



# International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

The ultimate aim of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, observed on 26 June every year, is to achieve an international society free of drug abuse.



The consequence of substance abuse is an unimaginable loss in human life. But it's also responsible for much illness, and the destruction of relationships and livelihoods. The results are particularly devastating for mental health, for both the person abusing drugs and their family. Furthermore, drugs play a role in progressing diseases such as hepatitis and HIV/AIDS, through the use of injection needles. And the children of drug abusers often grow up with the knowledge that their parents would place their addiction above the children's care.

It's estimated that illicit drug use costs South Africa around R136 million every year, with there being a direct relationship between alcohol, illegal drugs, crime and violence. One study found that around 47% of homicide victims had alcohol in their system at the time of death, while those under the influence are also at much higher risk of causing harm to others than if they're sober.

## What you can do

Society is in dire need of action against substance and alcohol abuse. When observing International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking this year, you can support your community by:

- Rejecting the stigma and supporting those who're addicted, in order to encourage faster recovery. Addiction can happen to anyone, and, while it's difficult to break, it's possible, with the right support.
- Educating yourself and your loved ones about the consequences of substance abuse. You can also get your community involved in outreach or volunteer programmes, to increase awareness and understanding of addiction. This way, you prevent the next generation from becoming addicted.
- Never drinking and driving. Always be responsible when you consume alcohol.
- Keeping moderation in mind at celebratory events. You can enjoy yourself without going overboard.
- Not falling into the trap. Illicit drugs are always a bad idea.
- Being a good role model to young people, living a lifestyle that doesn't involve illicit substances or alcohol abuse.
- Partnering with volunteer and support rehabilitation programmes to increase access to information for affected individuals and communities.



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