youth grieving a loss from overdose, as it helps to foster connection and hope.

Camp Erin® Philadelphia is a free weekend bereavement camp for youth who are grieving the death of a significant person.

Youth ages 6 to 17 attend a weekend camp experience that combines grief education and emotional support with fun, traditional camp activities.

