

THE OUTLOOK

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER



LAUNCHES ACROSS THE STATE

The three pilot crisis centers, funded by Governor Kay Ivey and the state legislature in fiscal year 2021 and located at [AltaPointe Health](#), the [Montgomery Area Mental Health Authority](#), and [WellStone](#), have launched services in their communities to individuals with mental illness and substance use disorder. The Alabama Department of Mental Health was proud to help host events with the centers, showcasing their services and new (or under construction) facilities this summer. These centers, along with [Stepping Up Alabama](#), mobile crisis units, and rural crisis care are all integral parts of the [Alabama Crisis System of Care](#).

Crisis centers are a designated place for communities, law enforcement, and first responders to take an individual who is experiencing a mental health crisis. The crisis center also includes walk-in access for individuals and families, offering a safe and comfortable environment.

The crisis centers are the first of their kind in Alabama and reflect a significant expansion of the crisis system of care serving all individuals in need.

Services may include:

- Temporary Observation Units (23 hours)
- Short Term Stabilization Units (5-7 days)
- Mobile Crisis and Co-Response (in tandem with law enforcement and EMS)
- Peer Services
- Case Management

The Alabama Crisis System of Care:

- Expands access to care
- Offers additional levels of care to individuals in need of mental health care
- Assists individuals before a civil commitment may occur
- Reduces the number of arrests
- Decreases frequency of admissions to hospitals
- Includes crisis diversion centers and programs
- Offers the right care, at the right time, at the right place
- Maximizes opportunities for the behavioral health workforce
- Assists individuals in crisis to achieve stability
- Promotes sustained recovery
- Provides connections and referrals to agencies and organizations
- Includes 9-8-8, Mobile Crisis Teams, and Crisis Centers



IN THIS ISSUE

SEP / OCT 2021

AL Crisis System of Care	FC
NAMI BHM Expands CIT Training	2
Recovery Month 2021	2
What is 9-8-8?	3
ADMH Staff Showcase: Pam Butler	5
Suicide Prevention Month 2021	7
Break the Cycle	7
Strike Out Stigma	8
Canceled Conferences	9
Recovery Night	9
State Combined Campaign	9
ADMH Staff Success	11
News from ACDD.....	BC

Want to be included in the next issue? Send us your stories, achievements, initiatives, events...etc!

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BIRMINGHAM STAFF

EXPANDS CIT TRAINING

Teena McGuinness, John McGuinness, and Susan Baty-Pierce of NAMI Birmingham recently attended the CIT Conference and CIT Coordinator training. The training and tests have been completed to meet criteria for a fully certified CIT System!

As members of the NAMI Birmingham Advocacy Committee, they are now scheduled to also complete the third and final requirement for certification at the CIT Train-The-Trainer class scheduled for September 1-2, 2021, taught by Johnny Hollingsworth, Huntsville Police Department's Academy Director, located at the Jefferson County Sheriff's Academy.



The 2021 National Recovery Month theme, *"Recovery is For Everyone: Every Person, Every Family, Every Community,"* reminds people in recovery and those who support them that no one is alone in the journey through recovery. Everyone's journey is different, but we are all in this together. Recovery Month will continue to educate others about substance use disorders and co-occurring disorders, the effectiveness of treatment and recovery services, and that recovery is possible. All of us, from celebrities and sports figures, to our co-workers, neighbors, friends, and family members, throughout our lives have experienced peaks and valleys, both large and small. But with strength, support, and hope from the people we love, we are resilient.

[National Addiction Professionals Day](#) will be celebrated on September 20, 2021, as part of National Recovery Month. This day aims to celebrate the vital players of the health care system and continuum of care: addiction professionals. The day was established by NAADAC to commemorate all the hard work that addiction professionals do on a daily basis.

[Faces & Voices of Recovery](#) has created a new [Recovery Month website](#) that will host all Recovery Month events and assets that make this celebration possible. Download [shareable graphics](#) and more on the [Recovery Month website](#), find and post upcoming events on the [Recovery Month website](#) as well.



WHAT IS 9-8-8?

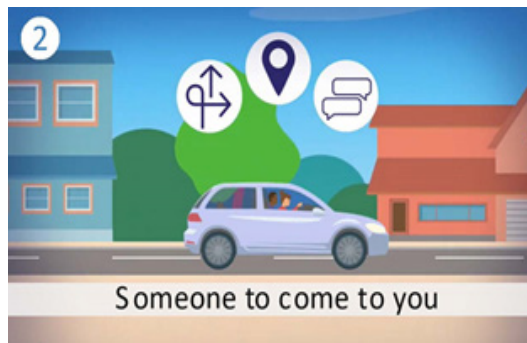
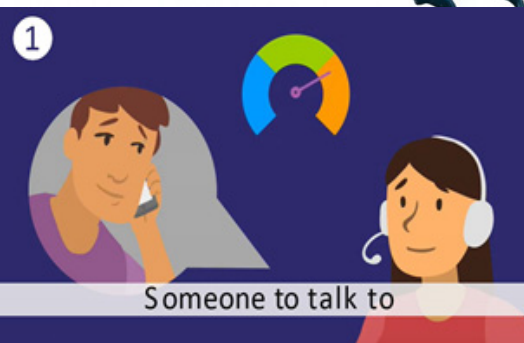
9-8-8 OFFERS A ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY TO DECOUPLE POLICING FROM A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

9-8-8 is an essential element of the [Alabama Crisis System of Care](#), linking an individual in a crisis to the resources in their community, in an efficient, accessible way. Once 9-8-8 goes live, if you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts, experiencing delusions, or displaying severe symptoms of mental illness, you should call 9-8-8 instead of 911.

The 9-8-8 Comprehensive Behavioral Health Crisis Communication System Commission (typically called the 9-8-8 Commission), created by [Act 2021-359](#) and chaired by the ADMH and Alabama Department of Public Health, has begun the study of, and will provide recommendations for the implementation of the 9-8-8 system. This work will enhance and expand behavioral health crisis response and suicide prevention services before it is nationally implemented on July 16, 2022, as required by [Public Law No: 116-172](#).

The Study Commission shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Senate President Pro Tempore and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on or before January 11, 2022, the first day of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session, at which time it shall be dissolved.

9-8-8 is not only about answering mental health calls—it's also about making appropriate and accessible referrals, creating a system that connects people to a continuum of care at critical moments. With the July 2022 launch of 9-8-8, Alabama will create a crisis care infrastructure that includes *someone to answer the call, someone to come help, and someplace to go for care.*



THE AGENCY FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION
WILL HOST A

RECOVERY ROCKS! SEARCH

Starting Date: September 1, 2021
Ending Date: November 30, 2021

The Recovery Rocks Will Be Located Throughout
Calhoun County. Five Rocks Will Be Prize Rocks
(Look For Numbered Rocks).

For Rules Visit The ASAP Website or Facebook Page

asaprev.com
256-831-4436

ASAP!
AGENCY FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

HOPE
HOLD ON, PAIN ENDS

ADMH STAFF SHOWCASE:

PAM BUTLER

Since 2016, the Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) has offered a certification program for individuals interested in becoming a Recovery Support Specialist. A Recovery Support Specialist is a person living in recovery with a substance use disorder who uses their personal recovery story to assist others in developing their personal plan for recovery. To understand the needs of working with individuals dealing with substance abuse, and mental health illness, ADMH has since expanded its use of peer support workers in Alabama.

In 2013, to better understand and change Alabama's system of care to a recovery-oriented system of care, the department hired Pamela Butler, now the Coordinator of Recovery Services.

"When I came onboard there were no certified recovery support specialists throughout the state, so I had to develop a training system that would not only offer recovery support to individuals, but the program also needed to certify support specialists, while raising awareness about the importance of peer recovery and support," explained Butler.

Butler says everyday working in recovery support has been a rewarding experience, as she's been able to share tools, skills, and provide a safe place for individuals that need support.

"Having a lived experience says a lot to individuals who are dealing with the impact of drug use, addiction, and mental illness. Our recovery support specialists have experienced the same issues, but they are now in recovery and working to help others overcome their own battles," she continued.

Butler's determination to have certified recovery support specialist throughout the state has grown from two to four recovery community centers and she's been able to certify 500 peers and place 85 percent of the individuals in a working environment.

"Our recovery support specialists are everywhere. We have peers inside our parole day reporting centers, and we even have peers working in hospitals," she added.

"When a lot of people come through our program, they find their purpose, and they are assisted with the right care, it certainly makes a difference to have someone that has been through this before – our peers guide individuals on the right journey to success," said Butler.

R.O.S.S. (Recovery Organization of Support Specialist), one of the larger peer-run organizations, provides an outlet for those in recovery by offering crisis support, peer mentoring, social opportunities and aid in acquiring resources. Butler noted that the recovery community centers, like R.O.S.S. are open 12 hours a day and in addition, offer a 24/7 helpline.



"Having a peer either on the phone or available 24/7 in the community centers make a huge difference for those that need help the most. We bring recovery support to individuals" said Butler.

Butler added that the need for peer recovery is necessary because it provides a pathway to recovery. *"Peer recovery support is critical because it carries a credibility that cannot come from any other source."*

Help is available for those struggling with substance use through a free 24/7 substance use helpline at 1-844-307-1760. This is a statewide service sponsored by the Alabama Department of Mental Health and staffed by recovery support specialists from R.O.S.S. to help individuals navigate treatment and recovery systems.

It's Okay to Talk About **SUICIDE**

Thoughts of giving up and suicide can be frightening. Not taking these kinds of thoughts seriously can have devastating outcomes.

Suicide is **NOT** the answer.

2nd Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for people ages 10-34



The overall suicide rate has increased 31% since 2001



Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S.

46% of people who die by suicide have a diagnosed mental health condition

90% of people who die by suicide have experienced symptoms of a mental health condition

If you start thinking about suicide, seek help. Call or text a crisis line or a trusted friend.



Make an appointment with a health care professional to talk about what you're thinking or how you're feeling.



HIGH RISK POPULATIONS

75% of all people who die by suicide are male



4x Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth

Transgender people are 12 times more likely to attempt suicide than the general population

12x

Suicidal thoughts are a symptom, just like any other — they can be treated, and they can improve over time.



If you are concerned about suicide and don't know what to do, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

Data from CDC, NIMH and other select sources. Find citations for this resource at nami.org/mhstats

NAMI Helpline
800-950-NAMI (6294)



NAMICommunicate

NAMICommunicate

www.nami.org

nami
National Alliance on Mental Illness



SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

There are an average of 123 suicides each day in this country. It's the tenth leading cause of death in America — second leading for ages 25-34, and third leading for ages 15-24. To create awareness and strengthen the fight against suicide, the entire month of September is Suicide Prevention Month. Participate in the fight by getting involved with local organizations and listening to those who need help.

All of us play a role in both perpetuating the causes of- and preventing suicide.

Every year on [National Suicide Prevention Month](#) in September, mental health advocates, survivors, friends and family, and mental health organizations across the country and around the world share their experiences and work towards eradicating this most tragic act.

If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call [The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 800-273-TALK (8255) or call 911 immediately.

HOW TO OBSERVE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

1. Spread the message

Throughout Suicide Prevention Month, it's extremely important to spread awareness, take time to reach out to those in need and help people understand the severity of this cause. How? Communicate! Talk to your friends and family. Share stories of hope on social media.

2. Volunteer at a crisis center or Reach out to a Friend

Provide support by volunteering at a crisis center in your area. Reach out to a friend who may be in need. Although this is something that can be done year-round, Suicide Prevention Month is the perfect time to get started.

3. Record and Post a supportive video

This is an easy option that doesn't cost money or time, so anyone can do it. Simply record a 15-30 second video promising your friends to listen to anything they need to say. Then, use the hashtags [#suicideispreventable](#) [#800273TALK](#) [#LETITOUT](#).

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is creating a statewide system to notify stakeholders in the event of significant drug overdose events. Any individual residing in the state can submit their information to be notified when these drug overdoses events occur. Notifications will be sent by email and text message. Go to bit.ly/alabamaoverdose or visit <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/pharmacy/overdose-response.html> to learn more.

REACT. COMMUNICATE. EDUCATE.



BREAK THE CYCLE.





Strike Out Stigma

STRIKE OUT STIGMA BASEBALL GAME – A HOME RUN!

Mental illness touches hundreds of thousands of families in America, with at least one family member diagnosed during their lifetime. Navigating life with a mental health condition can be tough, and the isolation, blame and secrecy, which is often due to stigma, can create huge challenges to reaching out, getting needed support and living well. Conversations about mental health and where to find help for oneself or for family and friends are vital.

To offer valuable information and resources on mental illness and substance use disorders, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, community mental health and substance use disorder prevention and treatment partners and the Montgomery Biscuits hosted Strike Out Stigma Night on August 18. The turnout was FANTastic with hundreds of fans, and 10 partners and providers from across the River Region to speak directly to them about mental health. Stay tuned for next year's date!

CANCELED

2021 AIR CONFERENCE AND CONSUMER CONFERENCE

Due to the recent increase in the spread of the Coronavirus in Alabama, the Office of Peer Programs, Department of Mental Health and Wings Across Alabama made the collective decision to cancel the 2021 Alabama Institute for Recovery (AIR) and the Consumer Conference.

We know this is a disappointment to many. We understand how important this event has become to so many people across Alabama who attend every year. We share in your sense of disappointment. We regret that this decision has become necessary, but we have determined that it is in the best interest of all to practice caution with our collective health and safety.

We plan to have the conferences next year. We encourage you, if you have not done so already, to get vaccinated for the virus and we look forward to seeing you!

Michael B. Autrey, Director
Office of Peer Programs
Alabama Department of Mental Health



RECOVERY NIGHT

AT THE BIRMINGHAM BARONS

It was a great night with Recovery peers, partners and providers at the Birmingham Barons at Regions Field on August 14! The event provided education to the community on addiction and recovery resources and was a fun respite for all who attended!



STATE COMBINED CAMPAIGN

The State Combined Campaign (SCC) has kicked off and will end December 31st. Last year – even during a pandemic – the SCC was a success, with state employees contributing more than \$767,000 to Alabama’s charities!

The 2021 campaign will build on this momentum and provide an even greater impact to those relying on our support. Please stay tuned for more information and fun activities surrounding this vital campaign. Visit the SCC webpage for all resources <http://www.statecombinedcampaign.org/>.

2nd ANNUAL EAP BEHAVIORAL HEALTH VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2021



Kwatasian P. Hunt MS, ICPS
EAP Coordinator
Department of Finance,
Division of Risk Management



Dr. Tammie McCurry
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Samantha H. Wadsworth
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Shannon Crenshaw
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Debra Nickolson
Vice President,
Corporate Training &
Customer Relations
Behavioral Health
Systems, Inc.



Perry Goins, MS
Dir. Staff Development MI Facilities
Alabama Department
of Mental Health



Tandra S. Elmore, LPC NCC
Owner/Therapist
New Vision Counseling Center

Conference Discussions

ARE YOU OKAY?

Languishing or Depression

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS:

Responding to COVID-Related Trauma in Employees

MENTAL HEALTH:

Awareness. Treatment. Recovery.

...and more



OCTOBER 7th
8AM-4PM



Conference free for participating EAP state agencies

Free Social Work/Nursing CEUs (6.25 hrs)

Registration

for more info

(334) 223-6153 or

Email: EAP.Information@finance.alabama.gov

<https://riskmgt-connect.alabama.gov/Account/Login/>

*Please create a user account with your
state-issued email address to register.

Conference access link will be emailed week of conference.

ADMH STAFF SUCCESS:



Holli Cawthorne, ACDD, graduated with her master's degree in Social work July 23rd from Troy University. She graduated with a 4.0 GPA and was inducted into Phi Alpha Honor Society on July 16, 2021.



Sharon Hawkins, CRNP at Bryce, recently wrote and had a book published! Check out her book, *Single Ladies, You are the G*, on Amazon, Barnes and Nobles, Books-a-Million, and Walmart online.

Mandi Kessler, MA, LPC-S, ECMH-E®, became endorsed as Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant this August!



Kent Schafer, Office of Deaf Services, recently graduated with his PhD. in school psychology. When Dr. Schafer was little, medical experts and professionals in education informed his parents that deaf children were not capable of achieving much. Thankfully, his parents ignored all those opinions to create a visual language foundation. It is through their persistence in recognizing the need for receptive and expressive language skills in Dr. Schafer's preferred language, that he stands where he is today.

To date, there are less than 1,000 culturally deaf individuals who have moved on from the quagmire to earn a doctorate degree in history. Dr. Schafer crossed the stage on July 30th to quite possibly be the first culturally deaf student to earn a PhD at the Capstone. A special thanks of gratitude to the generous support from Alabama Department of Mental Health and the Office of Deaf Services through the past five years of this academic journey.



Karen Watkins-Smith, RN BSN, Director of Certification Administration, celebrated 32 years as a Registered Nurse with an unencumbered license on August 21st!

DATES TO REMEMBER

MENTAL HEALTH RELATED EVENTS OF INTEREST

09/01

[National Recovery Month](#)

09/05

[National Suicide Prevention Week](#)

09/20

[National Addiction Professionals Day](#)

10/08

[Georgia Behavioral Health Symposium](#)

Dr. Kent Schafer, Office of Deaf Services will be presenting *Conceptualizing Proper Care within Deaf Behavioral Health*

NEWS FROM ACDD

ALABAMA COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Alabama's Developmental Disabilities Network Partners are now hosting a toll-free hotline for information and resources. The number is 1-833-258-4784.

Partners in Policymaking is returning to Alabama! Sponsored by the Alabama Developmental Disabilities Network Partners (ACDD, ADAP, and UCEDD), Partners in Policymaking is a national curriculum training for persons with developmental disabilities and their family members on how to become community leaders and organizers, particularly in the area of legislative policy to create systems change. Partners in Policymaking is an eight-month course and will begin accepting applications for its 2021-2022 cohort beginning in November 2021. To learn more, visit <https://www.uab.edu/civitansparks/alabama-dd-network>.

ACDD has submitted its 2022-2026 State Plan to the Administration for Community Living and is awaiting approval. The plan outlines goals focusing in the areas of Education and Early Intervention, Employment, Formal and Informal Community Supports, and Health. View the State Plan at <https://www.acdd.org/2022-2026-five-year-state-plan/>.

The Council will be issuing Requests for Proposals referencing many of the related areas within the upcoming weeks, which can be found at acdd.org. The Council is in hopes for an excellent response to support new projects and forge and renew collaborations. Please help share this opportunity with others and consider responding for your divisions.

Serve • Empower • Support