



May 2025 Newsletter

The Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health in Nursing Facilities (COE-NF) provides mental health and substance use evidence-based training, customized technical assistance, and resources to certified Medicare and Medicaid nursing facilities that care for residents with a variety of behavioral health conditions at absolutely no cost. To submit a request for assistance, complete the online request form by clicking [HERE](#).

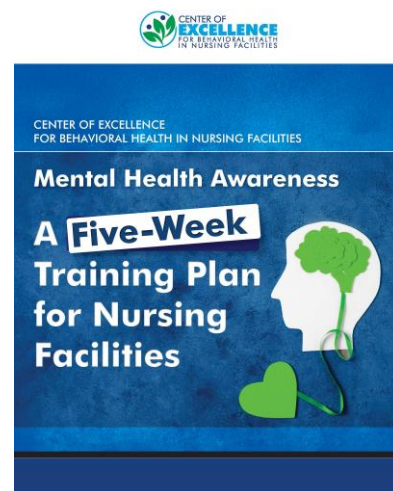
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Take Action This Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month—a time to raise understanding, reduce stigma, and support those living with mental health conditions. In recognition of this important observance, the COE-NF has developed a five-week training plan specifically tailored for nursing facilities. This training plan provides brief videos, educational flyers, and trivia questions to engage and educate participants.

Take action this Mental Health Awareness Month with training designed to promote supportive environments in nursing facilities.



[Click Here to Download Training Plan](#)

Facilities are also encouraged to download the Mental Health Awareness Toolkit from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Some content can be customized for the needs of your audiences. The toolkit includes:

- Key messages and themes for each week in May.
- Social media content, graphics, and promotional materials for your audiences and media channels.
- Messaging that encourages acceptance and support of people living with a mental illness.
- Best practices for supportive and beneficial discussions about mental health.
- Additional resources for increasing awareness about mental health in May and beyond.

[Click Here to Access SAMHSA Toolkit](#)

**National Prevention Week:
Raise Awareness in Your Facility**

National Prevention Week, May 11-17, 2025, is an annual observance that highlights the efforts of organizations across the country working to prevent substance misuse. Use this week to raise awareness about substance misuse and mental wellness prevention strategies at your nursing facility.



Substance use disorders are prevalent both in nursing facilities and in the general population. According to the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 37 million people over the age of 26 had a substance use disorder. However, only 0.5% of them - about 189,000 people - sought treatment.

Your nursing facility can play a vital role in raising awareness and encouraging prevention.

What you can do TODAY!

Engaging in social and leisure activities is an effective way to prevent risky behaviors. These proactive efforts can help reduce stress, support mental health, and offer healthy social outlets that decrease the likelihood of substance use.

- **Recovery Supports:** Connect with the COE-NF to start a 12-step recovery program at your facility. [CLICK HERE](#) to request assistance.
- **Gardening:** Connect with your local Master Gardeners to start a container garden. [CLICK HERE](#) to find a program near you.
- **Resident Council:** Engage the resident council for activity planning ideas.
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Toolkit:** Download SAMHSA's social media toolkit for social media shareables, virtual backgrounds, and more to promote prevention. [CLICK HERE](#) to download.

Source:

Highlights for the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) <https://engage.allianthealth.org/e/810993/2023-nsduh-main-highlights-pdf/5zw3nj/2556585702/h/wjxhQeoCvNA1M1Yraz1Oqi4hUQV1fxuUiyOcxDj8flQ>

**NEW! Launch a Behavioral Health Ambassador Program
with Our Step-by-Step Guide**

The COE-NF has released a new step-by-step guide to help nursing facilities launch a successful Behavioral Health Ambassador Program. This program is designed to develop champions to address the mental health and substance use education needs of your team. Click the link below to download the guide.

Save the Date: May 15 Webinar

Don't miss our live virtual webinar on May 15, where the COE-NF team will walk you through how to incorporate a **Behavioral Health Ambassador Program** in your facility. This is an excellent opportunity to learn how to create a stronger, more supportive care environment. [REGISTER HERE](#)



[Click Here to Download Program Guide](#)

Nursing Facility Guidance: Psychotropic Medications

According to [QSO-25-14-NH](#), Revised Long-Term Care (LTC) Surveyor Guidance: Significant Revisions to Enhance Quality and Oversight of the LTC Survey Process, nursing facility surveyors will utilize the updated guidance in Appendix PP to assess compliance with regulations concerning unnecessary psychotropic drug use under F605.

The revised surveyor guidance identifies that psychotropic drugs include antipsychotics, antidepressants, antianxiety, and hypnotics.

Facilities must ensure that:

- Residents who have not used psychotropic drugs are not given these drugs unless the medication is necessary to treat a specific condition.
 - Residents receive Gradual Dose Reductions (GDRs) and behavioral interventions, unless clinically contraindicated, to discontinue the drugs.
 - Residents do not receive PRN (as needed) psychotropics unless it is necessary to treat a diagnosed, specific condition.
- And*
- PRN orders for psychotropic drugs (which are not for antipsychotics) are limited to 14 days, unless the prescriber believes that it is appropriate for the order to be extended beyond 14 days, and the rationale and duration for the PRN order are documented.

- PRN orders for antipsychotic drugs are limited to 14 days, without exception.

What can you do TODAY?

- Ensure all residents have completed comprehensive assessments, and behavioral (nonpharmacological) interventions are in place.
 - The resident's medical record should include documentation of the evaluations and rationale for the chosen treatment options.
- Evaluate whether GDRs have been completed or attempted for residents on psychotropics.
 - Reference Appendix PP for guidelines on the frequency of GDRs and documentation requirements.
- Confirm that the continuation of psychotropic medication is regularly evaluated by the provider, and that residents are assessed for adverse consequences on a regular basis.
- Verify that the resident, family, or resident representative is informed of the benefits, risks, and alternatives to the medication before initiating or increasing psychotropic medication and given the right to accept or decline the initiation or increase.
- Watch the COE-NF's [Effective Strategies for Managing Psychotropic Medications in Nursing Facilities: Navigating New CMS Requirements of Participation](https://engage.allianthealth.org/e/810993/iles-document-qso-25-14-nh-pdf/5zw3nx/2556585702/h/wjxhQeoCvNA1M1Yraz1Oqi4hUQV1fxuUiyQcxDj8fIQ) on-demand training to increase understanding and how to apply principles of medication stewardship.

Reference:

Revised Long-Term Care (LTC) Surveyor Guidance: Significant revisions to enhance quality and oversight of the LTC survey process. March 10, 2025. Center for Clinical Standards and Quality/Quality, Safety & Oversight Group. <https://engage.allianthealth.org/e/810993/iles-document-qso-25-14-nh-pdf/5zw3nx/2556585702/h/wjxhQeoCvNA1M1Yraz1Oqi4hUQV1fxuUiyQcxDj8fIQ>

The COE-NF stands ready to support your facility in these guidance areas. Contact us today!

[Click HERE to Request Assistance](#)

COE-NF In Action Consultation Summary

The COE-NF In-Action consultation summaries demonstrate how the COE-NF provides critical mental health and substance use support to nursing facilities. The summaries include ideas and ways to transform your nursing facility's approach to providing high-quality behavioral health care to residents.

In this issue, the COE-NF is spotlighting the following summary:

Enhancing Recovery Support and Substance Use Education in Skilled Nursing Facilities

A nursing facility with strengths in empathic communication and a multidisciplinary care approach requested additional training around substance use disorders. To support the facility, the Center of Excellence for Nursing Facilities (COE-NF) delivered targeted educational resources and strategies to foster a recovery-oriented environment. These included staff training on addiction science, initiating 12-step support meetings, and enhancing communication with residents about substance use.

[Click HERE to Read More](#)

Office Hours

Have mental illness and substance use questions? We have the answers! Join us for office hours to talk with the experts.

Managing Substance Use Disorders in Nursing Facilities

Interested in receiving expert answers to substance use challenges you are facing in your nursing facility? Join Dr. Jen Azen and Dr. Swati Gaur, subject matter experts, as they answer questions related to your complex cases. No question is too big or too small!

Join our monthly office hours on the third Friday of each month from 1-1:30 p.m. ET to get answers directly from the experts working in nursing facilities!

Audience: Appropriate for clinicians, nurses, administrators, and social workers.



[Register HERE](#)

[Download Flyer](#)

COE-NF Resources

The Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health in Nursing Facilities (COE-NF) has developed a range of resources designed to educate nursing facility teams.



Screening for Generalized Anxiety Disorder
Generalized anxiety disorder is a mental health disorder characterized by persistent anxiety and worries for at least six months. Implementing regular screenings can help identify anxiety symptoms that are beyond what may be considered normal and create opportunities for early treatment for residents.

[Download Resource](#)



Establishing 12-Step Meetings in Nursing Facilities

This toolkit is a step-by-step guide to starting a 12-step meeting program at your nursing facility. It offers insights into the 12 steps, strategies for launching an NA or AA meeting, and practical resources to ensure a sustainable, impactful program that supports residents' recovery and creates a sense of community. [Download Resource](#)



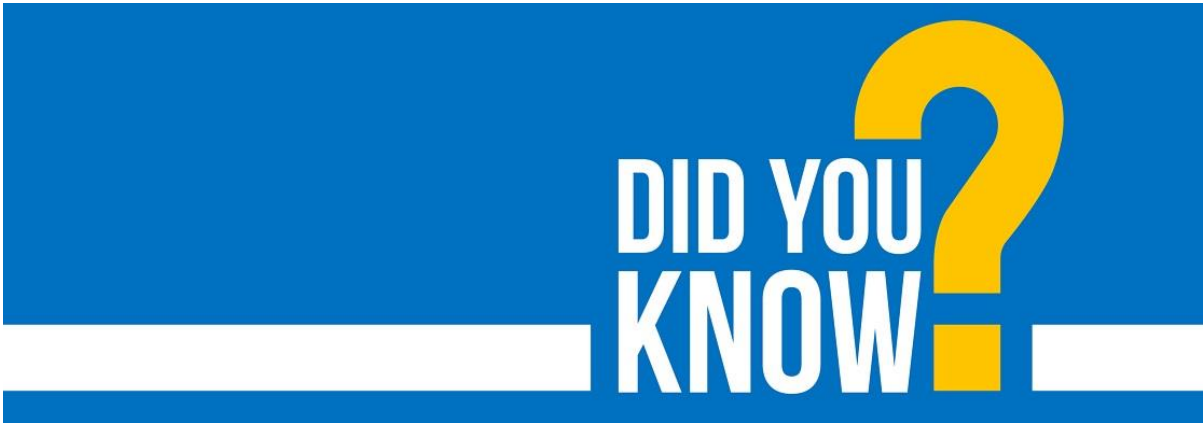
Behavioral Health Ambassador Program Guide

This step-by-step guide will help you implement a successful Behavioral Health Ambassador Program in your facility to address the mental health and substance use education needs of your team.

[Download Resource](#)

Interested in accessing additional COE-NF resources for your facility?

[Click HERE](#)



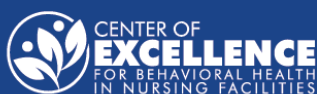
DID YOU
KNOW?

The foundation of recovery is **HOPE** - the belief that challenges and conditions can be overcome.

The four major dimensions of recovery are:

- **Health** - Overcoming or managing one's disease(s) or symptoms and making healthy choices.
- **Living Situation** - Having a stable and safe place to live.
- **Purpose** - Conducting meaningful daily activities, such as hobbies, independence at the highest level of functioning, the ability to return home, and improvement of physical and mental functioning.
- **Community** - Having relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

Reference: adapted from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
<https://engage.allianthealth.org/e/810993/substance-use-recovery-about/5zw3pt/2556585702/h/wjxhQeoCvNA1M1Yraz1Oqi4hUQV1fxuUiyOcxDj8fIQ>



JOIN OUR UPCOMING VIRTUAL EDUCATION EVENTS

In recognition of **Mental Health Awareness Month**, we're excited to offer a dynamic lineup of educational webinars designed to expand your knowledge and empower you to enhance support for your

residents' behavioral health needs. Each session provides practical strategies, expert insights, and continuing education credits.

Don't miss out - Register today!

Mental Health 101, Suicide Prevention & De-Escalation Strategies

Tuesday, May 13, 2025

2-3 p.m. ET

1.0 ACCME & 1.0 NAB credits will be offered.

This session is an introductory training to help identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health disorders. Join us as we address some of the common causes contributing to the onset or exacerbation of mental health symptoms among nursing home residents and share common warning signs and practical strategies on how staff can support improving resident mental wellness. Participants will also gain helpful strategies for suicide prevention and de-escalation techniques.

Learning Objectives:

- Define and discuss common mental health disorders in nursing facilities.
- Discuss causes contributing to the onset or exacerbation of symptoms.
- Provide awareness of suicide prevention and helpful strategies to assist residents.
- Identify helpful de-escalation strategies nursing home staff can use to support residents with mental health conditions.

[Register HERE](#)

Implementing a Behavioral Health Ambassador Program

Thursday, May 15, 2025

2-2:45 p.m. ET

0.75 ACCME & 0.75 NAB credits will be offered.

Mental health and substance use disorders are becoming increasingly common in nursing facility populations, highlighting the urgent need for staff who are equipped to recognize and respond to these challenges. One effective solution

may be to establish a Behavioral Health Ambassador Program.

Behavioral health ambassadors play a key role in advancing mental health initiatives and fostering a supportive environment within nursing facilities. This webinar will walk you through the steps to successfully launch and sustain a Behavioral Health Ambassador Program at your facility. By doing so, you'll empower your team with the skills and knowledge needed to address behavioral health concerns and drive positive, lasting change.

Learning Objectives:

- Define the role and value of a behavioral health ambassador.
- Identify key steps for program development and implementation.
- Develop a foundational and ongoing behavioral health education plan.

[Register HERE](#)

An Introduction to Trauma-Informed Care

Wednesday, May 21, 2025

2-3 p.m. ET

1.0 ACCME & 1.0 NAB credits will be offered.

In this informative training, nursing facility staff will explore the principles of trauma-informed care and learn techniques for creating a safe environment where both residents and staff can thrive.

Learning Objectives:

- Define trauma and trauma-informed care.
- Learn what happens to the traumatized body and why trauma behavior is misunderstood.
- Understand the basic concepts of trauma-informed care.

[Register HERE](#)

Understanding Co-Occurring Disorders: A Brief Overview

Thursday, May 22, 2025
2-2:30 p.m. ET
0.5 ACCME & 0.5 NAB credits will be offered.

This presentation focuses on the unique challenges and considerations associated with co-occurring disorders (medical/physical illness and/or mental health or substance use disorders) in nursing facility residents. It explores the intersection of mental health disorders and substance use issues.

Learning Objectives:

- Define substance use misuse, use, and co-occurring disorders.
- Explore prevalence and trends in co-occurring disorders among nursing facility residents.
- Understand risk factors and common presentations of co-occurring disorders in nursing facility residents.

[Register HERE](#)

Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)

****Registration Closed: This Session is Full****

Wednesday, May 28, 2025
2-3:30 p.m. ET
1.5 ACCME & 1.5 NAB credits will be offered.

QPR training will offer strategies to support your work in providing suicide prevention and mental wellness to your residents. This 1.5-hour evidence-based instructor-led training is held virtually and will provide a comprehensive review of a three-step approach anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide. This session will provide a one-year certification to attendees.

Key components covered in the training:

- How to Question, Persuade and Refer someone who may be suicidal.
- How to get help for yourself or learn more about preventing suicide.
- The common causes of suicidal behavior.
- The warning signs of suicide.
- How to get help for someone in crisis.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

****Registration Closed: This Session is Full****

**Friday, May 30, 2025
11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. ET**

7.75 NAB credits and 5.5 ACCME credits will be offered after completing the live training.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training provides skills to engage and provide initial help and support to someone developing a mental health or substance use challenge or experiencing a crisis.

This session provides a MHFA certification for three years.

The training covers:

- Common signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges.
- How to interact with a person in crisis.
- How to connect a person with help.
- Expanded content on trauma, substance use and self-care.

The training is divided into three parts:

Part 1 starts AFTER initial registration has been APPROVED by the instructor. Approved registrants will be emailed instructions on how to create an online profile using MHFA Connect and complete a pre-survey/quiz followed by a two-hour self-paced online course. Registrants MUST complete Part 1 no less than 48 hours (two business days) prior to the scheduled Part 2 session.

Part 2 is a 5.5-hour live instructor-led virtual training. Participants are required to be on camera the entire time.

Part 3 participants will return to MHFA Connect to complete the post-test and evaluation, which is required to receive a certificate of participation.

**You Matter:
Be GREAT This Mental Health Awareness Month**

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, take a moment to care for your well-being with the “GREAT” stress and anxiety management practices developed by Dr. Krystal Lewis, a licensed clinical psychologist at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). GREAT stands for:



G – Gratitude: Find small things each day to be grateful for.

R – Relaxation: Do things that help you to calm down and relax.

E – Exercise: Engage in exercise. Physical and mental health are tied together.

A – Acknowledge Feelings: Be aware of the many feelings you have and accept them as they occur.

T – Track Thoughts: Track your thoughts and change them to ensure that you are engaging in helpful thinking.

These small, daily practices can make a meaningful difference in your mental wellness.



Join our text message list!

Scan the QR code or click the button below to sign up and receive text notifications from COE-NF.

Stay up-to-date on COE-NF news and events.

[Click HERE to subscribe to receive text messages](#)

Contact us:

For more information, please call **1-844-314-1433** or email coeinfo@allianthealth.org.

To submit a request to inquire about substance use and/or mental health training options for your facility, complete the [inquiry form](#).

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Click below to follow the COE-NF social media channels for resources, news and more!



Alliant Health Solutions (AHS) was awarded a three-year cooperative agreement from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), in collaboration with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), to create the COE-NF. AHS has over 50 years of experience working with nursing facilities and behavioral health in nursing facilities.

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