

#ARHE2026 #ARS2026 #AAPG2026



ARHE/ARS/AAPG CONFERENCE

Denver



RECORDINGS

17th Annual

Collegiate Recovery Conference

25th Annual

Recovery Schools Conference

10th Annual

Alternative Peer Groups Conference



ARHE
ASSOCIATION OF RECOVERY
IN HIGHER EDUCATION



2026



Association
of Alternative
Peer Groups

Denver Marriott Tech Center

4900 S Syracuse St, Denver, CO 80237

collegiaterecovery.org/conference/



2026 Annual Conference

CE Information

Association of Recovery in Higher Education 17th
National Collegiate Recovery Conference / 25th National
ARS Conference
September 1, 2026 - September 1, 2027
ONLINE

Joint Accreditation Statement



In support of improving patient care, this activity has been planned and implemented by Amedco LLC and Association of Recovery in Higher Education. Amedco LLC is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

Professions in scope for this activity are listed below.

Amedco Joint Accreditation Provider Number: 4008163

Psychologists



This course is co-sponsored by Amedco and Association of Recovery in Higher Education. Amedco is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. Amedco maintains responsibility for this program and content. Maximum of 104.00 Enduring hours.

The following state boards accept courses from APA providers for Psychologists/Counselors: AK, AR,

AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MA (LEP ONLY), MD, ME, MN, MO, NC, ND, NH, NE, NJ, NM, NV, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, WI, WY*

MI: Accepts courses from APA for Psychologists. No general CE requirement for Counselors.

OK: Accepts APA credit for live, in-person activities but not for ethics and/or online courses.

The following state boards accept courses from APA providers for MFTs: AK, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, IA, ID, IN, KS, MD, ME, MO, NE, NC, NH, NJ, NM, NV, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, WA, WDC, WI, WY*

AL MFTs: Credits authorized by NBCC or any other state licensing agency will be accepted.

MA MFTs: Participants can self-submit courses not approved by the MAMFT board for review.

MI MFTs: There are no CE requirements for MFTs in MI.

The following state boards accept courses from APA providers for Addictions Professionals: AK, AR, CO, CT, DC, DE, GA, IA, IN, KS, LA, MD, MO, MT, NC, ND, NE, NJ, NM, NY (held outside NY ONLY), OK, OR, SC, UT, WA, WI, WY*

The following state boards accept courses from APA providers for Social Workers: AK, AR, AZ, CA, CO, DE, FL, GA, ID, IN, KY, ME, MN, MO, NE, NH, NM, OR, PA, VT, WI, WY

Social Workers



As a Jointly Accredited Organization, Amedco is approved to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Organizations, not individual courses, are approved under this program. State and provincial regulatory boards have the final authority to determine whether an individual

course may be accepted for continuing education credit. Amedco maintains responsibility for this course. ASWB Content Level: Intermediate. Social workers completing this course receive up to 104.00 Enduring continuing education credits.

The following state boards accept courses offering ASWB ACE credit for Social Workers: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, HI, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MD, MA, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NC, ND, NE, NH, NM, NV, OH, OK, OR, PA, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, VA, WA, WI, WV*, WY*

OK: Accepts ASWB ACE for live, in-person activities but not for ethics and/or online courses.

WV: Accepts ASWB ACE unless activity is held live in West Virginia.

The following state boards accept courses offering ASWB ACE credit for Counselors: AK, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, FL, GA, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, MA (LEP ONLY), MD, ME, MO, ND, NE, NM, NH, NV, OK, OR, PA, TN, TX, UT, VA, WI, WY*

MI: No CE requirement for licensed counselors.

The following state boards accept courses offering ASWB ACE credit for MFTs: AK, AR, AZ, CA, CO, FL, IA, ID, IN, KS, MD, ME, MO, NC, NE, NH, NM, NV, OK, OR, PA, RI, TN, TX, UT, VA, WI, WY*

AL MFTs: Credits authorized by NBCC or any other state licensing agency will be accepted.

MA MFTs: Participants can self-submit courses not approved by the MAMFT board for review.

MI: No CE for requirement for licensed MFTs.

The following state boards accept ASWB ACE credit for Addictions Professionals: AK, CA, CO, CT, GA, IA, IN, KS, LA, MO, MT, ND, NM, NV, OK, OR, SC, WA, WI, WV, WY

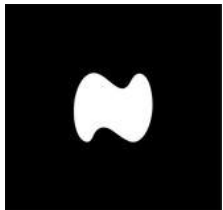
NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals

16th National Collegiate Recovery Conference / 24th National ARS Conference has been approved by Association of Recovery in Higher Education, as a NAADAC Approved Educational Provider, for 104.00 Enduring CE. NAADAC Provider #169876, Association of Recovery in Higher Education is responsible for all aspects of their programming. Counselor Skill Groups: [1, 2, 3, 4]

Individuals participating in educational programs offered by NAADAC Approved Education Providers are assured that the continuing education (CE) hours provided for each course will be accepted toward national credentialing by the National Certification Commission for Addiction Professionals (NCCAP), as well as many of the individual state licensing/certification bodies in the addiction and other helping professions. It is at the discretion of the individual to confirm CE acceptance policies with their state licensing/certification board.

MOUNTAINSIDE

Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention and Recovery



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The Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention and Recovery

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Zora Health Solutions

Johnny's Ambassadors Youth THC Prevention

Matt Butler - Reckless Son

Exhibitors

ERC Pathlight

Eating Disorder Treatment Centers of Louisiana

The Center for Trait-Based Transformation

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network

SMART Recovery USA

Recovery Dharma Global

Sober AF Entertainment

StayStopped Jackson

Second Chance Comedy

Agenda

Friday, June 26, 2026

Friday, June 26, 2026

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

ARHE Board Meetings | *Spruce 1*
 ARS Board Meetings | *Pinon Boardroom*
 AAPG Board Meetings | *Conifer 3*

10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Exhibit Hall Set Up | *Rocky Mountain Event Center*
 Registration Open | *Rocky Mountain Event Center*

1:00 PM - 5:00 PM: Pre-Conference Sessions

Let Them Tell Without Talking: Art Therapy and Art-based Wellness in Collegiate Recovery | 0 CEs Rachelle Ellis, MFA, MA, ATR, CWHC

How can collegiate recovery staff responsibly use art and expressive therapies in their programs? This training will outline how to appropriately utilize arts-based wellness programming in collegiate recovery spaces. Participants will learn methods of using art materials and processes within the boundaries of different credentials or certifications. Several art directives and activities will be included as examples, with printed instructions and supply lists. This workshop aims to empower all collegiate recovery professionals to use art in their programming and will include an experiential activity that can be used at participants' home institutions.



Recovery Allyship Training Showcase | 3.5 CEs Nicole Benigno, MSSW, Dylan Dunn, MS, Victoria Menz, MSW

Deriving inspiration from open-access LGBTQIA+ allyship training materials, recovery allyship initiatives began sprouting at The Ohio State University and Virginia Commonwealth University and were quickly replicated. SAFE Project will present themes and considerations found among Recovery Allyship Trainings at institutions of higher education across the nation—allowing participants to be inspired and make informed decisions regarding Recovery Allyship training and efforts on their campus. Using this information and direct technical assistance, attendees will be able to make meaningful collaborative progress on designing and/or updating their allyship training.

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM



Be the Light: Becoming an Agent for Transformation | 1.5 CEs Tina M. Miller, BA, CRPS-A

Transformation is more than change — it is a fundamental shift in one's internal world that reshapes behavior, leadership, and impact. In this keynote, participants will explore the psychology of transformation through both scientific and human lenses, drawing from models by Carl Rogers, William Bridges, and contemporary behavioral science.

The session challenges professionals to align their words and actions, navigate resistance and letting go, and lead transformation within themselves and their organizations. Using metaphor, neuroscience, and research-grounded insight, this presentation equips attendees with the knowledge and motivation to become catalysts for authentic, sustainable change in mental health systems and communities. Participants will leave understanding that transformation begins with the self — that to bring light to others, one must first light the match within. Transformation begins within. When professionals cultivate internal alignment, courage, and innovation, they become the light that guides others toward healing, connection, and growth.

Agenda

Friday, June 26, 2026

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

5280 Site Visit and ARS Reception | 0 CEs

1200 W Mississippi Ave., Denver CO

Come learn about 5280 Recovery High School, meet their staff, eat some food, and network with the entire ARS crew. Please register in advance for this event: bit.ly/5280openhouse

6:00 PM - 10:30 PM

Full Circle Program Open House | 0 CEs

11234 Caley Ave., Unit B, Centennial, CO 80111

The FullCircle Program is a no-cost recovery community for young people ages 13-25 and their families. Through peer support, family engagement, sober social activities, and a strong recovery community, we help young people build meaningful, connected, and substance-free lives. Whether you're a parent, treatment professional, educator, community member, or simply curious about what we do, we'd love to meet you.

8:00 PM - 10:00 PM



Welcome Event: Reckless Son by Matt Butler | 0 CEs

Matt Butler, Singer/Songwriter

Reckless Son is an immersive performance blending original songs and storytelling to illuminate the human experience of incarceration, addiction, and systemic disconnection. Developed by singer-songwriter Matt Butler after performing more than 100 concerts in jails and prisons across the United States, the work draws directly from the voices of incarcerated individuals and their families.

Through interconnected monologues and songs, Butler traces emotional arcs of struggle, resilience, and transformation. Audiences are invited to reflect on questions of belonging, accountability, and healing, and to engage in facilitated discussion and optional creative exercises.

This session highlights the power of music and narrative to elevate marginalized voices while offering educators, practitioners, and students practical tools for fostering empathy, reducing stigma, and creating inclusive environments across academic, clinical, and community settings.

Join us for this energizing welcome event with Matt Butler to kickstart the conference in Denver, CO! Light snacks will be included.



Agenda

Saturday, June 27, 2026

Saturday, June 27, 2026

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

All Recovery Meeting | *Spruce 1*

Yoga Session | *Spruce 2*

8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Registration Open | *Rocky Mountain Event Center*

Exhibit Hall Open | *Rocky Mountain Event Center*

Wellness / Reflection Lounge | *Bluebell*

Nursing Lounge | *Ponderosa*

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM: Opening Remarks



It Takes a Campus - Changing National Systems and Finding Purpose Through Community and Recovery | 0 CEs

David M. Awadalla, MSW, BSHP

Joining us from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Office of Recovery, David Awadalla, MSW, BSHP, will share his personal story of how collegiate recovery - and the community it gave - helped him discover purpose, overcome self-doubt, and build a meaningful life in recovery.

David will also highlight how lived experience plays a role in the Office of Recovery efforts to strengthen collegiate recovery and the broader recovery ecosystem of care, while sharing resources available to support students, organizations, and communities nationwide.



8:30 AM - 9:00 AM: Welcome Sessions

Student Welcome + "How To" Conference | 0 CEs

Dylan Dunn, MS, Victoria Menz, MSW, Nicole Benigno, MSSW

Whether this is your first conference or you've attended many, navigating professional conferences as a student can be exciting, overwhelming, and full of opportunities. Join us for a quick session on "how to" conference. We'll cover practical tips for making the most of your experience—from networking dinners and social events to choosing sessions and mapping your schedule.

This session immediately leads into "How We Think About Substance Use Matters," an interactive session exploring the different paradigms that influence how we understand substance use, addiction, recovery, and harm reduction.

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM: Welcome Sessions

The Paradigms Workshop: Utilizing a Survey Tool to Rethink Stigma and Conflict | 0 CEs

Dylan Dunn, MS

It is critical to continuously grapple with the underlying frameworks that shape our understanding of substance use, addiction, and recovery. This session will use an inventory tool to clarify assumptions and beliefs that develop our professional and personal approaches to substance use in our lives. Data and themes will also be shared from implementing this tool with professionals around the country to facilitate collaborations within and between individuals, organizations, and systems.

Agenda

Saturday, June 27, 2026

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM: Welcome Sessions

▶ ARHE / Collegiate Recovery Annual Meeting and Town Hall | 0 CEs

Kristina M. Canfield, MEd

Join us for the Collegiate Recovery Annual Meeting and Town Hall, a core gathering at this year's conference designed to unify, celebrate, and elevate our community. This annual session brings together colleagues across institutions to review organizational progress and align on upcoming initiatives. Following an update from ARHE leadership, the floor will open for a facilitated Town Hall discussion. Participants are encouraged to bring their insights, questions, and institutional perspectives as we collectively address the sustainability, growth, and advocacy needs of CRPs across higher education.

▶ AAPG Welcome Session | 0 CEs

Robin Bergeron, CRM, Ripp R. Motion, LPC-A, LCDC, Becky Ahlgrim, RSPS, Mary Kate Brown, LCDC-I, PSS, MHPS, PRS, RSPS, John C. Cates, MA LCDC

Join us for a Welcome Session for the Association of Alternative Peer Groups (AAPG)!

▶ ARS Welcome Session | 0 CEs

Michael F. Durchslag, B.A.; M.A.T.

Join us for a Welcome Session for the Association of Recovery Schools (ARS)!

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM: Keynote Session

▶ From Personal Recovery to Professional Purpose: Identity Transformation in Recovery High Schools, APGs, and CRPs | 1.5 CEs

Andrew J. Warren, LPC, LCDC

People who work or volunteer their time in the world of recovery navigate intersecting roles: people reclaiming their own lives through recovery; people with loved ones in recovery; people with some deep personal connection to recovery; and as professionals. This presentation explores how clarifying personal purpose and identity serves as the foundation for meaningful participation in recovery communities.

Drawing from lived experience of sustained recovery and professional engagement with recovery services, the presenter examines the transformative process of identity reconstruction. Recovery high schools, Alternative Peer Groups, and Collegiate Recovery are highlighted as vital environments to the recovery process.

Participants will gain clarity on the interconnected roles we play and enhance our effectiveness and promote hope for ourselves and the people we serve. This session invites reflection on how embracing a clear, authentic identity empowers us to support others.

This presentation draws from lived experience in long-term recovery from substance use disorder (SUD) and professional roles in recovery services, particularly recovery high schools, to explore how clarifying personal purpose and identity strengthens our contributions across recovery communities.

Through candid anecdotes and real-life stories, the presenter shares the good, the bad, and the ugly that comes with being deeply passionate about the work we do. Learning from the triumphs and tragedies is key. Key focus areas include navigating identity, bridging personal recovery with professional service, and the resiliency that is necessary to evolve as a professional.

Attendees will reflect on their own multifaceted roles as individuals connected to recovery and professionals offering hope. By examining interconnected purposes, participants gain tools to enhance effectiveness and contribute to a stronger, more collaborative recovery ecosystem.



Agenda

Saturday, June 27, 2026

12:00 PM - 12:30 PM**Meditation Session | 0 CEs****The Phoenix**

This trauma-informed meditation provides a grounding and restorative space to pause and reset. Through guided breath, body awareness, and present-moment attention, participants will be supported in settling the nervous system and cultivating a sense of safety and ease. The practice is accessible to all and honors individual choice, with options to engage in whatever way feels most comfortable. This session offers an opportunity to reconnect and meet yourself exactly where you are.

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**SMART Recovery Meeting | Spruce 1****12:00 PM - 2:00 PM****▶ ARHE / ARS / AAPG Awards Ceremony | 0 CEs**

Celebrate the outstanding achievements, dedication, and resilience within our community at the ARHE/ARS/AAPG Annual Awards Ceremony. This signature event honors the extraordinary students, professionals, programs, and advocates who have made a profound impact on the fields of collegiate recovery, recovery schools, and alternative peer groups over the past year. A catered lunch will be provided.

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM: Breakout Sessions**▶ Adapting Overdose Prevention: Meeting Student Needs Through Technology, Vending Access, and Micro-training for Students | 1 CE****Michael J. Vela, II, LCSW-S, LCDC, PSS**

This session provides an overview of the current opioid and overdose landscape in higher education and the growing need for multi-modal harm-reduction strategies, including expanded naloxone (Narcan) access. The presentation highlights UT San Antonio's evolving approach to naloxone distribution, beginning with traditional access points through the Recovery Center and Wellness 360 and continuing with campus overdose-awareness drives. Participants will learn about UTSA's innovative Narcan vending machine—developed through a partnership with RISE Recovery, student artwork contributions, and engineering retrofits—as well as the university's dual-format training model that includes a 9-minute digital micro-learning module and tailored in-person sessions. Future directions, including automated dispensers and expanded pilot locations, will also be discussed. Attendees will participate in small-group brainstorming and idea sharing, exploring strategies for overcoming barriers, engaging students, and strengthening campus partnerships. The session concludes with group share-outs, Q&A, and resources to support enhanced naloxone access and overdose-prevention education.

▶ Get in the Game: Addressing Risky Gambling Among College Students | 1 CE**Logan O. Davis, MA, Anthony Gonzalez**

The explosion of online sports betting and prediction markets has led to an increase in risky gambling behaviors on campus. Students engaging in these behaviors often go under the radar and are at higher risk of co-occurring disorders. It is critical campuses understand the changing landscape and are prepared to support students. Join Cindy Clouner and Logan Davis from the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention and Recovery as they explore the current gambling landscape and its trends, discuss the relationship between high-risk gambling and other behavioral health concerns like alcohol misuse and suicide, and identify strategies to integrate gambling work into existing campus efforts across the continuum.

Agenda

Saturday, June 27, 2026

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM: Breakout Sessions



Implementing an Independent Living Skills Workshop for Seniors in a Recovery High School | 1 CE Arielle Posadas, LOTR, QMHP, Renee Caballero, M.Ed, LSC, Kris Rochelle, CSWA, LSC

This session presents a practical framework for supporting students in recovery as they transition to college, work, and independent living. Participants will learn about a multi-session Senior Transition Workshop model that builds essential life skills through project-based learning, real-world simulations, and individualized planning.

The model addresses key transition domains including career readiness, community navigation, health management, financial literacy, and home management. Through weekly instruction, assessments, and reflective activities, students develop executive functioning skills and self-advocacy while maintaining recovery supports.

Attendees will explore how experiential learning—such as navigating healthcare systems, the DMV, and communication tasks—increases student engagement and accountability. Individual check-ins and life-mapping activities help students prepare for post-secondary transitions and adult independence.

Participants will leave with an adaptable framework applicable to recovery high schools, bridge programs, and first-year college support initiatives, strengthening the continuity of care and reducing gaps during critical transitions.



Making Higher Education More Recovery Friendly: A Survey of Certified Peer Recovery Specialists in Central Appalachia | 1 CE

G. Keilan Rickard, PhD, ABPP, Emalee Dauginikas, M.Sc., Marissa Kluk, Hannah Warren

Researchers will present findings from a survey of certified peer recovery specialists from central Appalachia. The survey examines respondents' experiences with higher education in the context of recovery. Attendees will learn how peer professionals who pursued postsecondary education describe its impact on their recovery, including academic structures, campus supports, and social environments they found helpful, as well as aspects they experienced as destabilizing or less helpful. The session will also explore perspectives of peer recovery specialists who have not pursued higher education, highlighting perceived barriers such as financial constraints, stigma, cognitive or mental health concerns, institutional limitations, and lack of recovery-informed supports. Attendees will gain insight into what respondents identify as facilitators that could make higher education more accessible. The session will emphasize implications for higher education, workforce development, and recovery-oriented systems of care.



Recovery Centered Education Is a Principled Journey | 1 CE

Rachael M. Wilson, certified

Participants will engage in a metaphorical journey using the principles of recovery as tools to engage students during subject area lessons. Students at recovery schools are likely familiar with the principles and how to use them in a spiritual sense. This session will highlight specific methods to be utilized in the classroom in order to exemplify for students that the principles can be practiced in all areas of their life. The presenter will spotlight each principle separately and describe examples of how they have used it specifically in their subject, then the presenter will suggest more ways that the principle could be served in other subject areas. Throughout the session, the presenter will include additional tips on working with small groups of diverse learners, how to make thinking visible, raising academic standards and co-regulation skills. Time will also be included for participants to workshop some of the ideas presented so that they can be used in their own classrooms and schools.

Agenda

Saturday, June 27, 2026

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM: Breakout Sessions

Rewiring the Heart: The Neurobiology of Parental Recovery | 1 CE

Robin Bergeron, CRM, Ripp R. Motion, LPC-A, LCDC

Parental grief in the context of adolescent Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is a unique, chronic, and often disenfranchised experience. Unlike the finality of death, caregivers often navigate "ambiguous loss," where a child is physically present but psychologically absent. This presentation moves beyond traditional, non-empirical stage models to introduce a modern, neuroscience-informed framework that views grieving as a painful form of learning and neuroplasticity. By exploring the neurological mismatch between stable semantic memories (the "good kid") and traumatic episodic events (the "addiction"), attendees will learn to facilitate memory transformation and meaning-making. Participants will leave with evidence-based interventions designed to build family-wide recovery capital within the Alternative Peer Group (APG) model.

The Future of Alternative Peer Groups: Bridging the Community Practice-research Gap | 0 CEs

J. Michael Wilkerson, PhD

This interactive session brings together practitioners and researchers to discuss substance use treatment and recovery of adolescents. The session will begin with a brief summary of recent research on alternative peer groups and similar adolescent recovery programs. Following the summary, attendees will be invited to engage in a discussion with the presenters about the challenges and opportunities to improve collaboration between community practitioners and researchers.

What Matters Most: Finding Ourselves Through Holding on and Letting Go | 0 CEs

Dylan Dunn, MS

In times of great success as well as challenge or transition, we often gain a deeper understanding of what certain people, places, and things mean to us. In this interactive session, we will reflect on and discuss the things we hold dear, what motivates us, and what guides us as we look towards life post-college. Participants will leave with a deeper perspective about "what matters most".

Working Your AND Experiential/talk | 1 CE

Aleah Johnson

Two truths can exist at the same time. Life doesn't have to be those or that, it can be this AND that. Standing on the threshold between looking back while also pulling forward to the unknown. Allowing yourself the grace and the space to navigate what your season of AND is.

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Bridge Drawings | 0 CEs

Rachelle Ellis, MFA, MA, ATR, CWHC

Bridge drawings are used in art therapy to examine a person's present experience with a particular goal. For those in recovery, bridge drawings can provide insight into one's current state, their perception of their surroundings, and any past, present, or anticipated challenges with one's recovery pathway. Join art therapist, Rachelle Ellis, for a session of introspection, expression, and connection.

3:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Coffee With Exhibitors | Rocky Mountain Event Center

Agenda

Saturday, June 27, 2026

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM: Breakout Sessions

A Supplement on Substance Use Disorders for Mental Health First Aid | 1 CE

Eluterio Blanco, Jr., MAC

Mental Health First Aid teaches individuals to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use. Those trained in Mental Health First Aid receive skills needed to provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use disorder or experiencing a crisis. However information on substance use and substance use disorders may be lacking. This presentation will fill in gaps and provide supplemental supportive information on what mental health professionals may need which may otherwise not be available through Mental Health First Aid.

BIPOC Students Navigating Recovery and Substance Use Disorders Research Panel | 1 CE **Quortne Hutchings, PhD, Becki Elkins, PhD, Eran Hanke**

This research roundtable panel discussion focuses on BIPOC students' experiences with collegiate recovery on college campuses. This session will include a moderated discussion with the co-presenters, who will share preliminary findings from two research projects. The session will also engage participants in reimagining how collegiate recovery and collegiate recovery programs can affirm, support, and address recovery in college for BIPOC students.

Expanding Access and Belonging: Removing Barriers to Participation in Recovery High Schools | 0 CEs **Seth Welch, MSW, SUDP, Starre Helm, MA Postsecondary Educational Leadership, Nafisah Downs**

Recovery high schools play a critical role in supporting adolescents in sustained recovery and academic success, yet many programs face challenges reaching all students who could benefit. This session examines structural and practical barriers that limit access and participation, including referral bottlenecks, stigma, transportation and funding constraints, inconsistent eligibility interpretation, and gaps in family engagement and school climate. Participants will explore real-world strategies to strengthen outreach, streamline referral pathways, improve onboarding, develop staff capacity, and reinforce a welcoming school environment. Through case examples, data-informed discussion, and interactive mapping, attendees will leave with practical tools to reduce barriers, broaden participation, and improve retention and outcomes for students and families.

Exploring Love Styles as a Framework for Understanding and Supporting Youth in Recovery | 1 CE **Shelia C. Sales**

This session introduces the "Love Styles" framework as a tool for understanding the attachment-based relationship patterns of youth in recovery. Attendees will learn how styles like the Victim, Avoider, and Controller manifest in teens and young adults diagnosed with Substance Use Disorder (SUD), driving both maladaptive coping and resistance to support. We will contrast these with patterns in non-SUD youth, highlighting key intervention points. The presentation will bridge theory to practice by introducing practical exercises designed to help youth build emotional literacy, establish boundaries, and move toward secure connection.

From Destruction to Creation: Collaborative Creative Writing as a Tool to Support Addiction Recovery | 1 CE **Chloe Whiting, BA, MA**

This presentation examines creative writing as a collaborative practice that can support addiction recovery in CRPs. While writing is often framed as an individual activity, bringing it into supportive group settings can transform both the process and its impact. Grounded in the importance of identification, the presentation explores how collaborative writing fosters expression, psychological safety, and honest self-disclosure. It considers how these practices can support identity reconstruction at any stage of recovery, and cultivate belonging through shared, supportive engagement.

Agenda

Saturday, June 27, 2026

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM: Breakout Sessions

Implementing Mutual-help Groups in Collegiate Recovery Programs: Barriers, Facilitators, and Strategic Recommendations | 1 CE

Isabel Redman, MPH, Noel A. Vest, PhD (Not Presenting), Erin Major (Not Presenting), Christina Freibott, PhD (Not Presenting)

Mutual Help Groups (MHGs), such as 12-step or SMART recovery meetings, are an effective, evidence-based intervention for individuals with addiction. While MHGs are frequently integrated into Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRPs), there has been limited exploration of the organizational, cultural, and contextual factors that support or hinder their effective implementation. To identify these factors, we interviewed program directors and college administrators from five CRPs across the United States. Attendees will learn about facilitators that may be leveraged to support the successful integration of MHGs, including the credibility and perceived effectiveness of MHGs, institutional support from high-level leaders, donor engagement, and alignment with broader university priorities. Additionally, they will learn about potential barriers reported by CRP administration, such as limited institutional awareness, funding instability, and concerns about the accessibility and inclusivity of traditional 12-Step models. Based on these findings, recommendations for targeted strategies to enhance MHG adoption in CRPs will be discussed.

Measuring and Monitoring Recovery Readiness Across College Towns | 1 CE

Kelsey Van Selous, MSW, LCSW, PhD, Shawn Dorius, PhD, Matthew Voss (Not Presenting)

Institutes of higher education and officials from their surrounding communities must make difficult decisions about where to allocate resources for substance use recovery. To address this complex decision-making process, Iowa State University's Public Science Collaborative partnered with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services to develop Recovery Readiness Assessments for hundreds of cities and towns that can be replicated in college towns across the country. These assessments compile 24 types of recovery resources and services across 20,000 data points to help decision makers understand the landscape of substance use recovery resources in their communities. This session will provide an overview of how we developed the assessments, feature examples of these assessments among the college towns surrounding Iowa's regents universities and share recommendations of how other college towns can create assessments for their own communities. Additionally, we show how these kinds of assessments can inform campus-based recovery efforts.

Peers on the Front Line: The Importance of Peer Specialists in Schools | 1 CE

Joslyn Duenes, Licensed Master Social Worker, Savannah R. Coronado, RSPS

Peer support specialists play a critical role in improving access to mental health and substance use support within high school settings. As adolescents face increasing academic pressure, social challenges, and emotional stressors, schools are uniquely positioned to provide early, accessible intervention. Peer support specialists—individuals with lived experience and specialized training—offer relatable, nonjudgmental support that can reduce stigma and encourage students to seek help. Their presence within schools helps bridge gaps between students and traditional mental health services, particularly for those who may be hesitant to engage with clinical providers. In addition to supporting students experiencing mental health or substance use challenges, peer support specialists promote coping skills, resilience, and help-seeking behaviors. By fostering trust and connection, they can identify concerns early and support timely referrals to appropriate services. Integrating peer support specialists into high schools represents a proactive, student-centered approach to addressing mental health needs, improving school engagement, and supporting overall student well-being.

The Art of Showing Up: Helping APG Facilitators Build Connection, Recovery, and Adventure | 1 CE

George Youngblood

This presentation explores what it means to be an effective APG facilitator through authentic peer support, daily recovery coaching, group connection, and adventure-based learning. We will discuss practical tools for engaging teens in recovery, creating meaningful experiences, and sustaining ourselves as facilitators in emotionally demanding work.

Agenda

Saturday, June 27, 2026

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Bridge Drawings | 0 CEs

Rachelle Ellis, MFA, MA, ATR, CWHC

Bridge drawings are used in art therapy to examine a person's present experience with a particular goal. For those in recovery, bridge drawings can provide insight into one's current state, their perception of their surroundings, and any past, present, or anticipated challenges with one's recovery pathway. Join art therapist, Rachelle Ellis, for a session of introspection, expression, and connection.

4:45 PM - 5:45 PM

ARHE Regional Meetups | 0 CEs

Connect with your local collegiate recovery community! The ARHE Regional Meetups are designed to break the annual conference down into smaller, geographic-specific gatherings. Drop in to meet professionals and students from your neck of the woods, discuss localized trends and campus challenges, and build a closer network of support that you can lean on year-round.

International Region | Conifer 3

Mid-Atlantic Region | Larkspur

Midwest Region | Primrose

Northeast Region | Spruce 2

Southeast Region | Cottonwood

Southwest Region | Conifer 2

West Region | Spruce 1

4:45 PM - 5:45 PM: Breakout Sessions

Beyond the Inner Circle: Using Authentic Messaging to Reach New Audiences | 1 CE

Travita S. Godfrey, DPH, Shelby Trahan

Ready to take your school/organization from a "best kept secret" to a "can't-miss community powerhouse"? This session draws on communication lessons learned from publicizing Fortis Academy, a recovery-focused high school, to show how collaboration, connections and effective messaging build a strong foundation for sharing your mission with the community. With these tips, you'll find that you don't need a giant budget, a graphic designer or a TikTok-savvy teen. Expect a chance to workshop your own messaging with peers during interactive activities using AI tools. Attendees will also walk away with plug-and-play promotional materials, simple social media and outreach techniques and tips to create original content that builds understanding and highlights impact without stigma. Gain the confidence to proudly boast about your school/agencies and take your brand to the next level.

Building Effective Youth Recovery Programs | 1 CE

Ricky Hill, RSPS

This presentation explores the foundational elements of effective Youth-oriented program operations at Rise Recovery, with a focus on delivering high-quality, barrier free recovery services. Participants will examine key components of program planning, eligibility and enrollment processes, and attendance and participation standards. The session also highlights strategies for program evaluation and continuous improvement to ensure accountability, compliance, and positive outcomes for youth and families. Designed for program leaders and staff this presentation offers practical insights and operational frameworks that support consistency, sustainability, and excellence in recovery-oriented service delivery.

Agenda

Saturday, June 27, 2026

4:45 PM - 5:45 PM: Breakout Sessions

Creating Space for Peace in Policies and Procedures | 1 CE

Amy Christian, MS, EdD

This workshop will help school leaders begin to embed peacebuilding principles into school policies and procedures from a healing-centered approach. Participants will explore how leadership decisions, organizational structures, and daily practices can foster a culture of trust, inclusion, and mutual respect, resulting in policies and procedures which reflect student voice and student choice. Through guided reflection, authentic experiences, and collaborative problem-solving, leaders will take time to examine their own existing policies related to discipline, communication, and decision-making, identifying opportunities to align them with peacebuilding values. The session will also highlight the role of school leaders in modeling constructive conflict resolution and creating systems that support dialogue, accountability, and student-centered environments. By the end of the session, participants will be prepared to revise or develop policies and procedures that intentionally promote peaceful school climates and strengthen relationships among students, staff, families, and the wider community.

Reclamation of Self, Interconnectedness, and Purpose: Story Telling as a Healing Method | 1 CE

Michael Ketner, Brian Newsome

A reflexive look at the process and outcome of communication in the form of story telling in the recovery pathway. Looking in-depth at how the utilization of sharing one's story can not only be healing for that individual but also healing or at least helpful with harm reduction for others. Story telling creates a communal experience that creates bonds of shared experience for individuals in recovery that allows them to build a network that provides stability. Through this communal bond students in recovery can greatly benefit and thrive in their academic and personal life.

Utilization of CRP sanctioned speaker meetings is a vital pathway for students to experience the benefits of giving and hearing stories on recovery.

8:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Documentary Film Screening

"Together: Family Recovery" | 0 CEs

Amy Christian, MS, EdD

The documentary "Together: Family Recovery" represents an innovative route toward our shared goal of stronger, recovery-ready communities. Just as the conference honors diverse strategies, this film demonstrates how creative storytelling can serve as a powerful mechanism for elevating recovery education. Backed by evaluation data, the film has shown to foster lasting positive change including, building knowledge of substance use disorders, shifting attitudes, and increasing engagement with support resources. Crucially, viewers reported enhanced family closeness and resilience, proving that connection is vital to the collective ascent.

Learn more at:

<https://www.togetherfamilyrecovery.com/>

Light snacks will be provided.



Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

Sunday, June 28, 2026

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

Recovery Dharma Meeting | *Spruce 1*

Yoga Session | *Spruce 2*

8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Registration Open | *Rocky Mountain Event Center*

Exhibit Hall Open | *Rocky Mountain Event Center*

Wellness / Reflection Lounge | *Bluebell*

Nursing Lounge | *Ponderosa*

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM: Extended Breakout Sessions



AAPG Panel Discussion | 1.5 CEs

Robin Bergeron, CRM, George Youngblood, Ripp R. Motion, LPC-A, LCDC, Mary Kate Brown, LCDC-I, PSS, MHPS, PRS, RSPS, Becky Ahlgrim, RSPS, John C. Cates, MA LCDC

The Association of Alternative Peer Groups board of directors gather for an engaging panel discussion. Come to ask questions and hear updates from AAPG!



Accreditation 101: Navigating New Updates and the Essentials & Accreditation 101: Navigating New Updates and the Essentials + Accreditation Toolbox: Templates, Tools, and Technical Assistance | 1.5 CEs **Traci Bowermaster, M.Ed./LICSW, Andrew J. Finch, PhD**

This session provides a foundational overview of the Association of Recovery Schools (ARS) accreditation process, designed for schools at any stage of their journey. Participants will explore the core components of the accreditation framework, including eligibility requirements such as the three-year operational minimum and the necessity of licensed staff in leadership, education, and recovery roles.



Beyond Check-ins: Effective Supervision Strategies for Peer Support Specialists in Collegiate Recovery Programs | 1.5 CEs

Mirna Herrera, MA MT-BC, CPS, CRP

As Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRPs) continue to expand across campuses nationwide, peer support professionals are increasingly serving in complex roles that require intentional, ethical, and recovery-oriented supervision. Yet many supervisors enter these positions without formal guidance on how to support peer staff while maintaining role clarity, professional boundaries, and the integrity of peer support values. This session will explore practical and trauma-informed approaches to supervising peer workers within collegiate recovery settings. Participants will examine common challenges including dual relationships, burnout, crisis response, confidentiality, and navigating campus systems. The presentation will also highlight strategies for fostering professional growth, psychological safety, and sustainable peer workforce development among students and young adults in recovery. Through discussion and real-world examples, attendees will leave with actionable tools to strengthen supervision practices, support peer retention, and create healthier recovery-supportive campus environments that honor both student wellbeing and the unique role of lived experience within recovery support services.

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM: Extended Breakout Sessions

[Lightning Talks - Ted Talk Style Topic Discussions | 1.5 CEs](#)

Characteristics of Recovery High School Behavioral Health Staff: An Assessment of Professional Quality of Life, Work Engagement, and Social Support

Jennifer Vasquez, PhD, LCSW-S, April C. Bowie-Viverette, PhD, LCSW-S, MBA

Little is known about the characteristics of recovery high school human services and other professional staff who work in these specialized high school settings with adolescents in recovery from a substance use disorder. Researchers examined staff experiences, substance use disorder experience, perceived social support, and work engagement. Measures included the ProQOL5, ACE questionnaire, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Support, and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Spearman's rho results showed a positive correlation between compassion satisfaction and dedication ($r(20)=.486, p < .05$), indicating that CS explains 24% of the variance in dedication and suggesting that staff who experience higher levels of compassion satisfaction are more dedicated to their role. Implications for staff and leadership are discussed. This presentation will discuss our study, Investigating the relationships between Recovery High School staff well-being & work engagement: Implications for leadership (2025), which sought to determine staff well-being or professional quality of life, with particular attention to compassion fatigue and satisfaction, burnout, perceived social support, and staff work engagement.

Connecting Recovery High School Fieldwork to Practice Discussions in Japan: Results from a Participatory Workshop with People in Recovery and Cross-sector Practitioners

Miho Omura, PhD, Yojiro Watanabe (Not Presenting), Hanako Asahi (Not Presenting), Hana Suzuki (Not Presenting)

This session introduces a Japan-based knowledge translation project on adolescent recovery support, drawing on fieldwork at U.S. Recovery High Schools. We present an exploratory effort to introduce RHS concepts in Japan and facilitate dialogue among stakeholders, rather than a finalized model or implementation. Attendees will gain insight into how recovery-oriented education is interpreted within a different cultural context, including discussions on youth overdose, self-harm, and service gaps. The session invites mutual learning by considering how RHS approaches may be understood, adapted, and potentially reimaged in culturally distinct settings to support and empower young people.

Examining the Subjective & Objective Well-being of Adolescents Attending a Recovery High School

Jennifer Vasquez, PhD, LCSW-S, April C. Bowie-Viverette, PhD, LCSW-S, MBA

Research on adolescents attending Recovery High Schools (RHS) has been ongoing for over a decade, yet gaps in knowledge still exist. This study aims to fill gaps in empirical data regarding the relationships among adolescents' depression, resilience, perceived well-being, ability to identify behavioral supports, and academic performance. Secondary data from a Southern RHS (N=30) were analyzed using univariate and bivariate methods, including Fisher's tests, Pearson's correlation, and t-tests. Measures included the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9), the Brief Resilience Scale, and self-reports. Most adolescents reported good well-being. Significant associations were found between perceived well-being and academic performance ($p < .001$), and between ability to identify behavioral supports and academic performance ($p < .048$). An inverse relationship between resilience and depression was also observed ($p = -.044$). The findings highlight implications for improving adolescents' well-being through social work support.

Faculty Fellow, Academic Interventions on a Personal Level

Marc Rich, Brian Newsome

Early academic intervention for students is a critical and frequently neglected part of the collegiate recovery community. Students in recovery face a variety of academic difficulties including returning to college after an extended absence, dealing with academic failings due to substance abuse, or balancing academic demands with the demands of early recovery. UNCG developed the Faculty Fellow position which is a position held by a professor on campus. The Faculty Fellow develops relationships with the students and becomes an source for academic advising and early intervention. UNCG's Faculty Fellow offers recovery minded academic advising and has helped get multiple students into grad school. This panel will include Dr. Rich, the Faculty Fellow; and his former TA, soon to be Masters student at CU Denver's Communication program, Brian Newsome.

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

Lightning Talks (Continued)

Go Humans!™ Mission Is to Celebrate Humanity, with the Initial Focus on Addiction and Recovery

MARK J. EHRENKRANZ, CPRS

Go Humans!™ is a human-centered behavioral health initiative focused on restoring connection, emotional regulation, and resilience in systems where professionalized care alone often falls short. Its mission is grounded in a core principle: humans learn, change, and heal most effectively through meaningful connection with others who have lived similar experiences. The initiative's first field application centers on Peer Recovery Support Services (PRSS), as addiction and recovery provide one of the clearest, most evidence-supported demonstrations of human-to-human support outperforming traditional clinical-only models. As behavioral health systems face increasing workforce shortages, rising service demand, and limited long-term outcomes from conventional treatment alone, PRSS programs are expanding nationwide. Research consistently shows that peer-delivered services improve engagement, retention, and recovery-oriented outcomes while reducing costly emergency and inpatient utilization. Go Humans!™ positions lived experience as a clinical asset, advancing a scalable, trauma-informed framework for strengthening recovery systems, improving continuity of care, and restoring human connection as a central mechanism of healing.

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM: Extended Breakout Sessions

Collegiate Recovery Leadership Academy Impact Project Summaries | 1.5 CEs

Victoria Menz, MSW

Collegiate substance-use advocacy and collegiate recovery efforts are often defined by institutional priorities and staff, yet some of the most creative and impactful solutions come from student leaders. Join SAFE Project for a facilitated session where Collegiate Recovery Leadership Academy (CRLA) Fellows and Working Group Leaders (WGL) share their individual impact projects, designed and implemented on their respective campuses or in their communities.

Projects span recovery support, prevention efforts, harm reduction resources, advocacy, allyship, and cultural change. This session provides attendees with tangible examples of student leadership in action. Presenters will share experiences from their project implementation, highlighting lessons learned and personal growth.

Healing Is a Group Project: Peer-led Healing Circles in Collegiate Recovery | 0 CEs

Liliana G. Spurgeon, CCSS, CHW

Healing doesn't happen in isolation; it happens in relationship. This 90-minute extended breakout session invites participants into a peer-led Healing Circle modeled after practices used within the University of New Mexico Collegiate Recovery Center. Grounded in peer support, trauma-informed care, and culturally responsive frameworks informed by Curanderismo, the session blends lived experience with practical application. Participants will engage in a Healing Circle designed to foster emotional grounding, connection, and a sense of belonging for students navigating recovery, mental health challenges, and identity-related stress. Co-facilitated by Lily, a collegiate recovery peer and Alejandro Castro, a bilingual, bicultural trauma and addiction counselor, the session emphasizes ethical, accessible approaches to collective care that honor both human experience and professional responsibility. Attendees will leave with concrete facilitation tools, implementation considerations, and strategies for thoughtfully integrating Healing Circles into collegiate recovery programs and campus wellness initiatives.

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM: Extended Breakout Sessions

Integrating Eating Disorder Recovery Within Collegiate Recovery Programs: Purpose and Programming | 1.5 CEs

Alex Shrode, Melissa A. Munn-Chernoff, PhD, FAED (Not Presenting)

Collegiate recovery programs (CRPs) have supported students with substance use disorders for nearly four decades; however, they continue to report challenges in addressing comorbid disordered eating. Although comorbidity between eating disorders and substance use disorders is estimated at approximately 10%, CRPs observe higher prevalence rates. This study examined disordered eating patterns among students participating in CRPs.

Participants were 148 students (47.6% female; 87.2% White) enrolled in CRPs across five universities. Disordered eating was assessed using the Changes in Eating Disorder Symptoms scale, measuring seven symptom domains over the past week. While 10.8% identified as being in recovery from an eating disorder, 42.4% met the clinical cutoff for disordered eating. These findings demonstrate a critical need for targeted eating disorder assessment, intervention, and staff training within collegiate recovery settings.

Mistakes Were Made: Recovery Education Leaders on What Went Wrong & How We Grew | 1.5 CEs **Erin C. Bernard-Harris, MAT, CPSS, Roger J. Oser, MAT, Sharon Dursi Martin, MAT, Tina Miller, BA, Michael F. Durchslag, B.A., M.A.T.**

It's everyone's favorite recovery high school game show, Mistakes Were Made! The format, with host Erin Bernard-Harris, will feature a lineup of established recovery high school leaders Sharon, Roger, Tina, (and Mike) playing a 'jeopardy' game in which each question pushes the players to delve beneath the surface of tough choices and individual growth to generate conversations of best practice through "mistakes." This roundtable discussion and storytelling session invites attendees and participants to serve as an active audience that includes a lightning round of Q&A. By focusing on nonexamples and challenges, these leaders will find commonalities in recovery high school leadership that can inform the work of leaders throughout the United States and the future of the field. We are stronger and learn more when we work as a transparent brain trust.

Synergy at the Summit: Leveraging Collective Power to Strengthen a Recovery-ready Future | 1.5 CEs **Allison Smith, Ph.D.**

As recovery-ready campuses continue to evolve, the most sustainable progress emerges not from isolated programs, but from intentional synergy through the strategic alignment of people, systems, and shared purpose. Drawing on statewide coalition leadership, cross-sector prevention and recovery initiatives, and higher-education policy work, this session explores how institutions and organizations can move beyond silos to create integrated educational recovery ecosystems that truly support student success.

Grounded in real-world examples from multi-institution collaborations, public-private partnerships, and collegiate recovery initiatives, participants will learn how aligning prevention, mental health, recovery, and well-being efforts accelerates impact while reducing duplication and burnout.

Through a practical approach and real-world examples, attendees will leave with a sense of shared responsibility on the climb toward one summit: campuses where recovery is visible, valued, and viable.

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM: Keynote Session

The Power of Connection: Using Documentary Storytelling to Rewrite the Family Narrative | 1.5 CEs **Shelly Young, Pam Lanhart**

For too long, the dominant narrative in recovery has told families that "disconnection" and "tough love" are the paths to helping a loved one. We believe there is a different story to tell, where family bonds are valuable, and connection is the catalyst for change.

This keynote explores the power of storytelling to disrupt systems and shift deep-seated beliefs. We will discuss the creation of Together: Family Recovery, which illustrates the role families play has a direct influence on recovery outcomes.

We will examine why we chose this medium to humanize this complex dynamic and how narrative tools can be used to encourage family engagement. We will share high-level insights from our qualitative research to illustrate the film's efficacy and focus on the transformative potential of stories as attendees reconsider how we treat addiction in the family system and how utilizing media can foster healing, connection, and systemic change.



12:00 PM - 12:30 PM

Meditation Session | Spruce 2

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

All Recovery Meeting | Spruce 1

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM: Breakout Sessions

Bridging Gaps: Language and Recovery in Multi-lingual Communities | 1 CE **Jarmichael Harris, LCAS, Jerome Randolph, Danielle Jusko, MPH**

Recovery goes beyond stopping substance use; it involves reshaping identity and fostering connection and hope. Language significantly influences this process. For instance, self-descriptions like "I'm a person in recovery" versus "I'll always be an addict" highlight this impact. Cultural and language barriers further complicate the recovery experience. In Black communities, phrases like "stay strong" may deter seeking help, while in Latinx families, the term "vicio" frames addiction as moral weakness. Asian households often experience cultural silence around mental health, and immigrant communities may fear seeking assistance due to systemic concerns. This session will explore how language shapes recovery journeys, emphasizing inclusive, culturally resonant resources. Participants will learn to adapt recovery supports across languages, examining grassroots efforts like Black church ministries, bilingual Latinx peer groups, and immigrant-led WhatsApp groups, while also leveraging technology for multilingual recovery apps and online platforms that center diverse voices.

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM: Breakout Sessions

Demystifying “Multiple Pathways of Recovery”: Reflections for Community & Program Development | 1 CE

Victoria Menz, MSW, Dylan Dunn, MS

In work as personal and vulnerable as recovery, it is understandable why concepts such as “multiple pathways of recovery” feel controversial. How some individuals pursue change and wellness may not align and can even conflict at a foundational level. Often these conflicts can include high-stakes concerns about safety and harm. But, time-and-time again we find that dialogue and self-reflection can assist in overcoming these perceived barriers. In this session, presenters will overview concepts related to these tensions and facilitate an activity focused on reflectively defining an individual's whole pathway to recovery. This session will conclude with discussions about navigating pathway-based conflict between individuals and within programming.

Designing and Implementing Statewide Collegiate Recovery Assessment | 1 CE

Susie Mullens, MS, LPC, Licensed Psychologist, AADC-S, Aaron S. Blankenship, PRSS SUD-MH, AAS, RBA

College students across West Virginia face significant challenges related to mental health, substance use, and the recovery process, all of which can impact their well-being, academic success, and ability to remain enrolled. Although some higher education institutions offer recovery or mental health services, the availability, consistency, and effectiveness of these supports vary widely. This statewide needs-assessment project seeks to better understand the current landscape of collegiate recovery and mental health resources by gathering input from faculty, staff, recovery professionals, and students. The survey aims to identify service gaps, highlight areas of strong support, and uncover opportunities to strengthen recovery-friendly environments on campuses. Additionally, the project intends to raise awareness of collegiate recovery programs and encourage institutions to consider developing or expanding such services. Findings from this assessment may guide colleges and universities in enhancing support systems, improving student retention, and fostering healthier, more resilient campus communities.

Ensuring Stability and Impact: Developing a Sustainability Plan for a Recovery High School | 1 CE

Rachelle Gardner, MA/LCAC, Jon Shapiro, Ty Spisak

Recovery high schools operate at the intersection of education and behavioral health, providing essential academic and recovery supports for students in substance use recovery. Despite demonstrated positive outcomes, many recovery high schools face ongoing sustainability challenges driven by fragmented funding, policy misalignment, and enrollment variability. This session presents a practical, systems-based framework for building long-term sustainability in recovery high schools.

From Campus to Campsite: Building Community Through Outdoor Adventure Learning Experiences | 1 CE

Ellie Morris, John A. Shiflet, MSW

Outdoor Adventure Learning Experiences (OALE) can serve as powerful tools for community building within collegiate recovery programs. This session examines how Cougars in Recovery at The University of Houston integrates multi-day camping trips with facilitated outdoor excursions to support students in recovery through shared challenge, reflection, and peer connection. Presenters will outline program design and key implementation considerations, including program fit and scope, funding and institutional alignment, and accessibility. The session highlights how experiential programming can support long-term recovery and enhance student success. Attendees will leave with practical guiding principles to adapt Outdoor Adventure Learning Experiences to their own collegiate recovery programs, regardless of size, location, or budget.

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM: Breakout Sessions

Holding Space: A Restorative Circle for Recovery School Staff | 0 CE

Niesha Conley, MEd

This facilitated restorative circle offers recovery high school staff a chance to pause, reflect, and connect with others doing similar work. Using trauma-informed restorative practices, we'll hold space for staff to share the joys, challenges, and complexities of serving students in recovery. Through intentional rounds and shared agreements, this session will build community, promote emotional sustainability, and remind participants that they are not alone in this work. The circle is designed to be supportive, not performative, just come as you are. Whether you're new to restorative practices or use them regularly, this space will offer connection, validation, and tools for bringing relational care back to your team or classroom.

Leveraging Lived Experience Through Community Outreach! | 1 CE

Ryan J. York, RSPS

This presentation focuses on empowering participants to leverage their personal lived experiences as a meaningful tool for community outreach, education, and stakeholder engagement. By integrating reflection, ethical storytelling, and effective communication strategies, participants learn how to transform individual experiences into impactful messages that promote awareness, reduce stigma, and encourage engagement within diverse communities. The program emphasizes the importance of boundaries and trauma-informed practices to ensure personal narratives are shared safely and responsibly.

Leveraging the Benefits of Recovery School Mathematics Classrooms: Creating a Better Problem-based Learning for Mathematics Students in Recovery | 1 CE

Clark Hannahs, Oregon TSPC, M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction, Capella University

The purpose of this session will be to provide recovery mathematics educators to review the foundations present in my thesis: "A Practical Curriculum Framework for Mathematics Education in Recovery and Alternative High School Settings", and engage in a collaborative conversation that produces a wellspring of resources and contexts for problem-based learning tasks that are inherently interesting to our unique student population. A focus will be placed on leveraging the inherent benefits of the recovery high school setting (smaller class sizes, greater opportunity for rapport, increased autonomy) in a manner that directly addresses the obstacles (massive learning gaps, mixed-level classes, and behavioral challenges). This is all in service of both creating a nation-wide PLC of recovery mathematics educators and something more like a curriculum product that directly speaks to the mathematics teacher at a recovery high school.

Perception Under Pressure: Reimagining Identity and Engagement in Collegiate Recovery | 1 CE

Dr. Jason G. Roop, PhD

Collegiate recovery programs have made extraordinary progress in expanding support, reducing stigma, and creating spaces where students in recovery can belong. Yet many students still struggle beneath the surface with identity fragmentation, emotional overwhelm, disconnection, and the pressure of navigating recovery while simultaneously forming a sense of self.

This presentation explores the concept of "perception under pressure" and how patterns of thought, identity, emotional regulation, and self-perception influence engagement, behavior, relationships, and long-term recovery outcomes in collegiate settings. Drawing from both lived experience and emerging research, Dr. Jason Roop will examine how recovery support models can move beyond compliance-focused approaches toward identity-centered frameworks that help students better understand themselves, reconnect with their strengths, and develop greater internal balance and resilience.

2:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Coffee With Exhibitors | Rocky Mountain Event Center

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM**Warm-Up, Stretch, & Flow | 0 CEs****Brandi Baker**

Take a break in the middle of your day and reconnect with your body through movement. This all-levels class combines gentle warm-ups, full-body stretching, mobility work, and flowing movement exercises to release tension, improve flexibility, and increase body awareness. Perfect for beginners and experienced movers alike, this session will leave you feeling refreshed, energized, and ready for the rest of the convention. No dance experience required.

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM: Breakout Sessions**▶ Building and Maintaining Steering Committees in APGs | 1 CE****John C. Cates, MA LCDC**

Steering committees are an essential element for developing an effective Alternative Peer program. Choice of individuals, application of the individual and group talents for short and long term goals, adjustment for hanging needs of the program and care for the steering committee members is critical.

▶ Harm Reduction in Action: HBCU Edition | 1 CE**Lindsay Dozier, MPH, Adora Harris**

This session highlights the development and implementation of a campus-based harm reduction series designed to address substance use and overdose prevention among college students. Attendees will learn from our experience planning and hosting a multi-session program that emphasized the principles of harm reduction, increased knowledge of opioid use, and provided hands-on training in the administration of naloxone (Narcan) for emergencies. The series was implemented in collaboration with an external partner, the local health department, to strengthen credibility and expand access to resources. Additionally, the program featured a person in long term recovery, offering an impactful perspective that reduced stigma and enhanced student engagement. This session will share key lessons learned, challenges encountered, and best practices for developing effective harm reduction programming within higher education settings.

▶ Kratom on Campus: What Every Higher Education Professional Needs to Know | 1 CE**Jana Wu, LCSW, LADC, ICADC**

Kratom, a botanical substance derived from the *Mitragyna speciosa* plant, is rapidly emerging as a substance of concern on college campuses, yet remains widely misunderstood by the professionals tasked with supporting student health and recovery. Widely available in convenience stores, smoke shops, and online retailers, kratom is frequently marketed as a "natural" supplement for stress, focus, and anxiety relief, messaging that resonates with high-achieving, high-stress college populations.

This session draws on frontline clinical experience, including leadership of one of the first clinician-run kratom support groups in the country, to equip collegiate recovery and student affairs professionals with the knowledge they need to support students struggling with Kratom dependency on campus. Attendees will leave with a clear clinical picture of kratom's effects and dependence potential, practical tools for identifying and supporting students who are struggling, and a framework for proactive campus-level response at a time when regulation and research have yet to catch up with the substance's rapid growth.

▶ OUR House Evolution: Using the Social Model to Build Resilient Recovery Communities | 1 CE**Kimberly A. Stanfield, MSHCA**

This session examines how the Social Model of Recovery, in alignment with Jesuit values, can be intentionally applied to the evolution or design of Collegiate Recovery Communities (CRCs). Following Gonzaga's OUR House evolution, this session will outline how social model principles such as peer leadership, shared decision-making, multiple pathways, and relational accountability create resilient communities that adapt to changing student needs while maintaining connection and spaces for vulnerability. Attendees will explore the OUR House evolution to meet cultural shifts, recovery identity variation, and frequent community member transitions while preserving a space of safety, shared ownership, and belonging. We will discuss strategies for inviting students into recovery communities, communication modalities, and supporting belonging across stages of change and during periods of disruption. An activity will invite attendees to apply social model principles to their own CRCs or recovery spaces, focusing on how to preserve belonging and allowing students to lead.

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM: Breakout Sessions

Self-care: A Roadmap for Enhancing Performance | 1 CE

David Chastain, PhD

All of our efforts as counselors, family members, friends, coaches, faculty, sponsors, and others rest on our abilities to first take good care of ourselves. This presentation emphasizes the crucial importance of active self-care as a requirement in our efforts to be helpful to others. The link between self-care and the prevention of compassion fatigue is addressed. It is emphasized that daily self-care practices are most effective when tailored to our individual interests rather than adopting what might be considered to be trending. Dr Chastain draws from his extensive professional career and deep personal experiences in recovery and grief to provide illustrations of key points.

Supporting College Choice for Students in Recovery | 0 CEs

Victoria Menz, MSW

Deciding which institution of higher education (IHE) is the “best fit” is a pivotal, and often stressful, decision for many adolescents. For students in or seeking recovery, that decision is further complicated by questions about the type, availability, and stability of recovery support on campus. This presentation introduces SAFE Project’s “Recovery in College: Finding the Right Support for You,” a new decision-making resource designed to support students in recovery—and those who support them—connect their values, needs, and priorities with their decisions about higher education. Rather than serving as a comparison or ranking tool, this resource emphasizes that there is no one-size-fits-all collegiate recovery program. Instead, it encourages students and their families to slow down and think intentionally about which recovery support will actually fit their needs—academically and personally.

Systematic Evaluation of Adolescent Recovery Services (SEARS) - 2026 Annual Update | 1 CE

Jordan Jurinsky, MEd, PhD, Sharon Dursi Martin, MAT, Andrew J. Finch, PhD

The Systematic Evaluation of the Adolescent of Recovery Services (SEARS) is an iterative assessment tool designed to capture student experiences and program-level practices to strengthen the accessibility, quality, and effectiveness of adolescent recovery services. In partnership with recovery high schools across the United States, ARS has introduced a strengths-based approach to understanding students’ abilities, skills, and recovery capital. Practitioners are committed to improving school environments to support successful recovery, healthy relationships, academic progress, and overall stability for enrolled adolescents. Developed with researchers including Drs. Andy Finch and Jordan Jurinsky, SEARS was launched in 2022 and continues to evolve based on field feedback and a growing body of recovery science research. This session will present the most recent SEARS findings, which includes data from over 1,000 students across 27 recovery high schools. The session will highlight updates to the tool and its related resources, share practitioner insights from implementation, and outline next steps for expanding and refining this national evaluation effort.

Understanding You: Building Emotional Resilience to Reduce Non-suicidal Self-injury | 1 CE

Amanda Beausoleil, Kate Berardi, PhD

Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) is common, complex, and often misunderstood. While many approaches focus on stopping the behavior, lasting change occurs when individuals strengthen the emotional, cognitive, and somatic capacities that support regulation and self-compassion. This session introduces Understanding You: A Journey Beyond Self-Injury, a 12-session education and support program developed by Self-Injury Recovery & Awareness (SIRA). Grounded in lived experience, trauma-informed care, and evidence-based practices, the program takes a whole-person-centered approach. Through this, participants build embodied awareness, emotional regulation, and a more compassionate relationship with themselves. Drawing from community pilot data and youth co-creation, this session highlights the promising impact of Understanding You, showing reductions in NSSI frequency and motives, along with increased agency and belonging. Attendees will leave with practical, adaptable strategies for supporting sustainable recovery in clinical, educational, and community settings.

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM: Breakout Sessions

What Women in Collegiate Recovery Need: Insights from Peer-led One-on-one Support | 1 CE

Trinity A. Mustico

Women in collegiate recovery will often carry layered pressure; academic perfectionism or indifference, identity development, relationship dynamics, the emotional labor of early recovery and safety concerns, all while often downplaying their discomfort and personal needs. These experiences are often shaped by a woman's intersecting identities, such as her gender, race, sexuality, and socioeconomic background. As both a woman and an undergraduate peer support specialist with the Spartan Recovery Program at UNC Greensboro, I have spent the past year working one on one with women and femme-identifying students. We have built trust from our shared experiences, and listened to the subtle ways women have contorted themselves to feel accepted or "likable" in recovery spaces. While sometimes tradition in recovery emphasizes men supporting men and women supporting women, this session will challenge the idea that separation alone is the solution for creating safe communities. These patterns will reveal opportunities for men to better understand the unique concerns of women, and for women to feel empowered to openly name these dynamics. Gender-responsive recovery is not about division, it is a shared responsibility. Through a compassion-centered and relational lens, I will highlight what women say they actually need from peer support: representation, agency, safety, and spaces where their full stories can be told without minimizing themselves. Participants will leave with practical strategies for creating collegiate recovery environments that affirm all women across identities, reduce shame, and foster genuine connection.

3:45 PM - 4:45 PM: Breakout Sessions

Ares or Skynet: What Is the Future of AI and Behavioral Health? | 1 CE

Pete Nielsen, LAADC; MA, Counseling Psychology; BS, Business Administration

In recent years, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force in every industry touched by technology. In the behavioral health field, this is no different. From enhancing provider efficiency to improved diagnostics and interventions, the potential and emerging applications of AI tools in behavioral health are revolutionary. But while AI promises innumerable advancements, it simultaneously poses serious implications, new and old, for ethical considerations in privacy, health equity, and accessibility. This workshop delves into the rapidly evolving landscape of AI technology-based behavioral health treatment. It will go over emerging trends in AI technology and behavioral health while elaborating on the way AI has reshaped the landscape of ethics. Additional discussion on the need for ethics to be a driving force at the front of the behavioral health AI renaissance will examine approaches to ethical integration.

Learning as We Go: Two Clinicians' Journeys in Their First Year at a Recovery School | 0 CEs

Rebecca M. Teachey, MSW-S, Taylor N. Ingram, LPC

This hour long presentation is an introduction to the first year of navigating a new recovery high school from a clinician's perspective. Learn about the challenges, growth opportunities, and role of acting as a clinician working in a recovery high school. Sharing firsthand experiences and an open dialogue to assist new recovery clinicians as they embark on their journeys.

Let Them Lead the Climb: Developing Peer Leadership, Mentorship, and Ownership in Alternative Peer Groups | 0 CEs

Mary Kate Brown, LCDC-I, PSS, MHPS, PRS, RSPS

Alternative Peer Groups thrive when young people feel a sense of belonging, purpose, and responsibility, but many programs struggle to balance youth empowerment with structure and safety. This session explores how peer leadership and mentorship can be intentionally cultivated as tools for recovery, not rewards reserved for the "most successful" participants. Grounded in adolescent development, recovery principles, and real-world APG practice, this workshop will examine why peer leadership increases accountability, retention, and long-term recovery outcomes. Participants will learn how to create developmentally appropriate leadership roles, design peer mentorship models that avoid burnout and parentification, and respond effectively when youth leaders experience challenges. Through interactive exercises and case examples, attendees will leave with concrete frameworks to shift from adult-driven control to youth-owned culture; where responsibility is shared, voices are valued, and recovery becomes something young people actively protect rather than passively comply with.

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

3:45 PM - 4:45 PM: Breakout Sessions

Maintaining Long-term Recovery While Navigating the Collegiate Party Culture | 1 CE

Caitlin E. Hjerpe, M.S.ED, LPC-S, CSAT Candidate

For many college students, picturing a long-term recovery can be daunting. These emerging adults can struggle to see the value of long-term recovery, while they fear they are "missing out" on the most important years of their lives. It's important to understand the threats to long-term recovery, while also understanding the grief a young adult may feel about seemingly "missing out" on these formative years. Taking the knowledge and awareness of these barriers and threats, can allow us professionals and support systems to create an ally-ship, while also supporting a culture of accountability for long-term recovery. We can help an emerging, young adult identify practical tools and resources to support their long-term recovery. These resources can look like support groups, 12-step meetings, finding a sponsor, as hiking, book clubs, volunteering, and more. Practical tools may involve teaching a young adult how to use their phone as a recovery tool.

Perpetuating Cycles: External Stigma, Self-stigma, and Stigma Within Recovery Spaces | 1 CE

Victoria Menz, MSW, Nicole Benigno, MSSW, Dylan Dunn, MS

Substance use stigma is often understood as something imposed by systems, media, and the general public. While we talk more openly about how individuals internalize that stigma, we spend less time examining how it can also show up within recovery spaces. This session invites participants to consider stigma from outside recovery and within recovery communities—and how the two are connected.

Together, we will explore how fear, survival, and identity, shaped by system-backed stigma, can lead people in recovery to unintentionally perpetuate stigma toward one another, even when the goal is safety or clarity. Rather than assigning blame, stigma is framed as a shared challenge that requires curiosity, humility, and accountability. Through discussion and reflection, participants will unpack how "one size doesn't fit all" shows up in real-life situations and why ongoing self-reflection matters for building more inclusive recovery spaces.

Women in Collegiate Recovery: Providing a Voice of Relational Care | 1 CE

Julia Curiel, BA, Gerard A. Love, PhD, Rachel Elkins, BA

The presence of women in collegiate recovery settings has increased significantly since the earliest days of campus programming. Recent research on collegiate recovery participation reveal that women outnumber men. Though actual participation percentages vary from university to university, the increase in women in the collegiate recovery space leads to important questions regarding impact and contributions based upon lived experience, communication style and a well-documented relational orientation. This presentation explores via case study the unique contributions of women in collegiate recovery, specifically jumpstarting a program in transition and fostering cohesion for all members.

You Know Why; Let's Figure out How: Supporting Our High School Students in the Classroom | 1 CE

Jennifer Wytmans

As teachers in recovery high schools, we understand our students have experienced trauma, face academic skill gaps, and are sometimes suspicious of the classroom environment. This collaborative session brings teachers together to openly discuss what has worked, what hasn't, and where we still struggle. This session is facilitated by a fellow teacher to provide participants a warm, supportive space to identify common obstacles to and share practical strategies for maintaining high academic expectations while honoring students' realities. The goal is for every participant to leave with at least one new, realistic strategy they can use immediately in their classroom, reassurance that they are not alone in this work, and connections with colleagues they can count on in the future.

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Poster Sessions & Networking Snack Bar | 0 CEs

Join us for a networking snack bar with mocktails in the Exhibit Hall as part of the Poster Sessions. Poster presentations and snacks will both be set up in the Rocky Mountain Event Center!

Association Between Forgiveness and Suicidal Behavior Among College Student Drinkers, as Mediated by Resentment and Psychache

Ashnita S. Maxton, MA, Alyssa M. Hill (Not Presenting), M.Ed, ERNESTINA AIDOO (Not Presenting), Jon Webb (Not Presenting)

Collaborative Recovery Ecosystems: Connecting Students with Local Recovery Community Organizations (RCO) and Community Behavioral Health Providers

E. Michael M. Watts, LCSW

Comparative Outcomes in Eating Disorder, Substance Use, and Dual Recovery

Jessica Koehn, CNA

Comparing Psychosocial Outcomes in Collegiate Recovery Program (CRP) and Non-crpf Students

Rebecca Smith, PhD, MSW, Thomas N. Bannard, CPRS, CADC, Kaitlin Bountress (Not Presenting), Spit for Science Working Group

"Connections" Preventative Methods and Transferable Mentalities: Practicing Grounding Skills and Vulnerability in a Peer-environment

Bryce H. Massey

DARE to Do Something Different: Looking to the Past, Present, and Future of Elementary Alcohol and Drug Education

Georgia Laster

Examining Developments in the Field of Collegiate Recovery Through a Descriptive Database

Chelsea Shore-Miller, PhD

Examining Hope and Mindfulness as Predictors of Depressive Symptomology in a Collegiate Acoa Sample

Travis Gudenrath, M.Ed., LCDC, Angela L. P. Cunanan, Alyssa M. Hill, M.Ed

Exploring the Comorbidity Between Substance Use Disorders and Eating Disorders in Higher Education Populations

Lucy Aultman

Exposure Through Service at a Syringe Exchange Reduces Social Stigma Towards People Who Use Substances

Bryce Dye

Internal Family Systems as a Framework for Collegiate Recovery

Madison J. Ellis

Living in the Groove: Enlisting the Nervous System in the Recovery Healing Process

Lane Siebert, Larkin M. Francis, PhD, MSW

Narcotics Access and Education on a Midwestern University Campus: Process, Outcome, and Lessons Learned

Aidan Ferguson, PhD, LCSW, MSW, MS, MS, Jennifer Erwin, PhD, JD, Ariel Hooker Jones, PhD, LCSW

Sources of Recovery Support That Drive Recovery Capital Vary Across Stages of College Career

Lane Siebert, Larkin M. Francis, PhD, MSW

The Evaluation of the Raymond J. Lesniak ESH Recovery High School

Makayla Folino, MA, MS

Agenda

Sunday, June 28, 2026

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Second Chance Comedy Show | 0 CEs

The goal of Second Chance Comedy is to raise awareness around addiction, provide a space for healing, and offer sober fun for people in recovery. We aim to raise money for charities helping those in need, chip away at the stigma of addiction, help people heal from the shame of addiction, and offer new perspectives. Laughter is a powerful healing tool, and we believe it can bring light to even the darkest moments. Join us in this mission to support recovery, promote understanding, and create a community of hope and resilience. Learn more at: <https://www.secondchancecomedy.com/>



8:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Second Chance Comedy Show | 0 CEs

Sober AF Entertainment (SAFE) was founded in 2018 to provide a supportive, substance-free environment at live events, promoting sobriety and recovery. Recognizing the challenges faced by those in recovery in environments often dominated by alcohol, SAFE creates sober safe zones at concerts, sports games, and festivals. By partnering with event organizers and venues, SAFE has grown rapidly, fostering a community that enjoys live events without the pressure of substance use. SAFE's unique, peer-driven model has made it a leader in the sobriety movement, changing the narrative around recovery and promoting inclusivity and fun in sobriety. This silent disco event is sure to get people dancing, laughing, and having a good time!



Agenda

Monday, June 29, 2026

Monday, June 29, 2026

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

SMART Recovery Meeting | *Spruce 1*

Yoga Session | *Spruce 2*

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Registration Open | *Rocky Mountain Event Center*

Exhibit Hall Open | *Rocky Mountain Event Center*

Wellness / Reflection Lounge | *Bluebell*

Nursing Lounge | *Ponderosa*

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM: Extended Breakout Sessions

AAPG Q&A Session | 0 CEs

Robin Bergeron, CRM, George Youngblood, Ripp R. Motion, LPC-A, LCDC, Mary Kate Brown, LCDC-I, PSS, MHPS, PRS, RSPS, Becky Ahlgrim, RSPS, John C. Cates, MA LCDC

Join the Association of Alternative Peer Groups board of directors for a Question & Answer session!

Accessible Programming to Engage and Support All Participants | 1.5 CEs

Heidi Cloutier, MSW, Heather Morris, MSW, Faye Paquette

Ensuring accessible programming is not just a compliance issue, but creates a sense of belonging, and acceptance and helps to build trust and engagement. This session is appropriate for recovery high schools, Alternative Peer Groups and Collegiate Recovery to better understand the various aspects of creating accessible programming, from physical accessibility to addressing stigma, digital and print accessibility as well as language and communication office. Examples, resources, & best practices will be shared, and participants will have the opportunity to share in small groups.

Accessible programming ensures equitable, timely access to supports and resources, improves outcomes and promotes overall well-being, and the correlation between accessibility and high-quality programming is an emerging research area. Collegiate Recovery programs that emphasize creating supportive, stigma-free and resource-rich environments demonstrate better academic success, student retention, and long-term sobriety.

Accessibility in youth and young adult substance use programs is about building a comprehensive support system that fosters inclusion of all participants and breaks down barriers to access.

Coaching the College Journey: An Interactive, Skills Based Exploration of Recovery Coaching in Collegiate Recovery | 1.5 CEs

Katrina Masi, RCP, RCPF, Michael Serrano, RCP, RCPF

Collegiate recovery programs support students at a critical intersection of identity development, academic responsibility, and long-term recovery. While many campuses offer peer support, clinical services, and student-led recovery communities, recovery coaching provides a distinct, strengths-based approach that empowers students to clarify goals, build recovery capital, and navigate the complexities of college life while maintaining recovery.

This highly interactive 90-minute breakout session, facilitated by CCAR Training, invites participants to experience recovery coaching in action through a collegiate lens. Rather than a lecture-based presentation, attendees will engage in guided reflection, structured small-group activities, and applied coaching scenarios grounded in real challenges faced by students in recovery on campus.

Participants will explore how recovery coaching complements existing collegiate recovery supports by emphasizing autonomy, accountability, purpose, and whole-person development. Attendees will leave with practical coaching tools, campus-relevant implementation strategies, and an adaptable evaluation framework they can immediately apply within their collegiate recovery programs.

Agenda

Monday, June 29, 2026

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM: Extended Breakout Sessions

How to Gain Institutional Support Utilizing an Abstinence Based CRP | 1.5 CEs

John A. Shiflet, MSW, William Gerber, PhD, LCDC, Ahmed Hosni

Programs (CRPs) has become increasingly difficult as higher education budgets tighten, and executive leadership demand clearer evidence of programming impact. Despite these obstacles, abstinence-based CRPs consistently demonstrate strong academic and wellbeing outcomes for students in recovery from substance use disorders. This presentation will showcase how GPA, graduation and retention rates, and a favorable cost-benefit analysis demonstrate immense value to institutions of higher education. Using these outcomes alongside increasing national focus on student mental health and wellbeing, a formula to advocate for making collegiate recovery a permanent line item in institutional budgets will be presented.

Recovery High Schools and the Nexus Model of Youth Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery | 1.5 CEs

Andrew J. Finch, PhD, Jordan Jurinsky, MEd, PhD, Nafisah Downs, Ryan Morgan, Rachelle Gardner, MA/LCAC

This presentation will introduce the Nexus Model of Youth Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery, a non-linear, developmentally informed framework integrating the cascade of care with Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). The model conceptualizes two dimensions: problem identification (universal, selected, and indicated prevention) and recovery identification (treatment through recovery supports). The model is organized around a harm reduction continuum for adolescent services and the definition of adolescent recovery from the Association of Recovery Schools which emphasizes brain development. The model will be applied to existing to RHSs to show various strategies for implementation.

Recovery Is Badass: Transforming Powerpoints into Interactive Student Events | 1.5 CEs

Danielle D. Irwin, AA, BA, Erica R. Jones, MA, LPC

Participants will learn how to transform standard PowerPoint presentations into dynamic, student-centered events that spark engagement and deeper understanding. We will share how we turned a traditional Recovery Allyship presentation into an interactive tabling fair featuring themed stations, hands-on activities, and real-time discussions. Our session will explore the steps, logistics, and creative strategies needed to cultivate memorable learning opportunities that resonate with diverse audiences. By the end, attendees will be equipped with actionable insights to revolutionize their programs, ensuring students stay engaged and excited about recovery and allyship.

Rolling the Dice on Our Future: Addressing America's Collegiate Gambling Crisis | 1.5 CEs

Saul Malek

In this 90-minute interactive session, Saul Malek — a national youth gambling prevention speaker with lived experience of sports betting addiction — equips recovery professionals in higher education with practical, relevant tools to identify and support students facing gambling-related risks. Drawing from his own journey (college betting spiral to rock bottom at 21, now 6+ years clean), Saul shares the modern landscape of gambling harms on campus: easy-access apps, micro-betting, social media influence, and financial/mental health pressures.

Participants gain actionable strategies: recognizing signs in recovery communities, using non-judgmental conversation starters, navigating referral pathways, and implementing simple follow-up tools to reinforce prevention and support. The session emphasizes immediate, student-centered impact while providing resources for ongoing community integration.

Designed for counselors, wellness coordinators, peer leaders, and student affairs staff, this program bridges lived experience with practical application to strengthen gambling harm support in college recovery settings.

Agenda

Monday, June 29, 2026

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM: Extended Breakout Sessions

What You Need to Know About CRP Research: Developments and Future Directions from the Collegiate Recovery Research Collaborative | 1.5 CEs

Thomas N. Bannard, CPRS, CADC, Onawa LaBelle, PhD, Larkin M. Francis, PhD, MSW, Keith Murphy, LPC, LCADC, Waltrina E. DeFrantz-Dufor, PhD

The Collegiate Recovery Research Collaborative (CRRRC) is a diverse group of academics and practitioners who have lived experience of recovery or who identify as allies, and addresses the lack of diverse, transdisciplinary research communities in addiction recovery (Bannard 2025). This panel discussion will present highlights of Collegiate Recovery Research from the past several years, discuss future research directions as well as exploring the formation and the growth of the the CRRRC, a group that focuses on applying recovery principles to their collaborative work. Since resuming in person research retreats in 2024, the CRRRC has collaboratively published 5 papers focused on Collegiate Recovery with several more in the works. More importantly, the research has stayed grounded in the day to day work of the field, with numerous program directors and coordinators helping to guide the direction of the work.

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Mandala / Open Drop In Session | 0 CEs

Rachelle Ellis, MFA, MA, ATR, CWHC

Sanskrit for "circle"; mandalas are used in art therapy to explore the unconscious mind. Art materials are used to create circular abstract and non-objective artworks that serve as representations of one's most intimate personal reflections. Initiated with no goal in mind beyond curiosity, insight, and exploration, participants will mentally unwind, connect with their inner wisdom and intuition, and visually explore their inner selves.

10:15 AM - 11:45 AM: Keynote Session

Healing for Us: Climbing Together Toward a Shared Summit | 1.5 CEs **Jarmichael Harris, LCAS**

Healing For Us: Climbing Together Toward a Shared Summit is a 90-minute interactive keynote designed to spark leadership, build connection, and inspire the next generation of voices in scholastic recovery. Rooted in the message of Grab a Shovel, Treat the Soil and aligned with the 2026 conference theme, this keynote explores how belonging, equity, and collaboration create the soil where students and communities grow. Participants will reflect on their personal "shovel," meaning the strengths, passions, and lived experiences they carry, and identify the "summit" they feel called to pursue, such as recovery ready campuses, peer workforce development, or stronger campus and community partnerships. Through guided conversation and simple group engagement, attendees begin shaping an idea they can grow into a future project or conference proposal. The session closes with a Healing For Us Commitment that encourages participants to stay connected, stay encouraged, and stay involved in our shared work.



Agenda

Monday, June 29, 2026

12:00 PM - 12:30 PM

Meditation Session | Spruce 2

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Recovery Dharma Meeting | Spruce 1

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM: Breakout Sessions

5 Pillars of Parent/caregiver Recovery | 1 CE

Becky Ahlgrim, RSPS

The APG parent support group is where parents/caregivers initially show up wanting to learn how to “fix” their child who is experiencing a substance use issue. Little do they suspect that the process of recovery is a family experience and that focusing on their own concerns will be their greatest challenge as well as greatest benefit. As recovery supporters, we can help parents identify and explore five main areas of parent growth that are significant in creating change within the family dynamic, resulting in observable beneficial outcomes for the parent-teen relationship. We will explore strategies from different approaches to recovery relating to each of the five areas and share helpful parenting resources. Participants will identify parent goal setting objectives and customize a family goals review format that can be adapted to meet the needs of the family in alignment with the standards of the APG.

Building a Full-day Recovery Campus: Integrating Education, Treatment, and Peer Support to Improve Outcomes for Adolescents in Recovery | 1 CE

Max Preminger, B.A., M.S., Nicholas Crapser, Ph.D., LPC, LMHC, CADC-III, SUDP, CGAC-R, CRM-II, NCC, MAC ACS, CSC

This presentation highlights an innovative co-housed recovery campus model that integrates a recovery high school, clinical treatment services, and peer-driven supports within a single, full-day sober environment. By aligning education, substance use treatment, mental health services, and recovery mentorship, the program reduces service fragmentation, strengthens continuity of care, and increases student engagement. Early outcomes demonstrate improved collaboration, dual enrollment success, and more responsive, youth-centered recovery planning.

Connecting the Dots to More Effectively Work with Fraternities and Sororities | 1 CE

Logan O. Davis, MA

For better or worse, there is nothing like the sorority & fraternity experience or working with fraternities and sororities on the campuses in which they reside. Complex, and often complicated organizations, lead to complex and complicated relationships. The question this session aims to explore is why. Why can working with fraternities & sororities and the professionals and volunteers who work with them be so complicated? Come “connect the dots” and explore barriers and complexities getting in the way of successful working relationships.

Making Sustained Change: Servant Leadership & Advocacy | 1 CE

Victoria Menz, MSW, Dylan Dunn, MS, Nicole Benigno, MSSW

Students strive to be change agents for this field on their campuses and in their communities (Cheifetz, 2025). Without carefully crafting this passion, we risk losing buy-in, sustainability, or even credibility. This session empowers students to craft their advocacy through strategy and servant leadership. In this session, the SAFE Project team will discuss servant leadership, advocacy, and goal setting with strategy.

Agenda

Monday, June 29, 2026

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM: Breakout Sessions

Mapping the Path to Care: Practical Tools for Eating Disorder Assessment and Resource Coordination on Campus | 1 CE

Molly Dixon, MS, LGPC, Shannon Kopp, MFA

Recovery communities on campus are uniquely positioned to notice early signs of eating disorders and support students in seeking care, yet they are often under-resourced and under-trained for this role. This session offers a practical, recovery-oriented framework for identifying eating disorder concerns, conducting basic assessments within scope, and coordinating warm handoffs to campus and community providers. Attendees will explore how peer recovery programs, recovery housing staff, and collegiate recovery centers can integrate brief screeners, safety checks, and resources into their everyday work. Through case examples and interactive planning, participants will leave with concrete tools to strengthen pathways from recovery spaces to appropriate clinical care while preserving autonomy, dignity, and community connection for students in recovery.

Move to Heal: An Experiential, Movement-based Peer Support Model for Collegiate Recovery | 1 CE **Leetal Young, BS, BA**

Movement is increasingly recognized as a powerful, nonclinical tool for supporting mental health, emotional regulation, and recovery, yet it remains underutilized in collegiate recovery programming. This session introduces "Move to Heal," a movement-based peer support group developed for implementation within a collegiate recovery setting. Participants will engage in a brief, accessible movement experience followed by a guided reflection to demonstrate how physical activity can support connection, nervous system regulation, and mental well-being. The session will highlight the role of movement as a complementary support alongside traditional recovery approaches and outline practical considerations for developing and adapting the model across diverse campus contexts. Attendees will leave with a clear, transferable framework for implementing movement-based peer support programming that expands multiple pathways of recovery and increases student engagement.

We Are Wildflowers: Garden Learning, Student Leadership, Arts, and Recovery Outcomes | 1 CE **Erin C. Bernard-Harris, MAT, CPSS, Annie Tickell, MEd, Certified Vegetable Farmer, Certified Trauma-Informed Teaching Artist, Silas Nelson**

The Bridge Way School, Pennsylvania's first and only recovery high school based in Northeast Philadelphia, has spent two years designing and implementing a unique, interdisciplinary program that centers gardening and arts as a practice of connection and exploration for students in substance use recovery. We Are Wildflowers pairs trauma-informed mental health practices with authentic horticultural skill-building in a school-day internship program alongside the nation's first Recovery Artist-In-Residence program. Our goal is to see if an opt-in, paid gardening internship paired with meaningful arts experiences led by professionals who have journeyed or witnessed recovery closely can impact students' mental health and recovery outcomes. Specifically, we want to see how collaboratively tending to plants can impact students' coping skills, self-esteem, and advocacy for themselves and their community. This interactive workshop will unpack the - sometimes messy - process of building an innovative recovery program, from visioning, to piloting, and into practice.

When Time and Money Are Tight: Strategies for Grant Success | 1 CE **CJ Bugna**

Collegiate Recovery Programs often operate under significant constraints, particularly when grant programming must be implemented quickly and with limited resources. This presentation explores practical, field-tested approaches to developing and executing effective programming within an accelerated timeline. We will discuss approaches to maximize the impact of a grant year while balancing staffing limitations, administrative demands, and sustainability concerns. Participants will learn strategies for rapid program panning, prioritizing high-impact initiatives, aligning grant goals with institutional capacity, and leveraging partnerships to stretch limited funds. Emphasis will be placed on creating adaptable program structures, using data to guide decision-making, and maintaining fidelity to recovery support best practices despite time pressures. Through concrete examples and actionable tools, attendees will leave with a clearer roadmap for implementing meaningful collegiate recovery programming that delivers measurable outcomes, meets grant requirements, and lays the groundwork for long-term success beyond the funding period.

Agenda

Monday, June 29, 2026
2:00 PM - 2:30 PM
Coffee With Exhibitors | Rocky Mountain Event Center
2:30 PM - 3:30 PM: Breakout Sessions

Advancing Excellence: Understanding SRCRA and Collegiate Recovery Accreditation | 1 CE

Kristina M. Canfield, MEd

This session will introduce attendees to the accreditation process for collegiate recovery programs (CRPs). The session will cover the history of how the process was developed, an overview of the process for applying and completing accreditation, a review of the manual and expectations, and an interactive experience with the unique tool designed for accreditation. The session will also address how this process can support the continued growth and sustainability of a CRP and how to leverage what is learned through the various accreditation processes to advocate for their CRP.

Come Hang and Get Trained: Normalizing Naloxone Access Through Recovery-centered, Community-based Engagement | 1 CE

Kaitlin Carter, MCS, LPC, Annie Chalmers-Williams, LCSW, CAADC

"Come Hang and Get Trained" is a recovery-centered harm reduction initiative that uses community-based naloxone education to normalize access, reduce stigma, and strengthen recovery-ready campus environments. Developed during Recovery Month with limited resources and an emphasis on recovery allyship, this public event intentionally positioned overdose prevention within a visible, welcoming, and non-clinical setting. What began as a small-scale gathering has grown into a highly anticipated campus tradition that bridges high-risk populations with students, staff, faculty, and allies who may not otherwise engage in recovery programming. This session will examine how recovery-centered framing, intentional language, and cross-campus collaboration contributed to the event's growth and cultural impact. Participants will learn practical strategies for implementing low-barrier naloxone training initiatives and sustaining access through visible infrastructure, such as naloxone distribution points, while advancing a shared commitment to community care and recovery.

Finding a Path "Together": How a Community-led Documentary Film Is Changing Family Members' Awareness, Knowledge, and Attitudes About Family Recovery Processes | 1 CE

Ya-Li Yang, PhD Candidate, MSW, Larkin M. Francis, PhD, MSW, Shelly Young, Pam Lanhart

Documentary films, as a form of storytelling, have a history of being used as health communication tools and may act as agents for mobilizing change. This study assessed the immediate and sustained impact of Together: Family Recovery, on participants' awareness, knowledge, and attitudes about family recovery processes, and on the actions participants take to learn more about family recovery and engage with the family recovery community. A total of 181 family members of individuals with SUDs were recruited across four film screenings to complete pre-, post-, and six-week follow-up surveys. Respondents reported improved understanding of family recovery, greater engagement in recovery-related activities, and increased family closeness and resilience six weeks after the film. This underscores the effectiveness of integrating narrative-based media in informing families and inspiring positive change for family recovery psychoeducation. Attendees will learn how documentary film can support psychoeducation and family engagement in recovery.

Flexible and Focused: Designing Responsive Instruction in Recovery High Schools | 1 CE

Niesha Conley, MEd

This interactive session explores how educators in recovery high schools can design responsive, student-centered instruction that supports both academic success and recovery. Participants will examine a real-world interdisciplinary project that reflects the flexibility and intentionality needed in alternative classrooms. Through guided analysis and a planning template, attendees will begin crafting their own unit or term plan that embeds student voice, flexible pacing, and embedded supports. Ideal for teachers, instructional leaders, and program developers, this session provides practical tools and a replicable process for alternative instruction needed in recovery high schools.

Agenda

Monday, June 29, 2026

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM: Breakout Sessions

From Lived Experience to Strategic Storytelling: Sharing with Purpose, Boundaries, and Care | 1 CE

Victoria Menz, MSW, Nicole Benigno, MSSW

People with lived experience are often encouraged to share their stories to connect, reduce stigma, and advocate for recovery-related supports. However, students and early-career professionals are rarely given guidance on personal boundaries or ethical considerations of sharing lived experience—especially the difference between sharing in support-oriented environments and strategic storytelling for advocacy, outreach, or professional goals. This session explores how to intentionally, with purpose and care, share lived experience without self-exploitation or overexposure. Building on feminist storytelling, recovery-oriented practice, and strengths-based frameworks, participants will examine the idea of sharing “scars, not scabs” and how context, audience, and purpose shape storytelling decisions. Students who attended earlier sessions on SMART goal-setting/advocacy and multiple pathways will have opportunities to synthesize those concepts within different storytelling contexts, though prior attendance is not required.

From Support to Strategy: Using SWOT Analysis to Strengthen Collegiate Recovery Programs | 1 CE

Michelle K. Strong, PhD | SPHR

This session draws on a narrative review of 71 peer-reviewed studies and applies a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) framework to examine CRPs from an organizational perspective. Attendees will learn evidence demonstrating CRPs’ strengths, including improved academic outcomes and overall well-being. Also presented will be persistent challenges such as unstable funding models, lack of homogenous curricula, limited longitudinal data, and lack of focus on post-graduation outcomes. Additionally, the session will highlight emerging opportunities to strengthen CRPs through programs such as recovery-informed college-to-work transition plans and stronger connections to corporate and community organizations. Lastly, external threats including stigma, reliance on grant funding, and gaps in institutional support and public policy will be discussed. This session is designed for researchers, practitioners, and administrators, and will equip attendees with a practical SWOT based tool they can apply to assess, advocate for, and strategically strengthen CRPs within their own institutions.

Healing, Learning, Belonging: An Integrated Recovery School Model for Youth with Co-occurring Needs | 1 CE

Todd Nicholson, Ed.S, NCSP, CADC, CRM

Oregon’s recovery schools provide a vital bridge between treatment and education, supporting youth with substance-use disorders and coexisting conditions as they rebuild their lives. Rivercrest Academy, Oregon’s second public recovery high school, operates under the Multnomah Education Service District as a trauma-informed, recovery-oriented learning environment. This presentation describes Rivercrest’s integrated model combining psychoeducation, social emotional learning and peer supports to holistically address recovery, emotional intelligence, and peer leadership. All students at Rivercrest are supported by an individualized recovery plan.

The Rivercrest framework is supported by The Association of Recovery Schools. These evidence-informed programs work synergistically to enhance students’ self-regulation, belonging, and purpose—critical protective factors for sustained recovery and academic success. Participants will explore implementation strategies, curriculum alignment, and outcomes data demonstrating improved student engagement, reduced relapse risk, and strengthened community connection. The Rivercrest approach offers a replicable, trauma-responsive blueprint for recovery schools seeking to integrate prevention, treatment, and recovery within an educational context.

Agenda

Monday, June 29, 2026

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM: Breakout Sessions

The Dangerous Truth About Today's Marijuana: Johnny Stack's Life and Death Story | 1 CE

Laura Stack, MBA, CSP, CPAE

Adolescence is a period of brain refinement, especially in regions associated with reward, cognitive function, and emotionality. Laura's real-life story is backed by current scientific and clinical research on how youth THC use has an increased association with psychiatric conditions such as anxiety, depression, paranoia, psychosis, and sadly, suicidal ideation. This presentation is a clarion call for adults who work with teens to educate themselves about the risks of today's high potency THC products and to better understand the potentially devastating effects on youth mental health.

The Wins and Woes of Collegiate Recovery: Navigating Uncertainty in Higher Education | 1 CE

Staisha Hamilton, DSW MSW LCAS

Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRPs) play a vital role in supporting students in recovery from substance use disorders as they navigate higher education. As attention to student wellness and retention increases, CRPs have expanded across campuses, demonstrating positive impacts on academic success, belonging, and persistence. Despite these gains, programs continue to face significant challenges related to sustainability, funding, stigma, and institutional alignment.

This 60-minute presentation examines both the wins and woes of Collegiate Recovery Programs within the context of current higher education trends. Participants will explore emerging practices, peer-based support models, and campus partnerships that contribute to effective CRPs, alongside persistent barriers that limit program growth and access. Through real-world examples and facilitated discussion, attendees will gain practical insights and strategies to strengthen existing programs or inform the development of new recovery-supportive initiatives on college campuses.

3:45 PM - 4:45 PM: Breakout Sessions

Coordinating Recovery and Reentry Dynamics for Justice Engaged Students | 1 CE

Wendy Loloff Cooper, PhD in Education & Social Justice (in progress), Lancaster University (UK); M.A. in Educational Leadership, Concordia University; B.S. in Business Management, Colorado Christian University – CEO, Generation Schools Network

Colorado recently passed HB24-1216, a bill of rights for justice engaged students as they re-enter the educational system. A high percentage of these students face recovery challenges related to substance abuse disorder. Session participants will be introduced to how a unique form of recovery high school exclusively serving justice engaged students in Denver is using an education journey mapping tool as an assessment and planning protocol that identifies critical barriers to both re-entry and recovery success. Having been piloted through a CO attorney general office education and innovation grant with justice engaged students, education journey mapping has become a helpful tool and process to coordinate and navigate recovery and re-entry dynamics. This session will be organized as a case study including the voices of students, parents, faculty, and treatment staff. Join the workshop to explore the process yourself and how to use it in your setting.

Discovering Evidence of Post Traumatic Growth (PTG) Among Collegiate Recovery Students; A Deductive Qualitative Analysis | 1 CE

Declan P. Murphy, BA MA MA Doctoral student, Lauren E. Lewis, PhD

A robust body of literature documents the relationship between trauma and addiction, with trauma both preceding and arising from substance use. Emerging adults (18-29) in recovery may face compounded vulnerabilities during this developmental period, yet those enrolled in collegiate recovery programs (CRPs) often access recovery-supportive environments that foster resilience. An emerging framework for positive psychological change following adversity, post traumatic growth (PTG), encompasses five domains: enhanced appreciation of life, relationships, personal strength, new possibilities, and spirituality. While PTG has been identified among individuals in addiction recovery, it has not been examined within CRP populations. Using deductive qualitative analysis, this study explored the presence of PTG among emerging adults enrolled in a CRP (N=10). Findings indicate strong evidence of new possibilities, personal strength, and meaningful relationships, while spirituality and appreciation of life were less pronounced in this sample. Future quantitative studies will expand the exciting intersection of PTG and addiction recovery.

Agenda

Monday, June 29, 2026

3:45 PM - 4:45 PM: Breakout Sessions

Empowerment Through Critical Thinking: Building Skills for Confidence, Autonomy, & Informed Decision Making | 1 CE

Armani Je Balderas, MHPS, RSPS, YMHA Instructor, LPN-TR, Brittany Dorris, RSPS

This presentation is build to show peer specialist/mentors/ leaders on how empowering others through the critical thinking process can benefit the individual being supported.

Enhancing CRP Recruitment and Retention via Scholarship Opportunities | 1 CE **Iz Engel**

Some Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRPs) may be challenged by the following two issues: how do we incentivize students to continue to engage in services that we know are effective in supporting their recovery? AND, how do we attract students who may be questioning their substance use but are not engaging in available support services? The UC Berkeley Recovery Scholars Program (RSP) was developed to address these challenges. RSP is a micro-scholarship program that supports student health and wellbeing while bolstering inclusion and belonging through comprehensive peer support services. Students who successfully complete the program are awarded a \$500 stipend. This presentation will discuss how the RSP has served as a tool for CRP recruitment and retention and demonstrate the effectiveness of the program through key metrics. Participants will leave with tangible tools to develop a similar program at their respective campuses.

From Survival to Strength: Recovery and Wellness Curriculum | 1 CE **Rachelle Gardner, MA/LCAC, Aleesha Bullock, MSW/LSW**

This presentation provides an overview of the Recovery & Wellness class and its role in supporting students in a recovery high school setting. Staff will explore the purpose, structure, and core components of the curriculum, including recovery education, wellness practices, and social-emotional skill development. The session highlights how the class reinforces academic engagement, emotional regulation, and healthy decision-making, while aligning with a recovery-informed, trauma-responsive school culture. Participants will gain a shared understanding of instructional goals and practical ways staff can support and reinforce Recovery & Wellness skills across classrooms and daily interactions, ensuring consistency and continuity for students throughout the school day.

Micro-credentialing for Peers | 1 CE **Aaron S. Blankenship, PRSS SUD-MH, AAS, RBA**

This presentation provides an overview of Southern CTC's pioneering Micro-Credentialing program for Peer Recovery Support Specialists (PRSS), the first initiative of its kind in West Virginia. The session will outline the program's development, beginning with its historical foundations and the key steps that led to its creation. It will also describe the program's current structure, implementation, and its evolution into a sustainable model that generates funding for the Collegiate Recovery Program (CRP) at Southern. In addition, the presentation will highlight the benefits the micro-credential offers to both aspiring PRSS professionals and those already working in the field, emphasizing its role in strengthening workforce readiness and enhancing service effectiveness. The session will conclude with a discussion of future plans, including the long-term goal of expanding the program to award academic credit hours to college students, further integrating PRSS training into higher education pathways

Pathways of Recovery: Putting the Person First and the Method Second | 1 CE **David Chastain, PhD**

As individuals experience recovery in different ways and with different needs, one group may provide a better match at a specific time. Each has value, but no group is a perfect match for everyone.

The groups to be discussed include: 12 Step groups; SMART Recovery; The 16 Steps for Discovery and Empowerment; Women for Sobriety; Life Ring; Secular Organizations for Sobriety; Wellbriety; Refuge Recovery; and All Recovery. There are additional approaches and there may be more going forward. Principles of recovery that are consistent across the groups are also presented.

Agenda

Monday, June 29, 2026

3:45 PM - 4:45 PM: Breakout Sessions

RU AWARE? An Intervention at Radford University Diverts Punitive Measures Toward Health Education, Community Connection, and Self Awareness | 1 CE

Reed Yearwood, CPRS-T, CSAC-S, Ashlea Yearwood, PhD, LPC, NCC, CSAC (Not Presenting)

The Virginia Higher Education Substance Use Advisory Committee (VHESUAC) recognized three Virginia institutions of higher learning for their commitment to furthering student substance use education, prevention, recovery and intervention efforts in early 2026. This session will learn about "RU Aware," a preventive intervention at Radford University. As an alternative to BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention of College Students), RU Aware is a three-level comprehensive program designed by Ashlea Yearwood, PhD, LPC, NCC, CSAC, to divert punitive measures toward health education, community connection, and self awareness.

Yes, We're Still Fighting for Funding: Creative Approaches to Securing Resources | 1 CE

Nicole Benigno, MSSW, Dylan Dunn, MS, Victoria Menz, MSW

Staff responsible for alcohol & drug (AOD) prevention, harm reduction, and recovery programming often face the challenge of finding and sustaining financial & material resources in a higher education environment shaped by shifting funding priorities and competing institutional demands. The presenter will outline strategies to expand financial & material capacity for Collegiate Recovery Programs & AOD prevention initiatives, including strategies for conversing with donors, and will facilitate discussion of participants' experiences.

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Colorado Rockies Tailgate | 0 CEs

*The Phoenix - 2239 Champa St,
Denver, CO 80205*

6:30 PM - 9:30 PM

Colorado Rockies Baseball Game | 0 CEs

*Coors Field - 2001 Blake Street, Denver, CO
80205*

Discounted Tickets Available in Sober Section of Stadium

Colorado Rockies vs. the Miami Marlins

Ticket Link: www.rockies.com/arhe



Colorado Rockies vs. Miami Marlins
Mon, Jun 29, 2026 @ 6:30pm-9:30pm

Colorado Rockies vs. Miami Marlins

GAME DETAILS
Venue Name: Coors Field
Venue Full Address: 2001 Blake Street, Denver, CO 80205, USA

TAILGATE INFO
Tailgate Venue Name: The Phoenix
Tailgate Venue Full Address: 2239 Champa St, Denver, CO 80205
Tailgate Time: 5:00pm-6:30pm

TICKET LINK: www.Rockies.com/ARHE

HOST BY:





Agenda

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

7:00 AM - 8:00 AM

All Recovery Meeting | *Spruce 1*

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Registration Open | *Rocky Mountain Event Center*

Wellness / Reflection Lounge | *Bluebell*

Nursing Lounge | *Ponderosa*

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM: Breakout Sessions



Clinical Consideration for Working with the LGBTQIA2+ Population | 1 CE

Kristina Padilla, MA, Counseling Psychology & BS, Criminal Justice Administration; LAADC, ICAADC, CGS, C-SAT Candidate

This session delves into clinical information for working with the Trans Community by addressing the needs of transgender individuals who seek treatment for mental health and/or substance use disorders. The presentation covers the "Trans Umbrella" to assist clinicians in understanding the distinctions between gender fluid, trans, F2M, M2F, third gender, gender queer, intersex, and non-binary and what perspective, history, and challenges these groups of people bring into treatment and recovery from addiction.

Clinical considerations, including best practices for trans youth and adults, body dysphoria as per the DSM-5, hormone readiness implications, body image management, and emotions and feelings those in the LGBTQIA2+ "Rainbow Community" may experience will be presented from both a clinical, as well as personal perspective through Kristina Padilla's lived experience as a gay/trans person.



How Much Is "Enough" Naloxone?: A Framework for Maximizing Campus Overdose Prevention Efforts | 1 CE

Dylan Dunn, MS, Nicole Benigno, MSSW

With more campuses being willing to address opioid-related risks within their communities, even more campuses are wondering how to do this work well. Meanwhile, budgets continue to tighten and job responsibilities keep growing. In this session, the SAFE Campuses team from SAFE Project will share frameworks that assist in the strategic use of available resources targeted at preventing and responding to opioid overdose on campus and within the many places that students and staff frequent.



Mentorship Is Relationship | 1 CE

Audrey Kort, Chioma Thompson, BA

Strong recovery does not end when the school day does, nor at graduation. In this session, two recovery mentors from Harmony Academy will discuss the power of intentional, long-term relationship-building in supporting students at a recovery high school. Drawing from lived experience and program implementation, Chioma Thompson and Audrey Kort will share how mentorship rooted in consistency, reliability, and accountability reinforces the school mission and creates lasting impact for students. Participants will be invited to reflect on mentorship practices at their own schools, identifying what works, what doesn't, and how post-graduation support can be strengthened. This session offers practical insight into building mentorship programs that are sustainable, relational, and impactful. Recovery thrives where connection lives.

Agenda

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM: Breakout Sessions

Safe(r): (y)Our Responsibility | 0 CEs

Logan O. Davis, MA, Anthony Gonzalez

Whether we realize it or not, everyone plays a role in safety. It's simply about keeping people safe(r). In high-risk environments, it can seem impossible to keep people safe. Understanding what it means to be safe(r) can allow us to change the narrative and flip the script. Instead of an illusion of safety, what steps can we take to keep people safe(r)? Safe(r) will look different for everyone. Instead of ignorance and stigma, how can we let people know we care about them and support them in their journey of what safe(r) looks like for them? So yes, helping keep people safe(r) is our responsibility.

Stories from the Summit: From Insights to Action | 0 CEs

Alexandrea C. Behler, MPH, MSW, CHES, CARES, CPS-AD,

Helping students reflect on what they learned during the conference & how they can turn it into action.



Sustaining Collegiate Recovery Programs Under Financial Constraint: Practice-based Lessons from a Community-supported CRP | 1 CE

Onawa LaBelle, PhD, Brandi Baker, Jason Parete (not presenting)

Collegiate recovery programs (CRPs) frequently operate within unstable funding environments, often relying on short-term grants or limited institutional support. This session presents a practice-based case reflection from a Canadian collegiate recovery program that sustained, and in some ways expanded, services following the loss of ongoing university funding. Operating through private donations, community foundation funding, and targeted grants, the program adopted adaptive strategies emphasizing visibility, low-barrier access, volunteer leadership, and repurposed resources. A partial community grant supported Recovery Ally Training without resolving broader sustainability challenges. During this period of constraint, the program increased hours of operation, expanded programming, and experienced higher student engagement, revealing a paradox of growth amid scarcity. This session offers an honest examination of adaptive sustainability strategies and ethical tensions related to volunteer labor, burnout, and the distinction between sustainability and stability.



When It's Gambling, Not Substances: Supporting Gambling Recovery in Collegiate Recovery Programs | 1 CE

Michael Zhang, PhD

Collegiate recovery programs are increasingly encountering students whose primary recovery needs involve gambling rather than substance use. Sports betting, online gambling, and related behaviors often present with distinct patterns of secrecy, financial harm, and shame that can be difficult to address within substance-focused recovery models.

This session provides a practical, recovery-oriented framework for supporting students experiencing gambling use issues within collegiate recovery settings. Drawing from clinical psychology, recovery coaching principles, and real-world collegiate scenarios, participants will explore how gambling use issues commonly present on campus, how to respond using person-first and non-stigmatizing language, and how to adapt existing recovery supports without requiring specialized gambling treatment programs.

Attendees will leave with concrete tools and decision-making strategies that can be immediately applied within collegiate recovery environments while remaining inclusive of multiple pathways of recovery.

Agenda

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

9:45 AM - 11:15 AM: Keynote Session



Stronger Together: Building Collective Impact Across Recovery Communities | 1 CE

Mirna Herrera, MA MT-BC, CPS, CRP

Recovery-supportive communities are strongest when people move beyond isolated efforts and work together toward a shared vision of hope, belonging, and wellness. This closing session will explore the power of collective impact and the importance of collaboration in strengthening recovery ecosystems for youth and young adults. Participants will be introduced to the work of the Center for Addiction Recovery Support (CARS) while engaging in a broader conversation about breaking down silos, fostering authentic partnerships, and creating sustainable systems of support. This session will highlight how connection, shared leadership, and cross-sector collaboration can expand opportunities for recovery and healing. Attendees will be challenged to think beyond individual programs and consider how collective action can create stronger communities, reduce duplication of efforts, and improve outcomes for those seeking connection and support. The session will leave participants inspired to strengthen partnerships and build more unified recovery-supportive environments.



11:15 AM - 11:45 AM: Closing Remarks

Closing Remarks, Silent Auction Announcement, Contest Winners, and Wrap-up | 0 CEs

Kristina M. Canfield, MEd

Join Kristina Canfield for closing remarks and to wrap up the conference. Silent auction winners and scavenger hunt winners will be announced, and rewards / prizes will be distributed during this time. A special Thank You to all of the attendees at this year's conference - thank you for making this year an unforgettable one!

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