

CELEBRATING SUMMER WHILE IN RECOVERY



- The summer is filled with barbeques, celebrations, vacation and holidays. These occasions might be times when alcohol or other drugs are more present and it may be difficult to enjoy these events if you are struggling with substance use or in early recovery.
- Parents in recovery or actively using can also experience extra stress from pregnancy, children being off from school or older children preparing to leave for college. Whatever the scenario, this time of year can be triggering.
- There are ways that you can stay safe while in recovery this summer!

PLAN AHEAD FOR GATHERINGS

- If you do plan to attend any gatherings, it's essential to plan ahead for your own safety and sobriety. You may want to get in touch with the hosts and find out what they are serving or if there will be an area where you will feel comfortable.
- If people are drinking, keep a non-alcoholic beverage in your hand to reduce the chances of people offering you a drink.

CREATE AN EXIT STRATEGY

- Have a back-up plan.
- Set a time for which you might be ready to leave and don't feel guilty or ashamed if you have to slip out the door
- An exit strategy may also help you if you find yourself feeling uncomfortable or anxious during the event.

IDENTIFY SUPPORT PEOPLE

- A support person can also be a big help in difficult situations. If you have a family member or friend who supports your recovery, let them know your concerns and ask them to support you during the event.
- They can intervene in awkward situations or remind you to take a break if you seem overwhelmed.

PUT YOURSELF FIRST

- You have the right to protect your health and your sobriety. If you know people will be drinking or using other substances at a party, speak out or be subtle about your reasons for not attending or having to leave early.
- Taking care of yourself is always important, but it's especially critical when you're new to recovery.

STAYING SAFE DURING PREGNANCY

Being pregnant doesn't mean you have to stay inside all summer. But it does mean you need to take extra precautions to keep you and your baby safe. Here are some summer safety tips to keep in mind to beat the heat!

- **Wear Sunscreen:** Every expecting parent should always wear sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 or higher every day.
- **Avoid Alcohol, Cannabis, and Other Substances:** There is no known safe amount of alcohol and/or cannabis during pregnancy. If you are struggling with substance use, you can contact your doctor to receive support and treatment options.
- **Prevent Dehydration:** Start drinking eight glasses of water a day to stay hydrated and sit in the shade to avoid overheating.
- **Wear the Right Clothes:** Breathable fabrics, such as loose-fitting cotton or linen shirts prevent heat rashes from developing.
- **Hop in the Pool:** The pool is not only refreshing, but it can also help relieve back pain and swelling due to pregnancy.



SEEK SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT AND RECOVERY SUPPORT

- **REACH Program:** The Women's REACH program provides female Recovery Navigators for pregnant or parenting women with substance use or co-occurring disorders.
- **PROUD Program:** The PROUD program offers support and family-centered treatment to pregnant people of infants or young children, in all stages of substance use recovery.
- **Mother to Baby:** Mother to Baby CT is a free consultation service for providers and families searching for guidance on any substance interference with pregnancy development and breastfeeding.

Are you struggling to reduce or stop your substance use while pregnant or parenting? You are not alone.

CT DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

CT 24/7 TREATMENT ACCESS LINE:

CT COMMUNITY FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY

1-800-563-4086

DMHAS ADDICTION SERVICES BED AVAILABILITY

211 CT

SAFE-Family Recovery

A PROVIDERS' GUIDE TO ENCOURAGING HEALTHY CHOICES



- The summer is filled with barbecues, celebrations, vacations, and holidays. These occasions might be times when alcohol or other drugs are more present and for those struggling with substance use, it may be difficult to enjoy these events.
- Parents in recovery or actively using can also experience extra stress from pregnancy, children being off from school or children preparing to leave for college. Whatever the scenario, this time of year can be triggering. Being a nonjudgmental and supportive provider can help your patient/client make safer decisions for their individual recovery journey.

HOW CAN I PRACTICE HARM REDUCTION WITH MY CLIENTS/PATIENTS?

SHOW POSITIVE REGARD

- The concept of positive regard means that when you talk to someone you address the whole person, instead of just focusing on their substance use.
- When people are trusted to make their own decisions and are treated with dignity and respect, they are more likely to be honest. People will know that they will be able to get the support they need, regardless of the choices they have made.

USE NON-STIGMATIZING LANGUAGE

- Using “person-first” language demonstrates that you value the patient, and are not defining them by their substance use.
- Adjusting to “person-first” language can take practice, but it is worth it because it helps you to better serve and support patients who are often subjected to shaming and stigmatizing language.

USE MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

- Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a tool that can help you navigate tough conversations.
- Providers can take classes in this technique in order to have better conversations about behavior change.
- With a little practice, this is a technique that can be easily used by anyone. When providers use MI techniques they should ask questions and listen to the answers.

HELP PATIENTS SEEK TREATMENT

- Abstaining from all substance use during pregnancy and breast/chestfeeding is the safest option, but it is important to understand that some people have trouble achieving abstinence and some may choose to reduce use instead.
- Information to assist them in accessing recovery support and treatment services to meet their individualized needs and goals should always be provided.

Most patients try several times before they can stop using. Healthcare providers should continue to work with patients who are unable or unwilling to stop using. There are many approaches to treatment for people who want to change or stop their substance use. A few common ways are:

- **MAT/MOUD:** Medication-assisted treatment (MAT) is the use of medications, in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a “whole-patient” approach to the treatment of substance use disorders.
- **Group and Individual Therapy:** Therapy engages people in substance use treatment and can teach patients how to manage stress and triggers.
- **Residential Programs:** Long-term residential treatment provides care 24 hours a day, generally in non-hospital settings.
- **Peer Recovery Groups:** Mutual-help organizations focus on the socially-supportive communication and exchange of substance use and recovery experience and skills.



WHAT ARE SOME CT RESOURCES FOR MY CLIENTS/ PATIENTS?

If you are working with pregnant or parenting individuals this summer who are struggling with substance use, there are resources to help!

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