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September an Important Month for Sinnissippi Centers

September is Recovery Month and Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month

(Dixon, IL)

September is an especially important awareness month for the public and for behavioral healthcare, and Sinnissippi Centers in particular. It is both Recovery Month and Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month. This September was very special because of the return of the Wellness and Recovery Celebration which took place September 12th at the Dixon Elks Lodge in Dixon, Illinois.

“The last Wellness & Recovery Celebration was held in September 2019,” says Stacie Kemp, Sinnissippi Centers’ President & CEO. “A few short months later the COVID-19 pandemic began which curtailed so many in person events,” adds Kemp. “Our Peer Panel was a very powerful part of the event talking about their own recovery journeys and the very personal reasons they dedicate themselves to helping others,” adds Kemp. There was also a social hour, a light dinner, and raffle prizes. The event was free and open to the public. “We were very pleased with the turnout considering it’s been five years since this event was held,” says Kemp. The Wellness & Recovery Celebration is held in September, which is Recovery Month.

The **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** sponsors **Recovery Month**. “The Goal of Recovery Month is to increase awareness that treatments for substance use disorders and mental illnesses work, and that recovery is possible,” says Kemp. “But just as important, is to let people know that they can be a great support to someone suffering from a substance use disorder without any special knowledge or training, just by being there. However, getting more information about these diseases and disorders is always helpful for everyone,” adds Kemp.

Some Facts to consider:

- 60% of rural Americans live in areas with a shortage of treatment professionals. Distance to treatment services in rural areas can be a barrier to getting treatment. Family and friends can play a significant role in helping address mental illness and substance use disorders by identifying when someone has a problem.
- Only 20% of those with a substance use disorder get the help they need. There are many barriers, but stigma and lack of coverage or adequate coverage are two major reasons.
- Information for Recovery Month online is available at www.samhsa.gov/recovery-month

September is also “**Suicide Prevention & Awareness Month** which seeks to raise awareness about suicide, a leading cause of death for individuals in the United States. Another goal is to inform people about what they can do to help keep their loved ones

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safe,” says Kemp. In 2022, a little over 49-thousand Americans died due to suicide. In that same year, the CDC estimates over 13.2-million Americans had suicidal ideation (thinking about suicide). Both are increases over the previous year. “People who have experienced violence, including child abuse, bullying, or sexual violence are at higher risk for suicide,” Kemp adds. “Our goal is ensuring that individuals, friends and families have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and to seek help,” says Kemp.

“The more that we openly, honestly, and directly talk about suicide, the more we can help to prevent it. We also need to look for the signs of suicide ideation in those around us,” says Kemp. Some of those signs include Someone saying they feel like a burden, being isolated, increased anxiety, feeling trapped or in unbearable pain, increased substance use, increased anger or rage, extreme mood swings, expressing hopelessness, and/or talking or posting on social media about wanting to die.

Who are the people at risk? Those with:

- Depression, other mental health concerns, or substance use disorders.
- Chronic pain.
- Family history of a mental health concerns or substance use.
- Family history of suicide.
- Exposure to family violence, including physical or sexual abuse.
- Having recently been released from prison or jail.
- A history of suicide attempts.
- Exposure, either directly or indirectly, to others’ suicidal behavior, such as that of family members, peers, or celebrities.

“What can you do? Safeguard the people in your life from the risk of suicide and support them: Ask how they are doing, ask about what’s going on in their life,” says Kemp.

“Keep them safe as best you can. Just be there for them to listen and be non-judgmental, don’t try to ‘fix them’. Help them connect to any treatment or support resources they need,” Kemp adds. Follow up with them to make sure they are OK.

A great resource someone in crisis can utilize is the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. You can call them by dialing 988, send a text to 988, or even chat online at 988lifeline.org.

Sinnissippi Centers also has a 24-hour toll free number you can use for someone in crisis (800-242-7642). Another great resource is the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention’s website at www.afsp.org. Sinnissippi Centers also maintains an extensive links page for all behavioral healthcare topics at www.sinnissippi.org

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