



STANDARDS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLEGIATE RECOVERY PROGRAMS ©

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STANDARDS & RECOMMENDATIONS®

The evolution of the collegiate recovery movement has paralleled the rapid growth of the larger recovery advocacy movement in the United States. Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRPs), as well as other types of recovery support services, are being added to the spectrum of student services on an increasing number of university campuses. Currently, there are many pathways to recovery and the Association of Recovery in Higher Education (ARHE) remains open to the evolving landscape and emerging recovery models. In addition, ARHE understands that every college/university is different, with its own distinct culture and defining characteristics. Accordingly, there is no single approach in developing and maintaining a collegiate recovery program.

Even though colleges/universities are different in many respects, ARHE is dedicated to and must ensure the integrity of our institutional members. Thus, the following standards and recommendations are provided to offer clear information for students, family members, and college/university officials to make informed decisions and to foster growth and development within the field. These are also offered to help emerging and new CRPs strive for excellence. We consider the following 9 standards and recommendations the “best practices” to date based on the wisdom and experiences of the past 30+ years as well as our understanding of the available research.

1. CRPS EMBRACE THAT RECOVERY FROM SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IS AN INDIVIDUALIZED, INTENTIONAL, DYNAMIC, AND RELATIONAL PROCESS INVOLVING SUSTAINED EFFORTS TO IMPROVE WELLNESS.*

Collegiate Recovery Programs support recovering students within a socio-ecological system along a continuum of care. They are as varied and unique as the institutions they represent. ARHE recognizes that recovery exists along a continuum and the needs of each community will vary based on institutional culture and access to resources. It is vital for each CRP to assess the needs of its peer-based community and to create strategic programming and support to meet the needs of students.

Students in or seeking abstinence-based recovery are particularly vulnerable and their needs should be addressed by the CRP. The definition provided here also creates space for each CRP to respond to the specific needs of its recovery community. There are many pathways to recovery and ARHE recognizes that the broader recovery field and the field of collegiate recovery exist in an evolving landscape. As new research and program models continue to emerge, ARHE strongly encourages each institution to assess the needs of its recovering students and to design a CRP that directly addresses those needs.

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2. CRPS HAVE DEDICATED PHYSICAL SPACE FOR STUDENTS IN RECOVERY TO GATHER AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER.

Dedicated space 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 drug 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 and ARHE embraces the community building power of dedicated space for students in recovery.

3. CRPS HAVE WITHIN THEM A COLLEGIATE RECOVERY COMMUNITY (CRC) WITH STUDENTS WHO OFFER EACH OTHER PEER SUPPORT.

It is essential for CRPs to have a community of students to provide peer support to one another. Peer support provides a sense of belonging, community, fun, accountability, and leadership opportunities while pursuing higher education.

4. CRPS PROVIDE A VARIETY OF RECOVERY SUPPORT PROGRAMMATIC ELEMENTS TO ASSIST STUDENTS IN MAINTAINING AND PROTECTING THEIR RECOVERY.

In general, programmatic elements must account for a full range of recovery stages and pathways (e.g., 12-Step; Medication Assisted Recovery; Faith Based approaches, etc.). Stages range from early recovery (i.e., requiring greater levels of structure and support) to sustained recovery (i.e., allowing greater autonomy, but still able to benefit from CRP resources and supports). ARHE offers the following points in developing these programmatic elements.

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:

- Seminars related to recovery or relapse prevention.
- Skills training (e.g., coping skills, time management, financial management).
- Easily accessible mutual aid meetings (on or off campus).
- Clinical and/or Case management for recovery support.
- Academic support (i.e., formal or informal advising).
- Team and community building activities.
- Admission assistance/support to navigate the admissions process and entry into the institution.
- Financial assistance (e.g., scholarships).
- Recovery-based housing support.

Policies:

- CRPs maintain clearly understood requirements for continued student participation.
- CRPs include a pre-planned response for student return to use, including referral to treatment services as needed and a continuation of education as appropriate.
- 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.

- 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.

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).

Case Management:

- CRPs often 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.
- CRPs serve as a liaison 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).
- CRPs serve as liaison by providing referral services to off campus resources (e.g., individual therapy, medication management, family therapy, and recovery community organizations).

5. CRPS HAVE PAID, QUALIFIED, TRAINED, ETHICAL, AND DEDICATED PROFESSIONALS WHO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN RECOVERY.

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 college/university who can assess the needs of the community and each individual student to ensure appropriate levels of structure and support are provided. 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. ARHE suggests one dedicated full-time staff position for every 15 to 20 actively engaged students.

6. CRPS ARE NON-PROFIT ENTITIES.

A non-profit organization status promotes the ability to keep the mission and structure above the personal interests of individuals and other for-profit motives. Thus, students should not be charged for standard supports (e.g., recovery coaching, not-for credit seminars, use of recovery space). Students may be charged for additional supports (e.g., trips, on-campus housing, study abroad, and for-credit course work) at usual university rates. When students are charged for these additional supports and activities, every effort should be made to ensure access for all students regardless of financial status.

7. CRPS ARE HOUSED WITHIN INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION THAT CONFER DEGREES (E.G., ASSOCIATES, BACHELORS, MASTERS, AND/OR DOCTORATE DEGREES).

Both students who are in recovery and the campus culture benefit the most when academic institutions take ownership of recovery supports on their campuses. Therefore, CRPs should be institutionalized within the structure of the college or university and should not be provided by an outside entity.

8. CRPS OFTEN IDENTIFY AND COLLABORATE WITH ON AND OFF CAMPUS PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS.

CRPs may collaborate with stakeholders to assist with financial development, referral sources, additional programmatic and student support services, recruitment, outreach and education opportunities.

CRPs may partner with campus entities that support alcohol and other drugs (AOD) prevention efforts and recovery (e.g., student health infrastructures, naloxone distribution and training with first responders and residential life). Strengthening these partnerships may also assist in increasing supports to students with needs along the substance use continuum (e.g. those who may benefit from a harm reduction or moderation approach).

CRPs may engage in outreach to the larger student body to create awareness of substance use, misuse, and addiction in order to educate and promote recovery.

9. CRPS ACTIVELY CULTIVATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF BELONGING WHICH HONORS THE WHOLE STUDENT.

Collegiate Recovery Programs support students in recovery; this is the foundation and core of the work. Honoring the whole student and their unique experiences is essential in all program development, programming, and student support.

This work requires staff to invest in education and training that enhances their ability to effectively support students in recovery and engage with broader campus and community networks. Programs should focus on developing collaborative relationships with entities that provide support and resources for students from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.

1. **Staff** – Collegiate recovery program staff engage in ongoing training to enhance their understanding of the factors that influence students' well-being and success. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their professional practices and ensure they are providing equitable support to all students in recovery.
2. **Space** – Collegiate recovery programs create spaces (both physical and virtual) that are welcoming, supportive, and conducive to engagement for all students in recovery.
3. **Programming** – Collegiate recovery programs offer an array of programming (academic, social, spiritual, etc.) that meets the needs of students in recovery and encourages broad participation.
4. **Relationships** – Collegiate recovery programs establish partnerships and collaborations with other campus and community resources to strengthen support systems for students in recovery.