



STUDENTS VOICING COLLEGIATE RECOVERY

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ABSTRACT

Young adults increasingly enter college with substance use addiction. Some may achieve recovery before setting their foot on a college campus whereas others during their college years. These students often struggle to maintain sobriety as they act out their daily lives because they find themselves in abstinence-hostile environments (Bugbee et al., 2016; Harris et al., 2008). This presentation will discuss students' collegiate recovery experiences and will report on a photovoice project documenting students' recovery experience and recovery management and support needs. Photovoice is a participatory social action method that uses photography to answer research questions (Wang, 2006); a photovoice exhibit, involving a gallery of participants' photographs and linked narrative text to explicate the photos' meaning, disseminates the findings. The presentation will focus on the narratives of students in recovery and attendees will obtain an in-depth understanding of recovery students' experiences of stigma, shame and isolation, and marginalized social positions, which are intimately tied to their addiction histories. Students in recovery represent an invisible student group that struggles to access resources and needed healthcare services. The photovoice method can act as a powerful tool to empower marginalized students to share their recovery experiences and articulate their needs; ultimately providing a vehicle for structural-level and systemic change.

FROM ACCEPTANCE TO GRADUATION: SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN RECOVERY THROUGHOUT THEIR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Students entering universities while in recovery from addiction face unique challenges, such as transitioning from a high school to a university, adapting to life after treatment, and/or transferring from a junior college or different university setting. Students in recovery also encounter challenges upon graduation including addressing gaps of employment on resumes, interviewing skills, and general professionalism. Cougars in Recovery offers support to students in recovery at the University of Houston in their academic journey through the use of programs including Source of Strength, offering peer to peer mentorship within the community and Career Ready Coogs, providing support for students approaching graduation with professional development resources. Longitudinal data is still being collected to demonstrate the influence of Source of Strength on Cougars in Recovery member retention and how Career Ready Coogs influences professional growth and preparation for graduation. Peer mentorship and professional development programs can help students in recovery navigate the challenges of the collegiate experience and entering the professional world.

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