

# ARHE's Ethical Considerations

The Association of Recovery in Higher Education (ARHE) is an organization whose members strive to champion, develop, and sustain excellence and inclusion within collegiate recovery. These efforts are supported by principles of equity, integrity, and responsibility. Collegiate recovery staff have a duty to ensure that a collegiate recovery community can form, can be sustained, and can be a healthy and supportive environment for the students involved. Endorsed by the ARHE Board Members and the ARHE Advisory Council, these ethical considerations are an agreed upon set of guidelines for ARHE Professional Affiliate Members. We hope that our members and all staff working within collegiate recovery programs will use these guidelines in their decision making as they continue their work.

As a growing field, we recognize that, like many fields before us, it is time to assemble and construct ethical considerations as our unique occupational identity grows. These ethics are not a set of standards for any program, but designed instead for staff serving each collegiate recovery program. Collegiate recovery programs (CRPs) are also not purely peer support programs or registered student organizations in a higher education institution. It is also important to note that staff and student makeup of these programs varies across institutions. Dedicated staff will provide the environment necessary to sustain and advocate for a CRP. In light of these differences, these guidelines strive to support developmental considerations and recovery processes that warrant guidance and scaffolding to ensure appropriate resources are given to each student and the community as needed support from CRP staff.

CRPs have experienced unprecedented growth across the country as people in recovery are increasingly recognized as a vital, but underserved population. Looking at the ethical considerations established by Recovery Community Organizations and recovery support services can inform the creation of a set of ethical considerations for CRP staff. The purpose of this document represents an initial effort to create ethical considerations specific to the unique needs of CRP staff.

## An Ethical Instruction Manual: How To Use This Document

The principal purpose of this document is to prioritize the physical and emotional well being of students that utilize collegiate recovery programs associated with ARHE. It will do this by increasing the ability of staff to make ethical decisions that align with the values of our organization. The definition of staff used in this document includes clinical, non-clinical, and interns involved in coordinating and executing the functions of a collegiate recovery program. We recognize that some collegiate recovery staff may be bound to other ethical guidelines. In the circumstance that a staff member is bound by multiple ethical codes, the staff member should follow the most restrictive ethical considerations. Self-regulation is the preferred means of maintaining ethical considerations. If behavior contrary to the ethical considerations is observed in a colleague, there are options in the appendix B for further guidance in resolving conflict. We also understand that decisions around ethics are not always simple or direct. For that purpose, decision making model information is included in the appendix as well as guidance from other ARHE members. This code of ethics does not outline or govern the programming expectations of a collegiate recovery program. Collegiate recovery program recommendations can be found through the ARHE website.

# Collegiate Recovery Ethical Principles

## 1. Non-Maleficance and Beneficence

As ARHE Members, Collegiate Recovery Staff will:

a) Focus their efforts on the development of the student. Staff are ethically responsible for establishing their personal wellness support outside of their collegiate recovery program. While there may be some personal benefit from doing this work, staff should be committed to doing their own work apart from the recovery program.

b) Prioritize the well-being and the best interest of the student(s) with whom they are working when there is an ethical dilemma. When multiple students may have conflicting interests, the staff should seek consultation to remain as impartial as possible.

c) Recognize the inherent power differential in their relationship with students in their care and make every effort to avoid exploitation or abuse in any fashion.

d) Be aware that their choices have an impact on those with whom they work. There is potential for inadvertent harm,

especially to those from underrepresented populations. Utilize professional consultation or supervision to maintain awareness of perceived or potential injury. Ethical consultation can be obtained by visiting the website [www.collegiaterecovery.org/services](http://www.collegiaterecovery.org/services)

e) Be mindful to not enter into a physical/ romantic relationship with current and/or former students involved in their collegiate recovery program. Seek professional supervision to process any feelings of attraction to make sure they are not hindering work with students.

f) Advocate for the highest standards of their field and seek to serve the greater good of the collegiate recovery field.

g) Monitor personal and professional functioning and effectiveness. Providers shall continuously monitor themselves for signs of physical, psychological, social, and emotional impairment and seek professional assistance when necessary.

## 2. Autonomy

As ARHE Members, Collegiate Recovery Staff will:

a) Respect the right of self-determination for all people, and empower each individual and group they work with to make choices for themselves.

b) Recognize the ability of individuals to define recovery for themselves. Recovery pathways and recovery definitions vary. Practical expectations for the CRP community may be set in order to provide a safe, stable, and recovery-supportive

environment for all who participate, however they do not dictate individual choices. Staff will help students explore which pathway is best for them without personal bias.

c) Remain aware of the needs of the campus community and create a CRP based on those needs. In the recognition that campuses vary in many ways, CRPs will also vary based on need.



# Collegiate Recovery Ethical Principles

## 3. Competence

As ARHE Members, Collegiate Recovery Staff will:

a) Maintain relevant continuing education to inform best practices in this evolving field. Continuing education can include ethics workshops, cultural humility/competency training, motivational interviewing, or other relevant work that enhances your professional work.

b) Have training and education to support the development and sustainability of their program. While lived experience can be a helpful framework for providing support to students participating in CRPs, it is recommended that they also have

some understanding of Human Development, Counseling Theory, and/or Higher Education experience. They must have an understanding of substance use disorders and recovery that supplements life experience.

c) Operate within their scope of competence and recognize their limitations and provide appropriate referrals when needed. This may become increasingly necessary in CRPs that welcome students who have behavioral addictions other than substance use disorders.

## 4. Honesty and Integrity

As ARHE Members, Collegiate Recovery Staff will:

a) Develop policies and procedures to guide the operations of their programs based on the size and need of their program. Policies and procedures should be made available to everyone involved in a CRP community for the purpose of transparency.

b) Be honest in their interactions with students. If it is thought that doing so would cause more harm, consultation should be sought.

c) Model appropriate relationship boundaries for students. Be mindful of relationships with students outside of the CRP as much as possible. This also enables CRP staff to remain neutral and supportive when outside conflicts occur. Certain settings and sizes of CRPs (rural, community/small college, etc.) may find this challenging. Sponsoring a student from your CRP in a mutual aid meeting would be an ethical violation.

d) Be mindful of participation in actions that could jeopardize relationships or exploit students. For example, purchasing gifts for students or accepting gifts from students may have a negative impact.

e) If social media is a part of the CRP, it is a suggested practice that a professional account for the CRP is established that would engage with students to maintain ethical boundaries. Be mindful to avoid engaging with students from staff personal social media accounts.

f) Establish their own system of healthy and professional boundaries, in consultation with their supervisors to ensure the sanctity of the relationship between CRP staff and students.

g) Be honest in fundraising and spending, and maintain an awareness of and disclose potential conflicts of interest.

h) Maintain integrity and inclusivity in any data collection/evaluation process and reporting.

i) Uphold all CRP related ethical responsibilities with their own institution's policies, as well as any applicable licensing boards and/or professional organizations to which they may belong.

# Collegiate Recovery Ethical Principles

## 5. Justice and Equity

As ARHE Members, Collegiate Recovery Staff will:

a) Work toward eliminating barriers (financial, racial, cultural, etc.) so that all students can access and benefit from collegiate recovery programs. It is recommended that CRPs partner with other cultural and community organizations on and off-campus to reduce barriers that exist within recovery communities.

b) Operate from a student-centered philosophy so that students have a voice in governance, leadership, and activities.

c) Recognize the worth, dignity, potential and uniqueness of every person within their social and cultural contexts.

d) Advocate for accommodations so all students can be fully included in meetings, activities, or outings. This includes communication, physical, emotional, or cultural accommodations (e.g. language barriers, ADA, sign-language, etc.).

## 6. Fidelity and Responsibility

As ARHE Members, Collegiate Recovery Staff will:

a) Take responsibility for their own actions and hold themselves and their colleagues accountable for maintaining ethical conduct.

b) Balance the interests of their students, employer, ARHE and legal entities. Follow all legal responsibilities. When these conflict, seek supervision.

c) Maintain confidentiality of student identities when required and/or appropriate.

Follow all confidentiality laws that apply to them (i.e. FERPA, HIPAA, 42 CFR Part 2).

d) Maintain sensitivity to the privacy rights and confidentiality of their students' names and identifying information. Even if confidentiality is not required legally, CRP staff should always use discretion when discussing individuals due to the nature of the population they work with. Student privacy should be prioritized at all times. This includes any photos or social media posts.

# Collegiate Recovery Ethical Principles

## Appendix A: Ethical Decision Making Models

Many ethical decision making models exist. They range in type from Rational, Virtue Ethics, Social Constructivism, Collaborative, and Integrative. When faced with an ethical dilemma, we encourage you to utilize a framework that will guide your decision making process and we encourage you to seek consultation throughout the process. At times, ethical dilemmas may occur due to cultural differences. We encourage you to view differences utilizing an intercultural perspective and taking various racial identities, ethnicities, gender identities, orientations and faith backgrounds into perspective. We all have biases and blind spots and this is an opportunity to grow professionally.

We do not want to limit you to one decision making model. Seeking a framework around the different types of models will assist you in your decision making progress. For your consideration, we have included the basic outline below. All ethical decision making models seem to include these 4 steps. More detailed models are available for reference.

### **Awareness**

Awareness that an ethical dilemma exists and outlining the specifics of the dilemma. Increase awareness of personal biases and worldviews that may be in opposition to the ethical considerations. Identify involvement of legal repercussions that may be present.

### **Grounding**

When faced with an ethical concern, look to the ethical considerations, legal standards, and institutional policies for guidance.

### **Support**

Seek consultation from external resources. This can include professional colleagues, supervisors, and/or professional organizations that you are a member of. This may include legal counsel at times.

### **Implementation**

Identify possible solutions to the ethical concern and evaluate repercussions (positive and negative) of all pathways. Select pathway based on information generated and document decision making progress as appropriate.

## Appendix B: Suggestions for Resolving Conflict

### **Initiate a private conversation**

Unethical conduct often is due to a lack of awareness or understanding of ethical considerations as described in the preceding document.

A private conversation with the individual being inappropriate is an important initial line of action because of this. This conference, if pursued in a spirit of collegiality and sincerity, often may resolve the ethical concern and promote future ethical conduct.

### **Pursue institutional resources**

If a private conversation occurs and this does not resolve the problem, institutional resources may be pursued. It is recommended individuals work with mentors, supervisors, faculty, colleagues, or peers to research campus based resources.



# A Very Special Thanks

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