



National Recovery Month – September 2018

Families and Communities Can Make a Difference

Isolated and alone — oftentimes, that's how individuals who experience mental or substance use disorders feel — and every year, thousands of Oregonians experience these conditions.

This sense of remoteness can be even more pronounced in rural areas. It is crucial that we reach out to offer support to our neighbors who are facing mental and substance use challenges. In fact, we need to create environments and relationships that promote a sense of belonging and inclusion.

Support from families is essential to recovery, so we must equip family members with the right tools and start conversations about prevention, treatment, and recovery. Too many people are still unaware that mental and substance use disorders can be successfully treated, just like other health conditions, and recovery is possible.

Having worked with providers of mental health and substance use disorders for over 20 years, I have witnessed the positive reality of recovery. Individuals who embrace recovery achieve improved mental and physical health, and form stronger relationships with their children, families, neighbors, and peers. A recent survey published in the Journal, Drug and Alcohol Dependence, concluded that 9.1 percent of the adult population has successfully resolved a substance use disorder. Recovery is not only a possibility — it is a reality for thousands of Oregonians.

Mental and substance use disorders can affect members of any of our families. People need to know help is available. These individuals can get better, both physically and emotionally, with the support of their community and family.

Family and communities can find hope and spread the message that recovery works by celebrating the annual **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**, an initiative sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Let people know that free, confidential help is available 24 hours a day through the Alcohol and Drug Helpline operated by Lines for Life at **1-800-923-4357** (Text: Recovery Now to 839863), and national lines supported by SAMHSA: National Helpline, **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** or **1-800-487-4889 (TDD)**. Additionally, you can provide information about local treatment and recovery resources on your website and link to tools available at <https://recoverymonth.gov/events/plan-events/social-media-tools>.

Events celebrating **Recovery Month** are often sponsored by local treatment and recovery advocacy organizations throughout Oregon to honor individuals and families who are in long-term recovery. Your attendance will demonstrate the support of the recovery community, including those who provide prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

Offering support to those experiencing mental and substance use disorders can make a huge difference. Together we can help people realize the promise of recovery and give families, facing what seem like insurmountable challenges, the support to help their loved ones.

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