

## Community Relations Tips for Opioid Treatment Programs

Your community relations activities help reduce stigma, endorse community integration for persons served, and promote recovery. However, creating these relationships can be a challenge.

Knowledge sharing strengthens the health of a community. Here are some tips from our accredited providers to enhance your program's community relations efforts:

### Consider scheduled dosing times

Loitering, long waits, and small waiting areas cause overflow into the community. To address this, some programs have started using time windows when persons can receive medication. They found this has reduced loitering, and helped persons manage other life responsibilities.

Tips to for switching to scheduled dosing times:

- **Hold community meetings with persons served**  
Scheduled dosing times can be a big change. Engaging stakeholders helps ease those concerns.
- **Select and empower peer leadership**  
Peer leaders help promote scheduled dosing and help move people efficiently through the new process.
- **Ensure persons served are active decision makers in scheduling their times**  
Their times should work within their life and schedule.
- **Create comfortable waiting areas**  
Some persons must work around public transit schedules. A good waiting area helps as they plan transportation.
- **Solicit feedback from your workforce**  
They may have valuable insight about how to improve the process.
- **Consistent communicating with all stakeholders**  
Constantly promote the clinical and programming benefits.

*Demonstrate your  
commitment to quality*

## Engage law enforcement

Many communities have begun to understand the importance of treatment and are currently seeking ways to educate their law enforcement workforce. Your OTP program can use this opportunity to:

- Speak to officers in training.
- Educate existing officers about the recovery process and treatment options.
- Attend rollcalls to speak with each shift.
- Invite law enforcement to regular community meetings.
- Partner on how to best support access to treatment.

## Engage community stakeholders

Community representatives can provide insight about how your services are perceived in the community. Checking in with these representatives is a valuable part of community relations. Ways to connect with community representatives:

- Host an open house or invite them to tour your facility.
- Create a method and process for community representatives to regularly provide feedback, such as input forums.
- Partner with your community on events, such as health fairs or presenting about treatment issues at local organizations.
- Send program representatives to attend community meetings.
- Look for opportunities to educate your community about the recovery process.

## Participate in community giveback

Giving back to one's community has long been an important part of the recovery process. It can both engage persons served in their community and help the community understand recovery. Ideas to get started with community giveback:

- Participate in local clean ups in parks or other public spaces.
- Research ideas related to Recovery Month in September.
- Participate in awareness and fundraising events in the community.

CARF accredits more opioid treatment programs than any other SAMHSA-approved accreditor and is the only accreditor that has standards for community relations.

Visit [www.carf.org/Programs/OTP](http://www.carf.org/Programs/OTP) to learn more.

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