Build Community Coalitions

"If I am hurting, I have learned it is okay to find a friend I trust and let them know what I am going through."

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join the voices for recovery

OPPORTUGE

on pathways to wellness





BUILD COMMUNITY COALITIONS

Community coalitions are alliances of people representing diverse organizations that work together to achieve a common goal. They are critical to the success of **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**, an annual observance that promotes that behavioral health is essential to health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover from mental and/or substance use disorders.

Effective coalitions combine the resources of multiple organizations and individuals to convey a strong message. Widespread support achieved by coalitions helps educate a broader audience that mental and/or substance use disorders affect all people. This document provides details on how to form a community coalition or partnership, starting with how to research and identify groups and individuals to partner with.

Learn the Specifics...

Coalitions are comprised of a wide range of individuals and organizations. Some coalitions represent business, education, religious or social groups, or the behavioral health community. Others may work on behalf of an elected official. Not all coalition members have to be affiliated with an organization; however, it's vital that members share common goals about mental and/or substance use disorders that focus on the promotion of prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

To support **Recovery Month**, you can either join an existing group or create your own coalition. Joining an existing coalition requires less effort for an individual or organization. However, by creating a coalition, individuals and organizations gain greater flexibility to select members that are aligned with the coalition's goals and strategic direction.

Create a Coalition...

If creating a coalition is the most appropriate option, there are tips that can help streamline the process and make the coalition as successful as possible. Individuals or organizations should ask the following questions before creating a coalition:

- What issues are important? What are the goals of this coalition? By assessing the local behavioral health environment, coalitions can identify the opportunities and challenges in the community. These issues may be related to prevalence of mental and/or substance use disorders, affected populations, or the availability of prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.
- What organizations or individuals closely support this coalition's goals and intended outcomes? Identify people and organizations that will make influential and positive contributions to a *Recovery Month* coalition. Search for those affiliated with state or local chapters of prominent national prevention, treatment, and recovery support organizations, as well as other individuals that can make a difference in the community. Refer to the "Single-State Agency Directory" in this toolkit for state and local services, as well as the "Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Resources" list for national organizations, and the "Planning Partners" section for organizations dedicated to the *Recovery Month* effort.



- Are local organizations or behavioral health-focused coalitions already active in this area? Monitor the news for recent stories about mental and/or substance use disorders, and observe organizations or individuals who are involved in the discussions on these issues. Organizations that may have the resources and expertise needed to build a successful coalition around mental and/or substance use disorders are included in the following list:
 - Adult independent-living communities;
 - Child welfare organizations;
 - Criminal justice system representatives and organizations;
 - Elected officials;
 - Foundations and volunteer groups;
 - o Government agencies;
 - Health-related organizations;
 - Individual and family therapists;
 - Mental health organizations;
 - Military associations;
 - National and local media outlets;
 - Neighborhood clubs;
 - Nonprofit organizations;
 - Prevention groups;
 - o Private companies/businesses;
 - Recovery bloggers;
 - Recovery community;
 - Recovery and peer-to-peer support groups;
 - Religious organizations;
 - Schools, universities, and the educational community;
 - o Treatment and recovery organizations; and
 - Veterans' associations.

It's important that the relationships within a coalition are mutually beneficial. For a coalition to be most effective, each member must be committed to the mission and work collaboratively. Take the following steps to ensure robust participation and maximize results:

• Recruit members to the coalition. Contact potential allies and invite them to join the coalition. Be sure to mention any references or existing connections within their organization that will incite further interest or establish credibility. When recruiting others to participate in the effort, have substantive materials to present, describing the mission, goals, and vision of the coalition to advance prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. Have a proper role within the coalition for each partner already identified. The following tools will help recruit members and build a coalition from the ground up:



- Social media, such as Facebook (http://www.facebook.com) or Twitter (http://www.twitter.com);
- o Email:
- A website encouraging people to join;
- Virtual meetings; and/or
- Online services to organize meetings simultaneously across the country, such as Meetup (http://www.meetup.com) or Google Hangout (http://www.google.com/+/learnmore/hangouts).
- Hold regular meetings during the coalition-formation process. Members must work collaboratively to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship. Due to busy schedules, bi-weekly or monthly meetings are probably more feasible than holding weekly meetings. Online tools, such as Windows Live Meeting (http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/live-meeting), WebEx (http://www.webex.com), and iChat (http://www.apple.com/macosx/apps/all.html), make it easier to collaborate and allow people to work remotely, rather than at the same location.
- **Develop an order of operations.** For the coalition to be successful, keep in mind these guidelines:
 - Set priorities and goals;
 - Be respectful of time commitments;
 - Decide the coalition's leadership early in its development;
 - Allow all members to have an active role in planning and decision-making;
 - Identify a leader to moderate and make final decisions;
 - Agree on a communication process and responsibility for maintaining it;
 - o Prepare a budget for activities and assign a person to manage it; and
 - Identify a main contact person to coordinate members.

A Proven Coalition Model...

Community coalitions have helped bring awareness to issues surrounding mental and/or substance use disorders for years. The *Recovery Month* campaign uses a coalition of *Recovery Month* Planning Partners. Organized in 1997, the Planning Partners include groups involved in the mental health and substance use prevention and treatment fields. The group works together to establish goals and set priorities for *Recovery Month* every year. For a list of the Planning Partners, refer to the "Planning Partners" directory in this toolkit. Additionally, SAMHSA, the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), and the U.S. Department of Justice fund hundreds of community partnerships throughout the country.

Consult Resources...

Recovery Month Planning Partner organizations provide resources to help create a successful coalition. Listed below are just a few partner organizations. For a full list, see the "Planning Partners" directory in this toolkit.

Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers of New York State (ASAPNY) Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers of New York State (ASAPNY) (http://www.asapnys.org)

This nonprofit membership association consists of coalitions, programs, and agencies throughout New York State that provide substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and research.

518-426-3122



American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) (http://www.amhca.org)

This association works exclusively for licensed mental health counselors by advocating for legislation that expands, enhances, and protects the right to practice; promotes mental health awareness; and builds the profession of mental health counseling nationally. AMHCA is dedicated to helping mental health counselors expand their professional knowledge and network of professional peers.

800-326-2642 (Toll-Free) 703-548-6002

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) (http://www.cadca.org)

This organization builds and strengthens the capacity of community coalitions to create safe, healthy, and drug-free communities. It supports members with technical assistance and training, public policy, media strategies, conferences, and special events.

800-54-CADCA (22322) (Toll-Free) 703-706-0560

Faces & Voices of Recovery (http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org)

This national recovery advocacy organization mobilizes people in recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs, as well as their families, friends, and allies in campaigns to end discrimination and make recovery a reality for even more Americans.

202-737-0690

International Association of Peer Supporters (http://na4ps.wordpress.com/mission)

This organization has 1,200 members and supporters representing every state plus the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and Japan. It promotes the inclusion of peer supporters throughout mental and behavioral health systems worldwide.

585-797-4641

Mental Health America (MHA) (http://www.nmha.org)

This is the country's oldest and largest nonprofit organization addressing all aspects of mental health and mental illness. With nearly 300 affiliates nationwide, MHA works to improve the mental health of all Americans through advocacy, education, research, and service. The local affiliates provide public education, information and referral, support groups, rehabilitation services, socialization, and housing services to those confronting mental illness and to their loved ones.

800-969-6642 (Toll-Free) 703-684-7722

National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA) (http://www.nacoa.org)

This national nonprofit membership and affiliate organization is the advocate and voice for children and families impacted by alcoholism or drug dependency in the family. NACoA provides training, evidence-based programs, materials, and public policy guidance to facilitate substance use prevention and recovery support for all impacted family members.

888-55-4COAS (2627) (Toll-Free) 301-468-0985



National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery (NCMHR) (http://ncmhr.org)

This organization ensures that consumer/survivors have a major voice in the development and implementation of health care, mental health, and social policies at the state and national levels, empowering people to recover and lead a full life in the community.

877-246-9058

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) (http://www.ncadd.org)

Founded in 1944, NCADD and its Affiliate Network is a voluntary health organization dedicated to fighting the nation's #1 health problem – alcoholism, drug addiction, and the devastating consequences of alcohol and other drugs on individuals, families, and communities. NCADD focuses on increasing public awareness and understanding of the disease through education, prevention, information and referral, intervention, treatment services, advocacy, and recovery support services, and has helped millions of individuals and family members into recovery.

800-NCA-CALL (622-2255) (Hope Line) (Toll-Free) 212-269-7797

National Inhalant Prevention Coalition (NIPC) (http://www.inhalants.org)

This public-private effort promotes awareness and recognition of the underpublicized problem of inhalant use. It serves as an inhalant referral and information clearinghouse, stimulates media coverage about inhalant issues, develops informational materials and a newsletter, provides training and technical assistance, and leads a week-long national grassroots education and awareness campaign.

800-269-4237 (Toll-Free) 423-265-4662

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.