

# Community Discussion October 2025

## Safe Haven REC Needs Assessment

Safe Haven REC is a Certified RCO and Regional Recovery Hub in Indiana serving 13 south, southwest Indiana Counties. 12 of our 13 counties are rural while 1 county is micropolitan. In every county, there is some level of prevention, primarily hosted through each school system. Treatment options in these 13 counties are limited and include at least 3 inpatient facilities, a handful of sober living homes, and 2 main Recovery Community Organizations: RISE Recovery and Safe Haven REC. There is one upcoming RCO in Vanderburgh County called SWIRE. Peace Zone is also in Vanderburgh county, hosting primarily group sessions and focused on mental health more than substance use. There is a recovery Café in Daviess County: REAL Recovery Café. There are limited MOUD providers but they are available in nearly every county, or a neighboring county. The only OTP in our service area is in Vanderburgh county. Recovery supports include a multitude of peer support meetings, local recovery advocates in each county, and a variety of cross sectors that support recovery such as most criminal justice systems, school systems, and other socially beneficial organizations such as non profits.

Safe Haven REC conducts a needs assessment every 2 years that is qualitative in nature and involves a discussion among community stakeholders from the 13 counties we serve. This assessment is used to develop action items to add to our next year's strategic plan and vision for Safe Haven. Action items developed from this community needs assessment will be utilized for our 2026 strategic plan. This year we had stakeholders representative of 9 of our 13 counties as well as 2 larger stakeholders serving the entire south region of Indiana.

Over the course of our community discussion, we covered three topics and focused on any and all barriers we saw in our day to day work.

### TOPICS:

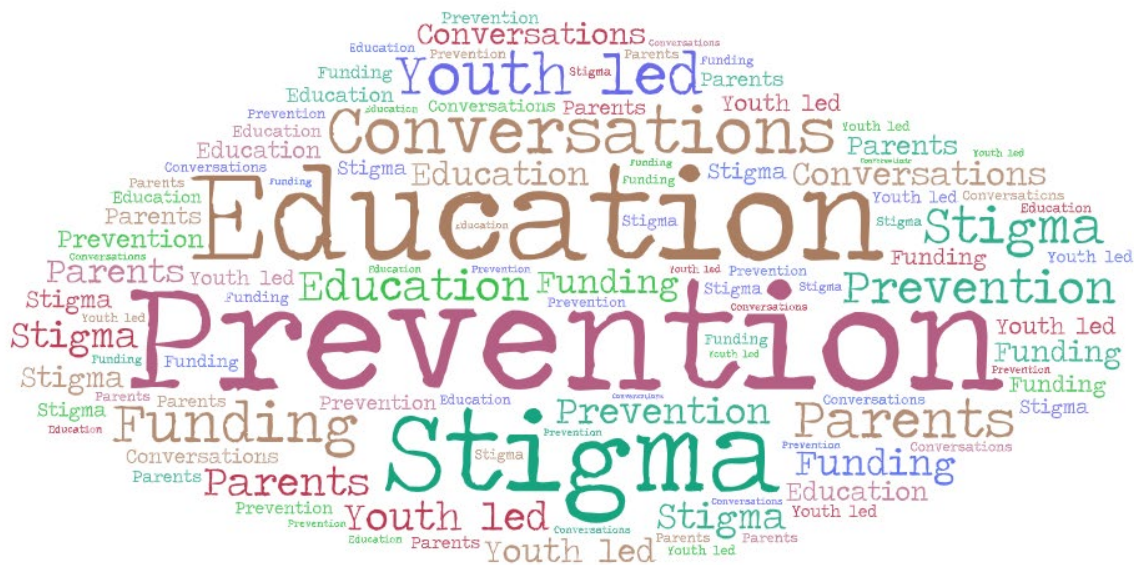
- Prevention
- Treatment
- Recovery

### PREVENTION

Discussion of barriers to successful prevention programming was fruitful and included many topics:

- Parents having lack of education about mental health and substance use

- Parents having self stigma around having discussions about mental health and substance use
- Lack of mental health services for young children (under 8 years old)
- Need for social media advertisements and talking about mental health in school systems
- Discussion about risks of alcohol at younger ages than currently do
- Trying to portray that it is NOT common to use, drink, or smoke
- Education of stakeholders
- How to have hard conversations
- Resource connection: more awareness needed in the community
- Knowledge about free trainings for lay people: MH trainings, QPR, etc.
- Education about the process of asking for help
- Funding
- After-care/discussion pamphlets for school based curriculums or speakers so parents can follow up
- Adding prevention to school newsletters
- Spanish resources
- Mindfulness, emotional regulation
- Handle with Care program: is it everywhere?
- Al-a-teen
- Alcohol prevention
- Advocacy groups: youth led
- Combining resources
- Vaping, nicotine prevention



Common themes included education, parental support and education, and incorporating most prevention efforts into school systems.

While many of these problems are systemic, there are many of these concerns that can develop into actionable items for Safe Haven REC to focus on in 2026.

The following are action items for Safe Haven REC's 2026 strategic plan:

- Increase branded mental health/substance use education topics on our social media and share regularly.
- Offer a teacher newsletter of prevention topics
- Increase awareness of lay people trainings through social media.
- Use local resources to ensure our marketing products are translated into Spanish
- Initiate a pilot project at one school to encourage or start youth led support groups
- Connect with other groups that assist with education and training about nicotine and vaping.
- Connect with local school's media departments about prevention additions to newsletters
- Connect with local school principals or guidance counselors regarding the use of take home discussion material for in school education sessions that are hosted regarding substance use and mental health

## TREATMENT

Discussion of barriers to successful treatment programming and access to treatment options was fruitful and included many topics:

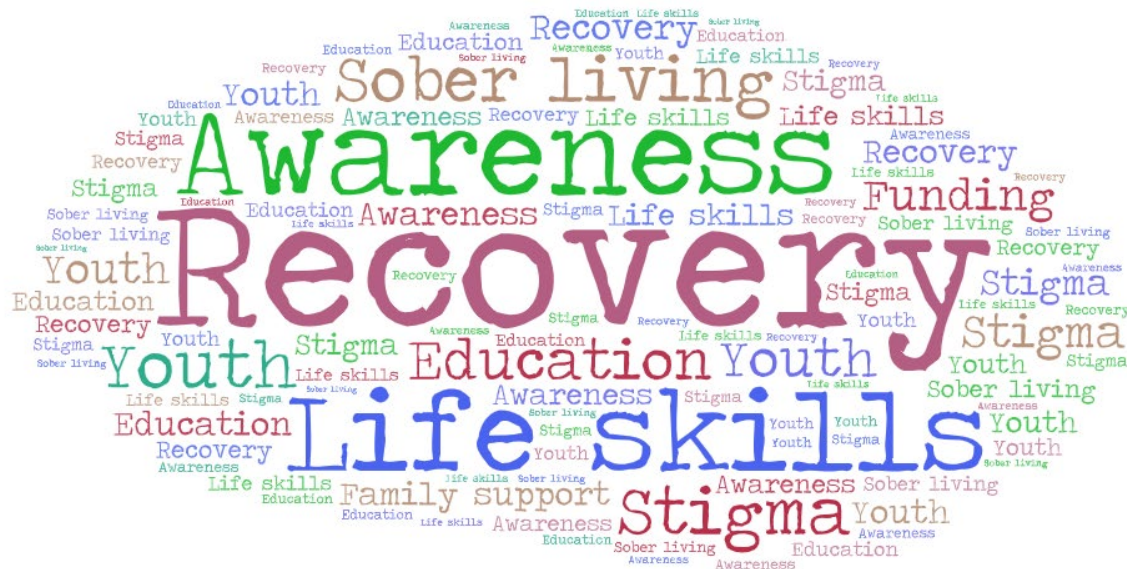
- Need for Youth MOUD
- Insurance issues: lack of or type
- Access to Presumptive Eligibility
- Medicare only does not cover inpatient
- Funding issues: schools need more staff
- Difficulty finding providers to hire
- Current providers have high caseloads and wait times
- Family support
- Women & Children homes
- Early treatment for youth in the criminal justice system
- Juvenile Problem Solving Court
- Accessing treatment at first point of contact with criminal justice system
- Treatment options for sex offenders
- Awareness of treatment options
- Dual diagnosis treatment options
- Data and demand to get closer facilities
- Transport for mental health services: currently using churches at times
- EAP Programs: ensuring keeping job after treatment
- Recovery coaches in schools
- Crisis response for youth

Many resources were also discussed in regards to treatment including:

- Mission 22
- STRIDE Center
- Green Door: Pike County

- Discussion of barriers to recovery and access to recovery supports was fruitful and included many topics:

- Individualized support
- Safe, affordable housing
- Child care
- Family support
- Clinical support alongside peer support
- Awareness of resources
- Centralized location for resources
- Transportation: need for running vehicle or active driver's license
- Limited public transport in most areas we serve
- Health care
- Relationship education
- Parenting education
- Finance classes: budgeting, household management, credit, buying a home
- 2<sup>nd</sup> chance employers not actually being 2<sup>nd</sup> chance
- Food access
- Knowledge of Alumni programs at treatment centers.



Common themes included the need for support resources such as child care, housing, and transportation; as well as the obvious need for life skills education and training. Many of these problems are again large and system but out of this needs assessment, Safe Haven REC can focus on the following for their strategic plan in 2026:

- Fund and host more prosocial activities
- Continue to educate about and reduce stigma

- Help collect a list of employers that are felon friendly
- Reach out to employers about true 2<sup>nd</sup> chance employment, including the development of a technical assistance program to offer businesses to become trauma informed, recovery oriented, true second chance employers.
- Continue to look for funding to expand transportation, aid in vehicle repair, and assist in getting driver's licenses back
- Host or partner with other organizations to host life skills based courses
- Purchase educational programming from Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation which includes a multitude of life skills, relationships, and parenting educational classes that recovery coaches can work on with participants.
- Provide education to clinical providers on the collaborative treatment modality between clinical providers and recovery oriented peer supports.