



Join the Voices for Recovery:
Celebrating Connections
Toolkit 2020

nationalrecoverymonth.org





National Recovery Month (Recovery Month) increases awareness and understanding of mental health and substance use disorders and encourages individuals in need of treatment and recovery services to seek help. Recovery Month celebrates individuals living their lives in recovery and recognizes the dedicated workers who provide the prevention, treatment, and recovery support services that make it possible.

This year's **Recovery Month** theme, "*Join the Voices for Recovery: Celebrating Connections*," embraces the adversity experienced in 2020. When we celebrate our connections to the diversity of people from all walks of life striving for recovery, we find support and courage to speak up for inclusion, respect, and opportunity.

Resources and activities for this year's **Recovery Month** observance includes a toolkit for **Recovery Month**, with tips for celebrating **Recovery Month** and community outreach, and a new Recovery Month website and social media accounts

The New Recovery Month website (nationalrecoverymonth.org) provides printable materials, web, and social media resources to help communities plan events, educate individuals about mental health and substance use disorders, and encourages individuals to celebrate the millions of people in recovery from mental health and substance use disorders. Reminding us that behavioral health is an essential component to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

- Find and post recovery events in the community:
<http://nationalrecoverymonth.org/submit-an-event/>
- Download web banners and logos to promote Recovery Month:
<http://nationalrecoverymonth.org/downloads/>

Follow **Recovery Month** on Social Media:

- Facebook:
<http://facebook.com/nationalrecoverymonthfv>
- Twitter:
<http://twitter.com/recoverymonthfv>
- Instagram:
<http://instagram.com/recoverymonthfv>

Please contact the Recovery Month team at support@nationalrecoverymonth.org for more information.



**FACES & VOICES
OF RECOVERY**

ADVOCATE. ACT. ADVANCE.



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PREFACE

We are grateful for SAMHSA's 30-year sponsorship of **Recovery Month** and are excited to unveil this new chapter of celebrations that we – the Recovery Community - achieve together.

Now in its 31st year, Recovery Month looks a little different. Previously, Recovery Month was sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). As members of the National Recovery Community, Faces & Voices of Recovery has launched a new website for Recovery Month. This website nationalrecoverymonth.org, will serve as the central location for recovery events and assets that make our celebrations possible during the month of September.

Though SAMHSA will no longer sponsor this celebration, their commitment to **Recovery Month** continues as they embrace the community's efforts to speak about the gains made by those in recovery and share our stories with neighbors, friends, and colleagues.



GOALS

The **Recovery Month** observance reminds us that when we *Celebrate Connections* and share our personal accomplishments and struggles, we combat the stigmas that can impede the recovery journey and send a message to positively impact lives for the better. Together, we will spread the message to people seeking recovery that “You are not alone. There’s hope, help, and support available from others.”

The 2020 **Recovery Month** observance and theme, “*Join the Voices of Recovery: Celebrating Connections*” will work to inspire people across the country to recognize the strength and resilience of individuals living in recovery as well as to support those with mental health and substance use disorders to consider seeking treatment. We need to spread the message that help is effective and available and that healthy and rewarding lives are in reach, knowing that our humanity is the cornerstone that connects us all.

ACCOUNTS

These accounts are still considered to be new. This year, wide dissemination of these accounts through various channels is highly encouraged to further expand **Recovery Month’s** reach.

Website: <http://nationalrecoverymonth.org>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/nationalrecoverymonthfv>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/recoverymonthfv>

Instagram: <http://instagram.com/recoverymonthfv>

ASSETS/MARKETING MATERIALS

Easily download and use web banners, logos, and other content to promote Recovery Month by visiting: <http://nationalrecoverymonth.org/downloads/>



Additional content to be uploaded throughout the month – check back often! Here is a glimpse of the current promotional materials for **Recovery Month**:

English Assets/Marketing Materials:

- Campaign Flyer
- Recovery Month One Pager Template
- Recovery Month Logos
- Recovery Month Toolkit 2020
- Recovery Month Word Template
- Social Media
 - Facebook Banner
 - Twitter Banner
 - YouTube Banner
- Your Choices, Our Lives: A Quick Guide to Fair and Accurate Coverage of Addiction & Mental Illness

Spanish Assets/Marketing Materials:

- Recovery Month One Pager Template
- Recovery Month Logos
- Social Media
 - Facebook Banner
 - Twitter Banner
 - YouTube Banner



CONTENT PILLARS/ TIMING

Types of content to post and how often to post each type of content:

1/3 Recovery Month self-promotion:

- Organization's/community's events
- Highlighting participation in local partner events
- Recovery month activities (ex. sharing your recovery story to <https://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/get-involved/share-your-story/>)
- Recovery Month Proclamations

1/3 National Recovery Month (nationalrecoverymonth.org and associated social media accounts) content:

- Retweets
- Suggested posts from Recovery Month 2020 Social Media Guide

1/3 Industry news

HASHTAGS AND TAGS

Guidelines:

- Generally, it is best practice to avoid an overabundance of hashtags in each post
- The number of hashtags can vary based on content – however, rarely should more than 5 hashtags be used in one post

Hashtags that can be included in every post:

- **#RecoveryMonth** – in combination with other hashtags
- **#Recovery** - in combination with other hashtags



Specialty Hashtags to highlight (no more than two specialty hashtags recommended in posts):

- **#RecoveryIn[insert location]** – when highlighting community events or your organizations **Recovery Month** events
- **#LanguageMatters** – when speaking of destigmatizing language or discussing the new guide: *Your Choices, Our Lives: A Quick Guide to Fair and Accurate Media Coverage of Addiction and Mental Illness*
- **#MakeSeptemberPurple** – when showcasing people wearing purple clothing or community buildings (monuments, landmarks, etc.) that are lighted purple, elevating purple as the color of **Recovery Month**

WORDS AND IMAGERY TO AVOID*

- Clichéd imagery
 - hypodermic needles, straitjackets, and other
- Words
 - Addict or alcoholic
 - Abuse
 - Committed suicide
 - Clean/sober
 - Crazy

*for suggestions of alternative words and imagery, see this year's *Your Choices, Our Lives* guide (<https://rm.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/resource/your-choices-our-lives-a-quick-guide-to-fair-and-accurate-coverage-of-addiction-mental-illness/>)

EMOJIS TO AVOID

- Alcohol emojis (ex. 🍷)
- Needle or syringe emojis (ex. 💉)
- Emojis representing other substances (ex. 💊)



CAPITALIZATION

What capitalization style to be used when writing on social media, i.e., sentence case, title case, no capitals, etc.

Recovery Month:

- When writing in any form of media, always capitalize ***Recovery Month***.
- When rich-text is enabled (ex. Word, website, etc.), please bold and italicize ***Recovery Month***
- When using "***National Recovery Month***", capitalize each letter

Theme:

- This year's theme should always be title case as shown below:
- Join the Voices for Recovery: Celebrating Connections
- Variations of this year's theme (ex. Celebrating Connections) should also be capitalized

SUGGESTED POSTS

Diversity:

Suggested Post:

The 2020 ***Recovery Month*** theme, "*Join the Voices for Recovery: Celebrating Connections*," embraces the adversity experienced in 2020. When we celebrate our connections to the diversity of people from all walks of life striving for recovery, we find support and courage to speak up for inclusion, respect, and opportunity.

Suggested Tweet:

When we celebrate our connections to the diversity of people from all walks of life striving for #recovery, we find support and courage to speak up for inclusion, respect, and opportunity. #RecoveryMonth



New Recovery Month Accounts:

Suggested Post:

Post upcoming events to the NEW **Recovery Month** website and download this year's theme, *Celebrating Connections*. Whether our faces and voices are shared through digital platforms or safe, social-distanced gatherings we celebrate the millions of people who have found, are finding, and have yet to find this path to hope, health, and personal growth.

Suggested Tweet:

Post upcoming events to the NEW #RecoveryMonth website as we Celebrate Connections all September long.

Specific Location:

Suggested Tweet/Post:

Whether our faces and voices are shared through digital platforms or safe, social-distanced gatherings we celebrate the millions of people who have found, are finding, and have yet to find this path to hope, health, and personal growth.
#RecoveryIn[insert location] #RecoveryMonth

Highlighting Your Choices, Our Lives:

Suggested Tweet/Post:

Your Choices, Our Lives. Addiction and mental health can be tragic – but people, families, and communities recover. Fair and accurate media coverage should use only respectful, person-centered language and imagery. New resource. Read more.
#LanguageMatters #RecoveryMonth [link to follow]

Purple in Recovery Month:

Suggested Tweet/Post:

Twitter is celebrating recovery alongside us this September! Use the hashtag [#RecoveryMonth](#) to unlock a custom Twitter emoji.

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1171478736752926722>



EVENTS/CAMPAIGNS*

- August 31, 2020 - International Overdose Awareness Day (<https://www.overdoseday.com/>)
- September 6-12, 2020 - Suicide Prevention Week
- September 10, 2020 – World Suicide Prevention Day
- September 20, 2020 - National Addiction Professionals Day (<https://www.naadac.org/national-addiction-professionals-day>)
- September 29, 2020 - Recovery Month Luncheon (Save the Date flyer) (https://rm.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/08/082620_NCBH_RecoveryMonth_EmailGraphic.png)
- September 30, 2020 – International Recovery Day (<https://internationalrecoveryday.org/>)

*This list is not exhaustive of all available events and campaigns. Inclusion of websites and resources in this document and on the Recovery Month website does not constitute official endorsement.

DESIGN ELEMENTS

Recovery Month Purple:

- PMS 268
- HEX #582c83
- RGB 88, 44, 131
- CMYK 33%, 66%, 0%, 49%



COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCES FROM PRIOR RECOVERY MONTHS:

WHAT CAN YOU DO THIS RECOVERY MONTH?:

Recovery advocates

Can share tips with first responders on how best to incorporate support strategies for individuals with mental health and substance use disorders, including:

- Law enforcement agencies can establish opioid overdose response programs to train officers in the handling and use of lifesaving medication, like naloxone. Trainings can often be provided by local departments of health, community-based organizations, or healthcare facilities, which can prepare officers to carry and administer naloxone to local residents.
- Public servants and emergency response personnel can familiarize themselves with the basics of recovery and recovery-oriented care, managing expectations for positive outcomes in encounters with persons experiencing co-occurring or substance use conditions. For example, the “Treatment and Recovery Support Services” section of the Recovery Month toolkit offers an overview of the various treatment options available for people
- experiencing these conditions and those who care for them

Consider reaching out to local hospitals or community health systems, specialty substance use disorder treatment providers, community mental health centers, recovery community organizations, and consumer organizations to host a panel on identification and treatment of mental and substance use disorders and recovery from them. This provides an opportunity for healthcare professionals and experts to talk about their experiences with recovery, to share resources for treating patients and to build the relationships necessary to effectively address mental and substance use disorders in the communities you serve. Encourage them to discuss:

- What strategies have worked for them in the past and areas in need of improvement.
- Best practices around the most current and effective prevention and treatment techniques, such as medication-assisted treatment.
- How mental and substance use disorders affect their practice area.
- How to coordinate with and receive support from mental and substance use disorder specialty treatment and recovery support services providers.



- How to identify any continuing education resources that have helped or may be of future benefit in supporting their ability to effectively address changes and advances in the mental or substance use disorder treatment fields.
- Advice on addressing co-occurring disorders—1.3 percent of all adults in 2017 had a co-occurring serious mental illness and substance use disorder in the past year, according to NSDUH.
- How patients can access specialty treatment and recovery support services in their communities.

Public officials

can publicize treatment resources, like SAMHSA’s Behavioral Treatment Services Locator and SAMHSA’s National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357). These free and confidential and anonymous information sources are essential self-help and peer support offerings that can assist in recovery even before first responders are called to the scene.

Recovery Month celebrates and supports efforts through outreach, cross-promotion, and materials that can be found on the National Recovery Month website (<https://nationalrecoverymonth.org/>). The **Recovery Month** site provides printable materials, as well as web, and social media resources to help communities as they encourage individuals to seek treatment and recovery services. To help those on the path to recovery, you can:

- Find out about and post recovery events in your community (<https://nationalrecoverymonth.org/events>)
- Download web banners and flyers to promote **Recovery Month** (<https://nationalrecoverymonth.org/downloads>)
- Spread the word on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other online forums

IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Encourage people 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.



Encourage social media user-generated content. Encourage people to show of the most creative or heartwarming display of the new

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.

For Information on:

WORK WITH THE MEDIA

RECOVERY MONTH PROCLAMATIONS

See the attached documents for in-depth examples and education

Faces & Voices of Recovery (<https://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/>) wants to hear about all of the events held in honor of Recovery Month this year.

Once an event takes place, send information about your event, the promotional pieces, and any photos for use to yourfriends@nationalrecoverymonth.org.

The Recovery Month Facebook page (<http://facebook.com/nationalrecoverymonthfv>), Instagram (<http://instagram.com/recoverymonthfv>), and Twitter account (<http://twitter.com/recoverymonthfv>) also serve as platforms on which event planners or attendees can post details about their experiences.





WORK WITH THE MEDIA

To successfully promote your **Recovery Month** event, it is essential to give the media information that is useful and relevant. Media outreach and the resulting coverage will increase awareness of events and highlight community efforts focused on mental and substance use disorders. The term “media” refers to the mass means of communication that reach many people through different channels, including broadcast, print, web, and social media platforms.

This document includes the basics of media outreach, including tips on speaking with the media and creating long-term relationships.

Determine a Focus...

To begin, it is important to differentiate your **Recovery Month** event from other activities in the area, since members of the media receive many requests to attend and cover events.

When determining the focus of your media outreach, use the following factors to increase your chances of coverage:

- **Hot topics:** In the crowded news space, a fresh, timely, and relevant angle will ensure that an event is considered. Check out health care trends, such as new research or policies, which may be driving the conversation in the news or on blogs.
- **Local impact:** Research compelling and current statistics that illustrate the prevalence of mental and substance use disorders, both locally and nationally. For example, the “Targeted Outreach” section of the toolkit features relevant behavioral health facts. You can use this information to create and supplement a localized fact sheet, outlining the effects of mental and substance use disorders in your area.



- **Proximity:** Media outlets have less money to spend on staffing and travel, so make sure you are contacting the most appropriate outlet and person. When reaching out to the media, emphasize the direct connection of the event to the local community, such as the appearance of a local official.
- **Timeliness:** When contacting reporters, take into account how frequently their publications are distributed. Many reporters may request an advance lead time to write about an event before their publications go to print. Other reporters, such as those for broadcast outlets, may only cover “breaking news” live at the event site.

Research...

After establishing the key, newsworthy aspects of your event, identify the appropriate outlets and reporters to contact. To find out who has covered topics related to mental and substance use disorders, set up Google Alerts (<https://www.google.com/alerts>) online, which will notify you when news on the topic you select is published.

Organize...

It is helpful to keep your media contacts’ information organized and accessible. Media lists are best created in a spreadsheet program. Once you have identified a potential contact, include the following information in your spreadsheet:

- Contact name and title
- Contact outlet
- Email
- Phone number
- Facebook page and Twitter handle
- Pertinent notes (e.g., preferred time and method of contact, previous articles on recovery topics, and remarks from your interactions with this person)

Connect...

Once the list is complete, reach out to reporters via phone or email, depending on each contact’s individual preferences. Reporters often have time limitations, so keep the message short when “pitching” the event. Refer to the end of this document for sample pitches and phone scripts.

Bloggers tend to respond to people they have engaged with previously, so it may be beneficial to send an introductory email to the blogger to break the ice and start developing a relationship. Once a relationship is established, follow up with details of your **Recovery Month** event.

Likewise, when “pitching” reporters, start with an introduction and then ask about their availability. Don’t be discouraged if a journalist is short with you or in a hurry. Instead, offer to call back at a different time or connect with a colleague who may be interested in talking about the event.

After the conversation, thank each media contact for his or her time, exchange contact information, and set expectations for potential follow-up. Also, offer to send event materials (such as a promotional flyer) for further details. Confirm by email or phone whether they will be attending.

Interview...

Reporters who cover an event may request an interview with the host, a speaker, or a key member of the host organization. If your team is presented with an opportunity to be interviewed by a member of the media, prepare for the discussion in advance. Research the interested media contact and anticipate the types of questions that may be asked. To best answer the questions, familiarize yourself with the event and all supplementary materials. Finally, practice answering questions with a friend or colleague.



The day before the interview, confirm the logistics and anticipated length of the interview. Whether your interview will be in-person or by phone, always be professional and polite. Keep in mind that the goal of the interview is to communicate **Recovery Month** key messages, event details, and to describe the importance of prevention, treatment, and recovery support services in the local area.

The following tips may also be useful in an interview:

- **Bridging:** This technique allows you to stay on message and avoid answering questions that may steer the conversation to unanticipated areas. Instead of answering the question head on, find a component of the question that can be tied back to one of the main points. For example, you might say, “That’s a great example of the power of recovery...” and then give a main talking point about recovery.
- **Bundling:** This technique allows a person to state a key point and then explain their justification for making the point. For example, a key message may include the phrase, “SAMHSA has a series of initiatives that improve prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.” This would be followed by important follow-up points that back up the key message, such as: “**Recovery Month** supports these initiatives by...”
- **Blocking:** If a reporter asks you a question that you are uncomfortable answering, avoid saying “no comment,” as it may appear you are hiding something. Instead, offer to put the reporter in contact with someone who can accurately answer the question. For example, “I am not the best person to answer that question; however, I can put you in contact with a local organization who can provide the information.”

For a successful in-person interview, remember to maintain eye contact, sit up straight, control hand movements, demonstrate enthusiasm and genuine feelings in your voice, and dress professionally. For a successful phone interview, be sure to prepare by rehearsing and drafting notes. Find a quiet place to hold the call, convey a friendly tone in your voice, and ask follow-up questions if needed.

Practice...

When speaking with the media, it may be helpful to use the following talking points about **Recovery Month**, which can be specific to an event.

For a specific event: On **[Date]** at **[Time]**, **[Organization]** is hosting **[Event or Activity]** at **[Location]** to celebrate recovery and encourage individuals with a mental or substance use disorder to seek treatment and achieve a healthy, happy life. Mental and substance use disorders can affect anyone, including people in **[City]**, where **[Number]** people have a mental or a substance use disorder. Our community must remain vigilant and dedicated to the recovery process by helping people address these preventable and treatable conditions, and support individuals in recovery, as well as their family members.

To promote *Recovery Month*: **[Organization]**’s activities are part of **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**. This year, **[Organization]** will be observing **Recovery Month** by **[Include the Name and Brief Description of your Recovery Month Activities]**.



Follow Up...

Follow up with any reporters who covered **Recovery Month** to obtain a final copy of the piece, save their contact for your next event, and provide links to any coverage when reporting on your event. Be sure to promote any featured media pieces by posting on your social media channels and website, and share with your stakeholders and partners.

SAMPLE PITCH EMAIL

Subject Line of Email: Main topic of your email

Hello **[Name]**,

I recently read your article on **[Behavioral Health Topic]**, and I thought you might be interested in an upcoming event celebrating people in recovery from mental and substance use disorders. In our community, behavioral health conditions affect many people: **[Insert Statistic on Local Prevalence of Mental and Substance Use Disorders]**. On **[Event Date]**, **[Name of Host Organization and any Noteworthy Attendees]** will host **[Type of Event]** in the **[City/Town Name]** area as part of **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**, a large national observance. This event increases awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders and promotes the message that behavioral health is essential to health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover.

Included in this message is a media advisory that provides additional details about the event. Please feel free to contact me if you need further information or would like to schedule an interview with **[Name and Title of Person Being Offered for Interviews]**. I will follow up with you prior to the **[Event]** to see if you or someone from your organization will be attending.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

[Your Name and Contact Information]



SAMPLE PITCH CALL SCRIPT

Hi **[Name]**,

My name is **[Insert Name]**, and I am calling on behalf of **[Name of Organization]**. Do you have a moment to chat?

As you may know, mental and substance use disorders are common, and not everyone receives the support they need to recover. **[Insert Local Prevalence Statistics to Support the Local Community Impact]**. Despite the prevalence of these conditions, recovery from mental and substance use disorders is possible.

We are hosting an event on **[Date]** in **[City]** as part of **National Recovery Month**, an annual observance. The goals of the event are to increase awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders and promote the message that behavioral health

is essential to health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover. This event will **[add something newsworthy and unique about the event – is it the first of its kind? Will it have an interesting speaker? Will it add high community value?]**, and given your recent coverage of **[reporter's beat/stories relevant to the event]**, I thought this might be an interesting story for you to cover.

To learn more about the event, or to speak with **[Spokesperson Name and Role]**, I have additional information I can send you. Is your email address **[Email Address]**?

Please let me know if you have any additional questions. My contact information will be included in the email, and I will follow up prior to the **[Event]** to see if you or someone from **[insert media organization]** will be attending.

Thank you for your time, and I hope to speak with you again soon.



USE OP-EDS AND ONLINE ARTICLES

People's opinions are often shaped by what they read in the media, whether in newspapers or online. The media is a powerful mechanism for spreading information, and placing an op-ed or bylined piece in a print or online media outlet can help raise awareness about **Recovery Month**. An op-ed, short for “opposite the editorial pages” of a newspaper, is a way to express opinions and perspectives on a certain subject or initiative. Writing about **Recovery Month** in any publication can promote understanding of mental and substance use disorders in your community, town, city, territory, or state.

This document includes helpful tips on how to write an op-ed or online article and how to submit it for publication.

Get Started...

Recovery Month explores how integrated care, a strong community, sense of purpose, and leadership contributes to effective treatments that sustain the recovery of persons with mental and substance use disorders. The observance will work to highlight inspiring stories that help thousands of people from all walks of life find the path to hope, health, and wellness. In addition, the materials support the message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover.

Think about this theme when you brainstorm ideas for your op-ed or online article. Also consider the purpose of **Recovery Month**—to spread the message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover.

Plan appropriately and start writing early to place your op-ed or opinion piece—either in print or online—during **Recovery Month**. Refer to the list below to stay on track:

- **Determine a clear and concise message:** A strong op-ed or online article persuasively makes a single point or argument in the beginning of the piece. Explain topics through simple messaging, allowing readers to stay focused and walk away with the main point.
- **Think relevance:** Make the subject of an op-ed or article timely and relevant to the readers of the publication. Search for recent events or news stories covered by the publication, and tie your op-ed to what they have published.
- **Personalize it:** Include a personal story to help readers easily connect with the message. Be sure to ask for permission before sharing someone's personal story.
- **Locate statistics and facts:** Validate all statements or opinions with hard facts. For example, if you want to note that mental and substance use disorders are common and more prevalent than one might think, include statistics on the prevalence. Refer to the “Common Mental Disorders and Commonly Misused Substances” section of this toolkit to identify relevant statistics.
- **Think local:** Give the article a local angle to increase chances that a print or online outlet will publish the piece. Feature local residents in your op-ed or article if they have granted you permission beforehand. You can also address recent local events and include statistics that are specific to your city or state.
- **Keep it brief:** Op-eds or online articles should be between 400 and 750 words. Check with publications to determine specific limitations on word count or other requirements, such as deadlines and how they prefer to receive submissions. Usually these guidelines are published on the publication's website.



- **Identify the appropriate publication(s):** Assess which publication is the best fit for a particular op-ed. A local newspaper might be ideal if the article focuses on community issues. If the article focuses on a broader, national issue, try a newspaper with a higher circulation rate. Remember that most publications will not publish op-eds that were already published in another outlet. For this reason, prioritize each outlet and select your top choices, followed by back-up options. Read examples of past op-eds to get a sense of what formats and topics appear to capture the publication's interest.
- **Create a relationship:** The best way to have your thoughts published or posted is to develop a relationship with the editor in advance. Always plan out what you want to say before contacting the publication. Provide background information about yourself, your organization, and **Recovery Month**, in addition to any local and state recovery issues.
- **Refer to the template:** Consult the sample op-ed at the end of this document to help initiate the writing process.

To gain additional attention for your op-ed, contact well-known organizations in the community and offer to co-write an op-ed or online article with them. An established partner might catch the eye of an editor and increase the chances that your op-ed is published. Refer to the "Resources" section of this toolkit to identify organizations you can collaborate with in your area.

Write...

Select a topic and statistics with a local angle to support your information about **Recovery Month** and its mission, along with this year's theme. Avoid making controversial statements or imposing beliefs on others, but do take a clear position. Also, consider the publication's readers when writing an op-ed or online article, and think about what would catch their attention and create interest in **Recovery Month**. If you feature or mention any prevention, treatment, and/or recovery programs in your community, make sure you have their permission first.

Refer to the following tips when writing an op-ed or online article.

- Include an eye-catching title that emphasizes central messaging.
- Make it personal and include real stories to connect with readers.
- Restate your main points at the end of the op-ed and issue a call to action.
- Avoid technical jargon and acronyms—most newspapers are written at a fifth-grade level.
- Include your name, contact information, and a description of who you are and your qualifications at the end of the piece.

Personalize...

Refer to the resources below for facts to make an op-ed or online article more compelling.

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics Report: Drug Overdose Deaths in the United States, 1999-2016** (<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db294.pdf>)
- **Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs, and Health** (<https://addiction.surgeongeneral.gov/>)
- **Mental Health Facilities Data** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/mental-health-facilities-data-nmhss>)
- **National Institute on Drug Abuse: Monitoring the Future Survey** (<https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/monitoring-future>)
- **SAMHSA's National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/substance-abuse-facilities-data-nssats>)
- **SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/samhsa-data-outcomes-quality/major-data-collections/reports-detailed-tables-2016-NSDUH>)



- **SAMHSA's Publications Store**
(<https://store.samhsa.gov/>)
- **SAMHSA's Recovery and Recovery Support Webpage** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/recovery>)
- **SAMHSA's Recovery Statement**
(<https://blog.samhsa.gov/2012/03/23/definition-of-recovery-updated>)
- **SAMHSA's Treatment Episode Data Set**
(<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/client-level-data-teds>)

Publish...

When submitting an op-ed or online article, include a brief cover letter to establish why you are qualified to write the piece and why it is timely, along with a simple explanation of why recovery from mental and substance use disorders is important to readers. When trying to place your piece in a publication or online, be sure to:

- **Place a follow-up call:** Follow up with the editor one week after submitting the op-ed or article. If he or she has not had time to look at it, follow up again one week later. Remember to be polite and state that publishing your piece will help others who may not be aware of the seriousness of mental and substance use disorders and the possibility of recovery.
- **Set a time limit:** Since most publications will not send notification if an op-ed is rejected, set a deadline for your piece to be published. If the deadline passes, move on to the next outlet and gauge their interest in publishing the piece. Don't give up!

If your op-ed is rejected from your desired publications, consider alternatives to the traditional printed op-ed. Ask the publication's website editor if op-eds can be posted on the online version of the newspaper. Online opinion pieces can be much easier to share with others through social media outlets, such as Twitter and Facebook.

Also consider that many newspapers have online bloggers who cover local philanthropic events, and some may accept guest post contributions to discuss mental and substance use disorders or a **Recovery Month** event in your area. Use the sample op-ed at the end of this document as a guide for a guest post, but remember to write in a more casual, personal manner when blogging. If a blogger does not agree to a guest post, offer information about **Recovery Month** and prevention, treatment, and recovery from mental and substance use disorders, and encourage the blogger to write his or her own post on the topic or link to a local **Recovery Month** event's website.

Keep in mind that **Recovery Month** celebrates individuals in long-term recovery; acknowledges those who provide prevention, treatment, and recovery support services; and empowers those in need of help to seek treatment throughout the year. Even if your op-ed or online piece does not get published in September, keep trying throughout the rest of the year to help spread these crucial messages.



Share...

Be sure to check news sites such as Google News (<https://news.google.com>) or Yahoo News (<https://news.yahoo.com/>) to see if an op-ed is published or whether other outlets have picked it up. Posting on personal social media accounts is also a great way to share an op-ed. In particular, you can do the following:

- Post a published op-ed on the **Recovery Month** Facebook page and Twitter account .
- Distribute event details, materials, and pictures to the social media channels above.

Send a copy of your published op-ed and placement information electronically to yourfriends@nationalrecoverymonth.org.

Inclusion of websites and resources in this document and on the *Recovery Month* website does not constitute official endorsement.



SAMPLE OP-ED

Families and Communities Can Make a Difference

Oftentimes, individuals who experience a mental or substance use disorder feel isolated and alone. Yet, every year, millions of Americans experience these conditions. It's important that we offer support to individuals facing mental and substance use disorders. In fact, we need to create environments and relationships that promote acceptance. Support from families is essential to recovery, so it's important that family members have the tools to start conversations about prevention, treatment, and recovery. Too many people are still unaware that prevention works and that mental and substance use disorders can be treated, just like other health problems.

Having **[Been in Long-term Recovery for XX Years / Worked in the Recovery Field for XX years / Other Statement of Personal Experience]**, I have witnessed the positive reality of recovery. Individuals who embrace recovery achieve improved mental and physical health and form stronger relationships with their neighbors, family members, and peers. We need to make more people feel as though recovery is possible.

Mental and substance use disorders affect people of all ethnicities, ages, genders, geographic regions, and socioeconomic levels. They need to know that help is available. These individuals can get better, both physically and emotionally, with the support of a welcoming community.

Families and communities can find hope and spread the message that recovery works by celebrating the annual ***National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)***.

[Name of Organization] is celebrating ***Recovery Month*** by holding a variety of educational and entertaining events **[Or Name Specific Event]** 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.

I urge all community members to join the celebration and help stem the incidence of mental and substance use disorders. Let people know that free, confidential help is available 24 hours a day through SAMHSA's National Helpline, **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** or **1-800-487-4889 (TDD)**.

Offering support to those experiencing mental and substance use disorders can make a huge difference. Together we can help others realize the promise of recovery and give families the right support to help their loved ones.

[Include Author Name, Title, and Brief Summary of Qualifications.]



PRESS MATERIALS FOR YOUR **RECOVERY** MONTH EVENT

To assist with the effort and generate positive publicity for **Recovery Month** activities, create and distribute press materials to spread the recovery message. These materials should garner media coverage by highlighting the fact that behavioral health is essential to health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover from mental and substance use disorders.

Use this document to guide the development and distribution of publicity materials to promote **Recovery Month** events this September and throughout the year.

Choose a Format...

There are several types of materials you or your organization can share with the media to publicize your **Recovery Month** event and highlight messages that will resonate with your intended audiences and the media.

The following tools will build awareness for a **Recovery Month** event. Examples of most of these tools can be found at the end of this document and can be modified for distribution to media outlets.

- **Media advisories**, or media alerts, are brief one-page documents that notify the media of an upcoming event and provide essential information about the event's date, time, and location. They are brief and entice reporters to attend the event to learn more. Advisories should be sent to the calendar editor of a local newspaper and also the health care reporter or editor who covers local news or events. They should also include the organization's contact information, as well as information on scheduling interviews and taking photos.

- **Press releases**, or news releases, are one- or two-page announcements sent to the media so they will cover a story or event. A release is similar to a condensed news story, which sometimes is repurposed as a stand-alone article in a newspaper. Refer to the "Work with the Media" section in this toolkit for factors that reporters use to determine if a story is newsworthy. Press releases should:
 - Be approximately 500 words, formatted in short paragraphs;
 - Contain the most important information at the top, followed by supporting details later in the article; and
 - Include a quote from an event's spokesperson or key figure.
- **Backgrounders** are succinct, supplementary documents that often accompany a media advisory or news release. A backgrounder may also be distributed at **Recovery Month** events or sent to reporters separately. They can be written in paragraph form or have bulleted information. Create a backgrounder, such as the one at the end of this document, that highlights SAMHSA and **Recovery Month**; your organization; the specific event; recent behavioral health data; relevant prevention, treatment, and recovery support services; and local individuals in recovery.
- **Op-eds** provide an opinion on a specific topic or event and are published opposite a publication's editorial page. An op-ed's purpose is to influence public opinion by taking a strong position and creating a dialogue about issues affecting a community, such as mental and substance use disorders.



- **Letters to the editor** are brief letters (no more than 150 to 175 words) written to express an individual's or organization's point of view on a particular, yet timely, subject that was recently covered in the news. Letters should be written as a response to another news story (within a couple of days of the story's appearance) and should highlight a timely issue, such as how the rate of mental and substance use disorders in a local community factors into other stories in the news. Letters to the editor tend to be published in newspapers and news magazines.
- **Public service announcements (PSAs)** are non-paid informational commercials, distributed to local radio or television outlets. PSAs create awareness of **Recovery Month** in communities and help inform audiences about the realities of mental and substance use disorders. Refer to the "**Recovery Month** Public Service Announcements" section in this toolkit for more information.

Draft...

When drafting press materials for a **Recovery Month** event, explain why behavioral health conditions are important to address and why your event is beneficial to the community. Remember to share these messages with all members of your event-planning committee, so they can offer a relevant quote if asked by the media. It may be helpful to review the "Work with the Media" section for more advice on interacting with reporters.

When developing press materials, keep in mind the following tips.

- Avoid using slang terms, which may offend people in recovery, or technical jargon that the general public may not understand.
- Double-check the names, titles, and contact information in press materials, and verify that all statistics and spelling are correct.

Personalize...

Use the following resources to customize your press materials with local data when possible.

- **SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatments and Services Webpage** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/treatment>)
- **SAMHSA's Mental Health Facilities Data** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/mental-health-facilities-data-nmhss>)
- **SAMHSA's National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/substance-abuse-facilities-data-nssats>)
- **SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/samhsa-data-outcomes-quality/major-data-collections/reports-detailed-tables-2016-NSDUH>)
- **SAMHSA's Recovery and Recovery Support Webpage** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/recovery>)
- **SAMHSA's Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS)** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/client-level-data-teds>)

Disseminate...

Before distributing the media materials you have developed, make sure your materials adequately highlight the importance of **Recovery Month**, have a specific call to action, and provide community-specific information.

Press materials are most commonly distributed electronically. To ensure that a reporter views the press materials, copy and paste the information into the body of an email. Make sure the headline and first paragraph are readable to prevent unnecessary scrolling. Also, personalize each email so the reporter knows it is not a mass message.

To learn where to send materials and how to build a comprehensive media list, refer to the "Work with the Media" section in this toolkit.



Coordinate Timing...

Media advisories are typically sent to reporters about a week in advance of an event. Remember, these alerts serve as an invitation or “save-the-date” for the event. Press releases are distributed either immediately before or at the event, or can be given to reporters under an “embargo” agreement until the event or announcement becomes official.

To distribute materials to a large number of recipients, you can send them to a news wire service organization, such as the Associated Press or Reuters, which may choose to run them for free. You can also choose to use an online fee-based distribution service, such as:

- **24/7 Press Release** (<https://www.24-7pressrelease.com/>)
- **Business Wire** (<https://www.businesswire.com/portal/site/home>)
- **PR Log** (<https://www.prlog.org/>)
- **PR Newswire** (<https://www.prnewswire.com/>)

Once materials have been distributed, remember to post them on the **Recovery Month** website and link to the materials on appropriate web-based platforms. It is also important to follow up with each reporter who received the materials to ensure that they received them and to gauge their interest in attending the event or to schedule an interview with a spokesperson or speaker

Share...

As discussed in the “Promote **Recovery Month** with Events” section in this toolkit, it is important to evaluate an event after it has taken place and share key learnings.

Post press materials on the **Recovery Month** website.

Share event information through **Recovery Month** social media outlets. Share the event's outreach efforts and talk about the materials that were useful during **Recovery Month**.

Send promotional materials electronically to yourfriends@nationalrecoverymonth.org

Consult Resources...

For more information on **Recovery Month** and services available to people in need, please refer to the “Treatment and Recovery Support Services” section of this toolkit.

Inclusion of websites and event examples in this document and on the *Recovery Month* website does not constitute official endorsement.



SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

[Adapt as needed for event by modifying the type of event, date, etc.]

[Name of Official] to Issue Proclamation and Lead Recovery Event to Raise Awareness of Mental and Substance Use Disorders

Mental and substance use disorders are prevalent in our community, and it's imperative that individuals in **[City or State]** understand how to seek help. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), in 2020, an estimated XX **[Thousand/Million]** people in **[City or State]** were affected by a mental disorder. In addition, an estimated XX **[Thousand/Million]** people in **[City or State]** were affected by substance use disorders.

To address this significant problem, **[Name of Official]** will issue a proclamation for ***National Recovery Month*** this September, raising awareness about prevention, treatment, and recovery support services in the area. Additionally, **[Name of Expert]** will discuss local mental and substance use disorder programs and highlight individuals in recovery, detailing the journey they took to get where they are today.

Last year, **XX** proclamations were issued nationwide, including one by the President of the United States. After the signing of the proclamation, attendees and all citizens of **[City or State]** are encouraged to join a recovery event around the community to highlight the significance of helping people in need of prevention, treatment, and recovery support services, while also celebrating the accomplishments of individuals in recovery.

WHO: [Participants]

WHEN: [Date and Time]

WHERE: [Address of Event]

CONTACT: [Name and Phone Number of Primary Contact for Event]



SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

[Adapt as needed for the event by modifying the type of event, date, and local statistics as available.]

For Immediate Release

Contact:

[Name of Person Who is Available to Answer Questions from the Media]

[Phone Number of Contact Person – Include Office and Cell Numbers]

[Email Address of Contact Person]

[Name of Official] Hosts Recovery Event to Raise Awareness of Mental and Substance Use Disorders Support Services in [City or State]

[City, State], [Date] – Mental and substance use disorders and the societal benefits of recovery for [City or State] must be addressed immediately, according to [Name of Local Official], who today recognized September as **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**. To promote the widespread national observance, [Name of Official] led a recovery event, which featured opening speakers and was intended to support people in recovery and draw attention to critical prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

In addition, a walk, attended by more than [Number of People Who Attended the Walk] people, celebrated real-life examples of people in recovery.

- “Today’s event emphasized that individuals in recovery and their support systems can be change agents in our communities,” stated [Name of Official]. “It is critical that people experiencing mental and substance use disorders receive the support they need. The reality is that behavioral health is essential to health, prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover.”

[Replace the Following Paragraph with Local Statistics, if Available.] In 2016, an estimated 44.7 million adults aged 18 or older (18.3 percent) had any mental illness in the past year according to the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an annual survey released by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

Opening speakers at the event described the impact of mental and substance use disorders on the community and joined the crowd on the walk in downtown [City]. The event also featured the support of local businesses and organizations that recognize the value of seeking treatment and overcoming mental and substance use disorders.

“It is important that the momentum we’ve established at this event is carried over to tomorrow, and the next day, week, and year,” said [Name of Person]. “We all have the potential to make a difference and be visible, vocal, and valuable to help spread the message that recovery is possible.”

Today’s event was part of **Recovery Month**, a national observance. The observance raises awareness of mental and substance use disorders, celebrates individuals in long-term recovery, and acknowledges the work of prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.



SAMPLE BACKGROUNDER

[Adapt as needed by including additional organization-specific information or information on the event]

National Recovery Month Media Fact Sheet

What is National Recovery Month?

National Recovery Month (Recovery Month) is an annual observance celebrated every September since 1989. In September, and throughout the year, ***Recovery Month*** spreads the message that –

- Behavioral health is essential to health.
- Prevention works.
- Treatment is effective.
- People recover.

Refer to the ***Recovery Month*** website, <https://nationalrecoverymonth.org/about>, for additional information on the initiative.

Who sponsors Recovery Month?

Recovery Month collaborates with approximately 200 ***Recovery Month*** Planning Partner organizations, who represent local, state, and national organizations dedicated to prevention, treatment, and recovery.

What is this year's Recovery Month theme?

This year's theme, "*Join the Voices for Recovery: Invest in Health, Home, Purpose, and Community,*" explores how integrated care, a strong community, sense of purpose, and leadership contributes to effective treatments that sustain the recovery of persons with mental and substance use disorders.

The observance will work to highlight inspiring stories that help thousands of people from all walks of life find the path to hope, health, and wellness. In addition, the materials support SAMHSA's message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover. Communities can improve the lives of those in recovery by extending opportunities for meaningful daily activities, such as jobs, school, volunteerism, family caretaking, or creative endeavors. Local communities can play a significant role in supporting those in recovery as they gain the independence, income, and resources necessary to fully participate in society.



What events occur during *Recovery Month*?

Every September—and throughout the year—hundreds of events occur to celebrate **Recovery Month**. These events, ranging from recovery walks and rallies to online web chats and group barbeques, encourage the following audiences to address the continued need for prevention, treatment, and recovery support services.

- Active military and veterans
- Civic leaders
- Communities
- College-aged students
- Educators
- Employers
- Faith-based organizations
- Faith leaders
- First responders
- Friends and family members
- High school-aged students
- Justice system personnel
- Policymakers
- Prevention, treatment, and recovery organizations
- Peer recovery
- Recovery community
- Social service organizations
- Youth and young adults

Where can people find treatment for mental and substance use disorders?

Many treatment options exist. SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatment Locator, <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>, helps people find mental and substance use disorder treatment facilities and programs across the country. SAMHSA's National Helpline, **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** or **1-800-487-4889 (TDD)**, is a free, confidential, 24/7, 365-day-a-year information service and treatment referral (in English and Spanish) for individuals and families facing mental and substance use disorders. Additionally, the "Treatment and Recovery Support Services" section in this toolkit provides an overview of support options.

Where can people learn more about the current mental and substance use disorder landscape?

Refer to the "Common Mental Disorders and Misused Substances" section in this toolkit for up-to-date statistics on the prevalence of mental and substance use disorders in the United States.



ISSUE RECOVERY MONTH PROCLAMATIONS

A proclamation is an official announcement that publicly recognizes an initiative, such as **Recovery Month**. Proclamations are typically signed and issued by federal officials, governors, state legislators, or other government officials at the local level.

The solicitation and gathering of proclamations from state, territory, city, or county entities in support of **Recovery Month** is another way to promote and raise awareness for behavioral health and spread the message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover.

In 2016, 43 proclamations were signed to support **Recovery Month**, including one issued by President Donald Trump. For the past 17 years, the Executive Office of the President of the United States has supported Recovery Month by working to raise public awareness and support for those with behavioral health conditions, as well as their communities and families. The Presidential Proclamation recognizes the importance of prevention, treatment, and recovery across the country. Equally important are the hundreds of proclamations issued at the state, territory, and local levels each year.

The 2018 **Recovery Month** theme, “*Join the Voices for Recovery: Invest in Health, Home, Purpose, and Community*,” explores how integrated care, a strong community, sense of purpose, and leadership contributes to effective treatments that sustain the recovery of persons with mental and substance use disorders. The observance will work to highlight inspiring stories that help thousands of people from all walks of life find the path to hope, health, and wellness. In addition, the materials support SAMHSA’s message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people can and do recover. The information below includes tips to help draft and promote a **Recovery Month** proclamation.

Contact Public Officials...

Before drafting a proclamation to designate September as **Recovery Month** in your area, you may wish to research local officials to gauge their interests and beliefs about prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. You will want to

engage someone who is passionate about this issue, if possible, or try to generate passion for the issue as a result of your outreach. Remember that many public officials can issue a proclamation, including:

- Governors
- Senators and Representatives
- Mayors
- City council members
- State legislators
- County managers
- Tribal nation leaders

Since some legislatures and city governments are not in session during the summer months, try to contact public officials at least six months in advance of **Recovery Month**. Write a letter or send an email to initiate correspondence with an official’s communications office, and follow up with a phone call. Include a link to <https://nationalrecoverymonth.org> in your correspondence. During the initial conversation, explain the **Recovery Month** observance, detail scheduled local activities, and discuss the importance of their support for this annual event. If the official’s office is unfamiliar with the proclamation process, explain that it’s a simple way for the government to recognize the importance of prevention, treatment, and recovery support services for mental and substance use disorders—and that it can encourage those in need to seek help.

Once the office confirms that the official might support **Recovery Month** and issue a proclamation, it’s time to start writing.



Decide on a Style...

There are two styles of proclamation writing: traditional and modern. While these two styles differ in format, they can both generate awareness of **Recovery Month**.

Traditional proclamations begin with a series of statements starting with the words “whereas,” which detail the current state of affairs and suggest the reasoning behind the proclamation. Each clause notes the problems or issues being addressed and is followed by a concluding phrase beginning with “therefore,” which specifically requests the support or action needed.

Modern proclamations are written in a letter format. They highlight the same points as a traditional proclamation, but are written as statements. See examples of proclamations included at the end of this document.

Develop a Proclamation...

Once you are familiar with the different proclamation styles, use the following list when drafting a proclamation and working to gain public support for **Recovery Month**.

- Determine the official's preferred writing style (traditional or modern).
- Offer to draft the proclamation.
- Refer to the examples at the end of this document to help draft the proclamation.
- Insert local information or statistics that will resonate with community members (see examples in the “Common Mental Disorders and Misused Substances” section in this toolkit).
- Submit the proclamation to the official's office early and allow time for the official to review and sign the proclamation.
- Follow up frequently to check the status of the proclamation.

- Display copies of the proclamation in public places once it has been signed.
- Post the proclamation on the **Recovery Month** website – submit to yourfriends@nationalrecoverymonth.org

Personalize...

You can personalize the proclamation for your community and include important messages about recovery. Consider including or consulting the following resources about treatment and recovery services.

- **SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatments and Services Webpage** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/treatment>)
- **SAMHSA's Mental Health Facilities Data** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/mental-health-facilities-data-nmhss>)
- **SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health and other data from SAMHSA** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/samhsa-data-outcomes-quality/major-data-collections/reports-detailed-tables-2016-NSDUH>)
- **SAMHSA's National Survey on Substance Abuse Treatment Services** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/substance-abuse-facilities-data-nssats>)
- **SAMHSA's Recovery and Recovery Support Webpage** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/recovery>)
- **SAMHSA's Treatment Episode Data Set** (<https://www.samhsa.gov/data/client-level-data-teds>)



Publicize...

Publicizing the proclamation will bring more attention to **Recovery Month** and generate momentum for the national observance in your community. Visit local businesses, health clubs, libraries, hotel lobbies, schools, college campuses, treatment and recovery centers, community mental health centers, and government buildings to see if they allow you to display copies of proclamations and other **Recovery Month** resources. If permitted, display a **Recovery Month** poster to garner additional attention and increase interest.

To create additional publicity, arrange a press conference or town hall meeting and have local officials sign or present the proclamation. This event can be accompanied by a roundtable discussion on issues related to mental and substance use disorders. Ideas for panelists include treatment and service providers, families affected by mental and substance use disorders, young adults affected by these disorders, and other individuals already in recovery. For information on how to plan a **Recovery Month** event, refer to the “Promote **Recovery Month** with Events” section in this toolkit.

Lastly, arrange for a proclamation to be featured in a local publication to increase awareness. Distribute electronic copies of the document to the local or metro desks of local newspapers, along with a press release to announce the signing of the **Recovery Month** proclamation. For tips on how to write an effective press release, refer to the “Press Materials for Your **Recovery Month** Event” section in this toolkit.

Share...

Post a copy of the proclamation and send it electronically to yourfriends@nationalrecoverymonthgh.org

Be sure to share it on your social media channels!

Inclusion of websites and event examples in this document and on the *Recovery Month* website does not constitute official endorsement.



SAMPLE PROCLAMATION 1: TRADITIONAL FORMAT

WHEREAS, behavioral health is an essential part of health and one's overall wellness; and

WHEREAS, prevention of mental and substance use disorders works, treatment is effective, and people recover in our area and around the nation; and

WHEREAS, preventing and overcoming mental and substance use disorders is essential to achieving healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally; and

WHEREAS, we must encourage relatives and friends of people with mental and substance use disorders to implement preventive measures, recognize the signs of a problem, and guide those in need to appropriate treatment and recovery support services; and

WHEREAS, an estimated **XX [Thousand/Million]** people in **[City or State]** are affected by these conditions; and

WHEREAS, to help more people achieve and sustain long-term recovery, **[Name of State, City, County or Treatment Organization]** invite all residents of **[State/City/Town]** to participate in ***National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)***; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I **[Name and Title of Your Elected Official]**, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of **[City, State, or Locality]**, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2020 as

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

In **[City or State]** and call upon the people of **[City or State]** to observe this month with appropriate programs, activities, and ceremonies to support this year's ***Recovery Month*** theme, *Join the Voices for Recovery: Celebrating Connections*.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this **[Day of Month]** day of **[Month]**, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two-hundred and forty-third.

Signature

[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]



SAMPLE PROCLAMATION 2: MODERN FORMAT

Mental health and substance use disorders affect all communities nationwide, but with commitment and support, people with these disorders can achieve healthy lifestyles and lead rewarding lives in recovery. By seeking help, people who experience mental health and substance use disorders can embark on a new path toward improved health and overall wellness. The focus of **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** this September is to celebrate their journey with the theme *Join the Voices for Recovery: Celebrating Connections*. **Recovery Month** spreads the message that behavioral health is essential to health and one's overall wellness, and that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover.

The impact of mental and substance use disorders is apparent in our local community, and an estimated **XX [Thousand/Million]** people in **[City or State]** are affected by these conditions. Through **Recovery Month**, people become more aware and able to recognize the signs of mental and substance use disorders, which can lead more people into needed treatment. Managing the effects of these conditions can help people achieve healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally.

The **Recovery Month** observance continues to work to improve the lives of those affected by mental and substance use disorders by raising awareness of these diseases and educating communities about the prevention, treatment, and recovery resources that are available. For the above reasons, I am asking the citizens of **[City or State]** to join me in celebrating this September as **National Recovery Month**.

I, **[Name and Title of Elected Official]**, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2020 as

NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

In **[City or State]** and call upon our community to observe this month with compelling programs and events that support this year's observance.

Signature

[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]