



Developing A Better Understanding



RECOVERY IS BEAUTIFUL: PROMOTING HEALTHY, SAFE, AND DRUG-FREE COMMUNITIES

As the Recovery is Beautiful framework helps guide the work of local addiction and mental health systems as they transform into Recovery-Oriented Systems of Care, there is an emphasis placed on strengthening a culture of partnership and collaboration in order to promote healthy, safe, and drug-free communities. Every sector of society is touched by addiction and mental illness and every sector of society has a vested interest in ensuring the health and wellness of its citizens. Communities throughout Ohio and the nation are working to find the best methods to understand and address the impact of mental illness and addiction on the entire community. In order to promote healthy, safe, and drug-free communities, local partners including businesses, treatment agencies, healthcare entities, law enforcement agencies, criminal justice entities, faith-based and veterans organizations, schools, public health professionals, child welfare entities, and more are coming together to develop solutions to promote community health and wellness.

Recovery is Beautiful Principle: Promoting Healthy, Safe, and Drug-Free Communities

Local Boards promote the health, wellness, and safety of individuals and communities by offering a continuum of services that include prevention, community education, crisis services, treatment, and recovery supports, such as housing, employment services, and peer supports. When individuals are healthy and stable in recovery, they can meet their fullest potential, businesses have access to a healthy, drug-free workforce, and families and communities flourish.

*“Recovery is not simply about personal health, but the health and well-being of the entire community.”
~Individual in Recovery*

Impacting the Future:

By partnering to promote healthy, safe, and drug-free communities, we can make a generational impact on individuals and families in our backyards. The following statistics demonstrate the potential impact of providing education, awareness, services, and resources to help community members identify early, understand, and respond to mental illness and addiction.

- Children of parents who talk to their teens about drugs are 50% less likely to use than those who do not. (*Start Talking!*)
- Studies show that Mental Health First Aid reduces the social distance created by negative attitudes and perceptions of individuals with mental illnesses. Individuals trained in Mental Health First Aid increase their confidence in and likelihood to help an individual in distress. (National Council for Behavioral Health)
- Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training has been shown to reduce stigma and studies show that police-based diversions, CIT especially, significantly reduce arrests of people with serious mental illnesses. Pre-booking diversion, including CIT, also reduced the number of re-arrests by 58%. (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
- Scientific research shows that treatment can help drug using offenders change their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors; avoid relapse; and successfully remove themselves from a life of substance use and crime. Treatment can cut drug use in half, decrease criminal activity, and reduce arrests. (National Institute of Drug Abuse)

Promoting Healthy, Safe, and Drug-Free Communities throughout Ohio

Communities throughout the state have been and continue to work to develop and implement innovative programs and practices designed to foster health, wellness, and safety. Boards, as the mental health and addiction leaders in their communities, serve as the hub in facilitating many of these activities. A number of programs, coalitions, and trainings are ongoing in localities throughout Ohio providing community members with information and resources to address emerging concerns and provide support to their friends and families. A small sampling of these activities is listed below:

- ◇ Mental Health First Aid Training – A training program designed to teach the skills to help individuals identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders.
- ◇ Suicide Prevention Coalitions – Community groups developed with the goal of providing education about suicide, reducing stigma, and promoting suicide prevention activities.
- ◇ Crisis Intervention Team Training – Training to improve the way law enforcement and the community respond to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.
- ◇ Reentry Coalitions – Community partnerships building resource and referral networks to help offenders reenter the community with the best chance possible to succeed.
- ◇ Youth-Led Prevention Programs – Prevention programs designed by and for youth to encourage their peers to abstain, from alcohol and other drugs, and maintain healthy lifestyles.
- ◇ Opiate and Other Drug Task Forces – Community partnerships working across systems to develop integrated solutions attempting to reduce drug abuse and addiction.
- ◇ Second Chance Workforce Programs – Community leaders and employers working together to implement second chance employment programs to provide individuals who test positive for drug use with opportunities to become and/or stay gainfully employed.
- ◇ Faith-Based Partnerships – Local faith-based organizations working with partners to help individuals and families access community mental health and addiction resources from a place of comfort.
- ◇ Awareness and Stigma Reduction Efforts – Education, campaigns, and activities designed to increase awareness of and understanding of mental illness and addiction.
- ◇ Community Activities – Events and actions designed to raise awareness about addiction and mental illness, provide opportunities for socialization, and bring partners together to help individuals improve.

Health Coverage and Healthy Communities

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, health starts in our homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities. We know that taking care of ourselves by eating well and staying active, not smoking, getting the recommended immunizations and screening tests, and seeing a doctor when we are sick all influence our health. Our health is also determined in part by access to social and economic opportunities; the resources and supports available in our homes, neighborhoods, and communities; the quality of our schooling; the safety of our workplaces; the cleanliness of our water, food, and air; and the nature of our social interactions and relationships.

In order to promote the health of community members, individuals need timely and affordable access to needed services and supports. Expanded Medicaid coverage has offered some of Ohio's most vulnerable citizens access to critical and life-saving health care services. This health coverage has afforded individuals access to these services when and where they need them in order for the individuals to achieve and maintain the health of themselves and their family members. Expansion of Medicaid coverage in Ohio has kept families together; helped individuals keep and get employment; and increased the chances for many additional Ohioans to achieve and sustain recovery while also helping increase the health and wellbeing of communities throughout the State.