



Recovery Roundup | January 2026

Promoting wellness for all who are affected
by Substance & Alcohol Use Disorders



Editor in Chief: Allie Mullin | allie@vtrecoverynetwork.org

Celebrating Recovery Day 2026



a message from
Suzie Walker



"Words are events, they do things, change things. They transform both speaker and hearer; they feed energy back and forth and amplify it. They feed understanding or emotion back and forth and amplify it."

— Ursula K. Le Guin

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you."

— Maya Angelou

"The least I can do is speak out for those who cannot speak for themselves."

— Jane Goodall

Recovery is so much about community and connection, and it's our stories that connect us.

Our stories inspire, offer hope, and help people to identify with us. Stories inform those without lived experience and ignite understanding. They serve as a powerful call to action for creating change and promoting healing—in people, communities, and the systems that serve us.

When we embody recovery and share our stories, hope and history allow change to happen through connection and authenticity. Stories surround us with tendrils of connection and healing that draw us away from isolation and pain and toward community and a new life. Hope is more than a feeling. It's a salve for sore spirits and an antidote for stigma.

Storytelling is one of humanity's oldest traditions, dating back many thousands of years to cave drawings and oral traditions. Early humans used art and oral narratives to share experiences, beliefs, and knowledge. Cave paintings and other relics show us that storytelling was integral to early life. We're connected with, and gain hope and understanding from, our ancestors through drawings and sculptures, creation stories, folktales, and songs we sing around campfires. We can gain some understanding of age-old human experiences from previous generations. And just imagine—Today's stories will still have the power to promote healing in the future!

Continuing Reading....

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ANNUAL

ADVOCACY EVENT

2026 RECOVERY DAY

EACH YEAR, VERMONTERS GATHER AT THE STATE HOUSE TO CELEBRATE RECOVERY AND ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE. **RECOVERY DAY** BRINGS LIVED EXPERIENCE AND LEADERSHIP TOGETHER TO MOVE OUR COMMUNITIES TOWARD HEALING FOR ALL.

REGISTER: bit.ly/Recovery2026



ALL ARE WELCOME | FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

WEDNESDAY

11 FEB 2026

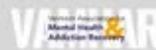
08:00 AM - 03:00 PM
SUPREME COURT HOUSE
AUDITORIUM
111 STATE ST. ROOM 110*
MONTPELIER VT 05602

**This room is accessed via the Pavilion Building located at 109 State St. using the entrance off Gov. Davis Ave.*

STAND WITH US —
HEALING BELONGS
TO EVERYONE



REGISTER



Recovery Partners
of Vermont



Personal Growth Check-In

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

Working in the field of peer support is meaningful but demanding work. Every day, we show up for others with empathy, patience, and resilience. This month's EAP newsletter is an invitation to pause and turn some of that care, focus and intention inwards. Personal growth and development don't always look like big breakthroughs or significant changes. Often, it can show up quietly, noticing when you're tired, recognizing when something feels distressing, or acknowledging a moment you handled with grace. Growth can mean setting a boundary, asking for help, or simply giving yourself permission to rest.

Take a moment to reflect:

- What has felt energizing in your work recently?
- What has felt draining?
- What is one small thing you've learned about yourself this past month?
- What is different now in your personal growth from a year ago?

Continue reading.....

[Continue Reading Liza's Column](#)

4th Annual **Recovery is the Answer!**

Peer Support is the Way Conference

3rd Annual **Recovery Stars**

Benefit Dinner & Auction

Video Recap!

October 21-22, 2025

Killington Grand Hotel | Killington, VT

[Conference Recap](#)

[Dinner Recap](#)

Member Staff Achievements

Turning Point Center of Rutland - We're excited to announce Amy Jameson is working toward certification!

Turning Point Recovery Center of Bennington - It is great honor that we announce our newly appointed Executive Director, Laura Jarrett! Congratulations!

Turning Point Center of Central VT- Kelly Millard earned her Peer Recovery Support Specialist License. Katie Jones graduates from the Common Good Vermont Nonprofit Management Certificate course on Thursday!

Recovery Coaches are stepping into a new phase, join us in celebrating their certifications!

- *Turning Point Center of Central VT* - Jason Braasch
- *Turning Point Recovery Center of Bennington* - Dylan Johnson and Donna Annunziato
- *North Central VT Recovery Center* - Phil Kirk, Steven Dushenko
- *Kingdom Recovery Center* - Ariel Beaulac and Sarah McFarland

Career Opportunities

Vermont Foundation of Recovery - Peer Support & Recovery House Coordinator, Membership Coordinator, & HR Coordinator, learn more about these positions **here**.

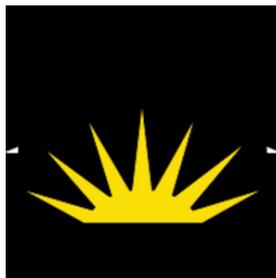
Turning Point Center of Addison County - Assistant Director, learn how to apply **here**.

Jenna's Promise - Case Manager, learn more **here**; Licensed Practical Nurse, learn more **here**.

Kingdom Recovery Center - Recovery Coach, learn more **here**.

North Central VT Recovery Center - Emergency Department Recovery Coach, learn how to apply **here**.

Member Events & Triumphs



Episode #33: Community Makes A Difference

Guest Gregory Tatro is a co-founder and the Senior Director of Mission and Impact at Jenna's Promise, a 9- to 18- month residential program in Johnson, VT that prepares persons in early recovery from substance use disorders to ultimately merge into communities with the skills and confidence they need for employment and daily life.

Listen In!



Turning Point announces nature-based wellness program

Turning Point of Windham County (TPWC) announced the launch of a yearlong, nature-based wellness program pilot in partnership with the Windham Foundation and the Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center (BEEC). This innovative initiative is designed to support individuals in recovery by integrating outdoor learning, environmental education, and wellness practices.

Read More



New women's recovery home open in Essex Junction

An organization that aims to support Vermonters recovering from substance abuse says that they're adding another location in Chittenden County. The Vermont Foundation of Recovery on Tuesday announced the opening of a new

home for women in Essex Junction, where up to 10 women will be able to live – including six long-term residents. This brings VFOR's total across the state to 79 beds.

Read More

Professional Development

Vermont Association for
**Mental Health &
Addiction Recovery**

Trainings - VAMHAR

The Recovery Coach Learning Paths offered through CLI-VT have been officially approved for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) by the Vermont Recovery Education Committee (VREC).

Learn How to Register

FREE WEBINAR:

THE CRITICAL INTERSECTION BETWEEN SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND SUICIDE RISK

Creating a Bridge of Communication
and Collaboration

with *Ann Duckless, MA*

**THURS
DAY** | **February 12, 2026**
11:00am to 12:30pm



For years, research has shown that mental health-related conditions increase the risk of suicide. There is a strong correlation between substance use disorders and suicide risk. This workshop will look at critical components that should be part of suicide prevention efforts in working with substance abuse prevention/treatment providers and cultural adaptations in working within the field of substance abuse and addictions.

This course has been pre-approved by the Vermont Office of Professional Regulation for 1.5 CEUs for **Alcohol & Drug Abuse Counselors, Allied Mental Health Practitioners, and Social Work**. Additionally, it has been approved for 1.5 CEUs for **Vermont Recovery Coaches** by the Vermont Recovery Education Committee (VREC).

registerNOW

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E-mail
escherer@neias.org



More Events
<https://cvent.me/zYn7Y1>

Common Good Vermont's 2026 Fundraising Series

We are excited to announce our 2026 Fundraising Series! With one panel and four training sessions, we will be covering fundraising hot topics and strategies with experts throughout the nonprofit sector. Starting off, we are hosting a panel with Vu Le, Philip Deng, and Mel Houser on the forces reshaping nonprofit fundraising. We will then have trainers go into impactful strategies including design annual appeals (with Katherine Sims), making bigger asks (with Jenn Hayslett), assessing campaign readiness (with Tere Gade & Rick Blount), and prospecting (with Shoshana Grossman-Crist). Register [HERE](#).



The Power of Language

Explore how language can support people's growth or keep them stuck. Learn best practices to facilitate the former and avoid the latter.

This training is intended for anyone interested in exploring the power of language, though is particularly geared toward clinical providers, community health workers and peer supporters.

[Register Here](#)

Resources



A New Drug is Driving a Dangerous Withdrawal Crisis

A powerful veterinary sedative called medetomidine is rapidly reshaping the overdose crisis in Philadelphia and placing new strain on hospitals and treatment systems, according to the New York Times. Unlike prior waves of the crisis, this crisis is not defined solely by fatal overdoses but by severe, life-threatening withdrawal. Medetomidine, which is increasingly mixed into the illicit fentanyl supply, causes extreme sedation shortly after use.

[Read More](#)



SMART Recovery National Conference 2026

Early Bird Registration Ends January 31!

Join us at the leading edge of self-empowered and stigma-free recovery at the 2026 SMART Conference. This gathering of SMART Recovery and Family and Friends facilitators, professionals, peers, and advocates offers engaging keynotes, educational breakout sessions, and open discussions to help you enhance your professional and personal skills, connect with a like-minded community, and explore real-world strategies for supporting recovery. This is your opportunity to grow, share ideas, and contribute to the future of recovery.

[Get your tickets!](#)



Free clinic increases access to health care in Rutland County

A free health clinic in Rutland County is providing no-cost adult health assistance for local residents. Rutland County Health Partners held one of its many free clinics on Wednesday morning, offering no-cost adult health assistance for uninsured and underinsured Rutland County residents. The clinic offered

vaccinations, health exams, illness and injury treatment, as well as addiction counseling and interventions.

[Read More](#)



[A Journey Back from Addiction](#)

About 15 years ago, a kitchen grease spill burned Aaron Blair's foot so severely that he needed skin grafts. The traumatic injury marked the start of a long struggle with opioids. Before he knew it, Blair was taking 15 Percocet a day, along with oxycontin and other heavy-duty painkillers.

[Read More](#)

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

Provided by OneDigital

Mental Health Benefits of Dry January

Each January, millions of people around the world commit to “Dry January,” a month-long break from alcohol. While the challenge is often associated with physical health benefits, such as improved liver function, a better immune system and more energy, it also offers significant mental health advantages. The following are potential mental health benefits of participating in Dry January:

- **Improved mood and emotional stability**—Alcohol is a depressant that can disrupt the brain’s chemical balance, often leading to mood swings, anxiety and even depressive symptoms. Taking a break allows your body to recalibrate, reducing these fluctuations. Many participants report feeling more emotionally stable and less irritable after just a few weeks without alcohol.
- **Reduced anxiety and stress**—Although alcohol may seem like a quick fix for stress, it often exacerbates anxiety in the long run. Drinking can interfere with neurotransmitters that regulate mood, creating a cycle of temporary relief followed by heightened anxiety. Dry January breaks this cycle, helping individuals experience calmer, more consistent mental states.
- **Boosted self-esteem and sense of control**—Completing Dry January can provide a powerful sense of accomplishment. Setting a goal and sticking to it reinforces self-discipline and boosts confidence. This achievement often translates into a greater sense of control over other aspects of life, which is essential for mental well-being.
- **Better social and emotional awareness**—Without alcohol as a social crutch, people often discover new ways to connect with others and cope with stress. This can lead to healthier relationships and a deeper understanding of personal triggers and habits. Many participants find that they enjoy socializing without relying on alcohol, which can reduce feelings of isolation and improve overall happiness.

Taking a month off from alcohol gives your mind and body time to reset and offers insight into your drinking habits. If you’re considering quitting entirely or have concerns, consult a health care professional.

How New Year’s Resolutions Impact Mental Health

As the calendar turns to January, many people embrace the tradition of setting New Year’s resolutions. While these goals can inspire positive change, they also have a profound impact on mental health—both good and bad. Understanding this dynamic can help you create resolutions that support your well-being rather than undermine it.

Resolutions can provide a sense of purpose and motivation. Setting achievable goals fosters optimism and gives structure to the year ahead. On the flip side, unrealistic or overly rigid resolutions can lead to stress, guilt and disappointment. When goals are unattainable, failure can trigger feelings of inadequacy or anxiety.

The following are tips for making more mindful New Year’s resolutions:

- **Start small and specific.** Instead of vague goals like “be healthier,” choose actionable steps such as “walk 20 minutes a day.” Small wins build momentum and confidence.
- **Focus on mental wellness.** Include resolutions that nurture your mind, such as journaling, practicing gratitude or scheduling regular downtime. These habits can help reduce stress and improve emotional resilience.
- **Be flexible.** Life is unpredictable. Allow room for adjustments without labeling yourself a failure. Flexibility prevents unnecessary pressure and keeps goals sustainable.
- **Celebrate progress, not perfection.** Recognize every step forward, no matter how small. Positive reinforcement strengthens motivation and reduces self-criticism.

By setting thoughtful goals and prioritizing your mental health, you can begin the year with confidence and create lasting, positive change.

If you’re feeling overwhelmed or want to explore ways to support your mental health, consider reaching out to your HR representative to learn more about the mental health benefits available to you.

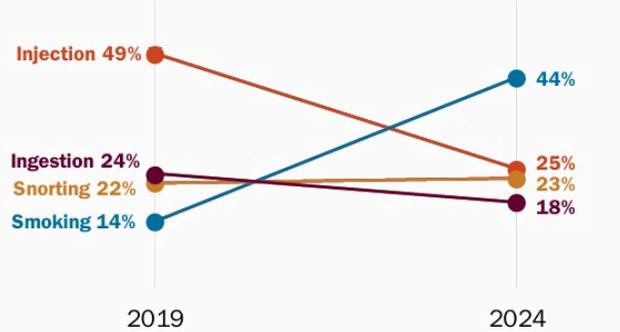
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Method of Use in Fatal Overdoses in Vermont Based on Scene Evidence and Witness Accounts

January 2026

Method of use is defined as how drugs are consumed (**smoking**, **injection**, **snorting**, or **ingestion**). Different risks are associated with the different ways drugs are used. Prevention strategies are improved when they are informed by trends in drug consumption methods. For example, these data have been used to update the [Health Department's KnowOD campaign](#) and educational materials provided with naloxone throughout Vermont.

From 2019 to 2024, overdose deaths with evidence of **smoking drugs more than tripled, while evidence of **injection** decreased by nearly half.**



Data Source: State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS)

Note: The method of use is not always clear from the available evidence, and sometimes there may be evidence of multiple methods used (ex., **snorting** and **injection**).

Other Standout Findings

- **Smoking** was the most common method of substance use overall in 2024. However, some groups showed differences in method of use:
 - People aged 65 and older most often had evidence of **ingestion**.
 - **Injection** was the most common method of substance use in fatal overdoses involving fentanyl analogs, which are drugs similar to fentanyl that have varying effects.
- Although females were most likely to have **smoked** substances, they were more than twice as likely to **ingest** substances than males in 2024.
- People who were unhoused were twice as likely to **inject** substances than people who were housed in 2024, but evidence of **smoking** was most common for both groups.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact AHS.VDHOverdoseDataVT@vermont.gov.



HealthVermont.gov
802-863-7200



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Memory Wall?

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beautiful lives lost to alcohol or
substance use disorders.



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