



## Message from our CEO

It's hard to believe that a new school year is upon us again! In this newsletter, we are sharing tips on how to have the difficult conversation with your teens in regard to the dangers of substance use. It's important to keep an open dialogue with your loved ones. In addition to the start of school, we look forward to this August here at ACTS. Leadership and program staff will be attending the annual Florida Behavioral Health Association Conference in mid-August, and we will have our CARF re-certification survey the following week.

As we begin the new Fiscal Year, it is time to recap last year's performance and plan for another productive year. We look forward to our Annual Board Meeting in October, where we will have an opportunity to celebrate our pass year's successes with the Board. We know that we continue to face challenges with the COVID-19 Pandemic, workforce crisis and rising inflation rates. Like the prior year, the ACTS team will forge ahead to provide the best behavioral health services to the communities we serve. Stay tuned to find out more about our plans to expand services this year!



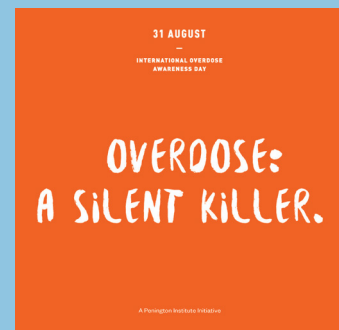
Asha Pereyra  
ACTS CEO

## Do You Know What an Overdose Looks Like?

August 31 is International Overdose Awareness Day. [107,622 died of drug overdoses](#) in 2021 hitting a new record high —compared to 16,849 drug overdose deaths in 1999. Here are common signs of overdose for opioid drugs:

- No response to stimuli
- Shallow, labored or no breathing
- Cannot be woken up
- Snoring or gurgling
- Blue/grey lips or finger tips
- Floppy arms or legs

Overdose symptoms vary depending on the substance used. Click to see common overdose signs for [alcohol](#), [depressants](#), [opioids](#), [psychoactive substances](#) and [stimulants](#). If you or a loved one have a substance use issue, call us at 813.246.4899 for help.



## Meet Idris Gaines

One of ACTS newest program directors is Idris Gaines, who oversees ACTS Youth Services. Youth services encompasses both the Juvenile Addictions Receiving Facility (JARF) and the Youth Residential Treatment Program at Thonotosassa. The JARF is the starting point for recovery for youth at ACTS, said Idris. At the JARF, youths ages 12 – 17 typically stay 3 – 5 days in a secure environment to safely detox from substance used. At the JARF, youth are typically there for marijuana use according to Idris and receive substance use treatment, evaluations by both medical professional and mental health professionals and health and life skills groups led by ACTS staff. One of the options after successfully completing the JARF program is going to youth residential treatment at Thonotosassa. Here 12 male youth stay for between 4 – 6 months and receive treatment and on-site schooling. Since Idris has taken over the program the youth have started going on outings again that were postponed due to COVID. “So far, we have been to theme parks, movies and go carting, and families can visit weekly and are also involved with therapy as needed,” said Idris. Referrals are similar for both programs and can range from direct referrals from families all the way to involuntary admission. Idris previously worked at Eckerd Connects (Circuit 6) and enjoys this role at ACTS. “There is always something going on – no day is ever the same,” he said. “I also like that kids are more receptive to changing their behavior. The change process with teens is easier than adults.” To learn more about both the [JARF program](#) and the [youth residential program](#), click the links or email Idris at [igaines@actsfl.org](mailto:igaines@actsfl.org) to make a referral to either program.



## Talking with Teens About Alcohol and Other Drugs

It's never too late to start talking with your teen about the risks of underage drinking and other substance use. SAHMSA has started the “Talk. They Hear You.” Underage Drinking Prevention campaign with 5 goals for parents to have when talking to their teens about substance use.



1. Show you disapprove of underage drinking and other drug misuse.
2. Show you care about your teen's health, wellness, and success.
3. Show you're a good source of information about alcohol and other drugs.
4. Show you're paying attention and you will discourage risky behaviors.
5. Build your teen's skills and strategies for avoiding drinking and drug use.

To find out more about this campaign, [go here](#).

## For More Information

ACTS, Agency for Community Treatment Services, Inc., is a non-profit serving the Tampa Bay area since 1978. As a comprehensive, community-based behavioral health organization, ACTS mission is to apply the best of contemporary physical and behavioral health interventions and social support services available to assist individuals and families to engage and succeed in recovery. Call us today to find out how we can help you - 813.246.4899 or visit us online at [www.actsfl.org](http://www.actsfl.org).

