CENTER FOR ADDICTION RECOVERY SUPPORT

GETTING STARTED:

What You Need to Know About Building a Collegiate Recovery Program

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For more information, visit page 27

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The Center for Addiction Recovery Support is a Collaborative Program

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WELCOME

How to Use This Document

Starting a collegiate recovery program (CRP) can seem like a daunting task, especially in the beginning stages. The best place to start is exactly where you are! Because this is such an exciting concept, it may be tempting to jump right to the "big" ideas such as recovery housing. It is important to have a vision and long-term goals, and it is even more important to have a plan.

The plan should start with meeting the current needs of the students on your campus while also looking to the future for how you will continue to grow services that align with the availability of resources over time.

This document is intended to help you get started in your planning process. Since every campus has its own unique culture, this document is not intended to be a step-by-step how-to guide, but rather it is something every school can adapt in its own way in order to meet the needs of students in recovery on that campus.

In this document you will find:

1. An introduction to collegiate recovery
2. Broad questions for you to consider as you begin your planning process
3. Information on how to build a team
4. Important planning milestones
5. Best practices to consider
6. A variety of resources to help you along the way

In addition to building a team on your campus that includes various stakeholders, many have found it helpful to also have a mentor in the collegiate recovery field to answer questions and provide suggestions.

These are our students, and we have a responsibility to support them and help them succeed.

Fast Facts

- A 2016 study from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reported that 1 in 7 young adults between the ages of 18-24 met criteria for a substance use disorder and needed treatment.[1]
- Students in recovery are a marginalized population on college campuses.
- College culture tends to be a recovery-hostile environment.

Need technical assistance?
Reach out to CARS at:
www.carsrecovery.org/technical-assistance

1 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2017). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. SMA 17-5044, NSDUH Series H-52). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from https://www.samhsa.gov/data/

COLLEGIATE RECOVERY 101

History of Collegiate Recovery Programs

Collegiate recovery has a rich and fresh history with pioneering programs starting as early as 1977 and 1986. Early programs led the way so that many collegiate recovery communities (CRCs) and collegiate recovery programs (CRPs) could adopt and adapt their models for their own campuses.

The collegiate recovery field has experienced marked growth since 2010 and gained national recognition when the Office on National Drug Control Policy released a call to-action statement in 2018 for all Institutions of Higher Learning to disseminate recovery support and resources to their students.

As of 2025 there are 184 member institutions that are a part of The Association of Recovery in Higher Education (ARHE) with several additional startup efforts nationwide.

The Association of Recovery in Higher Education

Formed in 2010 at the first collegiate recovery conference, then held in Lubbock, Texas, ARHE's mission is to champion, develop, and sustain excellence in collegiate recovery with a vision of collegiate culture that embraces recovery.

ARHE fosters the growth of collegiate recovery through the provision of institutional standards, support, and professional development. ARHE supports and advocates for the continued growth and expansion of collegiate recovery, acts as the accrediting body for collegiate recovery, and provides professional community and development opportunities for collegiate recovery leadership and staff.

There are 184 member institutions that are a part of The Association of Recovery in Higher Education (ARHE)*, with several additional startup efforts nationwide.

Collegiate Recovery Programs Are A Vital Campus Resource

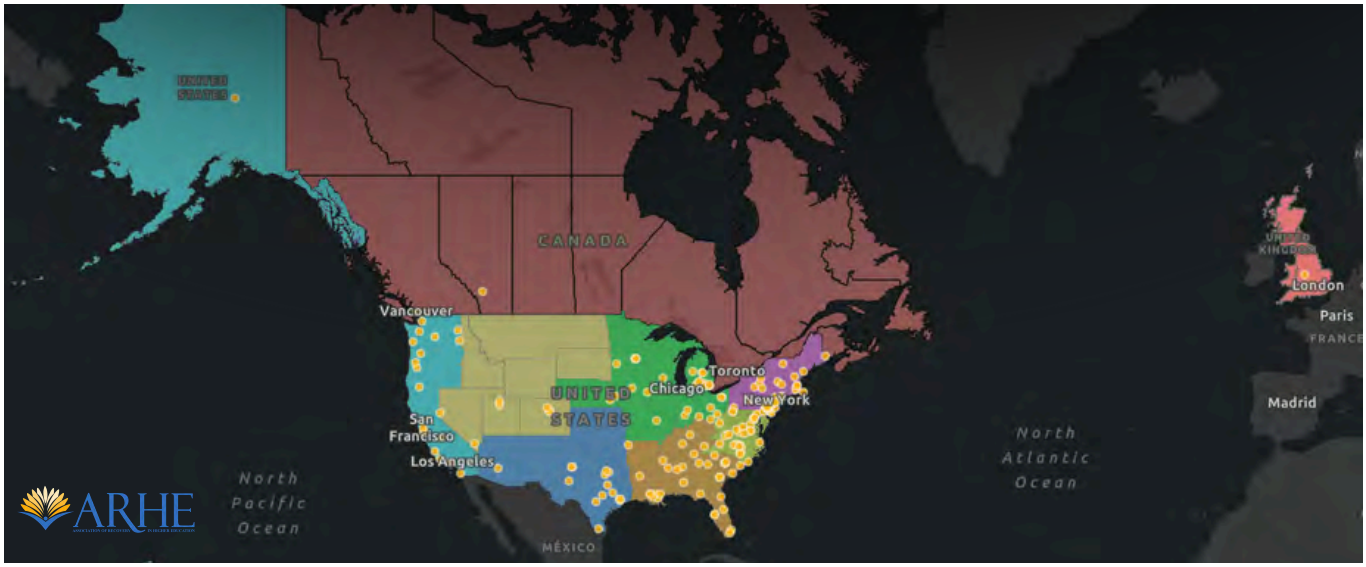
Students in recovery are challenged by a college environment that offers easy access to drugs and alcohol and promotes a student culture of alcohol and drug misuse.[2] A necessary condition for students in recovery to be successful in college is having a supportive network of peers and access to support services.

By offering campus support through a CRP for those students with substance use disorders, universities can play a critical role in relapse prevention that has the potential to directly impact student success, engagement, resiliency, and retention as is evident in measured outcomes of existing CRPs that report higher graduation rates than the general student body, increased GPAs, and promisingly low relapse rates.[3]

In light of the hundreds of thousands of lives lost each year to substance use disorder, collegiate recovery should not be viewed as an optional support, but rather a cornerstone resource on campus that can change the trajectory of a student's life.

*As of 2025, reflective only of ARHE member institutions. Additional CRPs may exist outside of ARHE.
2 Brian E Perron, Ivana D Grahovac, Joseph S Uppal, Teresa M Granillo, Jamie Shutter & Carolyn A Porter (2011) Supporting Students in Recovery on College Campuses: Opportunities for Student Affairs Professionals, Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice, 48:1, 47-64, DOI:10.2202/1949-6605.6226
3 Bugbee, Brittany & Caldeira, Kimberly & Soong, Andrea & Vincent, Kathryn & Arria, Amelia. (2016). Collegiate recovery programs: A win-win proposition for students and colleges. 10.13140/RG.2.2.21549.08160.

The Association of Recovery in Higher Education
Member Institutions 2024



The Language of Collegiate Recovery

Every campus is different, with its own distinct culture and defining characteristics. Accordingly, there is no single approach in developing and maintaining a CRP. Even though campuses are different in many respects, ARHE has developed standards and recommendations in order to help emerging and new CRPs strive for excellence.

ARHE considers the following 8 standards and recommendations the "best practices" based on the experiences of the past 30+ years as well as current available research.

CRP Best Practices

1. CRPs embrace that recovery from substance use disorder is an individualized, intentional, dynamic, and relational process involving sustained efforts to improve wellness.
2. CRPs have dedicated physical space for students in recovery to gather and support one another.
3. CRPs have within them a collegiate recovery community (CRC) with students who offer each other peer support.
4. CRPs provide a variety of recovery support programmatic elements to assist students in maintaining and protecting their recovery.
5. CRPs have paid, qualified, trained, ethical, and dedicated professionals who support students in recovery.
6. CRPs are non-profit entities.

For more in-depth details about the **ARHE Standards and Recommendations** for CRPs, please visit the website at: **https://collegiaterecovery.org/standards-recommendations/**

7. CRPs are housed within Institutions of Higher Education that confer degrees (e.g., associates, bachelors, masters, and/or doctorate degrees).
8. CRPs often identify and collaborate with on and off campus partners and stakeholders.
9. CRPs actively cultivate an environment of belonging which honors the whole student.

Collegiate recovery programs are an important part of the continuum of care for substance misuse on college campuses. Most institutions have alcohol and other drug prevention/education programs as well as some type of early intervention, such as BASICS. Establishing a CRP is a natural addition to this continuum and creates additional support for students on your campus.

A collegiate recovery program is not...

- A treatment or a substitute for treatment.
- For-profit or housed outside of an institution of higher learning.
- Meant to be a posterior component of a department.

COLLEGIATE RECOVERY 101

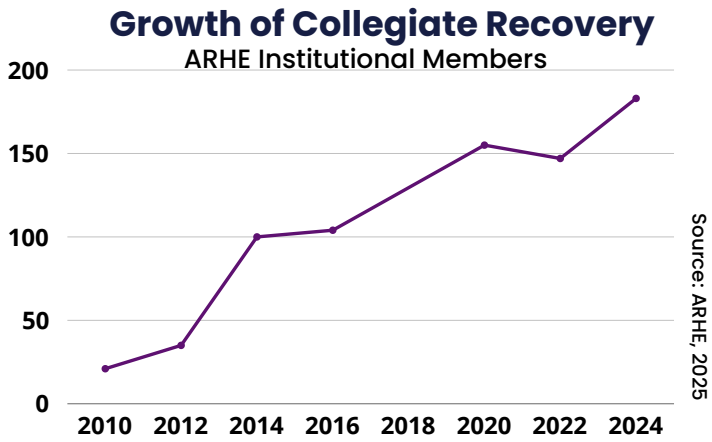
The Vision

Collegiate culture that embraces recovery

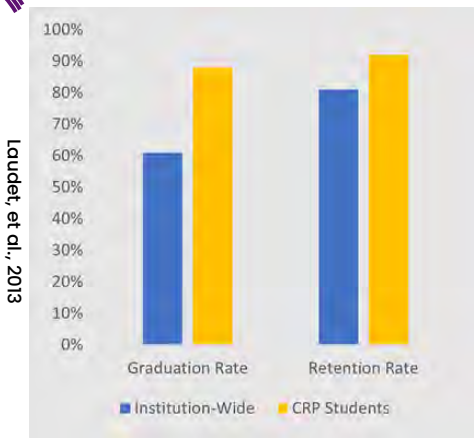
To truly create accessible campuses, colleges and universities must have initiatives that recognize and support students in recovery (Brown, 2020).

A collegiate recovery program (CRP) or collegiate recovery community (CRC):

- is a supportive environment within an institution of higher education.
- reinforces the decision to engage in a lifestyle of recovery from substance use disorder (SUD).
- values peer-recovery support services.



Student Success



- Students involved in CRPs collectively have a higher average GPA than the general student body.
  (Laudet, et al., 2013; Ashford, et al, 2018)

Visit www.collegiaterecovery.org for additional information

Student Support

Each program is as unique as the institution itself

Best Practices:

- A dedicated space
- Dedicated staff
- Programming supporting recovery
- Peer support

What's the Return?

- CRPs reduce the recovery and relapse cycle by 15 years while producing educated citizens (Laudet, et. al., 2014)
- Engaged students become engaged alumni
- Thriving students equates to fewer problems and lower costs

GETTING STARTED

Broad Questions to Consider

As you begin your adventure into establishing a collegiate recovery program (CRP) on your campus, there are some broad questions that you or your team should take time to consider. The answers to these questions can help guide your planning efforts.

ARHE has developed a readiness assessment tool that not only will assist you in this first step, but our team will also provide personalized feedback and guidance for your institution based on your responses.

1. Is there a history of efforts to build a CRP on your campus? What became of those efforts? What was learned during that process?
2. What stage of planning are you in? Is there already something established on campus or is this completely new? Have you identified students or alumni in recovery?
3. Have you put together a project planning team? If not, who would be a good fit for this project?
4. How familiar are you or your team with the local recovery community surrounding your campus? What is that culture like? What recovery supportive resources are available in the surrounding community?
5. How do you perceive the degree to which stakeholders and decision makers on your campus rate the importance of having a CRP on your campus?
6. Have you identified key stakeholders on campus that can be a champion for this project, especially when communicating with upper administration?
7. How many hours per week can you or the project planning team dedicate to this effort?
8. What are your perceived barriers? Understanding these can help you plan for overcoming them!
9. Who will your new CRP serve and where will it be housed within the current structure of your institution?
10. Considering these questions gives a look into where to begin, especially if this is a new effort on your campus. In order to receive personalized feedback on these questions, we encourage you to fill out the Collegiate Recovery Readiness Survey!

You can reach out to Kristina Canfield at **kristina.canfield@collegiaterecovery.org** for more information.

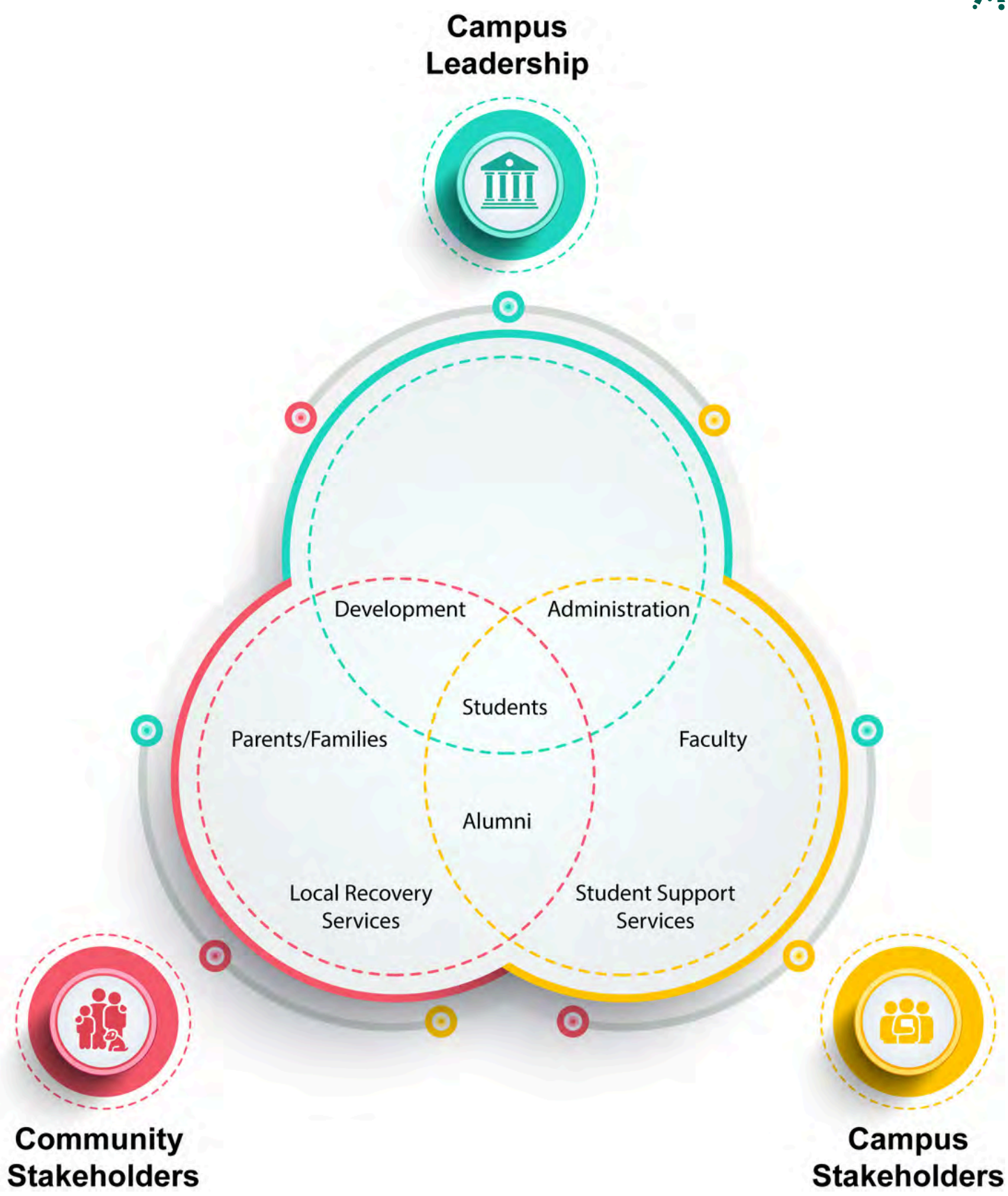
Building a Team

Building a Project Planning Team (or Steering Committee, or Task Force) may feel like a daunting task, but it doesn't need to be! Think about who would have a stake in having a CRP on your campus. The goal is to build as broad of a team as possible so there will ultimately be wide buy-in across campus. Begin by brainstorming potential collaborators and stakeholders to reach out to and include. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Any identified students or alumni in recovery
- An advocate in or with access to administration
- Representatives from various student support services across campus
- Faculty from the School of Public Health, Nursing, Social Work, etc.
- External stakeholders from the surrounding community
- Someone in the collegiate recovery field who can act as a mentor and guide

Key points to remember...

- You want people who are passionate about serving students and supporting folks in recovery and can also devote time to the project.
- Don't worry about rejection! Even if they say "no," give them the opportunity to say "no!"
- Reaching out across departments and units will increase buy-in across campus.
- It is important to know your institution's processes. For example, one university had to have Its Board of Regents approve the program in order for student fees to be applied. It was critical that they had someone on their planning team from the very beginning who could advocate to the Board once it was time for approval.


Campus Leadership
Development
Administration
Students
Parents/Families
Faculty
Alumni
Local Recovery Services
Student Support Services
Community Stakeholders
Campus Stakeholders

Use this chart to guide your brainstorming process for potential project team members:

Campus Departments / Resources		Community Resources
Division of Student Affairs	Disability Support Services	Association of Recovery in Higher Education
Health Promotion and Wellness	Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution	Local 12-step Meetings, Recovery Dharma, SMART Recovery, or other community recovery meetings
Housing and Residence Life	Academic Advising	Local Mental Health Experts
Alcohol and Other Drug Task Force	Dean of Students Office	Parents & Families
Counseling Services	College of Public Health	Recovery Community Organizations
Veteran and Military Affairs	Social Work Department	Local Treatment Facilities
Multicultural Affairs	Psychology Department	Community Alcohol & Drug Task Force
Office of Public Affairs	Athletics	State and Local Coalitions
Student Health Services	Admissions	Local Law Enforcement / Judicial System
Mental health, serious mental illness, and substance misuse - inpatient	Student Government/Student Organizations	Local Recovery Housing

IMPORTANT MILESTONES

Asset Mapping

When developing recovery supports on campus, it is critical to begin by assessing various areas in order to better understand the environment and gaps in services. In order to understand the needs of your student population, it is also crucial to evaluate what other programs and services, both on and off your campus, are currently providing or not providing.

Asset mapping assists in tailoring supports specific to an institution, resulting in the cultivation of student recruitment and buy-in. The collection of this data should provide a scope of existing strengths, areas of growth, partnerships to be made, and plans to be set forth.

Information to Gather

History and Status of Recovery Supports on Campus

- What has been attempted at your institution in the past? What were the results?
- Status of recovery support meetings on and around campus
- Current recovery supportive resources on campus and in the community
- Former and current students, faculty, and staff involved in recovery efforts on campus
- Former and current allies of recovery efforts on campus

Supporting Data

- Biennial Reviews
  - This provides information on current programming as well as gaps and mitigating efforts.
  - These annual reports are often public information, but it will be helpful to know who on your campus is responsible for drafting this report.
- National College Health Assessment (NCHA) and/or The CORE Survey
  - These surveys provide information on substance use prevalence, high-risk behaviors, percentage of students identifying as in recovery, percentage of students who have been diagnosed with a substance use disorder, and the effects of substance use on academic success as it pertains to your campus.
  - Find out who conducts these assessments on your campus. It will be helpful to have them be part of the project team from the beginning.
- EverFi Data (Alcohol EDU)
  - Programs such as EverFi reveal behavior of students pre-matriculation as well as incoming students identifying as in recovery.
  - Who is responsible for ensuring any pre-matriculation programs are completed by incoming students? They will have access to this data.
- ARHE Data
  - Effective programming, best practices, professional development, additional resources.
- Benchmarking Data from Peer and Near Institutions (See details in next section)

Be sure to check out **www.collegiaterecovery.org**. Members have access to a robust **Resource Hub**, with documents and resources shared by other institutions that you will find helpful during your planning.

Identifying Potential Barriers and Planning for Them

- Questions to consider:
  - What, if any, obstacles do you anticipate from within your local recovery community?
  - What, if any, obstacles do you anticipate from your administration?
  - What, if any, obstacles do you anticipate from the broader community?
  - What, if any, barriers do you anticipate encountering that have not been mentioned here?

Community Recovery Capital

- What services are already offered on campus that may benefit students in or seeking recovery? What gaps exist in these services?
- What is the culture of the recovery community outside of campus? Are there available recovery support meetings? Are they accessible to students? Do students feel welcomed and supported in those meetings or in that community?

- Is there recovery housing that is close to the university and student-friendly? Is there a program on campus that will help match roommates who identify as in recovery? What is the status and culture surrounding "substance free housing" on campus? ("Substance free" does not always equate to "recovery friendly").
- What is the campus culture as it relates to stigma regarding substance use disorder? How is your campus recovery friendly or recovery hostile? How are student conduct cases involving alcohol and drug use handled?
- What are barriers potential students may face when entering or reentering your campus community? For example: Some institutions require additional screening of applicants with a history of justice involvement. Including your Admissions Department in project planning can help plan for how to handle these potential barriers.
- What are local, state, and federal initiatives that could support your CRP? Are there any that would act as a barrier? Bring those folks to the table and make them aware of your project and plan how to collaborate.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a useful tool to understand the approach of peer and near institutions and may also serve to demonstrate where your institution currently stands as well as what is possible.

Being able to demonstrate that other campuses are successfully developing programs, especially those campuses your administration regularly measures against, taps into the idea of, "if they are doing it, so can we!"

Many institutional assessment offices will have a list of the institutions your administration considers to be "peer and near."

Peer institutions are typically those with similar size, structure, and programs while near institutions are just that: geographically nearby. The first step is to find out who those institutions are so you can begin to gather information.

After you get the list of peer and near institutions, decide what you are measuring. Some common questions in early development stages can be:

1. Does this institution have a CRP?
2. Does the CRP have a budget? Are staff willing to share that budget?
3. How is the CRP primarily funded (institutional funds, grant funds, donor funds)?
4. Where is the CRP placed within the structure of the university?
5. How many staff members support the CRP?
6. What services are offered?
7. What programmatic elements are included?
8. Is there a strategic plan for the CRP? Are staff willing to share?

Some of this information may be found on program websites, but an email, or better yet, a phone call, could offer richer information. You can also create a Google form with the questions, and ask representatives from the institutions to fill it out to the best of their ability. You can then follow up with a phone call to them. It is also helpful to have a way for them to upload supporting documents that may be helpful for you as you are gathering information.

Mobilizing Students

Identifying students in recovery on your campus will assist in fostering a sense of community and connection while attempting to establish and/or maintain a CRP on your campus. As with building your project planning team, begin with brainstorming! Having students as part of the planning process from the very beginning will help to launch this effort.

Don't focus on building the largest community possible. Instead, focus on a core group of students, no matter how small, and involve them in every step. The more that students are involved in planning, the more they tend to be engaged. Having them help brainstorm ideas and be an active part of this process increases their buy-in and involvement. When they are excited, they also tend to bring their friends!

One simple way to keep track of the information you gather is with a simple spreadsheet.

	Do they have a CRP?	Budget?	How is it funded?	What services are offered?
School #1				
School #2				

The information gathered from asset mapping and benchmarking can help guide your planning by offering examples while also building a justification for the development of a CRP on your campus. Furthermore, both offer the chance at important networking that will also serve these early stages of development.

Download the Cost Effectiveness Toolkit and learn how to use it when gathering information and crafting your proposal. Learn more at: **collegiaterecovery.org/media/**

Brainstorming Ways to Identify Students and Alumni in Recovery

Examples could include:

- Creating a student organization
- Conducting outreach to local treatment centers/providers
- Leveraging existing relationships with campus partners (dean of students referrals, counseling referrals, admissions)
- Conducting presentations on campus, such as new student orientation
- Hosting campus recovery events (sober tailgates, on campus recovery meetings)
- Reaching out to different recovery support groups in your local community
- Utilizing campus media outlets for announcements
- Partnering with established university-approved social media accounts for increased engagement
- Partnering with your alumni relations department to help identify potential alumni who may want to be engaged on this topic

Keeping Them Engaged

- Host events to keep students and alumni connected to the CRP
- Ongoing programmatic support for students
- Creating/managing a CRP social media page for graduates/alumni
- Empowering and supporting students who are in recovery to begin hosting on-campus recovery meetings

Building a Framework for Your Program

When establishing a new program, there are factors unique to: Your campus, the surrounding community, and the students that you serve. These factors influence the type of collegiate recovery program (CRP) that will best meet the needs of your institution.

Program Types

Who will you serve and how will you serve them?

Clinical vs. Non-clinical

Some campuses may view a CRP as an extension of counseling or treatment services, and hire staff who are credentialed to do clinical work. Other campuses rely primarily on a peer support based model in which the main goal is to provide students with a network of persons and resources to support a recovery community. Staff may or may not have clinical credentials in such cases.

Residence-Based vs. Community Center-Based

Some campuses have all or nearly all of their students in on-campus recovery housing. Some campuses may provide optional recovery housing for students in their programs, and others may not offer recovery housing at all. Experience suggests that the demand for recovery housing often springs from a thriving recovery program and a sizable peer support community. Campuses that have larger populations of commuters and non-traditional students may not see the same demands for housing as programs composed of 18-24 years old in which living in on-campus housing is commonplace.

Abstinence-Only or Harm-Reduction Approaches

In some CRPs, student participants are expected to remain entirely abstinent from alcohol and other non-prescribed substances. Some CRPs, in addition to supporting students in abstinence based recovery, also support students who are using harm-reduction approaches (i.e. moderating their use). The presence (or lack thereof) of adjacent harm-reduction services on one's campus might factor into such a decision.

SUD Recovery Specific or Supporting Other Types of Recovery in Addition to SUD Recovery

All CRPs should be equipped to serve students with a variety of issues. Some CRPs have substance use disorder (SUD) recovery as the only qualification for membership.

Others may include students in their membership who do not identify as in recovery from a primary SUD but do identify as in recovery from a mental health disorder or process addiction. Additionally, some universities also support allies and/or those affected by a loved one's addiction.

Factors Affecting the Growth of the Peer Support Community

To give your program the best chance to grow a peer support community from the student population at your college or university, it is essential to consider these factors:

The Pool of Potential Participants

Some campuses have larger student populations that provide a large pool of potential participants who are in SUD recovery. In order to grow their peer support community, some smaller campuses may find it makes more sense to launch a program by broadening their participation criteria beyond the relatively small numbers of students in SUD recovery to include persons who do not identify as in recovery from a primary SUD, but who do identify as in recovery from a mental health disorder or process addiction, and/or to those affected by a loved one's addiction, and/or to allies..

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion should be taken into account at all CRPs, regardless of the college or university. What may work to meet the needs of students on one campus may not work at another. Cultural factors may influence the pathways and approaches to recovery that are the best fit for individual students and the community.

"Recovery Desert" or Thriving Local Young People's Recovery Scene

Some campuses may be located in places that are recovery deserts where students are desperate for any peer support, while others may find abundant alternatives and young people's recovery in their surrounding area, in which securing the involvement of students who are active in recovery in the local community might be more difficult.

Traditional-Aged or Adult Learners

Some campuses primarily serve traditional-aged college students, others have more adult learners, many of whom are over the age of 35. Adult learners may struggle with a different set of concerns than traditionally aged students that could present barriers to involvement (i.e. the need for child care in order to attend programming).

Residential or Commuter Campus

Students' needs on a residential campus may not be the same as a campus in which many or most students commute, and vice-versa.

Working With Your Administration's Decision Makers

Identifying your campus partners and establishing relationships with them will be instrumental in securing administration and stakeholder buy-in. Remember, it is critical to include someone who can advocate to administration or the decision-makers as part of your planning team from the very beginning. In order to identify this person, examine the role of administrators on campus, their positions within the university, their ability to allocate resources to support the founding of a CRP, and their relationships with who you are considering for your team.

Proposal Ideas and Budget Considerations

- Pull everything together. Write a statement of purpose. What was the purpose of this project? What were the findings of your asset mapping and benchmarking? State the need for collegiate recovery on your campus. Be ready to educate your administration on the basics of collegiate recovery and consider bringing in an experienced CRP staff member from another institution to answer their questions.
- Include a mission statement and vision statement.
- Define a timeline for recovery supports being available on campus that aligns with available resources. Be realistic while also communicating how this timeline answers to student needs and supports the broader campus community. What will this look like in 1 year? 3 years? 5 years?
- Explore the potential of bringing in a graduate assistant who can dedicate more time to the development and planning of a CRP. What does this cost look like on your campus? This is often a good alternative to a full-time staff member during early development.
- Use supporting data regarding alcohol and other drug use on your campus. This data can be found in reports such as The National College Health Assessment, CORE Survey, EverFi (Alcohol EDU), or in the Biennial Review.
- Tie your CRP to broader campus initiatives such as a strategic plan for the Division of Student Affairs or for the campus as a whole. What is the mission of your institution? The vision? The values? How does building a CRP support these?
- Tie your CRP to a bigger purpose than just your campus. This could include your state's master plan/guiding document for higher education or the state department of health's overall wellness goals. Tying this project to the federal Drug Free Schools and Communities Act is also helpful.

Seeking Funding Opportunities

- Contact your state department of health or equivalent to see what federal funding the state may already have been awarded that can be allocated to collegiate recovery, prevention and treatment. This reinforces collaborative efforts among statewide agencies and leverages existing partnerships.
- Engage your institution's foundation/giving department and build a relationship! This will aid in applying for different grants by private donors while leveraging existing campus relationships or charting new interest-based relationships.

BEST PRACTICES

Peer Support Community

The peer support community is the lifeblood of any CRP. The relationships that students build with each other and the culture of the community are ultimately what make a program effective, sustainable, and attractive to students. Some CRPs have started incorporating trained and certified peer support specialists as part of their community. If you are considering trained peers, it is important to look into your state's process for this training and certification as each state is different.

Dedicated Staff

The primary mission of professionals in the collegiate recovery field is to support students who are in recovery in higher education settings. This mission is best accomplished by having at least one paid qualified, trained and dedicated professional employed by the institution who can assess the needs of the community and each individual student to ensure appropriate levels of structure and support are provided.

When the institution pays for staff, this signals to the students and other stakeholders that the institution understands the necessity of collegiate recovery and is committed to providing services to this important group of people. Such staff may come from a broad range of educational backgrounds and experience. Staff oversight and guidance helps maintain the health of the community as a whole and promotes recovery and the holistic development of each student.

As a CRP grows to include more students, appropriate staff-to-student ratios should be considered. Staff persons serve as liaisons by providing referral services to other campus resources as needed (e.g., career services, counseling services, disability services, identity-based services, academic support services, financial aid services) and sometimes staff persons help students connect to off-campus resources (e.g., individual therapy, psychiatric services, family therapy, and recovery community organizations).

You can find example job descriptions on the **ARHE Resource Hub** at **collegiaterecovery.org/public-resource-hub/**

Staff persons also provide various forms of advocacy (i.e. academic advocacy, student conduct advocacy, admissions advocacy, legal advocacy) on behalf of students and assist non-participating students who reach out for support by facilitating referrals and offering support in the transition into recovery and where necessary, back into school.

Dedicated Space

This is vital to the mission of supporting students in recovery. Students need safe spaces to gather, meet, support each other and find respite from the dominant narrative around drinking and substance use found on college campuses. Dedicated space communicates pride and belief in the value of the recovery identity. Most underserved identities on college campuses have such spaces and accommodations.

Recovery-Supportive Programming

Scope of Programming
In general, programmatic elements should be inclusive and not specific to any single pathway of recovery.

Social Programming
Activities that foster a sense of community and help nurture relationships between students are important. Some of these activities are staff directed (such as orientation, weekly lunches, sober tailgates), and some are student directed (hiking, bowling, kickball).

To find a compelling evidence base or supportive research, visit the **ARHE Research Hub** and **Descriptive Database** to find publications specific to collegiate recovery at **collegiaterecovery.org/research-database/**

Recovery-Protective Programming

CRPs provide a variety of recovery support services to assist students in maintaining and protecting their recovery. Such services may include but are not limited to:

1. Peer support groups / seminars for students in recovery
2. Skills training/seminars (e.g., coping skills, time management, relapse prevention, financial management)
3. Easily accessible mutual aid meetings (on or off campus)
4. Clinical and/or case management for recovery support
5. Academic support (i.e., formal or informal advising)
6. Team and community building activities
7. Admission assistance/support to navigate the admissions process and entry into the institution
8. Financial assistance (e.g., scholarships)
9. Recovery-based housing support

Developing Policies

Participation & Membership Policies

CRPs maintain clearly understood requirements for continued student participation (e.g., abstinence, support for fellow students, participation requirements, and drug testing when appropriate).

Return-to-Use Protocols

CRPs include a pre-planned response for student relapse, including referral to treatment services as needed and a continuation of education as appropriate.

Co-Occurring Mental Health Disorders and Behavioral Addictions

CRPs recognize the prevalence of co-occurring disorders as well as behavioral addictions or problems (e.g., eating disorders, gambling, gaming, sex, self-harm). CRPs are encouraged to develop appropriate programming and referral resources for students who face these challenges.

You can find example policies on the **ARHE Resource Hub**.

When establishing a new program, there are factors unique to — your campus, the surrounding community, and the students that you serve — that influence the type of collegiate recovery program (CRP) that will best meet the needs of your institution

Recovery Housing

CRPs may offer recovery housing. Where possible, CRPs offer dedicated recovery housing on campus (different from substance-free housing) or provide access to recovery-oriented housing options off-campus. Recovery housing policies should be well-thought-out and clearly conveyed to potential student residents.

Program Development

CRPs may advertise their services across the campus (e.g., signage, web presence, and social media). CRPs may publicize the program to incoming students and parents (e.g., orientation/convocation for general student population and/or for incoming CRP students and their families).

Ally Trainings

Many CRPs actively work to raise consciousness of recovery by providing recovery ally training and other educational programs for the broader campus community. Cultivating allies, other student supporters, and stakeholders will build momentum and spread awareness of the CRP effort on campus. Providing a recovery ally training can also contribute to your campus becoming a recovery-ready community where students experiencing substance use disorder are supported at every turn.

Several CRPs have developed recovery ally training programs that are easily replicated for your campus. Please check out the ARHE Resource Hub for more information.

STARTING & SUPPORTING COLLEGIATE RECOVERY PROGRAMS AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS (CTS)

While CRPs are often associated with four-year institutions, their presence at community and technical colleges is equally vital. These campuses serve diverse student populations that may not be as prevalent at four-year institutions such as non-degree seeking students focused on career advancement, working adults, and those transitioning from various life situations. For many students, community colleges serve as a bridge to academic and professional advancement while balancing recovery.

A recovery-supportive space on a community or technical college campus can be transformative. Community colleges serve as ideal educational environments for those leaving treatment and judicial systems due to affordability and flexibility in course offerings. Additionally, these institutions also offer short-term credit, certificate, and noncredit job training programs designed to support workforce development

The availability of CRPs at community colleges and technical schools affords students more opportunity to engage with the campus in conjunction with their off-campus support systems. In this context, a CRP can act as a haven where students can engage with their recovery journeys, their career and academic goals, and develop skills for lifelong success.

By establishing CRPs and recovery-supportive spaces, community and technical colleges can align their mission of equity, accessibility, and workforce development with the goals of the collegiate recovery movement, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to thrive.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR CRPS AT COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

Asset Mapping and Early Planning Stages

Community colleges may not have the resources to administer large annual health surveys generally employed by four-year institutions, so it is important to look at alternative sets of data such as local health department data, community surveys, or data collected by local high schools. Where are the entry points for the students on that campus? What data sets would generate a better understanding of those students?

Outreach to the local health department, community-based organizations and agencies, and identified entry points for that campus that are opportunities to access supporting data. Potential key data points include: educational attainment information, rates of substance use, and healthcare availability. Additionally, many high schools have students take surveys that ask questions about substance use and this data may be utilized to inform programming needs for students that may attend a community college.

Accessibility and Flexibility

CRPs strive to make recovery support services readily available to all students, regardless of their academic program, schedule, or background. This accessibility may involve offering flexible meeting times for support groups, online resources and virtual meetings, and accessible, recovery-friendly spaces on campus. Offering virtual meetings, online resources, and drop-in support hours to accommodate students with demanding schedules allows students to engage in ways that make sense for their individual needs and schedules.

Tailored Support and Programming

Non-traditional students, who are prevalent at community colleges, often bring different life experiences and responsibilities to their recovery journey. Many are returning to education later in life, balancing recovery with family care, full-time employment, and/or re-entering an academic environment after years away. These students may feel that their needs don't align with those of younger peers, which can lead to feelings of isolation. A recovery-supportive space and programming that includes options like peer mentorship, flexible meeting times, and group discussions tailored to life stages and diverse recovery experiences can make the program more welcoming for non-traditional students.

First-generation students, who are also well-represented in community colleges, may face additional barriers in accessing support due to unfamiliarity with higher education resources and unique family pressures. A recovery-supportive space and programming that acknowledges these needs helps first-generation students feel welcomed, less isolated, and more inclined to participate actively. No matter the make-up of the student population, it is critical to engage students in shaping CRP programming, ensuring that their voices guide the design and delivery of services.

Collaboration with External Resources

CRPs on community college campuses are particularly valuable in helping students build support systems that extend beyond school. Many students in recovery have developed their substance use disorder within the same community where they now attend school, making it vital to encourage off-campus involvement. Facilitating connections with local recovery organizations, community recovery meetings, and promoting volunteer opportunities in recovery-focused settings helps students expand their network and sustain their recovery both on and off campus. These connections reinforce the idea that recovery is a lifelong journey that can be strengthened through community support and accountability. CRPs should work to build relationships with local recovery organizations, treatment centers, and social services to provide comprehensive support.

Awareness and Stigma Reduction

Community college faculty and staff play a key role in encouraging students to engage with recovery resources. By understanding the importance of these spaces, faculty and staff can better support students by directing them to resources, mentioning recovery support options in syllabi, and creating a campus culture that prioritizes recovery. Consider hosting workshops and events to educate the campus community about recovery supports for students.

Development, Growth, and Sustainability

As with the development of any new program, it is important to "start where you are." If all of this feels overwhelming and staff is already pulled in multiple directions to support the needs of the campus and students, it's okay! Where is the most logical place to start at this moment? Leverage ARHE's opportunities, especially technical assistance, networking, professional development, and access to additional resources. ARHE can provide essential technical assistance which can relieve some of the confusion. It also allows for guidance on which next steps make the most sense for the resources your college currently has available.

Always remember that even one student makes a difference. Continue to engage ARHE to address strategies for program development.

Programs evolve and grow over time and CRPs have times of ebb and flow that often mirror academic schedules, or calendars or events in the surrounding community. CRPs at community colleges and technical colleges do not experience the same patterns of development seen at many four-year institutions because the student population is constantly evolving. This may lead to feeling like the program is being reinvented semester-to-semester, but this is where accessibility and flexibility is key. Continue to share information about recovery support services at every event, orientation, and campus program. Engage faculty and staff as advocates who can direct students to available resources, and partner with local organizations like drug courts, treatment centers, and recovery community organizations to recruit students.

Customizing Your Approach

Remember that community and technical colleges are unique. Avoid replicating four-year institution models without adapting them to your campus's specific needs. Emphasize inclusivity, flexibility, and partnerships to build a program that works for your students.

By using this guide, community and technical colleges can create effective, sustainable CRPs that support students in recovery, foster academic and personal success, and contribute to healthier, more resilient campus communities where the campus becomes more than a place of learning; it becomes a supportive environment where students can thrive in all areas of their lives.

EXAMPLE TIMELINE FOR DEVELOPING A COLLEGIATE RECOVERY PROGRAM

YEARS 1–3

01 Laying the Foundation

- **Form a Planning Team**
  - Recruit diverse stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and community representatives.
  - Engage recovery advocates to champion the initiative within the institution.
- **Conduct Asset Mapping**
  - Assess on-campus and community resources, including recovery meetings and support services.
  - Identify gaps in services and opportunities for partnerships.
- **Raise Awareness and Reduce Stigma**
  - Host educational events and workshops to introduce the concept of collegiate recovery.
  - Engage faculty and staff in recovery ally training.
- **Start Programming**
  - Launch small-scale peer support groups or recovery meetings.
  - Offer initial recovery-friendly events to build engagement.
- **Secure Initial Funding**
  - Apply for grants or identify institutional funding sources.
  - Begin fundraising through events or partnerships.

02 Program Development & Expansion

- **Establish a Dedicated Space**
  - Secure a consistent location for recovery meetings and peer connections, even if it is temporary.
- **Enhance Programming**
  - Offer workshops on relapse prevention, life skills, and academic support.
  - Introduce social and recovery-protective events to build a sense of community.
- **Strengthen Partnerships**
  - Collaborate with local recovery organizations and treatment centers to expand services.
  - Build relationships with alumni and donors for sustained support.
- **Evaluate Progress**
  - Gather feedback from students and stakeholders to assess program impact.
  - Use institutional and community data to refine and adapt programming.

03 Growth & Planning for Sustainability

- **Hire Dedicated Staff**
  - Secure funding for a part-time or full-time CRP coordinator to oversee programming.
- **Expand Recovery-Supportive Spaces**
  - Advocate for a larger or permanent space as the program grows.
- **Increase Program Reach**
  - Launch recovery ally training for broader campus participation.
  - Offer virtual and hybrid programming for commuter and non-traditional students.
- **Formalize Policies and Procedures**
  - Develop participation guidelines, relapse protocols, and program policies.
- **Measure and Showcase Success**
  - Conduct evaluations and share impact data with stakeholders and administration.
  - Highlight successes through campus events and publications to ensure continued support.
- **Prepare for Long-Term Development**
  - Create a strategic plan.
  - Focus on securing multi-year funding and building a resilient recovery community.

This timeline emphasizes incremental growth, flexibility, and adaptation to meet the unique needs of each campus and its student body. By year three, the CRP should be a growing and visible campus resource, supporting the academic and recovery success of its students.

RESOURCES

ARHE Resource Hub
This digital resource hub was built by collegiate recovery staff for collegiate recovery staff and houses a multitude of resources and training materials.

ARHE Research Hub
View a descriptive database of all collegiate recovery research to date, while viewing current studies as well.

ARHE Webinars and Articles
The ARHE blog provides information on various topics relating to collegiate recovery. Upcoming programming can be found on the Programming page of the Membership Portal.

Collegiate Recovery Cost Effectiveness Calculator
Use this calculator to determine the cost savings and cost effectiveness of a collegiate recovery program on your campus and speak to the financials.

ARHE Member Map
Use this map to take a look at the various institutions who are members of ARHE.

ARHE Contact
Reach out to ARHE staff to request a variety of resources, including support with getting a CRP started.

ARHE Standards and Recommendations
Review the Standards and Recommendations and continue working towards these while developing your program.

ARHE Ethical Considerations
The ethical considerations are intended to assist staff in making ethical decisions that prioritize the physical and emotional well-being of students within a collegiate recovery program.

ARHE Technical Assistance
Apply for free technical assistance support to begin your program.

ARHE Standardized Review for Collegiate Recovery Advancement
Review the official accreditation process for collegiate recovery. The Internal Review materials are available to institutional members. External reviews can be requested and will be performed by contractors through the ARHE.

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About the Center for Addiction Recovery Support (CARS)

The Center for Addiction Recovery Support (CARS) provides essential training and technical assistance (TTA) to help organizations better support individuals facing substance use and co-occurring mental health challenges.

In collaboration with **SAMHSA's Office of Recovery**, the CARS program aims to expand access to training and **technical assistance** for addiction recovery support services nationwide.

CARS is led by **One World Recovery Network (OWRN)**, a Peer-Led Recovery Community Organization. CARS expands upon the previous work done by the Peer Recovery Center of Excellence (PRCOE); and is committed to expanding recovery support resources for all communities.

For more information, visit **https://www.carsrecovery.org/**.

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About the Independence Blue Cross (IBX) Foundation

The Independence Blue Cross Foundation (Foundation) is the private, corporate, charitable foundation of Independence with a mission to lead sustainable solutions that improve the health and well-being of the community. The Foundation was founded in 2011 and builds upon Independence's social mission. The Foundation focuses on areas of impact including access to care, the healthcare workforce, and nonprofit sustainability. Since 2011, the Foundation has awarded nearly $48 million in grants to community-based nonprofit organizations, privately funded health centers, and accredited nursing programs serving more than 300,000 residents in Southeastern Pennsylvania.
Through its Supporting Treatment and Overdose Prevention (STOP) initiative, the Independence Blue Cross Foundation works to end the stigma of addiction and increase equitable access to community based prevention, treatment, and recovery resources for opioid use disorder.

SOMEONE YOU KNOW CAMPAIGN - INDEPENDENCE BLUE CROSS FOUNDATION

This campaign directly addresses stigma surrounding substance use disorder. The website includes stories, a podcast, and resources you may find helpful.

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