



# JOIN THE VOICES FOR RECOVERY

---

**“I began to realize, early in my career, that care needed to be appropriate for the person receiving it and that family and community were of the utmost importance for health and wellness.”**

**Sade Ali**

**TARGETED OUTREACH (COMMUNITY MEMBERS)**



## COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Strong communities make for strong recovery. Community members—including families, neighbors, employers, educators, charitable organizations, and faith-based institutions—are the backbone of communities that foster recovery among its residents. Research shows that peer support services can provide a valuable approach to guide individuals as they work to maintain recovery.

Each September, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) (<https://www.samhsa.gov>), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (<https://www.hhs.gov/>), sponsors **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** (<https://recoverymonth.gov>). This observance celebrates the millions of Americans who are in recovery from mental and substance use disorders, reminding us that treatment is effective and that people can and do recover. It also serves to help reduce the stigma and misconceptions that cloud public understanding of mental and substance use disorders, potentially discouraging others from seeking help. The 2019 **Recovery Month** theme, “*Join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Are Stronger*,” emphasizes the need to share resources and build networks across the country to support the many paths to recovery—engaging passionate community members along the way. It reminds us that mental and substance use disorders affect all of us and that we are all part of the solution.

The **Recovery Month** observance will highlight inspiring stories to help thousands of people from all walks of life find the path to hope, health, and overall wellness.

During the 30th anniversary of **Recovery Month**, communities across the nation will reflect on their positive strides and their plans to make recovery support services more accessible so people can live meaningful and productive lives. Over the years, recovery-oriented organizations have also played an essential role in states, cities, towns, and neighborhoods to help countless people start and sustain their recovery.

The 2019 observance underscores the importance of relying on one another, recognizing what brings us together rather than what drives us apart, and promotes the overall goals of health and well-being for all Americans. Mental and substance use disorders have left their mark on every American in one way or another. They affect individuals from all walks of life—and community members must band together to show that recovery is possible for everyone. Mental and substance use disorders do not come from outside of the community. They emerge from within it. Communities, therefore, have a central role in helping address their impact.

## The Issue

Our nation's communities are seeing the effects of mental and substance use disorders every day. According to SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health ([NSDUH](#)), among the 19.7 million adults in the U.S. who experienced a substance use disorder, 8.5 million adults, had a co-occurring mental illness in 2017. At the same time, countless American communities have suffered because of the opioid crisis. [NSDUH](#) also found that approximately 11.4 million or 4.2 percent of the population aged 12 or older in the U.S. misused opioids in 2017.

Many people who need treatment are not seeking the help they need to begin their path to recovery as shown by these [NSDUH](#) data statistics:

- In 2017, an estimated 13.5 million adults aged 18 or older had a perceived unmet need for mental health care at any time in the past year, including 6.5 million adults who did not receive any mental health services in the past year.<sup>ii</sup>
- About half of the adults with a co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder in the past year did not receive either type of service. An estimated 8.3 percent of adults with these co-occurring disorders received both mental health care and specialty substance use treatment, 38.2 percent received only mental health care, and 4.4 percent received only specialty substance use treatment.<sup>iii</sup>
- Suicide remains the 10th leading cause of death according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. American Indian/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) have the highest rates of suicide of any racial/ethnic group in the United States.<sup>iv</sup> According to [NSDUH](#), the number of American Indians or Alaska Natives who attempted suicide ranged from 4,000 to 12,000 from 2016 to 2017. In 2016, 4,000 American Indians and/or Alaska Natives attempted suicide; this number jumped to 12,000 in 2017.

### National Survey on Drug Use and Health



**19.7 million**

adults in the U.S. experienced a **substance use disorder**

**11.4 million**

people misused **opioids** in 2017

- Cocaine use is on the rise in American communities. According to [NSDUH](#), approximately 1 million people aged 12 or older used cocaine for the first time in the past year in 2017. This number averages to approximately 2,800 cocaine initiates per day.

Substance use disorder treatment and recovery support services can help people find pathways to sustained recovery, permitting them to lead active and meaningful lives while contributing to their communities. By engaging individuals with substance use disorders, helping them access the treatment, recovery support, and other services they need, and by welcoming them back to the community as they embark upon the pathway to recovery, we can build healthier, more resilient communities and reduce the public health and public safety costs of unchecked addiction. Supportive interpersonal relationships and positive messages are often the catalyst that people hope they can find in recovery, and these factors are often what move them to seek help.

## Recovery Spotlight

Social media enables people to engage with the world around them, both near and far. Thanks to technology, it's easier than ever for community members to influence recovery efforts via their social networks.

One way to help your community rally around treatment and recovery is to encourage social media user-generated content. Encourage people to show off the most creative or heartwarming display of the new [r is for Recovery symbol](#). Urge participants to use hashtags like #RecoveryMonth, #RisforRecovery, #Recovery, and #RecoveryIn[insert location]. Encourage them to share their personal stories about recovery and to tag their friends, family, and other members of their community. A local social media campaign is something easy for people to participate in and can foster a positive, collaborative spirit among community members.

## What You Can Do

Communities can bolster the possibility of recovery in a meaningful way. Help them reach their full potential by promoting recovery through these pathways:

- Host an event for recovery leaders and local stakeholders to advocate for community-based approaches to mental and substance use disorder treatment and recovery support.
- Share the **Recovery Month** [public service announcements](#) and ways to promote them.
- Write to representatives and local government officials, encouraging them to sign [proclamations](#) in support of **Recovery Month**. Remind them that this simple act demonstrates a common commitment to improving access to treatment programs.

- Organize a walk or run in your neighborhood to raise awareness around the mental and substance use disorder issues impacting your community. Post your event to the **Recovery Month** [website](#) to increase visibility and participation.
- Connect with local schools to provide messaging and resources for students, teachers, and administrators.
- Share information on innovative products that people can easily access to deter substance use in their home. For instance, prescription pill bottles that have a timer on the lid to deter misuse and locations of safe medication disposal sites in your area.
- Apply for SAMHSA [grant funding](#) to financially support programs for mental and substance use disorders.
- Reach out to faith-based organizations to encourage them to support recovery efforts through donations, member trainings, and community counseling initiatives.
- Engage local representatives of the organized recovery community as partners in your efforts. Recovery Community Organizations and Consumer Organizations are key allies who can help change the conversation about substance use and mental disorders in your community

Leverage social media to engage local and national community members. You can use these sample social media posts to get started:

- #MentalIllness and #SubstanceUse disorders impact more than the individual. Communities can support those who are struggling by coming together to show that #recovery is for everyone.
- Social connection is a key ingredient for #recovery. Celebrate 30 years of #RecoveryMonth and spread the word that recovery is possible!

- Your community can help support #recovery in all its forms. Start by engaging other community members to share resources and build support networks. The more people who get involved in celebrating the power of recovery, the better!
- Socially inclusive societies can support people in #recovery and provide an improved quality of life. You can help your recovering neighbors through community support efforts like meetups and resource sharing.

The process of recovery often occurs via intersecting pathways that can include evidence-based, medicated-assisted treatment, faith-based approaches, recovery support services, and family support. Because every person's path to recovery is unique, it is important to provide individualized treatment approaches and a collective community-wide effort.

## Resources

Community members looking to support their peers in recovery have many resources available to them. The following materials provide useful information for families, friends, and neighbors:

- **Alcoholics Anonymous** (<https://www.aa.org/>): Lists resources for those experiencing alcohol dependence; helps individuals find and join a local chapter.
- **American Public Health Association** (<https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/mental-health>): Discusses mental health as a topic area, offering an overview of the issue along with recommendations for improving access to care.
- **Faces and Voices of Recovery** (<https://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/>): Serves as a leading national addiction recovery advocacy organization promoting policies that are grounded in science, compassion, and health.

- **Facing Addiction with NCADD** (<https://www.facingaddiction.org/>): Provides education on misperceptions surrounding addiction; recently merged with the National Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence (NCADD).
- **Get Smart About Drugs** (<https://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov/>): Provides information about substance use from the Drug Enforcement Administration for parents, educators, and caregivers.
- **MentalHealth.gov** (<https://www.mentalhealth.gov/>): Offers guidance for recognizing mental health issues and starting conversations with friends and family members, educators, and faith and community leaders, among others.
- **National Alliance on Mental Illness** (<https://www.nami.org/>): Provides education and advocacy programs for those affected by mental disorders, including a toll-free helpline for families in communities throughout the United States.
- **Narcotics Anonymous** (<https://www.na.org/>): Lists resources for those experiencing substance use disorders; helps individuals find and join a local chapter.
- **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism** (<https://www.niaaa.nih.gov/>): Offers tools and training materials for community, school, and family interventions related to alcohol use and misuse.
- **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Alcohol Treatment Navigator®** (<https://AlcoholTreatment.niaaa.nih.gov/>): Offers a comprehensive, easy-to-use strategy for finding evidence-based alcohol treatment services for an adult loved one.

- **National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)** (<https://www.drugabuse.gov/>): Offers tools and training materials for community, school, and family interventions and other substance use programming.
- **NIDA Treatment Page** (<https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/treatment>): Details a step-by-step guide on what to do if you or a loved one has a problem with drugs.
- **Recovery Research Institute** (<https://www.recoveryanswers.org/>): Conducts research for the advancement of addiction treatment and recovery.
- **Rural Health Information Hub** (<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/>): Contains resources on evidence-based substance use prevention programs in rural communities.
- **SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator** (<https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>): Provides a confidential and anonymous source of information for persons seeking treatment facilities in the United States or U.S. Territories for mental and substance use disorders.
- **SAMHSA's Faith-Based and Community Initiatives** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/faith-based-initiatives/about>): Provides information and best practices on programs in mental health services, substance use prevention, and addiction treatment at the national, state, and local levels.
- **SAMHSA's National Family Dialogue** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/network-supports-families-recovery>): Connects families of young people with substance use disorders to resources and support.
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline** 1-800-662- HELP (4357) or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD): Provides a 24/7, 365-day-a-year information and treatment referral service (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and substance use disorders.
- **Urban Mental Health Alliance** (<http://www.urbanmentalhealthalliance.org/>): Advocates for the mental health and wellness of urban families and communities.

**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>i</sup> Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2018). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*, NSDUH Series H-53, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 18- 5068, p. 3. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Web. 28 September 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHFFR2017/NSDUHFFR2017.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2018). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*, NSDUH Series H-53, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 18- 5068, p. 54. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Web. 28 September 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHFFR2017/NSDUHFFR2017.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality. (2018). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*, NSDUH Series H-53, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 18- 5068, p. 3. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Web. 28 September 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHFFR2017/NSDUHFFR2017.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Leavitt RA, Ertl A, Sheats K, Petrosky E, Ivey-Stephenson A, Fowler KA. (2018). *Suicides Among American Indian/Alaska Natives – National Violent Death Reporting System, 18 States, 2003–2014*. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2018;67:237–242. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6708a1>. Retrieved from: [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6708a1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6708a1\\_e&c\\_cid=journal\\_search\\_promotion\\_2018](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6708a1.htm?s_cid=mm6708a1_e&c_cid=journal_search_promotion_2018)