



RESEARCH SOLUTIONS

February 26 Prevention Newsletter

Prevention Day, an annual observance hosted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) each year kicks off the annual CADCA Forum, a week of prevention-related training and activities for youth and adults from across the nation and beyond. Held at the Gaylord Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland on the outskirts of Washington, DC, these two events give us an opportunity to engage with people from rural and urban centers, from academia and community coalitions, and our elected officials serving in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Here we hone our skills in prevention science, learn best practices for community engagement to reduce substance misuse, and advocate for funding and national support for our local efforts. We were able to attend this year and see Arkansas' own Kirk Lane, Director of the ARORP program and former state drug director, receive the Lifetime Achievement Award. We are so proud of the work being done here in Arkansas to address substance misuse, overdose prevention, and to promote mental and physical health!

Heart Health Month

February is often associated with Valentine's Day – a time dedicated to expressing love and appreciation for those closest to us. In that same spirit, February is also recognized as American Heart Month, a reminder to care for the very organ that makes those moments possible. The heart serves as the body's engine, pumping blood to the brain, muscles, and vital organs, fueling our ability to think clearly, stay active, and maintain overall health.

When the heart is under strain or not functioning as it should, the effects can be felt throughout the body. Fatigue may set in, and over time, serious conditions such as high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, stroke, or heart valve disease can develop. Many of these conditions progress quietly, often without obvious warning signs.

That's why prioritizing heart health is essential. Making intentional lifestyle choices—such as eating balanced meals, managing stress, staying physically active, avoiding substance use, and keeping regular appointments with a primary care provider—can significantly reduce risk and support long-term well-being. This American Heart Month, let caring for your heart be part of how you show love—to yourself and to those who depend on you.

Children of Alcoholics Awareness Week

Observed each February, Children of Alcoholics Awareness Week asks us to pay attention to kids living in homes where alcohol is misused. Life at home shouldn't be scary or chaotic for children, but for kids who grow up with alcoholism or alcohol misuse in their families, these feelings can be all too common. They may feel like they can't talk about it. During Children of Alcoholics Awareness Week, we shine a light on this issue, offer support and understanding, and spread the word that families living with alcohol misuse are not alone. Kids who have a parent who misuses alcohol often bear more emotional burdens than other children. There may be erratic schedules or an inability to count on a caregiver for comfort if they're struggling with alcohol use disorder. This can lead to higher rates of anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues. Children may also blame themselves for what's happening at home. During Children of Alcoholics Week, schools, organizations, and neighborhoods host events to provide resources and education about this important topic. Posters and social media help remind kids (and parents) that there is recovery from alcohol misuse and that children can grow up to live happy, healthy lives. Children of Alcoholics Awareness Week spreads one very important reminder: kids are our future and they deserve to live in safe, healthy environments.

Mental Health & Wellness Observances

- **Time to Talk Day (Feb. 6):** A day dedicated to creating supportive environments by encouraging everyone to talk openly about mental health to reduce stigma.
- **Children's Mental Health Week (Feb. 9–15):** This week highlights the importance of children and young people's mental health, often supported by organizations like Place2Be.
- **National Eating Disorders Awareness (NEDA) Week (Feb. 23 – Mar. 1):** Focuses on educating the public about eating disorders and providing hope and support for those affected.
- **National School Counseling Week (Feb. 2–6):** Honors school counselors who support students' academic success and mental well-being.
- **Random Acts of Kindness Day (Feb. 17):** Part of a broader week (Feb. 14–20) that promotes mental well-being through the positive psychological effects of altruism. 

Drug & Substance Use Prevention

- **SAMHSA's Prevention Day (Feb. 2):** A major event hosted by the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) to advance the prevention of substance use and misuse.
- **Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month:** A month-long effort to educate young people about healthy relationships and the signs of abuse, which is often linked to substance use and mental health struggles. 

Related Health Observances

- **American Heart Month:** Focuses on cardiovascular health, which is closely linked to stress management and mental wellness.
- **National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (Feb. 7):** Addresses the impact of HIV/AIDS and promotes testing and treatment, often involving integrated mental health care. 