



# Using Challenge Course Education in Recovery Ally Programs



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## Introduction

- Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRPs) are gaining popularity in higher education to support students who identify as “in recovery.”
- The Association of Recovery in Higher Education defines CRPs as “a university-provided supportive environment within the campus culture that reinforces the decision to engage in a lifestyle of recovery from substance use.”
- CRPs are rapidly expanding due to the increase in “illicit drug use among young adults aged 18 to 25 years old from 37.5% in 2015 to 39.1% in 2019”
- The central hypothesis is that an experiential learning activity linking the recovery process from addiction or substance misuse to physical activity destigmatizes addiction and recovery, thus enhancing allyship for the recovery community.

## Abstract

- The Recovery Ally Challenge Course was delivered to students in a fraternity at a large southeastern public 4-year institution.
- The program provided participants with an experiential learning activity with debrief questions that connected the process of recovery to physical activity in an effort to reduce the stigma surrounding addiction and recovery.
- The activity in this project focused on supporting students to develop skills needed for assessing their substance-using behaviors and forming recovery-friendly environments through critical self-reflection and problem-solving activities.
- This presentation will report on the implementation process, evaluation methods, and directions for scaling.

## Methods

- A mixed-methods action research design was used.
- We used both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the program.
- The quantitative method included a survey that questioned: recreational sports involvement, substance-using behaviors on the frequency of use and reasons for use, attitudes about active substance use, stigma towards peers in recovery, and group climate on enmeshment/influencing climate and discouraging of substance use climate.
- The qualitative method included the study team conducting observations during the activities.
  - Observations may include providing statements from participants or describing nonverbal behaviors that demonstrate the mechanisms for a successful, or lack of, program.

## Implementation

August 22nd to December 9th, 2022  
Research conducted

September 17th, 2022  
Immediate post-survey

October 17th, 2022  
30 day follow-up survey

December 17th, 2022  
90 day follow-up survey

## Evaluation Methods

Qualtrics was used to administer a survey with the following measures:

1. Connection to the recovery community
2. Recreational Sports Involvement Survey (RSIS)
3. Substance Using Behaviors: Frequency
4. Substance Using Behaviors: Reasons for substance use
5. Attitudes towards active substance use
6. Stigma towards peers in recovery
7. Group Climate: Enmeshment/Influencing Group Climate
8. Group Climate: Discouraging Substance Use

## Scaling

- 1 facilitator per 10 people, at least 3 activities, perspective participants should score high on RSIS
- We are unsure if this would be beneficial for groups that do not have experience with substance use conduct or low group climate

## Discussion

- Data analyses are currently being conducted with assistance from OIR
- Preliminary evidences indicate the pilot program positively impacted the participants in reducing stigma surrounding substance misuse and recovery.

## References

Association of Recovery in Higher Education: ARHE. (2021, August 23). Retrieved March 6th, 2023, from [https://collegiaterecovery.org/#:~:text=A%20Collegiate%20Recovery%20Program%20\(CRP\)%20is%20a%20college%20or%20university,environment%20within%20the%20campus%20culture.](https://collegiaterecovery.org/#:~:text=A%20Collegiate%20Recovery%20Program%20(CRP)%20is%20a%20college%20or%20university,environment%20within%20the%20campus%20culture.)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2021). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. PEP21-07-01-003, NSDUH Series H-56). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>