**Five Ways to Incorporate Suicide Prevention in Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Settings**

In support of National Recovery Month, National Suicide Prevention Awareness Week and World Suicide Prevention day, all held in September, we are encouraging a special focus on the intersection between alcohol and drug use and suicide prevention. The observances are closely related as research has consistently shown a strong co-morbidity and substantial overlap between risk and protective factors. Further, research has shown a high incidence of suicidal thoughts and attempts amongst individuals in alcohol and other drug treatment, as well as a significant occurrence of death by suicide amongst individuals who have at one time been in alcohol and drug treatment.

Alcohol and other drug treatment providers, such as yourself, have an opportunity to be a key resource for early detection and prevention of suicidal behavior. You can start by incorporating the 5 practices below in your treatment settings.

1. **Know the Signs for Suicide.** Encourage staff to learn about the warning signs and risk factors for suicide. You can also have key staff participate in gatekeeper trainings such as [QPR](https://qprinstitute.com/) or [SafeTalk](https://www.livingworks.net/safetalk). Visit [SuicideIsPreventable.org](http://suicideispreventable.org/) to learn more.
2. **Raise Awareness with Clients.** Incorporate suicide prevention conversations and materials into the treatment milieu. You can do this by sharing Know The Signs tent cards or hanging up Know The Signs posters around the building. Get clients involved by integrating activities and games into group discussions, such as Bingo, Trivia, or utilizing our Suicide Prevention Group Guide. This can be downloaded at: <https://www.eachmindmatters.org/get-involved/spread-the-word/>
3. **Implement Suicide and Risk Screening Tools.** Screening helps identify problems early so people can be connected to the support they need before their problems become crises. Be sure to have a plan in place for how the results of the screening will guide the user to the appropriate services and supports. Visit the [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](https://www.sprc.org/resources-programs) to learn about various screening practices and tools such as the [Columbia-Suicide Severity Rating Scale](http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/Columbia_Suicide_Severity_Rating_Scale.pdf) or the [SAFE-T](http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/images/res/SAFE_T.pdf) card.
4. **Learn More About Incorporating Suicide Prevention Practices**. You can learn more about how to incorporate suicide prevention practices such as safety planning and crisis response by visiting the Each Mind Matters Resources for AOD Providers.
5. **Inspire Hope and Celebrate Recovery.** Throughout September and beyond, each of us has the opportunity to share messages of hope and recovery. Utilize the [Sticky Note Activity](https://www.eachmindmatters.org/get-involved/spread-the-word/) to provide a space for those with lived experiences to share their own stories of recovery and messages of hope. Share personal stories about recovery available on the Each Mind Matters [Story Gallery](https://www.eachmindmatters.org/stories/).

**Resources:**   
California’s Suicide Prevention Campaign: [www.SuicideIsPreventiable.org](http://www.SuicideIsPreventiable.org)

[Each Mind Matters Resource Center](https://emmresourcecenter.org/) provides free and downloadable suicide prevention resources in multiple languages.

SAMHSA: TIP 50: [Addressing Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors in Substance Abuse Treatment](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/TIP-50-Addressing-Suicidal-Thoughts-and-Behaviors-in-Substance-Abuse-Treatment/SMA15-4381)

This manual offers comprehensive guidelines for working with suicidal adults living with substance use disorders including risk factors, warning signs and clinical practices. The [Quick Guide For Clinicians](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/Addressing-Suicidal-Thoughts-and-Behaviors-in-Substance-Abuse-Treatment-Quick-Guide-for-Clinicians-Based-on-TIP-50/SMA13-4793?referer=from_search_result) is based on TIP 50.

[Safety Planning Guide: A Quick Guide for Clinicians](http://www.sprc.org/sites/default/files/SafetyPlanningGuide%20Quick%20Guide%20for%20Clinicians.pdf) used in conjunction with the safety plan template, provides guidance on how to lead a patient who is at high risk for suicide through the development of a safety plan.

The [Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC)](http://www.sprc.org/), funded by SAMHSA, provides technical assistance, training, and materials to increase the knowledge of professionals serving people at risk of suicide. The [SPRC Substance Abuse Treatment](https://www.sprc.org/settings/substance-abuse-treatment) page includes many useful resources.