



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 5, 2025**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
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## **September is an Important Awareness Month**

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. It is both Recovery Month and Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month. Millions of Americans are impacted by substance use disorders, mental illnesses, and suicide each year.

Every September, 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 Sinnissippi Centers’ President and CEO Stacie 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 or mental health concern 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:**

- There are nearly thirty-seven million rural Americans — more than half of rural residents — who live in mental health professional shortage areas. Distance to treatment services in rural areas can be a barrier to getting treatment. Family and friends can play a key 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](http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery-month)

**“Suicide Prevention & Awareness Month** 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 safe,” says Kemp. In 2023, a little over 49-thousand Americans died due to suicide. In that same year, the CDC estimates almost 13-million Americans had suicidal ideation (thinking about suicide). “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.

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“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 is 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, do not 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](https://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](https://www.afsp.org). Sinnissippi Centers also maintains an extensive links page for a wide variety of behavioral healthcare topics at [www.sinnissippi.org](https://www.sinnissippi.org)

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