

Working With the Media

Once you have conducted media outreach to promote your *National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)* activities, opportunities may arise to share your views in media interviews. Interviews provide reporters with background information to develop their stories, and sometimes a direct quote may be attributed to you. Reporters, editors, and producers from newspapers, radio shows, television shows, and news programs all conduct interviews for their stories.

Your Role in Media Interviews: Quotable and Confident

- Know your audience.** Before the interview, research the reporter, the publication, and the types of subjects he or she covers to get an idea of what the reporter might ask. Also, during the interview, do not use acronyms or jargon, especially if substance use disorders are not the reporter's main topic.
- Keep it simple and to the point.** Prepare three to four key points that you want to get across and stick to them. Do not try to communicate too many messages, as it may clutter the interview. Present the key messages briefly, because reporters may not be able to sort through lengthy statements. See the sample key messages about *Recovery Month* at the end of this document.
- Check for accuracy.** Ensure that everything you tell the reporter is supported by factual evidence that you can provide the reporter afterward, if needed.

Media Interview Tip = Your interview is a time to answer questions, but it also is your opportunity to tell your story and present your message. You can be in charge of the interview.

For local information to strengthen your interview, contact your state's Single-State Agency listed in the "Resources" section of this planning toolkit. Inquire about both public and private patient census information. State and local information is also available from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) *2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings* at www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh.htm and the *Treatment Episode Data Set* at www.dasis.samhsa.gov/webt/NewMapv1.htm.

- Make yourself invaluable.** Position yourself as an expert by providing as much information as you can about *Recovery Month*, substance use disorders, and recovery for people and their families. If you are unable to answer a reporter's question, offer to find out quickly, or provide additional sources and experts.
- Practice makes perfect.** Rehearsing your key points before the interview will make you better able to answer questions clearly. Also, prepare a list of expected media questions and answers in advance.
- Adhere to anonymity traditions, if applicable.** People willing to come forward about their experience in recovery can speak with the media without violating the "anonymity" clause of various mutual support groups. Many of these groups permit sharing stories as long as membership in the group is not mentioned. Be sure to inform the media about the reasons behind anonymity.

Key *Recovery Month* Messages to Convey

You can adapt the following points to discuss with reporters during interviews:

1. **[Organization name]** is planning activities throughout September for the 18th annual observance of ***National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)***. This is a nationwide celebration of people in recovery from substance use disorders and the treatment providers who helped them reclaim their lives. ***Recovery Month*** is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
2. **[Organization name]** is holding **[event]** on **[date/time]** at **[location]** to **[encourage others to seek treatment for substance use disorders/inform community leaders about the financial and human costs that stem from substance use disorders]** so that more of **[city's]** residents will seek treatment. In **[city]**, the percentage of residents with substance use disorders is **[percentage]**, yet only an estimated **[number]** receive treatment.
3. This year's ***Recovery Month*** theme, ***“Join the Voices for Recovery: Saving Lives, Saving Dollars,”*** highlights the financial and human costs of substance use disorders. Investing in treatment and recovery can have a positive impact on the workforce and the overall health of individuals and their families. Treatment is cost effective, with some measurements showing a benefit-to-cost ratio of up to 7:1, and problems at a person's place of employment can be cut by an average of 75 percent when treatment is obtained.
4. Recovery programs, such as **[specific programs in your community]**, provide a broad range of treatment services and offer various care options. Frequently, people need family counseling, job training, or help paying for services. These programs can help connect people with needed services. A person who has access to substance use treatment can reclaim a healthy and productive life, and will help **[city]** prosper.

Share Your Activities and Successes

You are encouraged to share your plans and activities for ***Recovery Month 2007*** with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), your colleagues, and the general public by posting them on the official ***Recovery Month*** Web site at www.recoverymonth.gov. By sharing your planning and activities, you are helping to generate momentum, thereby increasing outreach efforts to touch millions of lives that are affected by substance use disorders.

You also can share community success stories and other outreach efforts during ***Recovery Month*** by completing the Customer Satisfaction Form in this planning toolkit. Instructions are included on the form.

Please send samples of your organization's ***Recovery Month*** promotional materials to: Office of the Director, Consumer Affairs, SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 1 Choke Cherry Road, Second Floor, Rockville, MD 20857.

Sample ***Recovery Month*** materials are available electronically at the ***Recovery Month*** Web site at www.recoverymonth.gov. For additional ***Recovery Month*** materials, visit the Web site or call 1-800-662-HELP. For additional information about substance use disorders, treatment, and recovery, please visit SAMHSA's Web site at www.samhsa.gov.