

# Formative research to develop an empirically grounded collegiate recovery program

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## BACKGROUND

- Rates of illicit drug use among full-time college students is similar to peers not attending college or only attending part-time (22.3% in 2013), yet full time college students are more likely to drink alcohol than similar aged peers
- Problem drinking is also prevalent on college campuses with 39% of college students participating in binge drinking and 12.7% of students being classified as heavy drinkers
- Collegiate recovery programs (CRPs) are becoming more common across the U.S. and help support the special needs for students in recovery from substance use disorders
- Site-based reports have demonstrated the majority of students participating in CRPs are able to maintain high GPAs and experience low relapse rates
- Few CRP programs have been developed in accordance with systematic research. Initiating a CRP at the College of Charleston offers the opportunity to develop a program that is empirically grounded

## METHODS

**Phase 1: Content analysis:** A content analysis of websites for existing CRPs was conducted. This included documenting the type of content present on program webpages and descriptions of services provided to students.

**Phase 2: Stakeholder interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Charleston community members that are directly or indirectly servicing students in recovery. Interviews were also conducted with CRP directors and/or coordinators from other universities.

**Phase 3: Student interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with College of Charleston students who self identify as being a student in recovery from a drug or alcohol addiction.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

- All interviews were recorded using SoundNote and all audio files were transcribed verbatim
- HyperRESEARCH 3.5.2 facilitated data analysis
- A constant comparative method of open and axial coding used to analyze data
- Research team met frequently to discuss emergent themes and findings

## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

### INTERVIEWS

- To date 13 student interviews and 13 expert interviews have been completed
- The majority of the students interviewed credited their success in recovery to support groups such as AA, but also expressed interest in having the additional support of a CRP on campus
- Many students and experts suggested there should be some requirements for participation. However, experts were hesitant to suggest having strict requirements in fear of limiting access
- Students expressed interest in a CRP for reasons of designated space, a social circle of students with common experiences on campus, as well as academic support
- Experts echoed missions of creating a supportive, safe community for students in recovery
- Experts mentioned support of CRPs often resulting in high GPA and collegiate success for participating students

### CONTENT ANALYSIS

- The majority (70%) of CRPs in existence have websites, and nearly all (88%) offer on-campus support group meetings
- Only a few CRPs (30%) appear to have membership requirements
- CRPs were housed under various offices (i.e. Student Health Center, Counseling Center, Student Affairs)
- Numerous types of meetings comprised CRP programming (i.e., 12 Step Support, Support Group, Meditation)
- 22% of CRPs disclosed an application process

Activity	Spring 2016				Summer 2016			
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
<b>Phases 1 – 4 (Spring 2016)</b>								
Content Analysis								
Develop Interview Guidelines								
Conduct Stakeholder Interviews								
Conduct Student Interviews								
<b>Phases 5 – 7 (Summer 2016)</b>								
Interview Transcription								
Interview Analysis								
Report/Manuscript Development								

## CONCLUSIONS

- This study informs researchers and practitioners about college students' perceptions of, and experiences with alcohol and drug use
- Practitioners can use this information to develop effective campus-wide CRPs and mixed-media social marketing campaigns in order to best support college students who are recovering from substance abuse disorders
- Further formative research is needed to build comprehensive, empirically-based programs specific to colleges/universities and their unique campuses and students



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