

# Modeling Empathy: How Recovery Heals Communities



a message from  
**Suzie Walker**



*"For the past four decades, psychologists have measured empathy. The news is not good. Empathy has dwindled steadily, especially in the 21st century. The average person in 2009 was less empathic than 75 percent of people in 1979."*

*~ From the book **The War for Kindness: Building Empathy in a Fractured World**  
by Jamil Zaki*

*When the news is not good, even a person once described as "annoyingly optimistic" can become discouraged. As an antidote, I seek stories that focus on healing and transformation, especially when I see headlines on the "Death of Empathy," empathy being "the fundamental weakness of Western civilization," the concept of "suicidal empathy," defined as excessive compassion for others, or empathy being called a sin. Empathy a weakness, a sin?*

- *"Empathy is a fundamental survival trait because it is awareness that the other person could be me." (The Empathy Gap)*
- *Empathy is "the ability to truly feel and understand what someone else is going through," the heart of what makes us human. Empathy connects us and allows our society to function with kindness and fairness. (Emily Standley Allard)*

*Empathy, so integral to recovery work, is a superpower, not a failing!*

*Peer recovery support workers offer people a sense of belonging and safety. They foster empathy and understanding through their lived experience and messages of hope. They nurture trust and empathy: Peers can understand and share the feelings of another person seeking to recover. Recovery work also involves compassion, a genuine desire to help others improve their lives.*

*The recovery community, by supporting people in or seeking recovery from substance use and addictive behaviors, infuses empathy into communities that are experiencing a deficit of empathy and compassion. Peer recovery workers contribute to community healing by supporting individuals with their recovery process, reducing the impact of substance use and related harms, but they also contribute to community healing by modeling empathy in a world that increasingly lacks it. People who are treated with empathy and compassion are transformed. Then they can also model those behaviors, expanding the healing into the community.*

*Continuing Reading....*

Continue Reading



## Building Healthy Routines to Strengthen Your Recovery!

**By: Liza Ryan, LICSW, CRC**

Creating and maintaining healthy routines can look different for everyone but is an important aspect of building anyone's recovery! For individuals in recovery and those supporting them, consistent daily structure can offer stability, reduce anxiety, and help prevent unhealthy behaviors. At its core, we know recovery is not just about avoiding substances—it's about building a meaningful, balanced life that ultimately supports our long-term wellness.

A routine can provide purpose and predictability, which can be especially important when navigating early recovery and for those that have experienced a trauma history. Simple habits like getting up at the same time each day, preparing nourishing meals, attending support meetings, and setting aside time for self-care can have a profound impact on our mental and emotional health. These small, daily choices build momentum and reinforce a sense of control and self-worth.

Continue reading.....

**\*\*As a reminder for all members of Recovery Partners of Vermont, the EAP services are free and have immediate openings for individual 1:1 therapy where brief reprocessing utilizing EMDR can be done!**

[Continue Reading Liza's Column](#)



### Recovery Partners of Vermont Fundraiser

Hosted By: Cielo Phillips

You're invited to a Pampered Chef party! Mark your calendar and invite a friend or two! Get ready to learn recipes and tips to make meals that fuel your lifestyle with some of Pampered Chef's best products. Don't miss out on the fun!

### Fundraiser dates:

**July 9 - August 31**

It's so easy to join the party and start raising funds for Recovery in Vermont. Start your Holiday shopping early or grab those Pampered Chef favorites!! Signing up is as simple as creating a login and start shopping!



Start Shopping Today!!

## Thank You, Divided Sky!

*We're incredibly honored to have been chosen as the recipient of a portion of the funds raised from Divided Sky's Fun(d) Run! These funds will be used to directly support the growth of recovery services in Vermont!*



Registration is Live!!

# 4th Annual Recovery is the Answer!

Peer Support is the Way Conference

October  
21-22,  
2025

3rd Annual Recovery Stars

Benefit Dinner & Auction



Recovery Partners  
of Vermont

Killington Grand Hotel | Killington, VT

## Keynote Speaker



**Wendy Jones**  
Executive Director  
Minnesota Alliance of  
Recovery Community  
Organizations

## Lifetime Achievement Award



**Michael Johnson**  
Asst. Chief Executive Officer  
Turning Point Recovery  
Center of Springfield, VT

## Mark Helijas Recovery Pioneer Award



**Margae Diamond**  
Executive Director  
Turning Point Center of  
Bennington, VT

## Recovery Stars Award



**Astrid Bradish-Hoyt**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Turning Point Recovery  
Center of Springfield, VT

Thank you to ALL our Sponsors!

Registration  
is Open!!

## Lead Sponsors



## Alumni Sponsors



Elizabeth Skarie  
Bottomline Bookkeeping

## Returning Sponsors



## New Sponsors



Bill Lemieux  
Cheryl Fournier  
Aldous/Barnard Funeral Home

Grab Your Tickets  
Today!

## Membership Staff Achievements

**Turning Point Recovery Center of Rutland** - announces four staff members who are now Licensed Peer Recovery Support Specialist, Jenn Loso, Tonya Wright, Michael Daly and Katy Foote. Congratulations!



### Vermont Foundation of Recovery names David Riegel full-time executive director

ESSEX JUNCTION - Vermont Foundation of Recovery (VFOR) is proud to announce that David Riegel, one of the organization's co-founders, has officially assumed the role of full-time Executive Director. This transition marks an exciting new chapter for VFOR, positioning the organization for continued growth, long-term sustainability, and expanded impact across the state.

[Read More](#)

## Career Opportunities

**Vermont Foundation of Recovery** - Regional Manager supporting men's homes (FT); Learn how to apply **here**.

**Action Circles** - Legislative Assistant learn more **here**.

## CEU Approved Professional Development



Health Education & Training Institute

### HETI The Power of Groups Using Motivational Interviewing

This six-hour virtual dynamic training explores the transformative potential of mutual aid support groups through the lens of Motivational Interviewing (MI). Designed for professionals and group leaders, it emphasizes the effectiveness of MI techniques in breaking isolation, fostering personal growth, and addressing the unique needs of various populations. By understanding the principles of MI within group settings, participants will gain insights into creating supportive environments that inspire change and resilience.

[Learn How to Register](#)

Motivational Interviewing: Deepening the Practice

Deepening the Practice is for learners who are well-versed in Motivational Interviewing, have an ongoing practice, and are interested in "scuba diving" down further into their exploration of their MI practice. This workshop is great for folks who attend Learning Communities regularly or haven't been able to attend Learning Communities recently and would like an opportunity to spend a few hours diving back in. All are welcome!

[Register for MI Training](#)



### Ethical Considerations in Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment

#### Learning Objectives:

- Participants will be able to define ethics and identify sources of ethical guidance.
- Participants will be able to describe key ethical principles and standards of ethical responsibility among various SUD professional disciplines.
- Participants will be able to identify ethical dilemmas encountered amount different professionals working with SUD population.

[Register Here](#)



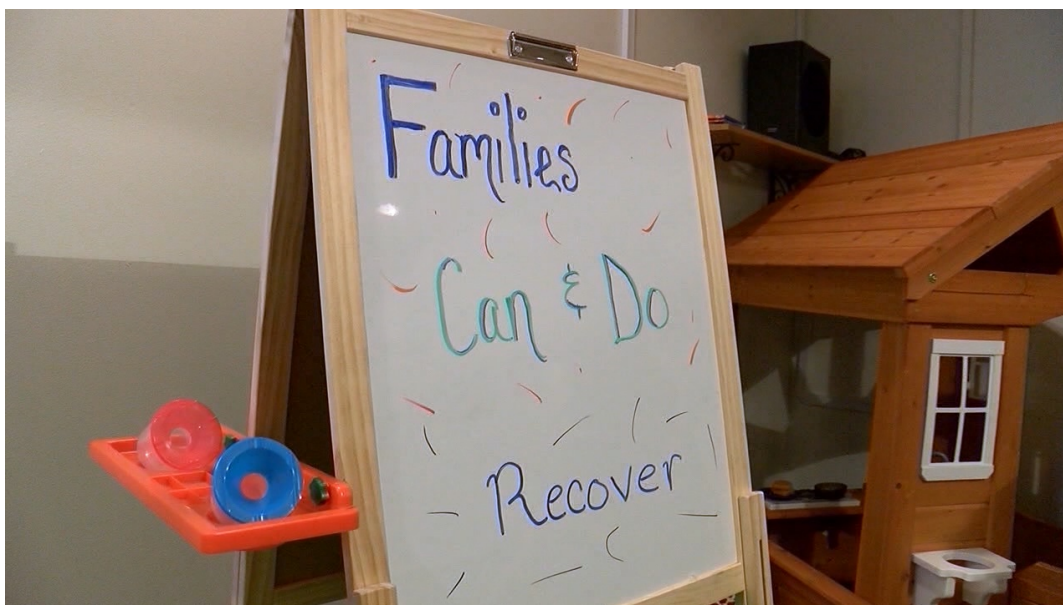
### Motivational Interviewing: Foundations and Strategies Five Week Course

Discover the value of Motivational Interviewing (MI) in our intensive five-week virtual course, "Motivational Interviewing: Foundations and Strategies," offered by MASBIRT TTA. Empower individuals to make positive change by exploring and resolving ambivalence through MI's evidence-based communication style. Learn about MI principles, processes and strategies through self-paced learning, partner activities, and live sessions, with personalized written and verbal feedback to support your skill development.



[Full Training Schedule](#)

## Member Events & Triumphs



### Burlington-based group supports fathers in recovery

BURLINGTON, Vt (ABC22/FOX44) – Navigating your recovery journey is never easy – especially when you factor in other things like work and family. A new group in Burlington is looking to create a support system unique to the challenges fathers may be facing during this time.

"We understand what it's like and we can get better because we're living proof of it," says Kayla Gauthier, Parents in Recovery Program Coordinator for the Turning Point Center of Chittenden County.

[Read More](#)

Facilitated by



**SUNDAY**  
**AUGUST 31<sup>ST</sup> 2025**

**FROM 6PM TO 8PM**  
**CITY HALL PARK, BARRE VT**

**INTERNATIONAL  
OVERDOSE  
AWARENESS DAY**

**CANDLELIGHT VIGIL AND REFLECTION EVENT**

Please join us in remembering those we have lost to substance use. Share your stories of loved ones, and your own survival story. There will be a flameless candlelight vigil and refreshments.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 802-622-0251**


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# ***Overdose Awareness Day***

## **Candle Light Vigil**

SUNDAY 08/31/2025 from 1 PM to 3 PM.



Join Us at Main Street Park to honor those we have lost to overdose with a candle light vigil & a drum beat for each life lost in 2024, as well as information on overdose prevention, support, & education.

Turning Point Center of Rutland  
(802)773-6010

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# **4TH ANNUAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS VIGIL**

**LUNCH & CANDLE VIGIL**

Join us to honor the memories of those  
we've lost to the disease of addiction.

**Sunday,  
August 31st, 2025**

12 PM - 2 PM

**Turning Point  
Recovery Center**

7 Morgan Street,  
Springfield, VT 05156

**QUESTIONS? (802) 885.4668**



# INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE **AUGUST 31** AWARENESS DAY



Join us Sunday  
Aug. 31<sup>st</sup>  
10 am- 12 pm  
to honor those we  
have lost.  
Candle lighting at  
11 am

**EVERY LIFE  
MATTERS.  
EVERY LOSS  
COUNTS.**

297 SUMMER ST. ST. JOHNSBURY VT  
KRCSTJ.ORG



Jenna's Promise: A Family's Fight to Transform Addiction Recovery

Jenna Tatro was a vibrant young woman — horse rider, swimmer, and



beloved friend — who had the world ahead of her. But a prescription for pain medication at a young age led to a six-year battle with addiction. Despite cycling through treatment centers and fighting tirelessly to recover, Jenna lost her life to an overdose at 26. That promise became the foundation of Jenna's Promise.

[Read More](#)

## Other Professional Development



### Strengthening Board Leadership for Organizational Resiliency

In an era of rapid changes and uncertainty, how should board members respond? What's the board's role prioritizing and realigning programs, building strategic partnerships, and re-thinking your organization's revenue model? How can the board help to ensure success and sustainability?

Register [HERE](#).

### Year-End Fundraising: Making the Most of the Final Stretch

The last few months of the year represent the most important fundraising window for nonprofits, don't leave your biggest gifts and best opportunities to chance. In this two-part workshop series, you'll learn how to plan, message, and execute a high-performing year-end fundraising campaign that inspires generosity and drives results.

Register [HERE](#).

### Attorney General Clark's Town Hall for Vermont's Nonprofit Community

Join Vermont Attorney General Charity Clark for a town hall addressing recent federal executive orders and their impact on the state's nonprofit sector. This virtual event will provide an overview of key federal actions, a deeper look at Vermont's response and legal action related to federal overreach, and analysis of what's at stake.

Register [HERE](#).



**WOMEN'S RECOVERY**  
Leadership Foundation

["Fridays in September" series with the Women's Recovery](#)

## Leadership Foundation

The "Fridays in September" series with the Women's Recovery Leadership Foundation is part of our Recovery Month 2025 celebration and the announcement of this new organization!!! This virtual speaker series will spotlight women leaders who have walked the path of recovery and now lead with purpose, strength, and compassion.

[Register Here](#)

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## Educational Series: Reclaim Your Calm

Self-Care Strategies That Work with Nicole Briggs\*Please Note: Communications from Zeffy have occasionally ended up in participants' spam folders. If you do not receive an automatic confirmation with the Zoom link, please check your spam folder. When a person is struggling with drug addiction, the stress on their loved ones can be overwhelming-impacting every part of life, from mental and physical health to relationships and daily functioning.

[Register for Series](#)

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#### TEN BASIC BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Determine mission and purposes.** It is the board's responsibility to create and review a statement of mission and purpose that articulates the organization's goals, means, and primary constituents served.
2. **Select the chief executive.** Boards must reach consensus on the chief executive's responsibilities and undertake a careful search to find the most qualified individual for the position.
3. **Support and evaluate the chief executive.** The board should ensure that the chief executive has the moral and professional support he or she needs to further the goals of the organization.
4. **Ensure effective planning.** Boards must actively participate in an overall planning process and assist in implementing and monitoring the plan's goals.
5. **Monitor and strengthen programs and services.** The board's responsibility is to determine which programs are consistent with the organization's mission and monitor their effectiveness.
6. **Ensure adequate financial resources.** One of the board's foremost responsibilities is to provide adequate resources for the organization to fulfill its mission.
7. **Protect assets and provide financial oversight.** The board must assist in developing the annual budget and ensuring that proper financial controls are in place.
8. **Build a competent board.** All boards have a responsibility to articulate prerequisites for candidates, orient new members, and periodically and comprehensively evaluate its own performance.
9. **Ensure legal and ethical integrity.** The board is ultimately responsible for adherence to legal standards and ethical norms.
10. **Enhance the organization's public standing.** The board should clearly articulate the organization's mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and garner support from the community.

*From Ten Basic Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards by Richard T. Ingram (BoardSource, Second Edition 2008).*

## Resources



### Social support is important for recovery, but what aspects matter most?

Although social support is widely acknowledged as vital to addiction recovery, there is limited understanding of which relationships—such as mentors, peers, family, or community members—are most impactful.



This study explored who is perceived as most helpful among members of The Phoenix, an active recovery community centered on shared, sober activities.

[Read Study](#)

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[Bennington Methadone Clinic offers look at opioid recovery underway in Vermont - VTDigger](#)

Vermont now has a methadone clinic in each region of the state. That convenience brings treatment options to people who didn't have access before, officials and recovery coaches say.

[Read More](#)

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## Parents Invited to a Parenting Class about Trauma



*For parents involved with DCF  
(or at risk of involvement)*

*FREE*

*Meet once a week for 10 weeks*

*In person and virtual classes*

*Receive gift cards for filling out surveys  
(up to \$180)*

**Ready to Register?**

Click on this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/36rt392b>

OR scan this QR code



### QUESTIONS?

[Amy.Bielawski-Branch@uvm.edu](mailto:Amy.Bielawski-Branch@uvm.edu)  
802-578-0426

University of Vermont with the University of Connecticut  
**Research Study**

*Trauma Informed Parenting can make all the difference!*

## 2025 SHRM Vermont HR Conference

Welcome to the 2025 SHRM Vermont State Conference, to be held in person on Thursday, September 24th, and Friday, September 25th, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Conference Center in Burlington, Vermont.

As the workplace continues to evolve, HR professionals must be prepared to navigate constant change—from shifting workforce expectations to emerging technologies, regulatory updates, and evolving business needs. "Seasons of Change: Navigating the Shifts in HR" reflects the dynamic nature of our profession, where adaptability and strategic thinking are essential to fostering resilient workplaces.

**Register Here**

# NATIONAL RECOVERY MONTH

RECOVERY. HOPE. HEALING.

## 2025 Recovery Month Toolkit

With the right treatment, support, and resources, recovery is REAL (Restoring Every Aspect of Life) for everyone. Use this toolkit to learn more about what SAMHSA is doing to support people in recovery and how to share this information with your audiences. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of people in or seeking recovery from mental and substance use disorders.

### The Toolkit Is a One-Stop Shop With:

- Social media content to help spread awareness about the process of recovery and to share the hopeful message that most people who get help do recover
- Resources for learning about and supporting those in recovery
- Promotional materials about recovery in September and beyond

Take Me to the Toolkit!



## Parents of Addicted Loved Ones | Support Group for Parents, Spouses, Family of Addicted Loved One

PAL is a nonprofit that provides hope through education and support to parents of adults dealing with substance use disorder. The free weekly meetings follow evidence-based practices, and the curriculum used is designed specifically for parents by professionals in the treatment and recovery industry.

Learn More



### Four regional organizations receive state funding

LONDONDERRY-The Collaborative, a Prevention Lead Organization for the Vermont Department of Health's (VDH), Division of Substance Use Programs (DSU), recently announced more than \$850,000 in sub-grant funding. This funding will support 21 vital community prevention partners across southern Vermont, enabling them to address disparities in Vermont's substance misuse prevention system by filling geographical gaps and expanding access to crucial services.

[Read More](#)

## Have you visited our Memory Wall?

*We will never forget the  
beautiful lives lost to alcohol or  
substance use disorders.*



When you donate to *Recovery Partners of Vermont*, you help us support Vermonters working tirelessly with those affected by an alcohol or substance use disorder such as...

Advocating  
Healthcare  
& Wages

Training  
Board  
Development

Fundraising  
Conference

Wellness  
Employee  
Assistance  
Program

Increasing  
access to  
Recovery  
Services for all  
Vermonters!

*Give for  
Recovery!*



*You could save someone's life.*

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