

Collegiate Recovery Program Engagement Strategy

Report provided to the Iowa Department of Public Health,

Substance Abuse Bureau

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Overview

College campuses constitute a unique risk environment for young people, especially with regard to the development of a substance use disorder. Collegiate recovery programs (CRP) aim to support students with a history of harmful substance use during their time in college. CRPs do this by connecting students in recovery to each other for peer support and helping students to find and utilize recovery resources, both on and off campus. CRPs provide a safe space for a particularly vulnerable population to share their story, find additional meaning and purpose, engage in advocacy, and most importantly, maintain their sobriety and further their unique recovery journey.

For additional questions or information about this report, the dashboards or data tools described herein, or the Public Science Collaborative, please reach out to the principal investigators of this study, Dr. Cassandra Dorius at cdorius@iastate.edu, or Dr. Shawn Dorius at sdorius@iastate.edu.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CDorius".

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Goal 1: Include conference session on CRPs at the annual Iowa Recovery Conference

PSC recommends that IDPH support an annual, statewide conference focused substance use recovery. Envisioning that a primary purpose of the conference is to facilitate collaborations among various service providers, community organizations, state agency partners, and people with lived experience, we encourage the conference to include a session aimed at recovery resources for special populations such as college students.

Why focus on the college-bound population? Among the biggest risk factors for harmful substance use is early age use, especially when it involves illicit substances such as methamphetamine or heroin, or when it involves high usage as in the case of chronic or binge drinking. College campus are associated with especially high and pervasive levels of excess alcohol consumption, exposure to illicit substance use, and all in an environment of risk for other harms, such as STI transmission, chronic stress, financial hardship, and for some, social isolation. More directly, many students either bring a SUD with them to college or develop a SUD during their college years. Either directly or indirectly because of their SUD (or in relation to co-occurring mental health disorder), these at-risk students are more likely to drop out of college, which further increases the odds of later life harms, including overdose death.

The collegiate recovery program model has been around for many decades and has been rapidly expanding to more campuses in recent years. At present, two Iowa colleges, including Iowa State University and the University of Iowa, sponsor a CRP. We encourage IDPH to engage with these nascent programs (and others that form in the coming years) to disseminate latest evidence around recovery, share best CRP practices, and develop strategic partnerships to monitor CRP efficacy and stay abreast of CRP needs. Organizing an annual event where such communication and collaborations can happen is advised.

Goal 2: Facilitate collaboration between existing Iowa CRPs

At time of writing, two Iowa colleges, including Iowa State University and the University of Iowa, sponsor a campus-based collegiate recovery program. We have conducting interviews with the leadership of both CRPs to learn about their experience founding a CRP, resource needs, student services and engagement, and plans for the future. Both programs are still relatively young, having been founded just before COVID, so program offerings are limited and memberships are small. To date, there have been no collaborations between the ISU and UI CRPs, but both organizations expressed interest in doing so. Creating opportunities for the two programs to engage with one another, share their successes and failures, and coordinate on strategic issues will likely strengthen these two programs and improve the delivery of recovery services to student on both campuses.



As the principle recovery organization on two of the state's three regents' universities, Iowa's collegiate recovery programs are valuable partners for IDPH and can help spearhead a number of high-value initiatives that align with the IDPH mission to improve the health of all Iowans. One such coordinating activity between IDPH and Iowa's CRPs might be to expand campus sober living housing and other sober living activities and events to ensure that campuses are welcoming and inclusive of students in recovery. In our discussions with Iowa's CRP leadership, we learned that neither university knows how to identify their student recovery population. This makes outreach more challenging and contributes to underutilization of CRP resources. Connecting with university data administrators to find ways to identify at-risk students and students in recovery is a first step toward bringing more recovery resources to students in recovery.

Goal 3: Outreach to targeted stakeholders at Iowa colleges and universities

Partners at PSC have begun outreach to the University of Northern Iowa, including an information session with Angela Meeter, Associate Director of Student Health and Wellness. In this session, we introduced the concept of the collegiate recovery program, shared their purpose and value to student wellbeing, and communicated that the other two regents' universities both sponsor CRPs. Because UNI has a board structure that would need to approve a CRP, PSC proposed to give a presentation and Q&A session about CRPs for the purpose of encourage administrative support for the development of a collegiate recovery program at UNI.

In preparation for this meeting and in anticipation of opportunities for similar outreach with other colleges in Iowa, PSC developed a CRP primer report aimed at introducing readers to collegiate recovery programs, but customized to Iowa.

As part of a general engagement strategy for expanding campus-based recovery resources, we recommend that PSC engage in direct outreach to university health and wellness directors/associate directors, student services leadership, offices of student retention, and substance use student groups, including their faculty advisors. We have prepared an outreach email, including supporting materials, with an offer to meet in person or by zoom to share information about the purpose and value of CRPs. We have tested this approach with UNI, with some early success.

Goal 4: Develop additional outreach materials

PSC proposes to develop a suite of college recovery program outreach materials that can be shared with university health and wellness directors/associate directors, student services leadership, office of student retention, and substance use student groups. We will make these materials available on the recovery Iowa website and will also share materials directly with key college and university stakeholders. We have prepared a CRP information document and a collection of additional



materials developed by other collegiate recovery programs. Collectively, these materials provide ample reading material about CRPs.

We also encourage the development of alternative outreach materials that will more effectively, and efficiently, communicate the college risk environment and an introduction to collegiate recovery programs. We suggest that IDPH support the development of short animated videos (1-3 minutes) and a roughly 20-minute recorded webinar that can be shared with college stakeholders as part of a broader substance use recovery outreach effort.

Goal 5: Additional recommendations

To the extent that it is feasible, we encourage the Bureau of Substance Abuse at the Iowa Department of Public Health to provide financial support to Iowa's two existing collegiate recovery programs. Based on our discussions with program leadership, CRP resource needs are broadly similar to those of a recovery community center. Iowa's CRPs would benefit from resources to further develop their physical infrastructure (dedicated space, furniture, computers, etc.), resources to support outreach and recruitment such as CRP promotional materials, flyers, and a program website, and funds to cover membership costs to the Association of Recovery in Higher Education.

Borrowing from the Iowa recovery community center playbook, we encourage the Bureau to provide one-time start-up funds to support the establishment of new CRPs on Iowa campuses. Based on our interviews with local and national collegiate recovery center leaders, start-up costs for a CRP are substantially lower than what is commonly required to establish a recovery community center. Primary needs including securing a high-quality space such as an office in the student union or a similar central campus location, funds to support one or more part time staff or graduate students, and financial support for community building and CRP mission and vision development.

Appendix: CRP Promotional Flyer

Pennsylvania State University Flyer

R.O.A.R. House:

On-Campus Recovery Housing

The Penn State CRC offers the option of on-campus recovery housing for members in R.O.A.R. House, an acronym for Residence of Addiction Recovery.

Space may be limited. For more information, contact the Program Coordinator at 814-863-0140

As someone in recovery who tried living in the regular dorms, I can tell you that R.O.A.R. House is necessary for someone like me. At R.O.A.R. House I am surrounded by other people who have a common goal of staying sober and leading a balanced life. Every day I have people around me who I relate to and can talk to about any challenge I might face as a student in recovery, and we have more fun in recovery together than I thought was ever possible.

—Ryan P., free from alcohol and drugs since August 1, 2011, resident of R.O.A.R. House



Penn State CRC Mission Statement: The Collegiate Recovery Community at Penn State University provides a caring and supportive environment for students working to recover from addictions. The CRC communicates a message of hope, links students with recovery-related services and persons in recovery, and facilitates the development of healthy and sustainable habits of mind, body, and spirit. Through the pairing of education and recovery, students are positioned to transition into fulfilling lives as productive members of the campus community.

Information

Times and days of seminars and other meetings vary by semester. An updated schedule can be found at <http://sites.psu.edu/pscrc/12-step-meeting-list/>

Spring 2020 Seminars in 105 Pasquerilla

Monday Seminar: 11:15-12:05

Tuesday Seminar: 11:15-12:05

Wednesday Seminar 11:15-12:05

Thursday Seminar 12:20-1:10

Friday Seminar 12:20-1:10

CRC Wednesday Lunch 12:10-1:30



On-Campus Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings:

Both on-campus meetings are “closed” : open only to those with a desire to stop drinking

5:30-6:30pm Fridays First AA, 104 Pasquerilla

7:30-8:30 Sober Sundays AA, 104 Pasquerilla

On-Campus Al-Anon Meeting:

Fridays 12:00-1:00pm Lunchtime Serenity Al-Anon

On-Campus SMART Recovery Meeting:

Monday 4:00-5:00 in 104 Pasquerilla
(contact Lori Strayer las192@psu.edu)

Contact: Jason Whitney, PhD Program Coordinator, Penn State CRC
814-863-0140 pennstatecrc@psu.edu

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Artwork by J. Rosello



PennState
Student Affairs

PENN STATE
COLLEGIATE
RECOVERY
COMMUNITY

Getting Started

Finding Recovery at the Penn State CRC



PennState
Student Affairs

What is recovery?

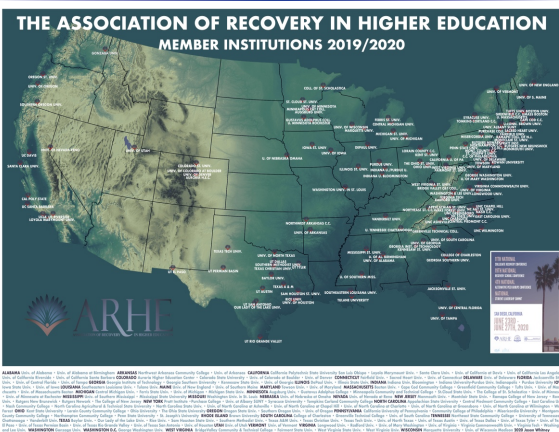
"Recovery from alcohol and drug problems is a process of change through which an individual achieves abstinence and improved health, wellness and quality of life" (S.A.M.H.S.A, 2015).

What is a CRC?

The Penn State Collegiate Recovery Community, opened as a program of Student Affairs in 2011 and features a small staff, a space on campus, a peer-support community, and people and resources designed to support students in recovery.

A National Movement

Programs that support students in recovery across the nation are a response to the need to support students with alcohol and other substance use disorders, helping students remain free of alcohol and other drugs while pursuing their educations. The Penn State CRC is a member of The Association of Recovery in Higher Education.



The Association of Recovery in Higher Education
Member Institutions 2019/2020

The CRC was my first experience with students who were happy, who were sober, and who were living their dreams. When I got there, they told me, "Your best days at Penn State are ahead of you." I thought there was no way that could be true. But they were 100% correct.

--Jimmy H., IST. Class of 2015, free of alcohol and other drugs since 8/1/2013

Recovery: A New Lifestyle

When I entered recovery, I had to adopt a new lifestyle. If I continued to hang around with the same people in the same places, I would be at high risk for repeating the same behaviors—and that's a risk I wasn't willing to take. I found new friends who understood and supported me and started navigating the world with a totally different attitude and outlook. I didn't know if I would ever be able to return to school — especially at a large university like Penn State. I used to fear that my life would be boring or that I'd feel out of place as a sober student, but that couldn't be further from the truth—as a member of the CRC, I've found acceptance, love, connection, and laughter beyond anything I've ever experienced.

--Melissa B., free of alcohol and other drugs since 5/4/2015

Working a Program

When my career at Penn State was off the rails, and before I had even considered quitting drinking and working a recovery program, I learned about the CRC. The other students convinced me that I could do it, and I jumped in with both feet. I attend seminars at the CRC, and I work a program outside the CRC by attending 12-step meetings and going to counseling, and I've stayed sober and I really like this whole way of life.

— Jack W., free of alcohol and drugs since 10/2/2017



A Community of Friends

My first encounter with the CRC allowed me to see that I was not alone in my battle with addiction. I found the support I needed in this community on the first day with a warm welcome and encouraging messages of hope. It was a pivotal moment in my undergraduate career to find the friendship and help I needed. The CRC has supported my goal to graduate while providing a safe place for me to be a sober student.

– Robbie E., free of alcohol and other drugs since 2/21/2014

A Second Chance at Penn State

I had disenrolled from Penn State to go to rehab, but I returned, and with the help of the CRC, I've found belonging and happiness, I'm staying sober, and I'm doing great in school — my dream of going to medical school has been revived, and I am back on track.

-- Ryan M., Class of free of alcohol and other drugs since 4/11/2016