COLLEGIATE RECOVERY PROGRAM TOOLKIT

AUTHORS

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SUMMARY

The Collegiate Recovery Program (CRP) Toolkit is designed to assist colleges and universities in developing, implementing, and sustaining programs that address the needs of students in recovery from substance use. Grounded in national best practices and featuring Tompkins Cortland Community College as a case study, the guide offers a comprehensive framework for establishing inclusive, supportive, and effective CRP communities across diverse campus settings.

Serving as a foundational resource for understanding recovery within the higher education context, the toolkit begins with an exploration of recovery-related language, key definitions, and pertinent historical background. It provides institutions with actionable guidance for launching a CRP, including strategies for forming multidisciplinary teams, leveraging campus and community assets, and addressing common barriers such as stigma, resource limitations, and institutional hesitancy.

It includes evidence-informed standards, adaptable program models, and benchmarking tools to support the customization of recovery initiatives to meet the distinct needs of student populations. The toolkit also emphasizes the importance of and provides guidance for creating programs that are accessible and welcoming to all students, ensuring that CRPs support individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and identities. Additionally, the resource outlines detailed approaches to outreach and engagement, policy development, budget planning, and integration of recovery supports into residential life. Through this comprehensive framework, campus leaders are equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to build and sustain a recovery-friendly infrastructure that fosters student success.

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1. LANGUAGE OF RECOVERY

Language plays a decisive role in shaping perceptions, influencing stigma, and framing the conversation around substance use and recovery. Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRPs) must adopt and model recovery-affirming language that promotes dignity, inclusivity, and hope.

Using person-first language (e.g., "person in recovery" instead of "addict") reflects respect for the individual and acknowledges that recovery is a personal journey rather than a fixed label. In CRPs, language should be carefully chosen to avoid perpetuating stereotypes, marginalization, or shame. Institutions are encouraged to incorporate recovery-friendly terminology into policy documents, training materials, classroom syllabi, and campus communications.

A helpful resource is the Addictionary by the Recovery Research Institute, which provides guidance on terms that reduce stigma and support a recovery-oriented culture. CRPs can also promote awareness campaigns that include visual reminders—such as "Recovery Ally" stickers or signage—to normalize recovery and educate the campus community about language's impact.

Recovery is not limited to substance use alone, nor is it confined to abstinence-based models. Definitions offered by organizations like SAMHSA and OASAS emphasize that recovery is a process of change focused on improving health and wellness, living a self-directed

life, and reaching one's full potential. These broad, inclusive definitions avoid referencing specific diagnoses or substances, reinforcing the idea that recovery can apply to anyone striving for positive change in their life.

For teens and young adults in particular, recovery is often connected to identity formation, self-discovery, and the development of personal goals. Young people attending a Youth Recovery Institute (YRI) conducted by Youth Voices Matter defined recovery as:

> *"A personal and individualized journey that involves setting goals with a continuation of self-discovery and healing, while moving towards taking personal accountability and responsibility and achieving one's potential through discipline, structure, and grace."*

College students in recovery may be navigating academic stress, trauma, mental health conditions, and/or systemic barriers. Language that affirms multiple pathways and lived experience is essential to creating a supportive environment.

CRPs should honor the diverse ways students may define and experience recovery. Some may find meaning in mutual aid groups or spirituality, while others may rely on professional treatment, medication, peer support, harm reduction, or natural recovery. By affirming the full spectrum of recovery identities and approaches, CRPs foster belonging and empowerment.

KEY PRACTICES

• Avoid terms like "clean" or "dirty" to describe sobriety or substance use.
• Use clinical terms like "substance use disorder" rather than slang or pejorative labels.
• Empower students to define their recovery and honor their language choices.
• Emphasize recovery as a growth process rather than a binary process or endpoint.
• Normalize recovery across the campus landscape as a sign of strength, not a deficit.

2. WHAT IS RECOVERY?

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), recovery is defined as:

> *"A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential."*

The New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) expands on this by stating,

> *"Recovery begins the moment a person decides to make better choices about their physical and mental well-being, work to live a meaningful self-directed life, and strive to achieve their full potential. There is no one way to be in recovery."*

Recovery can be pursued through multiple pathways, including formal treatment, mutual aid, spiritual communities, peer support, and holistic wellness. It may involve abstaining from substances, practicing harm reduction, addressing mental health needs, or healing from trauma and behavioral addictions. In a collegiate context, students may define their recovery in ways that reflect their age, culture, values, and academic journey.

Research shows that students participating in CRPs often achieve higher GPAs, experience lower relapse rates, and have improved graduation outcomes. CRPs serve not only as health initiatives but also as drivers of academic success and institutional equity. Their presence sends a clear message: recovery belongs here.

3. WHAT IS A COLLEGIATE RECOVERY PROGRAM?

A Collegiate Recovery Program is a structured support model within a college or university that provides students in recovery from substance use disorders and other behavioral health challenges with the resources, community, and environment they need to thrive academically and personally.

CRPs are built on the premise that students should not have to choose between their recovery and their education. They should be able to pursue both simultaneously. CRPs may vary in size and scope, but core components often include:
- Peer support
- Recovery-affirming activities
- Access to counseling and wellness services
- Educational workshops
- Recovery housing
- Dedicated campus space

The presence of a CRP normalizes recovery on campus, reduces stigma, and increases student retention, engagement, and success. According to ARHE:

"A college or university-provided, supportive environment within the campus culture that reinforces the decision to engage in a lifestyle of recovery from substance use... designed to provide an educational opportunity alongside recovery support to ensure that students do not have to sacrifice one for the other."

The college environment can often promote a culture where substance use is normalized, glamorized, or seen as central to the student experience. This can be especially difficult for students seeking to make healthier choices, those in early recovery, or those who prefer to avoid substances. CRPs are critical in counterbalancing this narrative by creating intentional, recovery-affirming spaces and communities.

Intentional spaces, whether physical, social, or emotional, are essential to students' success in recovery. These spaces acknowledge the diversity of students' experiences and identities and aim to reduce the isolation often felt by those who may not relate to the dominant campus culture. When students feel welcomed and safe, they are more likely to participate, connect with peers, and take ownership of their recovery journey.

CRPs also actively work to reduce stigma by modeling recovery-positive language and promoting awareness. Whether internalized or external, stigma can be a significant barrier to seeking support. By using person-first, nonjudgmental language and recognizing recovery as a strength rather than a deficit, CRPs foster a campus environment where students in recovery are valued and empowered. Resources and training for staff and students help shift attitudes and reduce harmful stereotypes.

NORMALIZING RECOVERY

- **Ask professors to post a "Recovery Ally" sign on their office door or outside the classroom where they conduct office hours.**

- **For academic courses in related fields such as behavioral health or psychology, ask professors to include information about your CRP on their syllabi.**

- **Build relationships with student leaders of campus organizations who will listen to your story about collegiate recovery and the on-campus program. Ask how they can help you spread the word about your program, and give back by exploring ways you can help them promote their programs in return.**

- **Meet with staff at other affinity groups, cultural centers, and student organizations and ask them to post "Recovery Ally" signs in prominent places.**

- **Ask student affairs professionals to identify campus faculty and staff who are interested in serving as guest speakers on recovery issues and as role models for students in recovery.**

- **As you build relationships with influential administrators, find nuanced ways to introduce data showing how a robust collegiate recovery program affects enrollment and graduation rates and reduces tuition loss related to student dropout.**

- **Form relationships with faculty in behavioral health fields whose courses feature independent coursework for credit. Talk to them about past projects involving student panels and/or outside speakers addressing mental health, substance misuse, and the unique challenges students affected by these issues face on campus.**
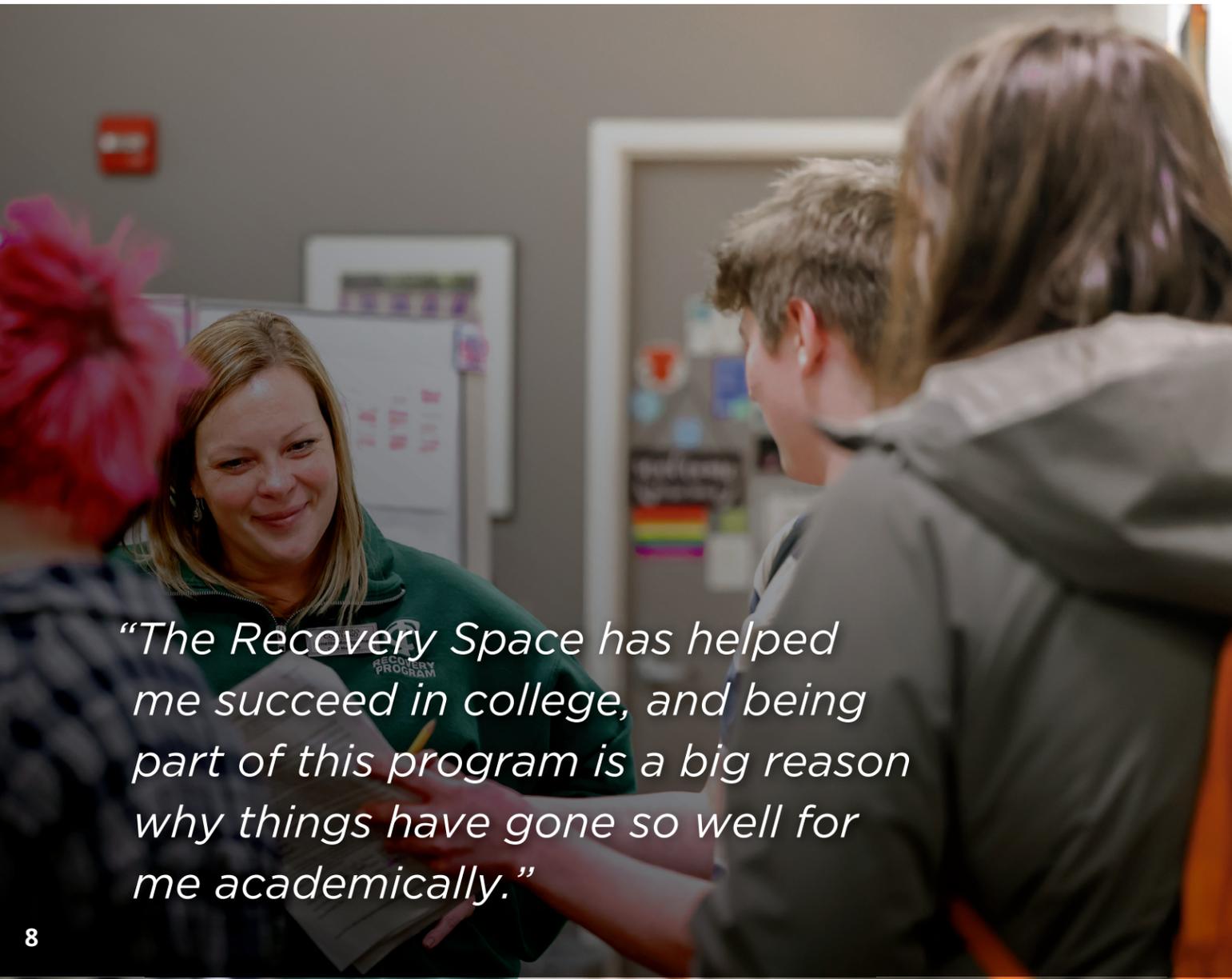
4. HISTORY OF COLLEGIATE RECOVERY PROGRAMS

The collegiate recovery movement began in 1977 when Bruce Donovan launched the first program at Brown University, recognizing the need for structured recovery support within higher education. In 1997, Augsburg University created StepUp, the first CRP to incorporate on-campus recovery housing, setting a new national model.

In the early 2000s, collegiate recovery programs and recovery high schools found common ground and formed collaborative coalitions, including the Association of Recovery Schools (2002) and the Association of Recovery in Higher Education (2010).

Since then, CRPs have expanded dramatically across the U.S., with public health support and increased institutional recognition. Modern CRPs may now support recovery from substance use, co-occurring mental health conditions, eating disorders, gambling, trauma, and other behavioral challenges.

Many also incorporate harm reduction models, hybrid supports, and culturally responsive services that reflect the diversity of the student population.

"The Recovery Space has helped me succeed in college, and being part of this program is a big reason why things have gone so well for me academically."

5. GETTING STARTED

Launching a Collegiate Recovery Program requires thoughtful planning, cross-campus collaboration, and a clear understanding of student needs. Whether you're building a CRP from the ground up or strengthening an existing support structure, there are critical steps and questions to answer throughout your process.
ARHE offers a Readiness Assessment that institutions can use to evaluate their preparedness and determine strategic next steps. Key questions include:

IS THERE ANY HISTORY OF PAST CRP EFFORTS ON CAMPUS?

- Understanding what has been tried before including successes and failures can provide insight into institutional culture and potential allies or barriers.

WHAT STAGE ARE YOU IN?

- Are you just starting out, or are recovery-related supports already in place (e.g., counseling, peer groups, health promotion)

HAVE YOU IDENTIFIED A PLANNING TEAM?

- Bringing together a core group of committed stakeholders from student services, wellness, counseling, residence life, and administration is essential.

HOW FAMILIAR IS YOUR TEAM WITH THE SURROUNDING RECOVERY COMMUNITY?

- Understanding the landscape of local mutual aid groups, treatment centers, and other providers helps create a recovery ecosystem.

WHO ARE THE KEY DECISION-MAKERS AND ALLIES ON CAMPUS?

- Champions in leadership positions can make or break the success of your initiative.

WHAT ARE YOUR PERCEIVED BARRIERS?

- Consider institutional resistance, stigma, budget limitations, or lack of visibility among students in recovery.

WHERE WILL YOUR CRP BE HOUSED STRUCTURALLY?

- Options include residence life, student wellness, health services, counseling, or diversity and inclusion offices.

HOW MUCH STAFF OR VOLUNTEER TIME CAN BE COMMITTED?

- Successful CRPs need reliable coordination and consistent presence to build trust and engagement.

Completing this readiness exercise gives direction and helps generate buy-in from stakeholders through a professional and informed approach.

6. STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To support quality, consistency, and student-centered success, CRPs should align with core standards recognized by the field. According to ARHE, best practices for CRPs include the following core components:

- Acknowledgement that recovery is dynamic and individualized.
- Emphasis on multiple pathways to recovery without a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Access to a dedicated, affirming physical space for students in recovery.
- Robust peer support and a sense of community through student-led engagement.

- Regular meetings, programming, and wellness activities.
- Qualified and ethical staff to support recovery goals.
- A non-profit, mission-aligned structure embedded within the institution.
- Strong partnerships with campus and community stakeholders.
- Promotion of belonging, wellness, and trauma-informed care.

These standards, as outlined by ARHE, provide a baseline for institutions to adapt according to their student population, culture, and capacity. CRPs should integrate these recommendations with institution-specific strategies to create a responsive and sustainable program.

7. BUILDING YOUR TEAM

Consider the metaphor of assembling a basketball team: A successful team requires individuals with diverse skills and abilities to create a well-rounded and dynamic unit. Similarly, when establishing a Collegiate Recovery Program on campus, it is essential to cultivate a diverse team that includes various partners and stakeholders.

After completing a readiness assessment, institutions should take the following foundational steps:

- Identify your stakeholders: Include students in recovery, student affairs professionals, health center staff, faculty, administrators, and community recovery partners.
- Map your campus and community assets: What already exists? What's missing? Who can support the vision? (See next section: Asset Mapping)
- Clarify your goals: Will your CRP focus on harm reduction, abstinence-based recovery, or both? Will you provide housing, peer support, and/or academic advocacy?
- Start small, think big: Begin with a few students, one staff contact, and a safe meeting space. Scale responsibly.
- Document the need: Use local, regional, and campus-specific data.

8. ASSET MAPPING

"Nothing about us, without us." This principle of inclusive planning reminds us that the best way to serve students in recovery is to involve them from the beginning. Asset mapping is a strategic process used to assess the current resources, strengths, and gaps related to recovery support on campus and in the surrounding community. According to ARHE guidance, asset mapping helps ensure that CRPs are responsive to real needs and avoid duplication of services.

WHY ASSET MAPPING MATTERS

Before launching or expanding a Collegiate Recovery Program, it's essential to take stock of the following:

- Supports that already exist on campus and in the surrounding community
- Gaps are in services, outreach, or engagement
- Former and current students, faculty, staff, and community allies involved in recovery efforts

An effective asset map allows your institution to build from a place of strength and avoid duplicating efforts while recognizing overlooked or underutilized resources.

SOME KEY AREAS TO EXPLORE INCLUDE:

- Campus counseling and wellness services
- Residence life and housing policies
- Student conduct systems
- Affiliated organizations, student clubs, and advocacy groups
- Local 12-step, harm reduction, or peer-led groups
- Spiritual or cultural centers
- Alums and faculty allies in recovery

INFORMATION TO GATHER

- History of past recovery initiatives on campus
- Data from student health and wellness surveys
- Existing policies around substance use, academic withdrawal, and conduct
- Student interest or participation in health/wellness programming
- Faculty/staff who are trained as recovery allies or mental health first-aiders
- Locations of sober-friendly spaces on campus
- Current student organizations with wellness, inclusion, and/or advocacy missions

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Consider creating a spreadsheet or interactive map that lists your assets by type, location, and current level of engagement. Sharing this can build momentum, show that your CRP is part of a broader ecosystem, and invite collaboration.

9. OVERCOMING BARRIERS

While the potential benefits of CRPs are profound, institutions may encounter barriers when developing or expanding these programs. Anticipating and addressing these challenges is essential for building resilience in your CRP from the start.

COMMON BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- Institutional resistance
- Misconceptions about what recovery means
- Fear that a CRP will attract "high-risk" students
- Bureaucratic delays or lack of decision-maker buy-in

Response: Provide research, student testimonials, and benchmarking data from similar institutions. Highlight how CRPs improve retention and reduce crisis-related interventions.

FUNDING CONSTRAINTS

- Limited budgets or competing priorities
- Lack of awareness that CRPs are eligible for certain grants

Response: Start with a modest pilot model, seek local partnerships, and explore funding through wellness grants, state prevention dollars, alumni giving, or student activity fees.

VISIBILITY AND OUTREACH

- Students may not know the CRP exists
- Stigma may prevent students from self-identifying

Response: Embed CRP messaging across campus— orientation, class syllabi, counseling referral lists, RA training, and student org collaborations. Normalize recovery through visibility campaigns.

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

- No dedicated space on campus
- Limited staffing
- Unclear reporting lines or program "ownership"

Response: Advocate for multipurpose space early, even if temporary. Clarify which department "houses" the CRP and outline responsibilities. Leverage student volunteers or part-time staff until full funding is secured.

BARRIERS FACED BY STUDENTS

Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRPs) must also account for the unique and multifaceted challenges students face when attempting to access recovery support. For students with marginalized identities, including BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and first-generation college students, barriers such as cultural stigma, systemic inequities, and a sense of exclusion can significantly hinder engagement. Economic insecurity further compounds these difficulties, as treatment, transportation, housing, or childcare costs may render recovery resources inaccessible. Additionally, students with histories of trauma or disciplinary action may experience a deep mistrust of institutional systems, making them reluctant to utilize official support services. Finally, the structure of academic life itself, including rigid scheduling, inflexible deadlines, and punitive attendance or grading policies, can inadvertently undermine a student's recovery process by prioritizing performance over well-being. An inclusive and effective CRP must acknowledge and proactively address these intersecting barriers to equitably support all students in recovery.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Conduct listening sessions with students in recovery.
- Use anonymous surveys to identify needs and barriers.
- Collaborate with inclusion and cultural centers.
- Advocate for flexible leave policies, grading accommodations, and recovery-affirming conduct procedures.
- Train faculty and staff on recovery-friendly practices.

By proactively addressing these barriers, your CRP becomes not just a program, but a cultural shift toward equity, wellness, and student success.

"Before I joined TC3's Recovery Program, I barely talked to anyone on campus. Now I come to campus looking forward to hanging out with my friends in the recovery space."

10. RECOVERY CAPITAL

Recovery capital refers to the "the internal and external resources that can be drawn upon to pursue, achieve, sustain, and enhance a life of recovery or wellbeing, according to David Whitesock. Therefore, understanding and enhancing students' recovery capital should be central to the mission of any CRP. Tools such as the Recovery Capital Index (RCI) are helpful to quantify and measure these resources.

WHY IT MATTERS

Students with higher recovery capital are more likely to achieve long-term recovery, succeed academically, and stay engaged in campus life. By contrast, students with lower recovery capital due to trauma, poverty, marginalization, or lack of support face greater challenges and are more vulnerable to relapse and dropout. CRPs are critical in identifying and building recovery capital across multiple domains.

CORE DOMAINS OF RECOVERY CAPITAL

- Personal Capital- Internal assets that support wellness, stability, and identity formation.
- General physical health
- Mental and emotional well-being
- Educational achievement and goals
- Employment or job readiness
- Housing stability
- Financial literacy and independence
- Transportation access
- Nutrition, sleep, and self-care

CRPs strengthen personal capital by connecting students to wellness services, academic support, basic needs programs, and peer mentoring. They also help students build skills such as time management, self-advocacy, and goal-setting, supporting both recovery and academic persistence.

Social Capital- Positive relationships and support systems that foster belonging and accountability:
- Supportive family and peer relationships
- Mentors, sponsors, and advisors
- Opportunities for leadership and service
- Safe, affirming social environments

CRPs build social capital by fostering recovery communities grounded in trust, shared experience, and peer leadership. Through events, peer groups, and informal gatherings, students build strong support networks that reduce isolation and reinforce recovery.

Cultural Capital- Beliefs, values, and identities that shape a person's worldview and meaning-making:
- Spirituality and cultural traditions
- Affirmation of diverse identities (racial, gender, sexual, linguistic)
- Personal values and ethics

CRPs enhance cultural capital by offering culturally responsive programming, collaborating with campus inclusion offices, and creating spaces that affirm students' varied identities. Recognizing and honoring diverse recovery experiences helps foster equity and belonging.

Community Capital- The broader recovery ecosystem available on and off campus:

Access to treatment providers and harm reduction groups
- Partnerships with community organizations
- Sober housing and transportation options
- Legal advocacy and reentry support

CRPs strengthen community capital by forging intentional partnerships beyond campus. By connecting
students to local resources and hosting collaborative events, CRPs create a seamless continuum of care that extends students' support networks.

EQUITY AND RECOVERY CAPITAL

Recovery capital is not distributed equally. Systemic barriers—including racism, classism, ableism, and homophobia—can limit access to resources and deepen vulnerability. Students with multiple marginalized identities may face greater hurdles to building recovery capital.

CRPs must be intentionally designed to address and rebalance these inequities. This includes centering the voices of students with lived experience, using trauma-informed and anti-racist practices, advocating for institutional change, and creating accessible, inclusive environments that affirm and support all students.

MEASURING AND ENHANCING RECOVERY CAPITAL

Institutions can use tools like the Recovery Capital Index (RCI) to assess individual or community-level strengths and gaps. This can help inform strategic planning, grant proposals, and individualized support plans.
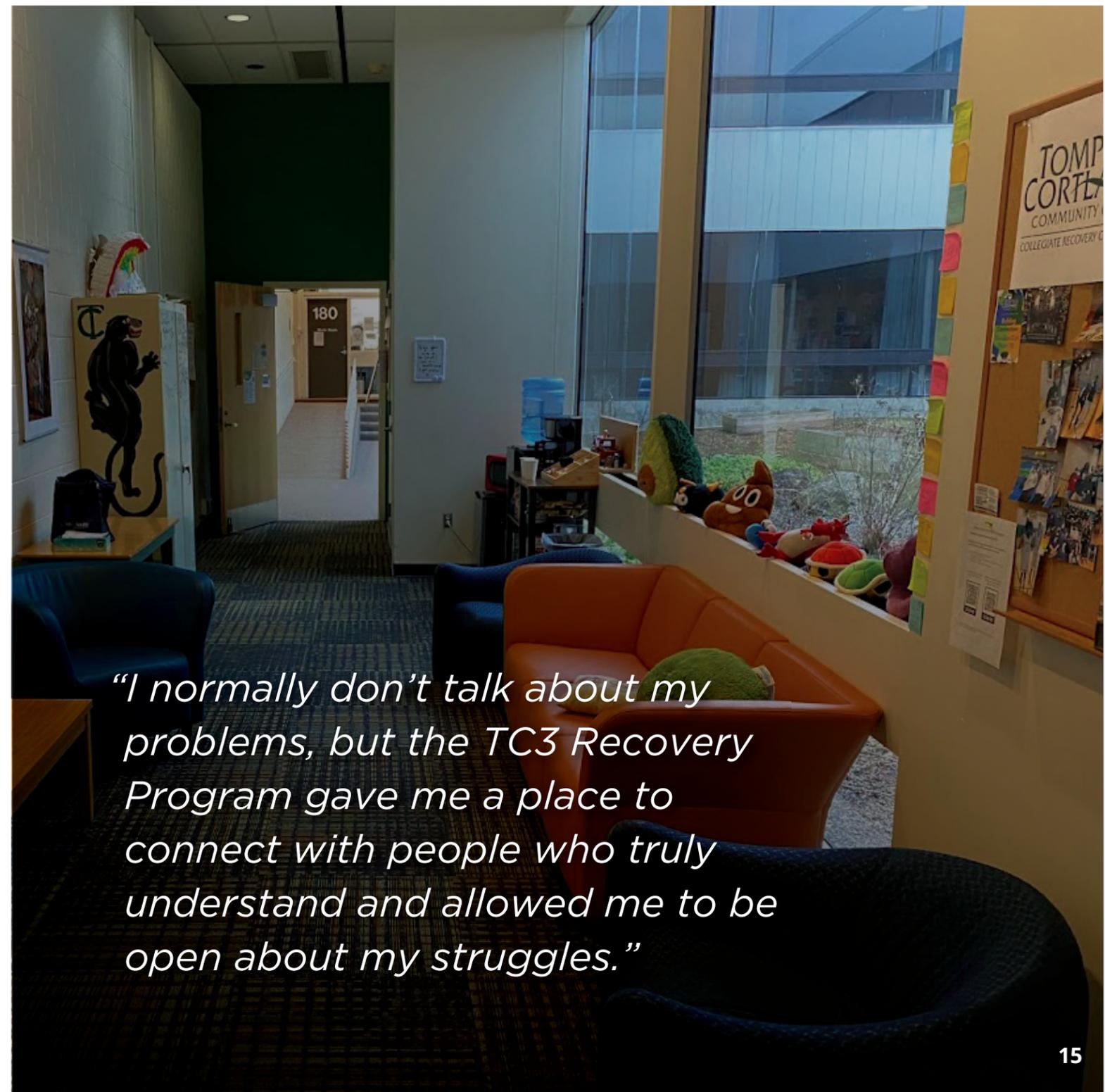
"I normally don't talk about my problems, but the TC3 Recovery Program gave me a place to connect with people who truly understand and allowed me to be open about my struggles."

11. BENCHMARKING

Benchmarking allows institutions to learn from existing CRPs and build a compelling case for program development.

As ARHE suggests, comparing your institution with peer and near institutions can:

• Demonstrate feasibility and inspire confidence among stakeholders
• Highlight effective models for service delivery
• Help define goals, expectations, and growth trajectories

WHY BENCHMARK?

• Understand what works: Learning from existing CRPs can help you avoid reinventing the wheel.
• Gain credibility: Demonstrating that peer institutions have robust CRPs can influence administrative buy-in.
• Set goals: Benchmarking helps you define reasonable expectations and long-term planning targets.
• Identify gaps: Seeing what others offer may highlight services or policies your campus is missing.

PEER VS. NEAR INSTITUTIONS

• Peer institutions share characteristics similar to your college's (e.g., size, student population, public/private status, or mission).
• Near Institutions are geographically close and may serve overlapping student populations or share community resources.

KEY BENCHMARKING QUESTIONS:

• Does the institution have a CRP? What services are offered?
• How is it staffed and funded?
• Are students involved in leadership roles within the CRP?
• Where is it housed within the institution?
• What is the CRP's mission and vision?
• Is there a dedicated physical space?
• Are outcomes data available (e.g., retention, GPA, relapse rates)?
• What types of programming are available (e.g., recovery meetings, sober social events, academic support, harm reduction, advocacy)?

HOW TO CONDUCT BENCHMARKING RESEARCH

Benchmarking is critical to developing or enhancing a CRP. Begin by exploring institutional websites and CRP-specific pages to examine how various colleges and universities structure and present their programs. The ARHE CRP Directory is a key resource for identifying active programs nationwide and collecting baseline information about their offerings. Consider contacting staff or faculty listed as CRP leads for deeper insights into program design, common challenges, and effective strategies. Participating in ARHE conferences, webinars, and affinity groups further enriches your understanding of the field, offering opportunities to ask questions, learn from peers, and establish professional connections. In addition, subscribing to relevant listservs and engaging in online communities can help you stay current on trends, innovations, and best practices. Collectively, these strategies provide a well-rounded perspective of the collegiate recovery landscape and support informed, strategic planning aligned with your institution's goals.

When documenting what peer or near institutions are doing, consider tracking:

• Institution name
• Contact person & title
• Services offered
• Year CRP was established
• Number of students served
• Budget size
• Institutional home (which office or department)
• Key accomplishments
• Challenges encountered
• Innovations (e.g., hybrid support, online outreach,

USING BENCHMARKING RESULTS

Benchmarking results are essential to shaping the development and growth of a CRP. By examining how peer institutions structure their programs and support students in recovery, institutions can make informed, evidence-based decisions that reflect national best practices and campus-specific needs. These insights can inform program design, drive policy improvements, and support the scaling of services. Benchmarking also provides compelling justification for institutional investment and strengthens proposals for external funding, grants, and awards. When integrated into strategic planning, benchmarking findings enhance a CRP's credibility, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. Importantly, benchmarking is not about comparison for its own sake, rather, it is about contributing to a broader recovery movement in higher education that is collaborative, informed, and committed to continuous improvement.

"I never thought I'd go back to college, let alone be a part of something like this. TC3's Recovery Program gave me a place where I don't have to hide who I am."

12. PROGRAM MODELS

There is no one-size-fits-all model for a Collegiate Recovery Program. Instead, programs should be customized based on the student population's needs, institutional culture, available resources, and the surrounding community. One of the most important decisions in designing a CRP is determining where your program will fall along the continuum of recovery support.

MODEL TYPE	APPROACH	EXAMPLES
Abstinence-Based	Emphasizes total sobriety from all substances. Often aligned with 12-step traditions.	AA, NA, traditional CRPs
Harm Reduction	Focuses on reducing the negative consequences of use rather than requiring abstinence. Supports incremental change.	Naloxone distribution, safe use education, motivational interviewing
Hybrid	Offers space for all recovery pathways—abstinence-based and harm reduction—to coexist.	Most modern CRPs in inclusive settings

Programs should be clear about their framework, but also remain flexible and student-driven. CRPs that welcome all pathways to recovery tend to be more inclusive and reflective of student diversity. ARHE identifies several common frameworks used across institutions:

COMMON STRUCTURAL MODELS

Community-Centered CRP
- Based in a wellness center, student affairs office, or standalone unit
- Includes a drop-in space, programming, and peer groups
- Most accessible and scalable option

Residence-Based CRP
- Includes designated recovery housing (entire buildings or dedicated floors)
- Supports recovery-friendly dorm life with quiet hours, substance-free zones, and peer accountability
- Often paired with community-centered supports

Integrated Clinical CRP
- Housed within or affiliated with campus counseling or health services
- Offers access to clinical professionals, case management, and crisis support
- Best suited for campuses with larger mental health infrastructure

Student-Led Model
- Driven by a student organization or advisory council
- Offers leadership opportunities, advocacy, and peer-to-peer support
- Can be effective when staff resources are limited

Co-Curricular or Integrated Model
- Embeds recovery into broader identity-affirming or social justice frameworks
- Partnerships with LGBTQ+, BIPOC, first-gen, or disability student support services
- Promotes recovery as an equity issue

KEY PROGRAM ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER

MODEL TYPE	APPROACH
Dedicated Space	A visible, welcoming space on campus where students in recovery can gather, decompress, and build community.
Peer Support	Students supporting each other through shared experience. Peer navigators, recovery meetings, and informal social connection.
Professional Staff	At least one staff member with expertise in recovery, wellness, or peer mentoring. Lived experience is a valuable asset.
Programming	Includes recovery meetings, wellness workshops, social events, harm reduction education, and life skills training.
Student Leadership	A student advisory board, regular feedback loops, and student-driven events to keep the program relevant.
Visibility and Outreach	Campaigns, presentations, and partnerships to build awareness and reduce stigma.
Housing (if applicable)	Substance-free housing options with recovery-informed policies and peer accountability.
Academic Support	Advocacy, mentoring, and resources to support students' educational success.
Ally Training	Workshops or campaigns to build recovery-affirming allies among faculty, staff, and peers.

DESIGN QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR MODEL

- What recovery pathways do your students use (e.g., abstinence, medication-supported, harm reduction)?
- Do students live on campus, commute, or attend online?
- What partnerships already exist on campus or in the community?
- What is your available space, staffing, and budget?
- Is there student leadership or a demand for advocacy?
- How will the CRP be evaluated and sustained?

By considering these elements, institutions can develop CRPs that are scalable, inclusive, and tailored to their student body's unique needs.

13. INCLUSION

In alignment with best practices identified by ARHE and others, CRPs should be designed to support students from various backgrounds and experiences. Institutions must recognize that students' access to recovery resources can be shaped by systemic barriers, including socioeconomic status, disability, race, gender identity, and cultural stigma.

Rather than referencing diversity, equity, and inclusion directly, CRPs can demonstrate inclusive practices by:

- **Addressing Systemic Barriers:** Students from marginalized communities often encounter additional obstacles in accessing recovery support, including cultural stigma and socioeconomic challenges. Implementing DEI initiatives helps dismantle these barriers, promoting equitable access to recovery resources.
- **Enhancing Program Effectiveness:** Diverse and inclusive programs are more effective in meeting the varied needs of the student body, leading to improved engagement and recovery outcomes. Research indicates that DEI initiatives can significantly enhance academic engagement and performance among university students.
- **Fostering a Supportive Community:** An inclusive CRP cultivates a sense of belonging, which is crucial for students in recovery. Recognizing and valuing diverse experiences strengthens peer support networks and encourages active participation.

STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION IN CRPS

- Develop culturally responsive programming that respects and incorporates cultural values and practices, ensuring relevance and effectiveness for diverse student groups.
- Ensure materials and communication are accessible to all students with diverse linguistic, cultural, or learning needs.
- Build diverse staffing and leadership teams by intentionally recruiting individuals who reflect the student population and bring varied lived experiences to recovery support.
- Establish collaborations with campus and community organizations to strengthen support networks and foster inclusive partnerships.
- Partner with cultural centers and student organizations to co-host events and workshops that bridge recovery with identity-affirming spaces.
- Connect with local organizations that serve underrepresented or marginalized populations to expand recovery resources beyond campus boundaries.
- Provide flexible support options that honor multiple pathways to recovery, including harm reduction and abstinence-based approaches.
- Create leadership pathways for students with lived experience to ensure recovery services are guided by those who understand the journey firsthand.

CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Integrating principles of inclusion and access into a CRP's development presents significant opportunities and nuanced challenges. Institutions must often navigate shifting political landscapes and internal policies that may influence inclusive initiatives' visibility, prioritization, and funding. Advocates for equitable recovery support must be prepared to demonstrate how inclusive practices directly contribute to improved student outcomes, engagement, and retention. Furthermore, the ability to measure the impact of these efforts through clear, data-informed metrics is essential for fostering continuous improvement and institutional accountability.

Despite these complexities, embedding inclusive and equity-minded practices into CRPs is essential for creating recovery spaces that are welcoming, affirming, and effective for all students. Recovery is inherently personal and non-linear, shaped by intersecting identities, cultural influences, and systemic barriers. By intentionally centering equity in the design and implementation of CRPs, institutions can expand their reach, reduce stigma, and more effectively support the full spectrum of student needs. In this context, inclusion is not an optional or peripheral consideration, it is a foundational element of effective, student-centered recovery support.
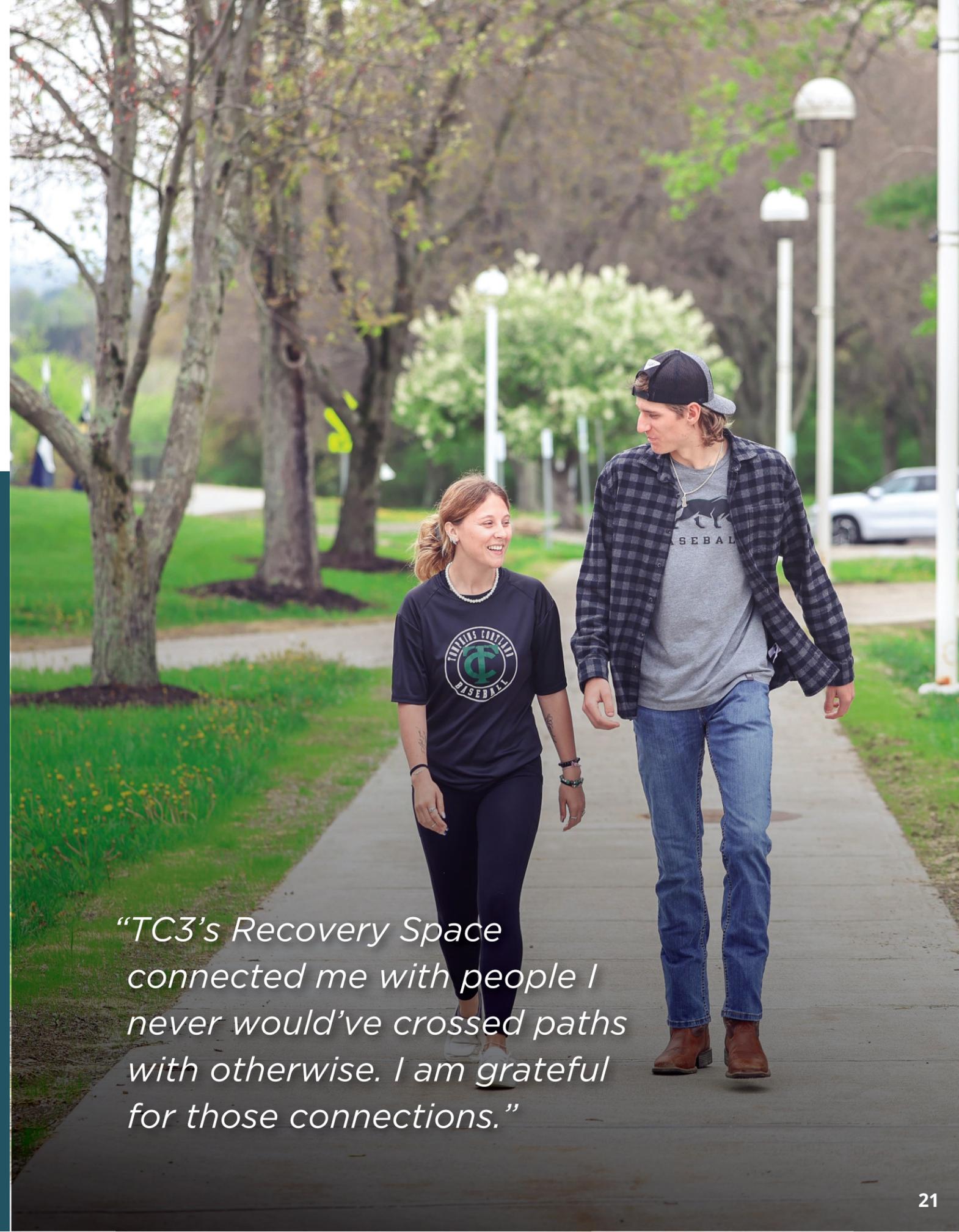
"TC3's Recovery Space connected me with people I never would've crossed paths with otherwise. I am grateful for those connections."

14. OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS BUILDING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Changing campus culture requires consistent messaging. Use campaigns to show students that recovery is real, respected, and welcomed. High visibility helps reduce stigma, encourages help-seeking behaviors, and signals that students in recovery are valued members of the campus community. When recovery is seen, and certainly not hidden, it becomes a normalized part of student life rather than an exception. Make space for fun and reflection. Balance structured and unstructured engagement.

- **Recovery Ally campaigns:** Train staff and faculty to display "Recovery Ally" stickers and offer inclusive support.
- **Social media storytelling:** Share anonymous or first-person recovery stories with permission.
- **Sober October or Recovery Month (September):** Host events, speakers, and tabling to educate the campus.
- **CRP-branded merchandise:** Provide T-shirts, water bottles, journals, or stickers that promote visibility and belonging.
- **Sober social events:** Host game nights, open mic, art therapy, movie screenings
- **Wellness workshops:** Conduct stress management, mindfulness, nutrition, and other programs.
- **Campus speaker panels:** Facilitate discussions on lived experience, trauma-informed education, and identity and recovery.
- **Service projects:** Create opportunities for volunteerism with local recovery or justice organizations.
- **Cross-club partnerships:** Collaborate with LGBTQIA+, multicultural, or spiritual groups.

ENGAGING ONLINE AND HYBRID STUDENTS

Recovery support must extend to students who are not on campus because recovery is certainly not limited by geography or enrollment status. These students may face additional challenges, such as isolation, lack of access to in-person services, or competing responsibilities like work and caregiving. Without intentional outreach and flexible programming, they risk being excluded from the recovery community and the support it provides. Ensuring that CRPs are accessible to all students regardless of where or how they engage with the institution promotes equity, fosters connection, and reinforces the message that recovery belongs everywhere.

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

- Weekly online peer meetings
- Anonymous chat forums or discussion boards
- Virtual sober social events or speaker series
- Newsletter or podcast featuring recovery stories and tips
- Consider using tools like Discord, GroupMe, or campus apps to maintain informal connections

EDUCATION AS OUTREACH

Outreach also includes education, i.e., helping the broader campus understand what recovery is (and isn't), why it matters, and how to be supportive. This involves dispelling common myths about substance use and recovery, promoting empathy, and fostering a campus environment where students in recovery feel seen, respected, and included.

Examples:
- Offer guest lectures on recovery and trauma-informed care
- Host faculty/staff lunch-and-learns on stigma and language
- Develop educational handouts for high-traffic areas (residence halls, health centers)
- Collaborate with student organizations to co-host recovery awareness events during National Recovery Month or Wellness Week
- Create short educational videos or social media campaigns that highlight student recovery stories and promote campus resources

BUILD CONSISTENCY

Students in recovery may take time to build trust. What matters most is showing up consistently. A steady presence communicates reliability and safety, key factors in fostering meaningful connections. Consistency also reinforces that recovery support is a long-term commitment, not a passing initiative.
- Keep regular meeting times and drop-in hours
- Avoid over-scheduling at the expense of reliability
- Develop a yearly calendar to pace engagement

TRACK ENGAGEMENT

Use straightforward tools to track engagement and assess which strategies are most effective. Collecting this data helps demonstrate the program's impact, refine outreach efforts, and build a strong case for continued or increased funding. It also provides valuable insights into the evolving needs of students in recovery, allowing the program to adapt and grow over time.
- Sign-in sheets or anonymous RSVP forms
- Post-event feedback surveys
- Social media analytics
- Ongoing student focus groups

15. SUSTAINABILITY AND FUNDING

A Collegiate Recovery Program must be more than a pilot project. A successful CRP will be sustainable, scalable, and financially supported over time. While many CRPs begin with grassroots energy and minimal resources, long-term success depends on securing stable funding, institutional support, and a sustainability plan that adapts as student needs evolve.

WHY SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS

- Visibility takes time: It can take several semesters or years for a CRP to become widely recognized and understood across campus, making sustained outreach and presence essential for reaching current and prospective students and their families.
- Cultural integration matters: Long-term sustainability allows the CRP to become a normalized and valued part of campus life, woven into student support services, academic planning, and institutional messaging.
- Student trust can develop slowly: Students in recovery are more likely to engage with programs that demonstrate consistency and longevity.
- Staff burnout is real: CRPs often rely on passionate individuals; without solid infrastructure and support, those individuals may burn out or leave.
- Institutional memory is short: Leadership turnover, shifting priorities, or budget constraints can end promising programs without proper embedding and documentation.

CORE COMPONENTS OF CRP SUSTAINABILITY

Organizational Home

Assigning the CRP to a well-established department or office helps protect the program during times of transition or uncertainty. It ensures institutional support, visibility, and access to resources. Because recovery is fundamentally a wellness issue, intersecting with mental health, academic success, and equity, it fits naturally within departments focused on student well-being, such as Student Affairs, Counseling, Health and Wellness, etc.

Dedicated Staffing

The ideal staffing model for a Collegiate Recovery Program includes a full-time professional with either lived recovery experience or clinical training in areas such as substance use, mental health, or trauma-informed care. This core staff member provides consistent leadership, while peer leaders, student workers, or interns can expand the program's capacity and contribute authentic, relatable perspectives. To support sustainability and reduce staff burnout, institutions should explore creative staffing pipelines, such as partnerships with AmeriCorps, graduate assistantships, or field placements in programs like social work, public health, or addiction studies. Building a diverse and stable staffing structure ensures the program remains active and resilient, even if individual personnel change.

Institutional Recognition and Funding

CRPs require ongoing budget support to sustain staffing, programming, dedicated space, and outreach efforts. Embedding the CRP into campus strategic plans, wellness initiatives, or inclusion efforts increases visibility and reinforces the program's relevance to institutional priorities. To promote long-term stability, colleges should work toward including CRPs in baseline budgets rather than relying solely on external grants or temporary funding. Visibility in campus publications, admissions materials, and student life communications further signals the program's legitimacy and permanence, helping it become a recognized and valued part of the college experience.

FUNDING SOURCES

CRPs are often funded through a combination of sources. In-Kind Contributions- Even without new funding, many resources can be leveraged:

SOURCE	EXAMPLES
Institutional Funds	Student affairs budgets, student health fees, diversity and inclusion grants
Student Activity Fees	CRPs often qualify as recognized student organizations
External Grants	SAMHSA, OASAS, local coalitions, foundations
State or Federal Programs	SUD prevention, mental health, or peer workforce funding
Philanthropy & Donations	Alums giving campaigns, named recovery spaces, crowdfunding
Partner Contributions	In-kind support from counseling centers, housing, or wellness offices

- Meeting spaces
- Staff time from existing offices
- Co-hosted events
- Shared printing, supplies, or tech access

Start by calculating the value of what's already being donated. This will help you build your budget request and demonstrate institutional investment.

BUILDING A BUDGET- A SAMPLE STARTING BUDGET MIGHT INCLUDE:

ITEM	ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST
Part-time CRP Coordinator	$25,000–$35,000
Peer Leader Stipends	$3,000–$5,000
Supplies (coffee, snacks)	$1,000
Programming (events, speakers)	$2,000–$5,000
Marketing & Outreach	$1,500
Recovery Housing Subsidy (if applicable)	Varies
Total	~$35,000–$50,000+

Demonstrating Impact- To sustain funding, CRPs must track and communicate outcomes. Consider collecting:
• Participation rates (meeting attendance, event turnout)
• Retention and graduation rates of CRP students
• GPA comparison between CRP and the general student population
• Qualitative data (student testimonials, focus group quotes)
• Prevention metrics (decreased conduct violations, hospitalizations, etc.)
• Partner feedback (counseling, residence life, faculty)

Make the Case- CRPs are not cost centers. They are strategic investments in student success, mental health, and retention. When students in recovery drop out due to lack of support, the institution loses tuition dollars, reputation, and opportunity.

Frame your CRP as:
• A driver of student enrollment, persistence, and graduation
• A wellness and equity initiative
• A campus safety and prevention effort
• A pipeline for peer leadership and public health careers

16. POLICIES AND RECOVERY HOUSING

Establishing clear, supportive policies and providing safe, substance-free living environments are two of the most powerful ways a college or university can institutionalize recovery support. This section outlines key considerations for recovery-affirming campus policies and how to develop or expand recovery housing.

WHY POLICIES MATTER

Campus policies signal an institution's values. For students in recovery, policies can either:
• Serve as affirming structures that protect their progress and well-being or
• Act as barriers that increase stress, risk of relapse, or feelings of isolation.
• Policies rooted in punishment, stigma, or rigidity often deter students from seeking help. CRP-friendly policies prioritize restoration, flexibility, confidentiality, and wellness.

RECOVERY-AFFIRMING POLICY AREAS

Academic Leave and Reentry
• Create policies that allow students to take medical or behavioral health leave and return without penalty.
• Ensure students on leave are offered a connection to the CRP and campus resources during their time away.
• Offer academic support for reentry, such as tutoring or GPA recovery programs.

Conduct and Sanctions
- Avoid zero-tolerance substance use policies that criminalize students with substance use disorders.
- Distinguish between intentional violations and students struggling with recovery.
- Offer alternative sanctions like recovery coaching, counseling, or CRP participation.

Confidentiality and Privacy
- Protect student recovery status in all academic, housing, and disciplinary records.
- Limit access to CRP participation records to only essential personnel, and clearly communicate privacy policies to students upon entry to the program.
- Ensure marketing and outreach materials emphasize confidentiality so students feel safe exploring the program without fear of exposure.
- Avoid outing students by requiring them to "prove" their recovery in public settings.

Substance-Free Events and Spaces
- Support student organizations and campus departments that offer regular sober social options.
- Designate and maintain welcoming, substance-free physical spaces on campus where students in recovery can gather, study, and build community.
- Promote substance-free events during high-risk times, such as weekends, holidays, and campus traditions, to offer meaningful alternatives to drinking or using.
- Encourage the inclusion of CRP members in event planning to ensure visibility and representation.

Bias and Inclusion
- Include "person in recovery" as a protected status in non-discrimination policies where possible.
- Ensure recovery is included in campus inclusion and identity-based training.

RECOVERY HOUSING

Recovery housing is one of the most impactful and most requested forms of support by students in recovery. It provides a stable, substance-free living environment with built-in accountability and peer support. Living among peers with shared goals fosters a sense of belonging and reduces social isolation. Additionally, recovery housing signals the institution's commitment to supporting students' long-term well-being inside and outside the classroom.

BENEFITS OF RECOVERY HOUSING
- Reduces exposure to triggers and high-risk environments
- Increases sense of community and accountability
- Improves academic performance and retention
- Normalizes recovery as part of campus life

KEY FEATURES OF RECOVERY HOUSING
- Application and eligibility process (with student input)
- Peer support model (trained peer leaders or RA alternatives)
- Clear community guidelines and mutual accountability
- Connection to CRP programs and staff
- Access to life skills workshops, mental health support, and sober events
- Financial aid compatibility (many students in recovery face financial insecurity)

CONSIDERATIONS AND CHALLENGES
- Cost: Institutions may need to subsidize or fundraise for recovery housing if not covered by student housing revenue.
- Demand: Even a small pilot (1–2 rooms or a shared apartment) can serve as a proof of concept.
- Confidentiality: Avoid labeling buildings as "recovery housing" publicly to protect student privacy.
- Stigma: Frame housing around wellness, leadership, or academic success if necessary to gain buy-in.

17. CASE STUDY

Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) Building a Recovery-Ready Campus in Rural Upstate New York

Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3), a rural two-year college in Dryden, NY, serves approximately 1,500 full-time, on-campus students, including nearly 300 living in campus housing. Recognizing a growing need for mental health and substance use recovery support, TC3 launched its Collegiate Recovery Program to create a campus culture that affirms students in all stages of recovery and wellness. This commitment reflects an institutional understanding that students facing substance use and mental health challenges deserve not only access to support but also the opportunity to thrive in higher education settings.

COMMON MODELS

MODEL	DESCRIPTION	BEST FOR
Dedicated House or Floor	Entire dorm floor or house designated for recovery students	Larger campuses with residence life infrastructure
Substance-Free Apartments	On- or off-campus apartments with recovery-minded roommates	Commuter schools or campuses with limited dorms
Partnership with Local Housing	College partners with community providers to place students in recovery-friendly housing	Rural or non-residential campuses
Hybrid Wellness Housing	Mix of students in recovery and wellness-minded students	Campuses emphasizing broader health culture

What began as a student-centered idea has become a multifaceted program that integrates harm reduction, peer support, outreach, and sober recreation, offering a model for how small colleges can develop impactful recovery infrastructure even with limited resources. TC3's approach acknowledges that recovery is not linear and that a spectrum of support must be available to meet students where they are, with dignity, compassion, and consistency.

PROGRAM GOALS

- Reduce the stigma associated with substance use and recovery
- Provide inclusive, trauma-informed support for all recovery pathways
- Offer a safe space for students to connect
- Promote academic persistence and student success through recovery support

PEER SUPPORT: THE HEART OF THE PROGRAM

TC3's CRP emphasizes the power of lived experience. At the core of the program is a Certified Recovery Peer Advocate (CRPA) who provides:

- One-on-one support meetings
- Wellness coaching
- Academic encouragement
- Referral to counseling, housing, or financial aid
- Connections to off-campus recovery resources

Students can book appointments confidentially, and drop-ins are welcomed during posted office hours in the dedicated recovery space. The CRPA model underscores a commitment to student-led healing, fostering trust and empowerment through non-clinical, peer-based relationships that complement traditional mental health services.

DEDICATED SPACE

The CRP operates in a dedicated, recovery-affirming space on campus—a warm, welcoming lounge intentionally designed to promote healing, connection, and belonging. This space offers students a safe haven where they can decompress between classes, attend peer support meetings, study, or spend time in a supportive environment. With comfortable seating, calming decor, and flexible use, the lounge serves as a retreat and a community hub for students in recovery.

Key features of a Recovery Space

- Comfortable seating and calm lighting
- Peer-led discussion groups and drop-in hours
- Coffee, snacks, and resource materials
- Open-door policy for students exploring recovery

This space has become a visible, symbolic part of TC3's Health and Wellness Services infrastructure, emphasizing that recovery is vital to student wellness and holistic well-being. Its presence reinforces the message that students in recovery are supported as valued members of the College community. Its presence normalizes help-seeking behavior and signals an institutional commitment to inclusion and holistic student support.

HARM REDUCTION + MULTIPLE PATHWAYS

Rather than enforcing a single model of recovery, TC3 supports all pathways to wellness, including:

- 12-Step meetings (AA, NA, Al-Anon)
- Harm Reduction group meetings
- SMART Recovery and other secular alternatives
- Natural recovery
- Medication-assisted recovery

This inclusive approach helps reach students who may not resonate with abstinence-only models and reinforces autonomy, dignity, and respect. It also ensures that recovery is accessible to students from diverse backgrounds and experiences, honoring personal choice and cultural considerations.

REC²: SOBER RECREATION & CONNECTION

Recognizing that isolation is a key risk factor for students in recovery, and college and university students' social activities often involve substances, TC3 created Rec², a collaboration between the Athletics and Recreation Department and the Recovery Program, to offer a series of free, sober social events that help students build community and joy in substance-free settings.

Events include weekly bowling nights, laser tag, go-karts, skiing, and more. Transportation is provided, and all activities are free to participants. Students report that Rec² is one of the most important ways they've formed meaningful friendships on campus. These events reduce social barriers and promote the protective factors associated with engagement, belonging, and positive peer connection.

RECOVERY HOUSING (PILOT STAGE)

With on-campus residence halls, TC3 is taking initial steps toward offering recovery-friendly housing:

- Identified substance-free rooms with proximity to CRP resources
- Partnered with Residence Life to create low-barrier referral and roommate-matching processes
- Integrated recovery-friendly messaging into housing materials and staff training to foster a supportive living environment and raise awareness among residents and staff
- Created plans to expand as student demand increases

This flexible model offers students the opportunity to live with peers who understand and respect their recovery goals. As the pilot evolves, it may serve as a foundation for future substance-free living communities that further integrate wellness and recovery into campus life.

CAMPUS-WIDE OUTREACH

- TC3 staff work across departments to normalize recovery as part of student life.
- Faculty Ally Outreach: Recovery Ally signage on office doors and inclusion of CRP info in syllabi
- Presentations: Orientation sessions, classroom panels, and peer storytelling events
- Affiliation with other Centers: Partnerships student activities, athletics, and counseling
- Visibility Materials: Stickers, posters, and social media campaigns to reduce stigma

Outreach efforts emphasize that recovery is not separate from student success—it is central to it. Normalizing recovery in academic and social environments fosters a sense of safety, pride, and institutional belonging for students in all stages of wellness.

IMPACT AND LESSONS LEARNED

Now in its fifth year, TC3's CRP has demonstrated:

- Increased retention among students engaged in the program
- High participation in Rec² events and peer meetings
- Positive shifts in campus conversations around harm reduction and mental health
- Enhanced collaboration across departments to support holistic student well-being
- Improved campus reputation as a recovery-supportive institution, which can attract prospective students and families seeking a safe, inclusive environment

LESSONS FROM TC3:

- Secure support from institutional leadership
- Start small, build authentically
- Students in recovery should guide the process
- Create a dedicated space
- Visibility matters - use quality marketing and promotion strategies
- Recovery support and CRPs are scalable

TC3's approach offers a replicable model for colleges seeking to build CRPs that are inclusive, student-centered, and grounded in hope. Their success underscores the truth that recovery is not a liability in higher education. Recovery support is an institutional asset, a movement, and a core part of student well-being.

CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS AND INTEGRATION

One of TC3's successes has been to embed the CRP into the fabric of the campus community by forming strong, mutually beneficial partnerships:

- Counseling and Case Management: Refers students to the CRP for ongoing peer support or harm reduction education. The CRP and counseling staff coordinate care to ensure wraparound services.
- Student Activities: Co-sponsors Rec² activities, provides promotional support, and helps fund programming through student activity fees.
- Residence Life: Collaborates on recovery housing placements and supports training for Residential Assistants on recognizing and supporting students in recovery.
- Athletics and Recreation: Delivers Rec² events and programming in collaboration with the CRP
- Faculty: Professors in human services, social sciences, and health programs often invite CRP staff and students to discuss recovery and peer support in class. Some offer extra credit for attending recovery-related events.
- These collaborations have helped normalize recovery as a campus-wide priority and established the CRP as a trusted, integrated part of student life.

STUDENT VOICE AND LEADERSHIP

At TC3, students in recovery are not just participants; they are co-creators of the CRP's vision and voice. Their involvement includes:

- Serving as peer mentors to incoming students
- Co-planning events, including Sober October and Recovery Awareness Week
- Leading recovery meetings or wellness discussions
- Meeting with administrators to share lived experiences and advocate for change

The CRP regularly surveys students to ensure that programming reflects their interests and needs. Peer leaders also receive training in boundaries, confidentiality, and trauma-informed engagement. Their leadership affirms that students in recovery are not only capable—they are agents of positive transformation.

EVALUATION AND OUTCOMES

Early indicators of success for the TC3 CRP show strong outcomes:

- Student Retention: Participants in the CRP have higher rates of semester-to-semester persistence compared to the general student population.
- Academic Performance: Many CRP participants maintain GPAs at or above the campus average.
- Mental Health & Belonging: Students report feeling significantly more supported and connected since engaging with the CRP.
- Reduction in Conduct Violations: Anecdotal evidence suggests decreased disciplinary issues among CRP-involved students.

TC3 is working to formalize these outcomes through regular data collection, assessment tools, and integration with the college's institutional effectiveness team. Quantifying these impacts is essential for sustaining and expanding recovery support on campus.

CAMPUS CULTURE SHIFT

Perhaps most powerfully, TC3's CRP has helped catalyze a broader shift in how the campus views recovery:

- Faculty and staff now understand that recovery isn't just about abstinence; it's about personal transformation, support, and dignity.
- Student leaders across unrelated organizations (e.g., athletics, student government) have attended ally training and promoted CRP events.
- College administration has begun to include recovery support in campus wellness, retention, and equity initiatives.
- Recovery support has become a visible, valued part of what makes TC3 a student-centered college.

18. BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Creating a Collegiate Recovery Program means more than launching a new initiative; it's about changing campus culture to recognize recovery as a vital, visible, and supported part of student wellness. At its core, this work is about belonging. Students in recovery often navigate college life while managing complex histories of substance use, mental health, trauma, and stigma. A CRP acknowledges those realities and creates a pathway for students to survive college and fully participate in it academically, socially, and personally.

Establishing a CRP requires intention and persistence. It involves challenging outdated narratives around addiction, advocating for inclusive policies, building relationships across departments, and identifying and leveraging existing campus strengths. It may begin with a single staff advocate or student voice and grow into a cross-functional effort that weaves recovery into the institution's values and systems. Along the way, the process invites campuses to consider how they define wellness, who feels welcome, and what it truly means to support student success.

There is no one-size-fits-all model and no perfect place to begin. What matters is the commitment to show up consistently, to listen deeply to students in recovery, and to take incremental, thoughtful steps toward a more supportive and recovery-affirming campus. The work of building a CRP is ongoing but also incredibly rewarding. When campuses invest in this work, they not only support individual students, they affirm that recovery belongs in higher education, and that healing and hope have a rightful place in the college experience.

19. RESOURCE APPENDIX

PLANNING & ASSESSMENT TOOLS

1. ARHE Getting Started: What You Need to Know About Building a Collegiate Recovery Program
2. ARHE Collegiate Recovery Readiness Assessment
3. Recovery Capital Index (RCI)
4. Recovery Research Institute Addictionary

ORGANIZATIONS, DIRECTORIES, AND OTHER RESOURCES

1. Youth Voices Matter
2. Tompkins Cortland Community College Recovery Program
3. Association of Recovery in Higher Education (ARHE)
4. Young People in Recovery (YPR)
5. Trevor Project (LGBTQ+ support and crisis services)
6. Shatterproof – National SUD advocacy & data tools
7. The Phoenix
8. SMART Recovery