



Invited summaries of research for scholar and practitioner advocates for, traditionally hidden college student populations

Current Hidden College Student Populations

May include those who have foster care or justice-involved experiences, who are survivors of sexual violence, who are recovering drug or alcohol addicts, who face housing insecurity, or who are considered Third Culture Kids

R is for Thursday

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National Conference for Engaged Scholarship on Hidden Student Populations

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The Scholar-Practitioner is a monthly publication of invited research summaries that target the research-to-practice gap for U.S. scholar and practitioner advocates for college students with experiences in foster care and other hidden college student populations.

This publication reinforces the work of the **National Conference for Engaged Scholarship on Hidden Student Populations (NCHP)** by providing a space to share research applications for practice. NCHP was the first research conference dedicated to this multidisciplinary area of study. The NCHP 3rd conference will be held at Oklahoma State University, September 14-16, 2022.

Supporting Students in Recovery: Why Every Campus Needs a Collegiate Recovery Program (CRP) and Sober Housing

Hoffman, D. E. (2020). *Experiences of College Students in Addiction Recovery: A Critical Case Study*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina]. University Libraries. <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/etd/5757>

Research Summary

The purpose of this study is to investigate the lived experiences of college students in addiction recovery. The lived experiences of this hidden population are described to share their stories and work towards better policy solutions to the U.S. college drug epidemic.

Nationally, roughly half (49%) of full-time college students engage in binge drinking, illicit drug use, or both (Bell, 2009). That number jumps to 80% for Greek Life members, the highest risk population for drug-related harm (Bell, 2009). Other high-risk populations include student-athletes, on-campus residents (Palmer et al., 2012), and students with mental health concerns (Jeffries et al., 2016).

This study features findings from semi-structured interviews with eight college students in recovery, enrolled in Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRPs), at four-year universities, who have on-campus living experience.

Research Questions

1. What are the experiences of college students in addiction recovery?
2. How do college students in recovery describe academic success?
3. What barriers do college students in recovery face?
4. What role does on-campus living play on the nationwide college drug epidemic?
5. What support do students in CRPs have?

Methodology

Data collection occurred at two public, four-year, predominantly white institutions on the east coast, Walter University, a large university, and

Middletown University, a small liberal arts college. Photo-elicitation and embedded ethnography were used in the study.

Research sites and participants have pseudonyms. Data saturation, data triangulation, and member checking ensured authentic representation. Critical theory and phenomenology guided the study, centered on social justice and emancipatory research. Emancipatory research dismantles the fictive dichotomy of researcher/subject.

Findings

1. On-campus party culture does not cause addiction but living on-campus increases access to alcohol and other drugs.
2. Many students in recovery have a mental illness and some have a history of suicide attempts and suicidal ideation.
3. Students in recovery do not feel safe living on-campus and very rarely have access to sober living.
4. Students value the benefits of CRPs (95% sobriety success rate) over 12-step programs (5% sobriety success rate).
5. Students need lifesaving CRPs and sober housing. CRPs give students a safe space, community, a sense of belonging, and the tools they need to survive.
6. Participants stated their academic goals were to

graduate from college; five reported specific GPA goals.

7. Participants were overwhelmed but did not consider withdrawing from school. They faced barriers like balancing school, work, and recovery.

Implications

All eight study participants chose to move off campus. They saw on-campus housing as an abstinence-hostile environment, one that poses significant risks to sobriety. The most abstinence-hostile places on campus are dorms, fraternities, sororities, and sports events.

Greek Life on-campus residents are at the highest risk for drug addiction, overdose, death, and drug-related sexual assault. Some small liberal arts schools in the U.S. have banned high-risk student organizations such as Greek Life and requirements that students live on campus.

High-risk locations like Greek Life, dorms, and sports games should have fentanyl testing kits and Narcan. Fentanyl is a dangerous opiate and Narcan is a lifesaving drug that can reverse an opiate overdose.

Most higher education campuses do not have sober housing. Students can drink alcohol and use other drugs in "substance-free" dorms as these rules are not consistently enforced. We cannot put the onus of harm prevention on residential advisors who are the same age as their residents. Sober housing should exist on

every campus.

Lastly, educational researchers must stop ignoring the US college drug epidemic. Mental health issues like addiction are largely absent from education conferences and journals. College students in recovery exist in every higher education institution in the country and they deserve our support.

References

Bell, N., Kanitkar, K., Harris, K., et al. (2009). 'It has made college possible for me': feedback on the impact of a university-based center for students in recovery. *Journal of American College Health* [serial online].

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