

## VISIBLE, VOCAL, VALUABLE: AN OVERVIEW

Mental and/or substance use disorders affect millions of Americans and directly touch the lives of individuals, family members, neighbors, and colleagues. Given the widespread impact and societal cost of these behavioral health conditions, it's important for communities to make prevention, treatment, and recovery support available and accessible for all who need them.

Every September, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (<http://www.samhsa.gov>), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (<http://www.hhs.gov>), sponsors **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** to increase awareness of behavioral health conditions. This celebration promotes the message that behavioral health is essential to health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover from mental and/or substance use disorders.

The 2015 **Recovery Month** theme, "**Join the Voices for Recovery: Visible, Vocal, Valuable!**" highlights the value of peer support by educating, mentoring, and helping others. It invites individuals in recovery and their support systems to be catalysts and active change agents in communities, and in civic and advocacy engagements.

The concept encourages individuals to be vocal by starting conversations about the prevention, treatment, and recovery of behavioral health conditions at earlier stages of life and to depict the societal benefits of recovery. **Recovery Month** continues to celebrate and support communities, families, and individuals through continued outreach efforts, materials, and cross-promotion.

The "Targeted Outreach" section of this toolkit shares tips the recovery community can use to connect with these key community audiences.

### *Why It's Important...*

The prevalence of mental and/or substance use disorders is high. Nearly one out of every five adults in the United States, about 43.8 million people, has a mental illness, such as a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder (excluding developmental and substance use disorders).<sup>1</sup> Approximately 21.6 million people age 12 or older were classified with a substance dependence or misuse disorder in 2013.<sup>2</sup> In spite of high prevalence, most Americans believe that recovery from a mental illness<sup>3</sup> or a substance use disorder is possible.<sup>4</sup>

For many individuals, behavioral health treatment is an important part of the recovery process.<sup>5</sup> However, in 2013, 22.7 million individuals aged 12 or older needed treatment for an illicit drug or alcohol use problem, but only 2.5 million received treatment at a specialty facility in the past year.<sup>6</sup>

High school and college students, families, and peer recovery networks all play unique roles in society and have the power to support healthy lifestyles. Members of the recovery community can lead the charge to educate these audiences about how they can provide support, starting with the basics of recovery.

For many people, recovery—<sup>7</sup>

- Emerges from hope, which is fostered by friends, families, providers, colleagues, and others who have experienced recovery themselves
- Occurs via many pathways, which may include professional clinical treatment, use of medications, support from families and in schools, faith-based approaches, peer support, and other approaches
- Is holistic, meaning recovery encompasses a person's whole life including mind, body, spirit, and community
- Is supported by relationships with peers and allies, and on social networks
- Is culturally based and influenced

# Targeted Outreach – Overview

- Is supported by addressing trauma, including physical or sexual abuse, domestic violence, war, disaster, or profound loss
- Involves individual, family, and community strengths and responsibilities
- Is fostered by respect

These principles of recovery can help people establish a blueprint for their own journey. However, it's also important for people living with these conditions to become aware that they are not alone in their efforts. The right support system can help ensure that those in need are addressing the following four key aspects of recovery.<sup>8</sup>

- **Health:** The person learns to overcome or manage his or her condition(s) or symptom(s)—and make informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional well-being.
- **Home:** It is also important to have a stable and safe place to live.
- **Purpose:** A person in recovery participates in meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school, volunteer opportunities, family caretaking, or creative endeavors, and has the independence, income, and resources to participate in society.
- **Community:** Relationships and social networks should provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

## *Groups That Can Make a Difference...*

Anyone can be affected by mental and/or substance use disorders. This year's **Recovery Month** observance focuses on ways the recovery community can connect with four different audiences that play distinct and important roles in helping others, or themselves, find a path of recovery.

Detailed information on the following groups can be found in their respective "Targeted Outreach" sections in this toolkit.

- **High School Students:** High school students often find or place themselves under heavy peer pressure because they feel the need to "fit in" within a certain group of friends. This same type of pressure can also come from media and pop culture messages suggesting to this group that they must act a certain way to be "trendy" or "edgy." Dealing with this type of pressure can be a trigger for high school students to start experimenting with substances or develop symptoms associated with mental health issues. Fortunately, this group is at an age, and within an environment, with visible and valuable resources around them, such as parents, teachers, counselors, and other support groups who can provide critical information, resources, and support.
- **College Students:** The transition from home to college is a stressful time for students and families, especially when the school campus is far from home. Likewise, the new acquired responsibilities, sense of independence, and pressure to perform well academically or at other college activities, such as sports, can lead college students to develop symptoms related to mental health issues, to experiment with substances, or experience a combination of both. Often, this group doesn't feel comfortable disclosing any of these issues and refrains from reaching out and utilizing resources within their campuses. This section aims to help and encourage students to be visible and vocal about their experiences with mental and/or substance use disorders in order to be a valuable resource to others who might be experiencing the same issues and are seeking help.
- **Family Supports:** A supportive family is an essential element in a person's recovery. People who have an engaged family tend to have better outcomes in recovery. In addition, it is just as important for family members to have a recovery process to learn how to manage their health and wellness as their loved one goes through recovery. There are many organizations tailored to provide recovery support for the family because these groups understand the value of family and its ability to aid in the healing and restorative process of a single person's recovery. These groups also support the family's need for a place where they can be visible, vocal, and share their value with others on the same journey.

# Targeted Outreach – Overview

- **Recovery Peers:** Recovery peers can be from all walks of life. They can be found in your neighborhood, congregation, and workplace. They are valuable to communities and institutions as they guide people in treatment and recovery in making decisions. Recovery peers are also cornerstones and people on which individuals in recovery depend on a day-to-day, month-to-month, and year-to-year basis. Chances are we all know someone in recovery, and many can make personal identification to the value they hold in your life. These are the same people who support individuals in recovery and share an even greater value, peer support. A large part of peer recovery is sharing the story, helping others know they too can live a life of recovery and can help bring balance to what was once uncertain. A peer being vocal and visible is often the beacon of hope many seek to either start or continue their personal journey of recovery. Therein resides the value of the peer.

Additional resources for high school and college students, families, and peer recovery networks are provided in the “Targeted Outreach” section of the toolkit.

**This list is not exhaustive of all available resources. Inclusion of websites and resources in this document and on the *Recovery Month* website does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.**

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<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings*, NSDUH Series H-49, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4887. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2006). National Mental Health Anti-Stigma Campaign: *What a Difference a Friend Makes* (SMA) 07-4257, p. 2. Retrieved January 14, 2015, from <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA07-4257/SMA07-4257.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2008). Summary report CARAVAN® survey for SAMHSA on addictions and recovery. Rockville, MD: Office of Communications, SAMHSA.

<sup>5</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2012). *SAMHSA's Working Definition of Recovery*. Retrieved March 24, 2015, from <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/SAMHSA-s-Working-Definition-of-Recovery/PEP12-RECDEF>, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> SAMHSA Blog. (2012). *SAMHSA's Working Definition of Recovery Updated*. Retrieved January 14, 2015, from <http://blog.samhsa.gov/2012/03/23/definition-of-recovery-updated/>.

<sup>8</sup> SAMHSA Blog. (2012). *SAMHSA's Working Definition of Recovery Updated*. Retrieved January 14, 2015, from <http://blog.samhsa.gov/2012/03/23/definition-of-recovery-updated/>.

## SUPPORTING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

### Introduction

For many students, high school presents a critical time of personal and social development. Driven by the desire to “fit in” with certain social groups, the high school environment fosters immense peer pressure. In addition, academic pressures can overwhelm high school students. As a result, high school students are susceptible to mental and/or substance use disorders.

The physical, mental, and emotional health of high school students is essential to every family and community. When young people exhibit signs of mental and/or substance use disorders, it is important that they receive appropriate support as early as possible. Family members, friends, and trusted adults (e.g., teachers, school counselors, and medical professionals) can help address mental and/or substance use disorders by understanding the risks and learning about the resources available to help young people with behavioral health conditions. Students who live with one or both parents with a mental and/or substance use disorder also need support systems to help them learn healthy ways to cope with problems.

Every September, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (<http://www.samhsa.gov>), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (<http://www.hhs.gov>), sponsors **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** to increase awareness of behavioral health conditions. This observance promotes the belief that behavioral health is essential to health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover from mental and substance use disorders.

The 2015 **Recovery Month** theme, “**Join the Voices for Recovery: Visible, Vocal, Valuable!**” highlights opportunities for recovery education, support, and celebration. The community can: *be visible* by knowing the prevalence of mental and/or substance use disorders; *be vocal* by noticing warning signs and symptoms; and *be valuable* by raising awareness of the resources available to help.

### Visible...

Statistics highlight the importance of preventing behavioral health issues among high school students, as the data shows widespread prevalence of mental and substance use disorders.

- In 2013, 8.8 percent of adolescents aged 12 to 17 were current illicit drug users,<sup>9</sup> and 11.6 percent were current alcohol users.<sup>10</sup>
- An estimated 1.3 million adolescents aged 12 to 17 had a substance use disorder in 2013 (5.2 percent of all adolescents).<sup>11</sup>
- Roughly one out of every nine adolescents aged 12 to 17 (10.7 percent) experienced a major depressive episode in the past year, with 7.7 percent having a major depressive episode with a severe impairment in one or more role domains (e.g., chores at home, school/work, close relationships with family, and/or social life).<sup>12</sup>

Young people who experience a mental and/or substance use disorder are at increased risk for a variety of academic, health, social, and emotional problems, including:

- **Academic:** lower grades, absenteeism, and school dropout
- **Physical health:** injuries, physical disabilities, death by suicide, homicide, illness, and unintentional injuries
- **Mental health:** memory problems, depression, developmental delays, personality disorders, and suicidal ideation
- **Social:** isolation from peers, disengagement from school, family, and community activities; and family dysfunction

# Targeted Outreach – High School Students

Reaching high school students with mental and/or substance use disorder prevention messages and resources benefits individuals, families, and communities. Intervening early promotes the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and continued wellness.

Recovery from a mental and/or substance use disorder for adolescents is possible and may be a vital piece for the maintenance of a healthy lifestyle. Youth recovery support should include alternative peer groups, ongoing emotional and mental health check-ups, and developmentally appropriate recovery support from peers and mentorship programs. This is also true for young people living with a parent who has a substance use disorder or untreated mental health condition. According to the 2015 Al-Anon Membership Survey, 12 percent of Al-Anon members, whose mean age is 59.8 years old, have a child under the age of 18 living with them.<sup>13</sup> Of these adults, 81 percent are the biological parent of the child living with them.<sup>14</sup> Students whose lives have been affected by a parent with a mental and/or substance use disorder can also experience academic, health, social, and emotional problems.

## *Vocal...*

Everyone can play a role in detecting mental and/or substance use disorders by recognizing signs and symptoms of these disorders and encouraging the individual to get help. Families and educators are in a unique position to recognize these signs and symptoms and can take steps to have a young person evaluated.

Signs and symptoms of a mental health problem of a high school student may include:<sup>15,16</sup>

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Not eating, throwing up, or using laxatives to lose weight
- Having intense worries or fears that interfere with daily activities
- Experiencing extreme difficulty controlling behavior, putting oneself in physical danger, or causing problems in school
- Changes in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Excessive complaints of physical ailments
- Defiance of authority
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Outbursts of anger
- Suicidal thoughts

Signs and symptoms of a substance use disorder of a high school student may include:<sup>17,18</sup>

- Sudden drop in grades
- Loss of appetite or sudden increase in appetite
- Sudden weight loss or gain
- Skipping school or class
- Stealing and/or vandalism
- Change in friends or social groups or isolation from peers
- Hyperactivity or exhaustion
- Lack of motivation or inability to focus on daily tasks

Several factors can decrease the likelihood that high school students will use or misuse alcohol and other drugs. Protective factors include: perceived risks associated with substance use, prevention messages, parental monitoring of activities, and having a strong sense of family and school connectedness and engagement.<sup>19</sup>

Friends, parents, and teachers play a major role in helping to prevent mental and/or substance use disorders, identifying when someone has a problem, and connecting those in need with treatment and recovery resources.

Students with a parent who has a mental and/or substance use disorder need to have at least one trustworthy adult to speak to and listen to them.

If a high school student is showing signs or symptoms of a mental and/or substance use disorder, a concerned member of the community can be vocal by doing the following:

- Express concern and support for the individual in need.
- Find out if the individual is getting the care he or she needs and wants—if not, connect him or her to help.
- Ask questions in a calm voice, listen to ideas, and be responsive when mental and/or substance use problems come up.
- Offer to help the individual with everyday tasks without enabling negative behavior.
- Include the individual in plans and outings; continue to invite him or her without being overbearing, even if he or she declines your invitations.
- Educate other people so they understand the facts about mental and/or substance use disorders and do not discriminate.
- Treat him or her with respect, compassion, and empathy.
- Recommend resources like recovery high schools, which provide students with a safe and substance-free environment conducive to sustaining recovery.
- Set an example of how to live a healthy lifestyle and encourage the individual to do the same.

## SCHOOL AND CAMPUS HEALTH

SAMHSA's Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) initiative supports schools and communities that promote students' mental health, enhance their academic achievement, prevent violence and substance use, and create safe and respectful school climates. To date, SS/HS has provided services for 13+ million youth and has offered more than \$2 billion in funding and other resources to 365 communities in 49 states across the nation. The SS/HS initiative also provides a series of online resources for the prevention of youth and school violence. To learn more about SS/HS initiatives and resources, visit <http://www.samhsa.gov/safe-schools-healthy-students>.

# Targeted Outreach – High School Students

## *Valuable...*

Support from the community enables a high school student to see his or her worth and recognize that recovery is possible. In addition to encouraging treatment and offering emotional support, concerned community members can also connect students to important treatment and recovery resources.

The community can be valuable in reaching out to high school students in many ways, including:

- Conduct a search of existing, federally-supported youth programs in the community at Map My Community (<http://youth.gov/map-my-community>). The search can be filtered by programs that deal with substance use disorders, bullying, mental health, homelessness and housing, and health and nutrition.
- Talk with other organizations including nonprofit support group programs in the community that have already successfully partnered with high school students and high schools for their advice on how to engage teens.
- Develop key talking points on prevention, treatment, and recovery support services relevant to high school students in the community.
- Reach out to teachers, coaches, counselors, school administrators, and school or county officials to participate in informational fairs or to arrange speaking opportunities to educate students about prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.
- Access the following **Recovery Month** social media channels for prevention, treatment, and recovery information, tips, and resources.
  - Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/RecoveryMonth>)
  - YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/RecoveryMonth>)
  - Twitter account (<http://www.twitter.com/RecoveryMonth>)

Some valuable resources for individuals or organizations looking to reach high school students with prevention, treatment, and recovery information include:

- **National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) for Teens** (<http://teens.drugabuse.gov>): Provides information and resources to students about drugs and neuroscience, and supports educators and parents to facilitate student learning.
- **Young People in Recovery** (<http://youngpeopleinrecovery.org>): Creates and cultivates local community-led recovery chapters that support young people in or seeking recovery by empowering them to obtain stable employment, secure suitable housing, and explore continuing education.
- **Students Against Destructive Decisions** (<http://www.sadd.org>): Empowers local student-led high school chapters to be resilient to all forms of peer pressure and engage in peer-to-peer education on healthy and safe development.
- **Association of Recovery Schools** (<http://recoveryschools.org>): Provides research and best practices to recovery high schools across the country in an effort to support the growth of the recovery high school movement.
- **National Institute of Mental Health** (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/child-and-adolescent-mental-health/index.shtml>): Features numerous publications on different mental health issues common amongst high school-aged students.
- **School Mental Health** (<http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/AboutUs.html>): Provides tips for nurturing high school students' mental health based on the role schools play in the students' lives.
- **Mental Health America** (<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/back-school>): Offers tips on how parents can help their children thrive in a high school setting and links to external resources that further explain the psychological development of this age category. In addition, the "Find an Affiliate" page (<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/find-affiliate>) finds the closest mental health clinic in an area.

# Targeted Outreach – High School Students

- **Love Is Respect** (<http://www.loveisrespect.org>): Provides an opportunity for teens and young adults to receive support for dealing with an unhealthy or abusive relationship by offering online chat, telephone support, and texting with a peer advocate.

Additional resources can be found on SAMHSA's website, such as:

- **SAMHSA's Recovery Month Website** (<http://www.recoverymonth.gov>): Provides resources, tools and materials, including print, web, television, radio, and social media assets, to help communities encourage individuals to seek treatment and recovery services.
- **SAMHSA's Website** (<http://www.samhsa.gov>): Provides numerous resources and helpful pieces of information related to mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, treatment, and recovery.
- **SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatments and Services Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment>): Contains information on common mental illnesses and substance use disorders and how SAMHSA helps people access treatments and services.
- **SAMHSA's Find Help Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help>): Provides various links and numbers to mental and substance use disorder treatment and recovery services locators.
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) – or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>): Provides 24-hour, free, confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, treatment, and recovery in English and Spanish.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** (<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>): Provides a free, 24-hour helpline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
- **SAMHSA's "Talk. They Hear You." Campaign** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking>): Provides information about the dangers of underage drinking and gives families and communities prevention tips.
- **SAMHSA's Age- and Gender-Based Populations** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/specific-populations/age-gender-based>): Provides information about SAMHSA's programs, initiatives, and resources to improve the behavioral health of age-and gender-based populations.
- **SAMHSA's Recovery and Recovery Support Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery>): Provides information on how recovery-oriented care and recovery support systems help people with mental and/or substance use disorders manage their conditions.
- **SAMHSA's School and Campus Health Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/school-campus-health>): Offers information about SAMHSA's efforts to promote mental health and substance use prevention in schools and on campuses, and to provide safe learning environments.
- **SAMHSA'S Too Smart To Start** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/too-smart-to-start>): Helps prevent underage alcohol use by offering strategies and materials for youth, teens, families, educators, community leaders, professionals, and volunteers.
- **SAMHSA's 2012 Town Hall Meetings to Prevent Underage Drinking: Moving Communities Beyond Awareness to Action** (<http://store.samhsa.gov/product/2012-Town-Hall-Meetings-to-Prevent-Underage-Drinking-Moving-Communities-Beyond-Awareness-to-Action/SMA14-4838>): Presents outcomes from a series of Town Hall meetings to educate communities about underage drinking and engage them in prevention efforts.
- **SAMHSA's Know Bullying App** (<http://store.samhsa.gov/product/KnowBullying-Put-the-power-to-prevent-bullying-in-your-hand/PEP14-KNOWBULLYAPP>): Describes strategies to prevent bullying and explains how to recognize warning signs that a child is bullying or being bullied. Includes a section for educators.
- **SAMHSA's Wellness page** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/wellness>): Promotes the improved wellness of people with mental and/or substance use disorders by engaging, educating, and training providers, consumers, and policymakers.

# Targeted Outreach – High School Students

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<sup>9</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings*, NSDUH Series H-49, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4887. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> Al-Anon Family Groups. (2015) Al-Anon Membership Survey, p. 45. Retrieved March 23, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Anon Family Groups. (2015) Al-Anon Membership Survey, p. 45. Retrieved March 23, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Mental Health America. (n.d.). *Mental Illness and the Family: Recognizing Warning Signs and How to Cope*. Retrieved January 9, 2015 from <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/recognizing-warning-signs>.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d.). *For Parents and Caregivers*. Retrieved February 3, 2015, from <http://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers/index.html>.

<sup>17</sup> The National Center of Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University. *Adolescent Substance Use: America's #1 Public Health Problem*. Retrieved December 30, 2014 from <http://www.casacolumbia.org/addiction-research/reports/adolescent-substance-use>.

<sup>18</sup> DrugAbuse.com. *Teen Drug Abuse*. Retrieved December 30, 2014 from <http://drugabuse.com/library/teen-drug-abuse/>.

<sup>19</sup> Substance Abuse Prevention: *Snapshots from the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative*, The National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention at Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), 2013.

## HELPING COLLEGE STUDENTS ACHIEVE POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

### Introduction

College students are in a phase of self-discovery as they transition from adolescence to adulthood. For many, college is the first time students are living on their own—a newfound freedom, which can be both exciting and overwhelming. College students go from having their parents to support them at home to seeking guidance from their peers on campus.

With this independence comes responsibility, academic stress, and social pressure. Coupled with access to alcohol and/or drugs, college students are at risk of developing mental and/or substance use disorders.

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### Visible...

Research shows the widespread prevalence of mental and substance use disorders amongst college students.

- In 2013, 22.3 percent of full-time college students aged 18 to 22 were currently using illicit drugs, with nearly one out of five using marijuana (19.8 percent). More than half (59.4 percent) were drinking alcohol.<sup>20</sup>
- The rate of current nonmedical use of prescription-type drugs among college students is 4.3 percent.<sup>21</sup>
- According to the 2013 *National Survey on Drug Use (NSDUH)*, among full-time college students age 18 to 22, 8.0 percent had serious thoughts of suicide, 2.4 percent made suicide plans, and 0.9 percent attempted suicide.<sup>22</sup>
- According to the 2013 NSDUH, 9.5 percent of full-time college students aged 18 to 22 had a major depressive episode in the past year; this equals 5.9 percent among college males and 12.6 percent among college females.<sup>23</sup>
- Despite college counseling services offered at most campuses, 36 percent of college students who screened positive for depression did not receive treatment.<sup>24</sup>

For parents, peers, teachers, and staff, knowing how to recognize an issue is critical to helping a student in need. Signs and symptoms of a mental health problem in a college student may include:<sup>25,26</sup>

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Not eating, throwing up, or using laxatives to lose weight
- Having intense worries or fears that interfere with daily activities
- Experiencing extreme difficulty controlling behavior, putting oneself in physical danger, or causing problems in school
- Showing drastic changes in behavior or personality
- Exhibiting decreased motivation

# Targeted Outreach – College Students

Signs and symptoms of a substance use disorder in a college student may include:<sup>27,28</sup>

- Bloodshot eyes
- Sudden loss of appetite or extreme hunger
- Unusual weight loss or gain
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Withdrawal and isolation from social functions
- Skipping school or class
- Stealing
- Sudden change in peers/friends
- Hyperactivity or fatigue

## *Vocal...*

Approaching a college student about a mental and/or substance use disorder can be uncomfortable. At the same time, it is important to voice concern and speak the truth. If someone is showing signs or symptoms of a mental and/or substance use disorder, consider doing the following:<sup>29</sup>

- Offer support, understanding, patience, and encouragement.
- Talk to the individual and listen carefully.
- Recognize comments about hurting themselves or suicide and report his or her behavior to a counselor or advisor on campus.
- Invite the individual out for walks, outings, and other activities; if he or she refuses, keep trying but don't push.
- Encourage the individual to attend doctor's appointments.
- Support the individual in reporting any concerns about his or her medication misuse to a health care professional.
- Remind the individual that with time and treatment, recovery is possible.
- Share information about services on campus, such as support groups, recovery programs, or a sober living dorm.

## Collegiate Recovery Community

A Collegiate Recovery Community (CRC) provides a safe, supportive environment for students to maintain their sobriety and adopt skills to help manage the stresses of college life. Students participating in this community have educational, academic, advisory, community building, and programmatic opportunities that support their decisions to maintain their recovery, as well as improve their academics and general life skills.

Some colleges even have sober housing, where students in recovery have an opportunity for a fulfilling, healthy college residential experience free from drugs and alcohol. To learn more, visit the Association of Recovery in Higher Education at <http://collegiaterecovery.org>.

## *Valuable...*

Members of the college community all have a role to play in helping students in need get the proper prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. Ways that parents, teachers, peers, and community members can make a valuable contribution include:

- Talking with organizations in the community that have successfully partnered with college students and campuses for their advice on how to engage students.
- Reaching out to university officials and the school's Collegiate Recovery Community (CRC) to plan guest-speaking opportunities to educate students about prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.
- Asking coaches, professors, and administrators to talk about mental and/or substance use disorders with their students or collegiate athletes. Consult the "Mental and/or Substance Use Disorders: Fast Facts" section in this toolkit for more information.
- Recruiting college students in recovery to share their stories on campus and offer support.
- Accessing the following **Recovery Month** social media channels for prevention, treatment and recovery information, tips, and resources.
  - Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/RecoveryMonth>)
  - YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/RecoveryMonth>)
  - Twitter account (<http://www.twitter.com/RecoveryMonth>)

## Sexual Assault on College Campuses

An estimated one in five women will be the victim of sexual assault during her college years. Many of those that have experienced a sexual assault seek services for addressing the trauma and its impact on mental health, including signs and symptoms of PTSD. The White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault was established to bring awareness to the prevention and intervention initiatives around this issue. For more information about the resources available, visit Not Alone at <https://www.notalone.gov>.

The following is a list of online resources for community members who want to connect a college student to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services and information.

- **Active Minds** (<http://activeminds.org/>): Lists external resources about mental health for students, multicultural organizations, and LGBT communities.
- **Transforming Youth Recovery** (<http://www.transformingyouthrecovery.org/>): Works with recovery communities to increase recovery success for students struggling with addiction. Uses the real world experiences of students in recovery to educate the public about addiction and to connect students and their families to recovery support services.
- **Young People in Recovery** (<http://youngpeopleinrecovery.org/>): Creates and cultivates local community-led recovery chapters that support young people in or seeking recovery by empowering them to obtain stable employment, secure suitable housing, and explore continuing education.

# Targeted Outreach – College Students

- **Teen Mental Health** (<http://teenmentalhealth.org>): Offers tools specifically designed for first-year college students and works to erase the shame attached to mental health issues.
- **ULifeline** (<http://www.ulifeline.org>): Designed for college students with questions about mental health issues, including a “self-evaluator” for mental health. Includes a searchable database to find the location of a counseling center on campus.
- **The American College Health Association** (<http://www.acha.org>): Leads a coalition against alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and offers brochures and online education programs.
- **Transition Year** (<http://www.transitionyear.org/parent/intro.php>): Features interactive tools for determining college students’ emotional health and advice on how to differentiate between emotional challenges versus larger mental health concerns.
- **Association of Recovery in Higher Education** (<http://collegiaterecovery.org>): Represents collegiate recovery programs (CRP), and communities (CRC), the faculty and staff who support them, and the students who represent them.
- **Mental Health First Aid** (<http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org>): Offers training through an eight-hour course to help communities identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.
- **Love is Respect** (<http://www.loveisrespect.org>): Provides an opportunity for teens and young adults to receive support for dealing with an unhealthy or abusive relationship by offering online chat, telephone support, and texting with a peer advocate.
- **Recovery Campus Magazine** ([www.recoverycampus.com](http://www.recoverycampus.com)): Provides editorial information to young adults seeking to continue their recovery and complete their education. The magazine raises awareness on the growing number of CRCs across the country.
- **Sound of Your Voice Video and Parent Guide** (<http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/videos/soyv.aspx>): Provides information for parents to encourage them to talk with their college-bound young adults about alcohol use. The resources are for parents, high school or college administrators, and organizations serving parents and teens.

Additional resources can be found on SAMHSA’s website. These include:

- **SAMHSA’s Recovery Month Website** (<http://www.recoverymonth.gov>): Provides resources, tools, and materials including print, web, television, radio, and social media assets, to help communities encourage individuals to seek treatment and recovery services.
- **SAMHSA’s Website** (<http://www.samhsa.gov>): Provides numerous resources and helpful pieces of information related to mental health and/or substance use issues.
- **SAMHSA’s Behavioral Health Treatments and Services Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment>): Provides information on common mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders and how SAMHSA helps people access treatments and services.
- **SAMHSA’s Find Help Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help>): Provides various links and numbers to mental and/or substance use disorder treatment and recovery services locators.
- **SAMHSA’s National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) – or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>): Provides 24-hour, free, confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, treatment, and recovery in English and Spanish.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** (<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>): Provides a free, 24-hour helpline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

# Targeted Outreach – College Students

- **SAMHSA's Recovery and Recovery Support Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery>): Provides information on how recovery-oriented care and recovery support systems help people with mental and/or substance use disorders manage their conditions.
- **SAMHSA's Wellness Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/wellness>): Promotes the improved wellness of people with mental and/or substance use disorders by engaging, educating, and training providers, consumers, and policymakers.

**This list is not exhaustive of all available resources. Inclusion of websites and resources in this document and on the Recovery Month website does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.**

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<sup>20</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 27.

<sup>21</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings*, NSDUH Series H-49, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4887. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 31.

<sup>23</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings*, NSDUH Series H-49, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4887. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.

<sup>24</sup> Eisenberg, D., Golberstein, E., Gollust, S.E. (2007). *Help-seeking and access to mental health care in a university student population*. *Medical Care* 45(7):594-601.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (n.d). *For Parents and Caregivers*. Retrieved December 30, 2014, from <http://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers/index.html>.

<sup>26</sup> WebMD. (n.d.). *Symptoms of Depression*. Retrieved January 8, 2015, from <http://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/detecting-depression>.

<sup>27</sup> HelpGuide. (2014). *Drug Abuse and Addiction: Signs, Symptoms, and Help for Drug Problems and Substance Abuse*. Retrieved November 4, 2014, from <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/addiction/drug-abuse-and-addiction.htm>.

<sup>28</sup> DrugAbuse.com. *Teen Drug Abuse*. Retrieved February 3, 2015, from <http://drugabuse.com/library/teen-drug-abuse/>.

<sup>29</sup> National Institute of Mental Health. (2012.) *Depression and College Students*. Retrieved February 3, 2015, from <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression-and-college-students/index.shtml>.

## COMMUNITY-BASED FAMILY SUPPORT

### Introduction

Family members are often the first to recognize that a loved one has a mental and/or substance use disorder.

Research shows that family support plays a major role in helping to prevent mental and/or substance use disorders, identifying when someone has a problem,<sup>30</sup> and connecting those in need with the treatment resources and services they need to begin and stay on their recovery journey.<sup>31</sup>

Having actively involved family members can also promote positive behavioral health since family members monitor each other's behavior, take responsibility for each other's well-being, and can offer or recommend assistance and support.<sup>32</sup>

Every September, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (<http://www.samhsa.gov>), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (<http://www.hhs.gov>), sponsors **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** to increase awareness of behavioral health conditions. This observance promotes the belief that behavioral health is essential to health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover from mental and/or substance use disorders.

The 2015 **Recovery Month** theme, "**Join the Voices for Recovery: Visible, Vocal, Valuable!**" highlights opportunities for recovery education, support, and celebration. The community can: *be visible* by knowing the prevalence of mental and/or substance use disorders; *be vocal* by noticing warning signs and symptoms; and, *be valuable* by raising awareness of the resources available to help.

### Visible...

Statistics show the widespread prevalence of mental and/or substance use disorders that affect millions of family members.

- In 2013, an estimated 24.6 million Americans aged 12 or older were current (past month) illicit drug users.<sup>33</sup>
- In 2013, an estimated 21.6 million persons aged 12 or older were classified with substance dependence or abuse in the past year.<sup>34</sup>
- In 2013, the prevalence of binge alcohol use among adults aged 65 and older was 9.1 percent or 3.9 million people.<sup>35</sup>
- In 2013, approximately 7.7 million adults had co-occurring substance use disorder and any mental illness in the past year.<sup>36</sup>

People with a mental and/or substance use disorder are likely to find themselves increasingly isolated from their families. Family can include members of the immediate (parents, siblings, partners, and children) and extended (cousins, grandparents, and in-laws) families. People in recovery may include others, who are supportive, as part of their "family of choice" (friends, colleagues from work, and mentors).

The effects of a substance use disorder frequently extend beyond the nuclear family. Extended family members may experience feelings of abandonment, anxiety, fear, anger, concern, embarrassment, or guilt. They may also wish to ignore or cut ties with the person misusing substances.<sup>37</sup>

Military families are especially vulnerable to the risks of mental and/or substance use disorders. Post-traumatic stress disorder is a common and devastating mental health condition that may lead veterans and family members alike to cope through the use of drugs and alcohol. Additionally, approximately 50 percent of returning service members who need treatment for mental health conditions seek it, but only slightly more than half who receive treatment receive adequate care.<sup>38</sup> Members of the military are often separated from their families for lengthy periods of time due to active-duty assignments, and as a result their families often experience life challenges and stress.<sup>39</sup>

## KEY ISSUE: HOMELESSNESS AND FAMILIES IN RECOVERY

Individuals with serious mental illnesses, and especially those with substance use disorders, are at risk of homelessness. Family members of a loved one who is homeless may feel stress and pressure to help resolve the problem. Resources are available to help end the cycle of homelessness associated with mental and/or substance use disorders and help individuals and families find stable housing. For more information, visit SAMHSA's Homelessness Resource Center at <http://homeless.samhsa.gov>.

### *Vocal...*

Families are in a unique position to recognize the signs and symptoms of a mental and/or substance use disorder.

Signs and symptoms of a mental health problem in a family member may include: <sup>40,41</sup>

- Showing signs of confusion and an inability to follow directions
- Withdrawal from family and social functions
- Having intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- Having severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Excessive anxiety and worry
- Showing drastic changes in behavior or personality
- Feeling tired or having problems sleeping
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Outbursts of anger
- Delusions or hallucinations
- Denial of problems
- Minor or chronic physical ailments
- Showing severe behavior that can hurt oneself or others
- Defiance of authority, stealing, and/or vandalism

Signs and symptoms of a substance use disorder in a family member may include:<sup>42</sup>

- Bloodshot eyes
- Sudden loss of appetite or extreme hunger
- Unusual weight loss or gain
- Skipping class or work
- Unexplained or sudden change in mood
- Unusual hyperactivity or nervousness
- Lack of motivation or inability to focus on daily tasks

Below are some tips for families to reach out to a loved one in need.<sup>43</sup>

- Observe the family member's behavior to look for signs and symptoms of a mental and/or substance use disorder.
- Discuss your observations with other family members to determine if they also notice signs and symptoms of a mental and/or substance use disorder.

# Targeted Outreach – Family Support

- If other family members agree that there is a problem, talk to the family member in need about getting help in a calm, matter-of-fact manner.
- Listen to the family member in need to identify the root of the problem and suggest the appropriate resources to help.
- Contact a behavioral health specialist, faith leader, physician, employee assistance professional, or guidance counselor to help you. Do this even when the family member with the mental and/or substance use disorder declines help.
- Offer to go with the family member to doctor's appointments and recovery support groups.
- Respect the individual's need for, and right to, his or her privacy.

## *Valuable...*

Family members supporting a loved one on the road to recovery need access to resources like treatment programs, counseling, family resource centers, and mutual aid/support groups.

The recovery community can be valuable in reaching out to families in many ways, including:

- Set up or join existing family support groups.
- Reach out to county or health department officials to arrange guest-speaking opportunities to educate families about prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.
- Organize a run/walk to promote the **Recovery Month** message.
- Access the following **Recovery Month** social media channels for prevention, treatment, and recovery information, tips, and resources.
  - Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/RecoveryMonth>)
  - YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/RecoveryMonth>)
  - Twitter account (<http://www.twitter.com/RecoveryMonth>)

Resources for family members who need support during this trying time include:

- **Al-Anon Family Groups** (<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/>): Offers the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others who have coped or are coping with a loved one with a drinking problem.
- **Mental Health America – Mental Illness and the Family: Recognizing Warning Signs and How to Cope** (<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/recognizing-warning-signs>): Provides information on how to recognize mental illness and resources for those coping with someone with a mental illness.
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness Family Support Group** ([http://www.nami.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Find\\_Support/Education\\_Training\\_and\\_Peer\\_Support\\_Center/NA\\_MI\\_Family\\_Support\\_Group/NAMI\\_Family\\_Support\\_Group.htm](http://www.nami.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Find_Support/Education_Training_and_Peer_Support_Center/NA_MI_Family_Support_Group/NAMI_Family_Support_Group.htm)): Provides a peer-led support group for family members, caregivers, and loved ones of individuals living with mental illness.
- **The 20 Minute Guide** (<http://the20minuteguide.com/parents/#.VFqX-TTF9fe>): Offers a set of interactive tools and strategies for any family member or friend who wants to help a loved one get help for a substance use disorder.

# Targeted Outreach – Family Support

Additional resources can be found on SAMHSA's website. These include:

- **SAMHSA's *Recovery Month* Webpage** (<http://www.recoverymonth.gov>): Provides resources, tools, and materials, including print, web, television, radio, and social media assets, to help communities encourage individuals to seek treatment and recovery services.
- **SAMHSA's Website** (<http://www.samhsa.gov>): Provides numerous resources and helpful pieces of information related to mental health and substance use.
- **SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatments and Services Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment>): Contains information on common mental illnesses and substance use disorders and how SAMHSA helps people access treatments and services.
- **SAMHSA's Find Help Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help>): Provides various links and numbers to mental and/or substance use disorder treatment and recovery services locators.
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) – or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline>): Provides 24-hour, free, and confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, treatment, and recovery in English and Spanish.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** (<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>): Provides a free, 24-hour helpline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
- **SAMHSA's Homelessness Resource Center** (<http://homeless.samhsa.gov>): Provides resources about homelessness, mental illness, substance use, co-occurring disorders, and traumatic stress.
- **SAMHSA's Recovery and Recovery Support Page** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery>): Provides information on how recovery-oriented care and recovery support systems help people with mental and/or substance use disorders manage their conditions.
- **SAMHSA's Veterans and Military Families Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/veterans-military-families>): Offers information about SAMHSA's efforts to ensure that American service men and women, and their families, can access behavioral health treatment and services.
- **SAMHSA's Wellness Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/wellness>): Promotes the improved wellness of people with mental and/or substance use disorders by engaging, educating, and training providers, consumers, and policymakers.

**This list is not exhaustive of all available resources. Inclusion of websites and resources in this document and on the *Recovery Month* website does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.**

- <sup>30</sup> Velleman, R. D. B., Templeton, L. J. and Copello, A. G. (2005), *The role of the family in preventing and intervening with substance use and misuse: a comprehensive review of family interventions, with a focus on young people*. Drug and Alcohol Review, 24: 93–109. doi: 10.1080/09595230500167478.
- <sup>31</sup> Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. Substance Abuse Treatment and Family Therapy. Rockville (MD): Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US); 2004. (Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series, No. 39.) Chapter 1 Substance Abuse Treatment and Family Therapy. Available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK64269/>.
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- <sup>33</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 1.
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- <sup>35</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 36.
- <sup>36</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings*, NSDUH Series H-49, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4887. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 49.
- <sup>37</sup> The Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network. (2008). *Family participation in addiction treatment—Part 1: The importance of engagement*. Addiction Messenger, 10 (1). Retrieved November 6, 2014, from <http://www.nattc.org/userfiles/file/NorthwestFrontier/Vol.%2011%20Issue%201.pdf>.
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- <sup>39</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (September 29, 2014). *Veterans and Military Families*. Retrieved November 6, 2014 from <http://www.samhsa.gov/veterans-military-families>.
- <sup>40</sup> Mental Health America. (n.d.). *Mental Illness and the Family: Recognizing Warning Signs and How to Cope*. Retrieved November 5, 2014, from <http://www.nmha.org/go/information/get-info/mi-and-the-family/recognizing-warning-signs-and-how-to-cope>.
- <sup>41</sup> National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc., Helping a Family Member or Friend. (n.d.). *For Friends and Families: Signs and Symptoms*. Retrieved February 3, 2015, from <https://ncadd.org/for-friends-and-family/signs-and-symptoms>.
- <sup>42</sup> National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc., Helping a Family Member or Friend. (n.d.). *For Friends and Families: Signs and Symptoms*. Retrieved January 9, 2015, from <https://ncadd.org/for-friends-and-family/signs-and-symptoms>.
- <sup>43</sup> Partnership for Drug-Free Kids. (2014). *Helping an Adult Family Member or Friend with a Drug or Alcohol Problem*. Retrieved February 3, 2015, from <http://www.drugfree.org/want-help-adult-family-member-friend-drug-alcohol-problem-7-suggestions/>.

## PEER-SUPPORTED RECOVERY IN THE COMMUNITY

### Introduction

Each year millions of Americans experience mental and/or substance use disorders.<sup>44</sup> Seeking help can be challenging, especially when people fear discrimination and often feel isolated and alone. Knowing that there are peers to help in the recovery journey can be immensely empowering.

Research shows that peer support facilitates recovery and reduces health care costs.<sup>45</sup> Peer recovery supports self-efficacy through role modeling by those who have traveled the same path. Ongoing peer recovery support can help individuals regain meaning, purpose, and positive social connections.

Every September, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (<http://www.samhsa.gov>), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (<http://www.hhs.gov>), sponsors **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** to increase awareness of behavioral health conditions. This observance promotes the belief that behavioral health is essential to health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover from mental and/or substance use disorders.

The 2015 **Recovery Month** theme, “*Join the Voices for Recovery: Visible, Vocal, Valuable!*” highlights opportunities for recovery education, support, and celebration. The community can: be visible by participating in peer support groups; be vocal by sharing recovery stories; and, be valuable by raising awareness of the resources available to help.

### Visible...

The following statistics highlight the prevalence of mental and substance use disorders.

- In 2013, an estimated 24.6 million Americans aged 12 or older were current (past month) illicit drug users.<sup>46</sup>
- In 2013, an estimated 21.6 million persons aged 12 or older were classified with substance dependence or abuse.<sup>47</sup>
- In 2013, approximately 7.7 million adults had a co-occurring substance use disorder and any mental illness in the past year.<sup>48</sup>

Peers play a major role in helping to prevent and intervene with mental and/or substance use disorders. Peers can identify if someone has a problem, and connect those in need with treatment resources and recovery support services.

In studies of individuals with co-occurring substance use disorders and/or mental illness, peer-led interventions were found to significantly reduce substance use, mental illness symptoms, and crisis.<sup>49</sup>

Recovery peers can be found in all walks of life, including neighborhoods, faith communities, and workplaces. By sharing their experiences, peers bring hope to people who are in or seeking recovery, and promote a sense of belonging within the community.<sup>50</sup>

Specialized peer support is especially helpful for groups with unique experiences, such as military service members and veterans; people who have been involved in the justice system; young adults; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations. Recovery peers and coaches can help those in recovery navigate the various services available, such as filing paperwork for disability, preparing for job interviews, finding housing, and managing medical appointments.

Peers can take part in peer support services that help prevent relapse and promote sustained recovery from mental and/or substance use disorders, including:<sup>51</sup>

- **Peer mentoring or coaching:** Developing a one-on-one relationship in which a peer leader with recovery experience encourages, motivates, and supports a peer in recovery.
- **Peer recovery resource connecting:** Connecting the peer with professional and nonprofessional services and resources available in the community.
- **Recovery group facilitation:** Facilitating or leading recovery-oriented group activities, including support groups and educational activities.
- **Community involvement:** Helping peers make new friends and build healthy social networks through emotional, social, and mutual support efforts. This includes connecting a peer to information about learning a new skill, accessing child care or transportation services, and supporting positive personal relationships that encourage recovery.

## *Vocal...*

Everyone develops a number of meaningful relationships throughout school, work, and other day-to-day activities. Daily interactions with people from these different parts of life provide a unique opportunity for recognizing signs and symptoms of a mental and/or substance use disorder.

Signs and symptoms of a mental health issue in a peer may include:<sup>52,53</sup>

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- Showing signs of confusion and an inability to follow directions
- Having unusual ideas and experiencing paranoia
- Responding to auditory and visual hallucinations
- Seriously trying to harm oneself or commit suicide, or making plans to do so
- Experiencing sudden and overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart or fast breathing.
- Exhibiting violent behavior that poses a risk to oneself, or others
- Not eating, throwing up, or using laxatives to lose weight
- Having intense worries or fears that interfere with daily activities
- Experiencing extreme difficulty controlling behavior, putting oneself in physical danger
- Using illegal drugs or alcohol repeatedly
- Having severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Showing drastic changes in behavior or personality
- Feeling tired or having problems sleeping
- Losing interest in activities once enjoyed

Signs and symptoms of a substance use disorder in a peer may include:<sup>54</sup>

- Sudden weight loss
- Loss of interest in favorite activities and/or pastimes
- Sudden drop in grades
- Uncommon behavior problems at home, school, and work
- Skipping school or work
- Change in friends
- Stealing
- Excessive hunger
- Runny nose
- Loss of appetite

# Targeted Outreach – Peer Recovery

A peer who is vocal about his or her treatment and recovery story can be the catalyst for others in need. Real-life stories bring to life the power of recovery.<sup>55</sup> For examples of real-life stories and the chance to upload a story, please consult the **Recovery Month** Personal Recovery Stories (<http://www.recoverymonth.gov/personal-stories>) page.

Below are tips that can help peers start the conversation if a friend, colleague, or classmate is showing signs of a mental and/or substance use disorder.<sup>56</sup>

- Talk to the individual and offer support, including offering to go with him or her to get help.
- Share personal stories of treatment and recovery to foster trust.
- Focus on the positive aspects of treatment and recovery, including paths to wellness.
- Acknowledge that everyone's recovery is unique.
- Remain involved and encourage the individual's participation in continuing care, treatment, and recovery support groups.

## *Valuable...*

Through self-help and mutual support models, peers offer support, strength, and hope to others by encouraging personal growth, wellness promotion, and recovery.

In order to maintain lasting recovery, people need relationships and social networks, such as family and friends, who provide support, friendship, love, and hope.<sup>57</sup>

The recovery community can be valuable in reaching out to recovery peers in many ways, including:

- Start peer support groups and offer to mentor peer support specialists.
- Organize an event (e.g., run/walk, rally, educational series) to benefit **Recovery Month**.
- Reach out to school, county, or local government officials who could participate as guest speakers to educate groups about prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.
- Contact other community organizations that have partnered with recovery peer groups and get advice on how to engage.
- Develop key talking points on prevention, treatment, and recovery support services for peer support in the community.
- Access the following **Recovery Month** social media channels for prevention, treatment, and recovery information, tips, and resources.
  - Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/RecoveryMonth>)
  - YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/RecoveryMonth>)
  - Twitter account (<http://www.twitter.com/RecoveryMonth>)

Additional peer recovery resources include:

- **Alcoholics Anonymous** (<http://www.aa.org/>): An international fellowship of men and women who have had a drinking problem.
- **Al-Anon Family Groups** (<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/>): Offers the opportunity to learn from the experiences of others who have faced similar problems coping with a loved one with a drinking problem.
- **Faces & Voices of Recovery** (<http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/>): Organizes and mobilizes individuals in recovery, as well as their families and friends.

# Targeted Outreach – Peer Recovery

- **Sober Nation** (<http://www.sobernation.com/>): Provides numerous recovery resources online as well as links to addiction treatment centers and directories.
- **Young People in Recovery** (<http://youngpeopleinrecovery.org/>): Creates and cultivates local community-led recovery chapters that support young people in or seeking recovery by empowering them to obtain stable employment, secure suitable housing, and explore continuing education.
- **SMART (Self-Management and Recovery Training) Recovery** (<http://www.smartrecovery.org/>): Is a self-empowering addiction recovery resource where individuals learn tools for recovery through science-based mutual help groups. Sponsors face-to-face meetings around the world, daily online meetings, an online message board, and a 24/7 chat room.

Additional resources can be found on SAMHSA's website. These include:

- **SAMHSA's Recovery Month Webpage** (<http://www.recoverymonth.gov/>): Provides resources, tools, and materials, including print, web, television, radio, and social media assets, to help communities reach out and encourage individuals in need of help, and their friends and families, to seek treatment and recovery services.
- **SAMHSA's Website** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/>): Provides numerous resources and helpful pieces of information related to mental health and substance use issues.
- **SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatments and Services Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment/>): Contains information on common mental illnesses and substance use disorders and how SAMHSA helps people access treatments and services.
- **SAMHSA's Find Help Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/>): Provides various links and numbers to mental and/or substance use disorder treatment and recovery services locators.
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) – or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD)** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline/>): Provides 24-hour, free, and confidential treatment referral and information about mental and/or substance use disorders, prevention, treatment, and recovery in English and Spanish.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** (<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>): Provides a free, 24-hour helpline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.
- **SAMHSA's Recovery and Recovery Support Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery/>): Provides information on how recovery-oriented care and recovery support systems help people with mental and/or substance use disorders manage their conditions.
- **SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Quality Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/behavioral-health-equity/lgbt/>): Offers resources on the LGBT population, including national survey reports, agency, and federal initiatives, and related behavioral health resources.
- **SAMHSA's Veterans and Military Families Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/veterans-military-families/>): Offers information about SAMHSA's efforts to ensure that American servicemen and servicewomen, and their families, can access behavioral health treatment and services.
- **SAMHSA's Wellness Webpage** (<http://www.samhsa.gov/wellness/>): Promotes the improved wellness of people with mental and/or substance use disorders by engaging, educating, and training providers, consumers, and policymakers.

**This list is not exhaustive of all available resources. Inclusion of websites and resources in this document and on the *Recovery Month* website does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.**

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<sup>45</sup> Faces & Voices of Recovery Issue Brief No 2, *Addiction Recovery: A Health Care Issue*. Retrieved February 11, 2015, from [http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/sites/default/files/resources/1.15.13\\_Issue\\_Brief\\_No\\_2.pdf](http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/sites/default/files/resources/1.15.13_Issue_Brief_No_2.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 7.

<sup>48</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Mental Health Findings*, NSDUH Series H-49, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4887. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 49.

<sup>49</sup> Magura, S., Laudet, A., Mahmood, D., Rosenblum, A. and Knight, E. (2002). *Medication adherence and participation in self-help groups designed for dually-diagnosed persons*. *Psychiatric Services*, 53(3), 310-316.

<sup>50</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Peer Support and Social Inclusion*. Retrieved November 9, 2014, from <http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery/peer-support-social-inclusion>.

<sup>51</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Peer Support and Social Inclusion*. Retrieved January, 2015, from <http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery/peer-support-social-inclusion>.

<sup>52</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *For Parents and Caregivers*. Retrieved December 30, 2014, from <http://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/parents-caregivers/index.html>.

<sup>53</sup> WebMD. *Symptoms of Depression*. Retrieved January 9, 2015, from <http://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/detecting-depression>.

<sup>54</sup> DrugAbuse.com. (2013). *Teen Drug Abuse*. Retrieved December 30, 2014, from <http://drugabuse.com/library/teen-drug-abuse/>.

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<sup>56</sup> National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. *Helping a Family Member or Friend*. Retrieved November 9, 2014, from <https://ncadd.org/for-friends-and-family/helping-someone>.

<sup>57</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Leading Change 2.0: Advancing the Behavioral Health of a Nation*, HHS Publication No. (PEP) 14-LEADCHANGE2. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014, p. 23.