JOIN THE VOICES FOR RECOVERY

Media

"Now is the time for every one of us to take action in our own lives, in our work and in our communities. There is no shame in addiction and there is so much hope and possibility in recovery. I am like more than 23 million other people across our great nation who have the disease of drug or alcohol addiction. And I am grateful that I am one of the faces and voices of recovery."

- North Dakota First Lady Kathryn Burgum

TARGETED OUTREACH
Media

The media has an important role in recognizing people who are in recovery for their accomplishments and also educating their communities about the realities of mental and substance use disorders. For **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** to be successful, it is critical for people to understand the prevalence of behavioral health conditions, as well as the prevention and treatment options available to them. This year's **Recovery Month** theme, *"Invest in Health, Home, Purpose, and Community,"* calls on the media to play a bigger part in positively advancing the public's knowledge of mental and substance use disorders, and to encourage acceptance and inspire action for people to get help for themselves and their loved ones.

Media:
Invest in **purpose** by highlighting positive stories of people in recovery.

The Issue

Today's media landscape offers people access to information 24/7 and has reshaped the way Americans consume information. More than 80 percent of Americans get at least some of their news through websites, apps, or social networking sites.[1]

Media sources – whether traditional or digital – influence people's opinions and perceptions. While there is an abundance of negative news stories, the media has the power to educate and inform society about misperceptions of persons in recovery from mental and substance use disorders by highlighting treatment options and bringing individual stories to life. When reporting on behavioral health, the media has a responsibility to convey the prevalence of these issues and the effectiveness of prevention and support.

With the rise of social media, people increasingly expect opportunities to comment, share, and discuss topics online.[2] The media has an opportunity to use websites such as Facebook and YouTube as platforms to help raise awareness and promote healthy behavior.

Audience Tip:
Refer to the "Common Mental Disorders and Commonly Misused Substances" for the latest data on prevalence of behavioral health conditions in the U.S.

What You Can Do

By communicating the realities of mental and substance use disorders, and the power of effective treatment and recovery support, the media can diminish associated misconceptions and promote action for people and their families who are seeking support.

When sharing an individual's story or reporting on substance use disorders, treatment, and recovery, members of the media community should:

- Include the perspectives of mental health and substance use experts who are knowledgeable about the cultural and ethnic factors that impact people living with these disorders;[3]

- Accurately refer to substance use, since addictions come in more than one form: substance (drugs, alcohol, etc.) and behavioral (gambling, sex, etc.);[4]

- When referring to someone who is diagnosed with a mental disorder, identify him/her as a person with a disorder, not as the disorder (e.g., "someone with depression" rather than "a depressed person");[5]

- Be mindful of the language used when discussing substance use disorders so the

condition is accurately portrayed, avoid an "us vs. them" mentality, and keep the human being at the center of the coverage (e.g., "person with a substance use disorder" rather than "addict");[6]

- Profile people with behavioral health conditions who are living satisfying lives with rewarding relationships and strong community ties;[7]

- Include the phone numbers or websites for national hotlines or local resource centers for those who want to learn more or get help[8]; and

- Report hard-hitting facts about the dire consequences of having a substance use disorder. For instance, every day, 44 Americans die because of prescription opioid overdose.[9]

The inclusion of these angles in your coverage may reduce the number of myths associated with addiction, treatment, and recovery.

Resources

There are a number of resources that can be used as a reference when constructing articles or broadcast stories. The following links provide assistance for media professionals reporting on a mental or substance use disorder to ensure an accurate depiction of those experiencing a behavioral health issue.

- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention** (https://afsp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/recommendations.pdf): Provides recommendations for reporting about suicide.

- **American Psychiatric Association** (https://www.psychiatry.org/newsroom/reporting-on-mental-health-conditions): Provides tips for accurately covering mental disorders.

- **Entertainment Industries Council** (http://www.eiconline.org/): Serves as a bridge for information between the entertainment industry and public policy members.

- **Faces and Voices of Recovery** (http://www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org): Profiles personal treatment and recovery experiences.

- **Facing Addiction** (https://www.facingaddiction.org/): Creates campaigns and conducts research to change perceptions about addiction and find solutions for recovery across the nation.

- **Journalist's Resource** (https://journalistsresource.org/studies/society/news-media/media-impacts-suicide-research): Provides a collection of research that investigates the media's impact on suicide.

- **Media Guidelines for Bullying Prevention** (https://www.stopbullying.gov/media/index.html): Serves as a federal resource for journalists covering the issue of bullying.

- **National Alliance on Mental Health** (https://www.nami.org/): Provides education, advocacy, helpline support, and leadership to help better the lives of the millions of Americans affected by mental disorders.

- **NIH DrugFacts** (https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/finder/t/160/drugfacts): Lists NIH publications that provide facts and figures on certain substances and their use in America.

- **Poynter** (https://www.newsu.org/reporting-mental-health-suicide): Provides a self-directed course for print, online, and broadcast journalists to gain a better understanding of behavioral health conditions and covering suicide.

- **ReportingOnSuicide.org** (http://reportingonsuicide.org): Provides recommendations for media coverage of suicide and at-risk populations.

- **SAMHSA's Data, Outcomes, and Quality** (https://www.samhsa.gov/samhsa-data-outcomes-quality/major-data-collections/reports-detailed-tables-2016-NSDUH): Provides reports and detailed tables from the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

- **SAMHSA's National Helpline (1-800-662-HELP [4357] or 1-800-487-4889 [TDD])** (https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline): 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.

- **SAMHSA's The Power of Language and Portrayals: What We Hear, What We See** (https://www.samhsa.gov/power-language-portrayals): Provides a four-part webcast produced by SAMHSA in partnership with the Entertainment Industries Council, educates the news and entertainment media about the best terminology and language to use, as well as how to accurately portray individuals with substance use disorders.

- **TEAM UP** (http://www.eiconline.org/teamup/): Brings together mental health experts, entertainment industry professionals, and journalists to encourage deeper reporting and more accurate depictions of people living with mental disorders.

- **The Carter Center** (https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/health/mental_health/2015-journalism-resource-guide-on-behavioral-health.pdf): Works to promote awareness about mental health issues and reduce stigma and discrimination against those with mental disorders.

- **The National Center for Biotechnology Information** (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4921198/): Provides data on media coverage of mental disorders.

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 United States Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

"I continue to grow in my recovery, practicing daily the principles and steps that saved my life. My marriage is stronger than ever, my kids are back in my life, my company is taking off and my life has been given back to me."

1 "The Modern Consumer: News attitudes and practices in the digital era." Web. 3 October 2017. Retrieved from http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2016/07/07104931/PJ_2016.07.07_Modern-News-Consumer_FINAL.pdf

2 "Developing a Social Media Plan to Support Substance Misuse Prevention Efforts." Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2017). Web. 3 October 2017. Retrieved from https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/tools-learning-resources/social-media-support-prevention-efforts

3 "Style Guide: Reporting Mental Health." Entertainment Industries Council. (2012). Web. 3 October 2017. Retrieved from http://www.eiconline.org/teamup/wp-content/files/mental-health-reporting-style-guide.pdf

4 "Style Guide: Reporting Mental Health." Entertainment Industries Council. (2012). Web. 3 October 2017. Retrieved from http://www.eiconline.org/teamup/wp-content/files/mental-health-reporting-style-guide.pdf

5 "Style Guide: Reporting Mental Health." Entertainment Industries Council. (2012). Web. 3 October 2017. Retrieved from http://www.eiconline.org/teamup/wp-content/files/mental-health-reporting-style-guide.pdf

6 Botticelli, M., and Koh, H. "Changing the Language of Addiction," *Journal of the American Medical Association.* (2016). Web. 17 November 2017. Retrieved from: https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2565298

7 "Style Guide: Reporting Mental Health." Entertainment Industries Council. (2012). Web. 3 October 2017. Retrieved from http://www.eiconline.org/teamup/wp-content/files/mental-health-reporting-style-guide.pdf

8 "Style Guide: Reporting Mental Health." Entertainment Industries Council. (2012). Web. 3 October 2017. Retrieved from http://www.eiconline.org/teamup/wp-content/files/mental-health-reporting-style-guide.pdf

9 "Patients with Addiction Need Treatment - Not Sigma." American Society of Addiction Medicine. Web. 3 October 2017. Retrieved from https://www.asam.org/resources/publications/magazine/read/article/2015/12/15/patients-with-a-substance-use-disorder-need-treatment---not-stigma