

# The Role of Faculty & Staff

## OVERVIEW

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Collegiate recovery programs (CRPs) are vital for supporting students who are recovering from addiction, providing them with a structured and supportive environment to pursue both academic and personal success. However, these programs' effectiveness hinges not only on the services they offer but also on the involvement and support of faculty and staff across campus. This research brief synthesizes the findings of three studies focused on the role of staff and faculty in supporting students in recovery, exploring the challenges of addiction disclosure, the stigma faced by students, and the institutional involvement needed to ensure recovery programs' success.

The studies reviewed are:

1. **Vazquez, E. (2023).** *The Invisible, Yet Dangerous Mental Health Crisis Among Historically Marginalized Graduate and Professional Students.*
2. **Burns, V.F. (2021).** *A Qualitative Exploration of Addiction Disclosure and Stigma Among Faculty Members in a Canadian University Context.*
3. **Vest, N. (2022).** *Characterizing Collegiate Recovery Programs in the U.S. and Canada: A Survey of Program Directors.*

Together these studies examine how staff and faculty can impact students in recovery, both positively and negatively, and highlight the barriers that must be addressed to maximize support for students.

## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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- **Stigma and Faculty Awareness:** Faculty and staff often lack understanding of addiction and recovery, leading to stigma that discourages students from disclosing their struggles. Faculty education on addiction is crucial to creating a more supportive environment for students in recovery (Burns, 2021).
- **Institutional Support for Recovery Programs:** Collegiate recovery programs are more effective when there is strong institutional support, including faculty and staff involvement. Programs with active engagement from faculty and administration tend to offer better resources and outcomes for students in recovery (Vest, 2022).
- **Academic and Personal Support:** Faculty can play a critical role in students' success by offering academic accommodations and informal mentorship. Their support is essential for helping students balance recovery with academic responsibilities (Vest, 2022; Burns, 2021).
- **The Need for Cultural Competency:** Students from historically marginalized groups (e.g., students of color, LGBTQ+ students) face compounded challenges related to addiction and recovery, including stigma and a lack of culturally competent support. Faculty and staff training must address these intersectional issues (Varquez, 2023).

## Implications for Practice

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The findings from these studies have clear implications for how higher education should engage faculty and staff in supporting CRPs. To successfully support students in recovery, universities must consider the following actions:

### Addiction and Recovery

- As noted by Burns (2021) and Varquez (2023), faculty and staff training to reduce stigma and increase understanding.
- Should focus on the medical and psychosocial aspects of addiction, including the recovery process.

### Faculty Support and Engagement

- Should be encouraged to engage with students in recovery through mentorships, policies, and better understanding of recovery
- Universities should provide guidelines on how faculty can better assist students in recovery

## Increase Collaboration Between Recovery Programs and Campus Staff

- This practice would be extremely beneficial to enhance the effectiveness of recovery programs
- Vest (2022) elaborates that CRPs are most successful when there is collaboration between faculty/staff with program directors
- This could include; integrating recovery themes into course curricula, promoting recovery-focused events, developing programs that balance academics and personal life.

## Create an Inclusive Campus Environment

- Reducing stigma across campus would help support recovering students
- Educating staff members about addictions and the pathway of recovery
- Varquez (2023) suggests that when faculty and staff are involved in reducing stigma, students feel comfortable using campus addiction resources.

## Provide Resources and Support for Recovery Programs

- Ensure that CRPs have adequate funding and backing from their respected university
- Allow faculty/staff to have more opportunities to be involved in CRPs

## Conclusion

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The faculty and staff at a university play a crucial role in the success of a collegiate recovery program, but their efforts must be supported by the broader institution. The studies highlighted in this brief emphasize the importance of training faculty and staff on addiction, recovery, and the stigma associated with these issues in order to create a supportive, addiction-free environment. Additionally, involving faculty and staff in the recovery process can enhance their understanding of the accommodations students may need to thrive academically while maintaining a healthy lifestyle. By fostering a campus culture that prioritizes these supports, universities can better serve students in recovery and contribute to their long-term success.

## References

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