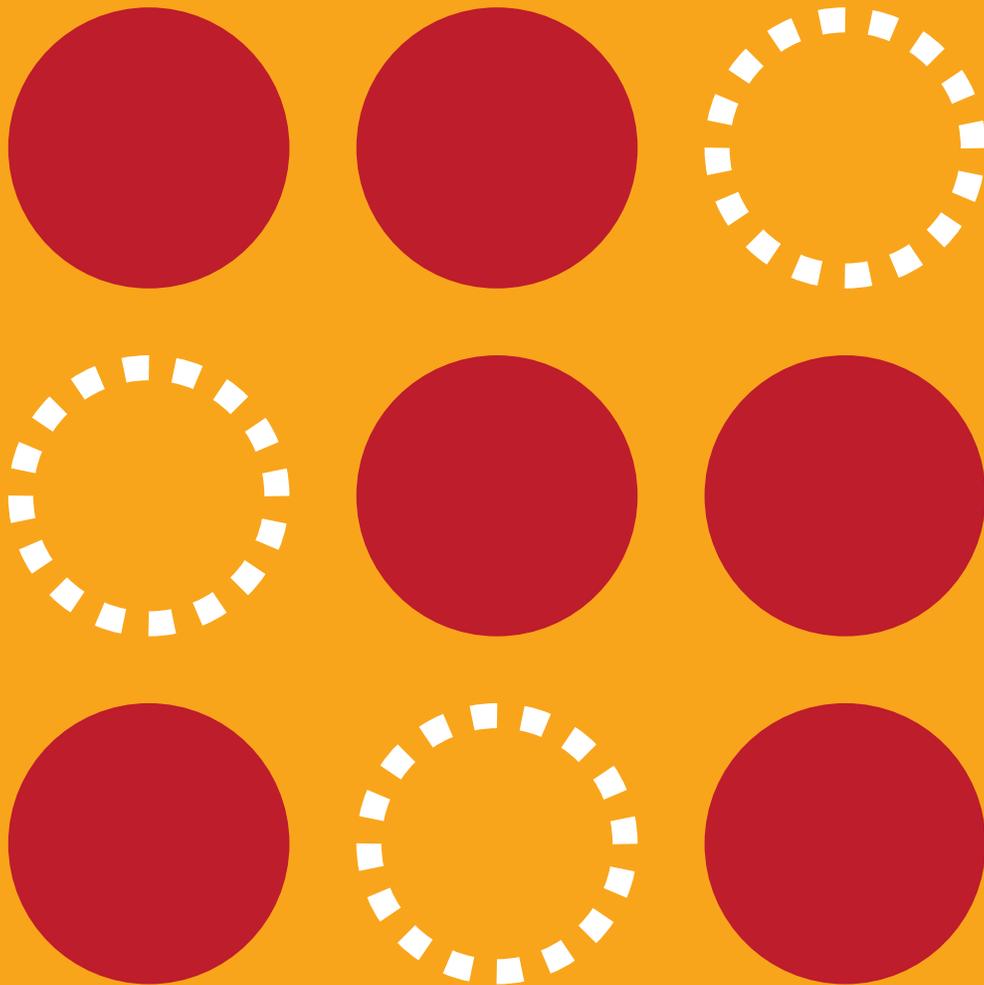


# CAPACITY BUILDING FOR COLLEGIATE RECOVERY

Edition 1. 2013



Thriving in the fullness of the college experience

The Stacie Mathewson Foundation



Transforming Youth Recovery  
One Community, One School, One Student At A Time

# Capacity Building for Collegiate Recovery

The following pages could be read as a report from a research team that has spent six months interviewing and surveying individuals with primary experience in collegiate recovery. But don't be fooled! It is actually a field manual for asset-based community developers. If you are thinking about, engaged in, or stuck in the early stages of a collegiate recovery effort, this is your step-by-step guide for effective action.

You are advised to read these pages with an awareness that you will be asked to get in action in two essential ways:

1. Finding and mapping community-based assets
2. Mobilizing assets into recovery practices and local coalitions

And if you are a student, you will notice that getting in action is seen as student-driven, relying on student leadership and engagement, with support from non-student advocates.

If this publication furthers the general conversation on collegiate recovery, that's fine; but it will only be considered successful if it results in actively helping students in recovery thrive in the fullness of the college experience.

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# CAPACITY BUILDING FOR COLLEGIATE RECOVERY

With an increasing social awareness of the number of young adults facing substance abuse, a belief has developed that an increase in programmatic tools is needed to support these students. According to this belief, college administrators and counselors currently lack the dedicated resources for helping students in recovery fulfill their academic and personal potential. In other words, there is a perception that a resource gap is contributing to the limited number of collegiate recovery programs that are active and flourishing in the United States.

This premise has led many to approach the desired expansion of collegiate recovery from a program focus – a problem-solving view that seeks to identify and bring forward a distinctive set of activities and services necessary to address supposed deficiencies in supporting college students in recovery. The primary strategy to date has been to research and create collegiate recovery programs, and then disseminate specific standards to expand the reach of recovery support on college campuses.

Our findings, however, indicate a nearly universally held opinion that supporting college students in recovery consists largely of being able to manage access to resources, many of which are already available within collegiate communities, and building those types of relationships that enable students to take advantage of the full breadth of collegiate experiences. This insight has led us to concentrate on shifting from a *program focus* to a *relationship focus* when it comes to promoting early stage initiation of any collegiate recovery effort. This conceptual shift has challenged us to move from a *problem-solving approach* to a *capacity-building approach*. It is an approach grounded in the assumption that college communities already have the resources and capabilities necessary to help students in recovery to thrive. **We just need to turn our attention to removing barriers that may be constraining students in recovery from accessing those things that could help them thrive in the fullness of their college experience.**

*“The program was established when two students came to the then director of our class program and said, ‘It’s really hard to be in recovery and be on a college campus.’ They put their heads together and just came up with a pilot program.”*

*—Program Director*

On every college campus, there is a certain capacity for helping students in recovery to thrive. These capacities reflect the diverse ways that college-specific partnerships and coalitions can form to create activities, services and programs that best support their students. Our intention is to inspire you to cultivate those relationships that we have seen capable of overcoming barriers to helping students in recovery live their best lives.



## THE LANGUAGE OF CAPACITY BUILDING

To understand the capacity-building approach, we start with certain definitions that will guide your efforts:

First, there are individual and organizational **assets** that can assist and support students in recovery on campus. Convenient access to AA meetings would be an asset. A dedicated space for students to gather would be another asset.

*“When we had our own personal, dedicated space - that was the thing that really, really helped.”*

—Program Coordinator

Second, there are **practices** that are created by mobilizing the available assets into an offering or relationship of some kind. Holding AA meetings in the dedicated space at a regular time with timely announcements would be a practice.

*“Within a few months of being here we started the first AA meeting. I didn’t start it; we had students start it with people from the community.”*

—Program Director

**You build capacity by making visible and mobilizing your community-based assets into practices and local coalitions that help students in recovery to live their best lives while getting the most out of everything a college experience has to offer.**

The result is the emergence of a capacity type (or, “capacitytype”) – a specific way in which practices and community coalitions come together to support college students in recovery on a college campus.

*“We recently made a presentation at the local Police Department, and they are someone who you would probably be adversarial with unless you put them on your team. And (our) advice is put them on your team.”*

— Recovery Counselor

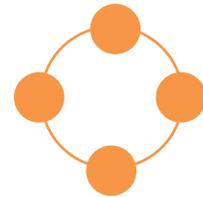
In some instances, certain **capacitytypes** lead to the adoption of a formalized collegiate recovery program. In other instances, capacitytypes reflect a more informal connection of people and activities that support students in recovery.

Any capacity building effort is greatly aided by the ability to find and replicate what others with similar capacitytypes are doing in their college communities to help students in recovery to live their best lives.



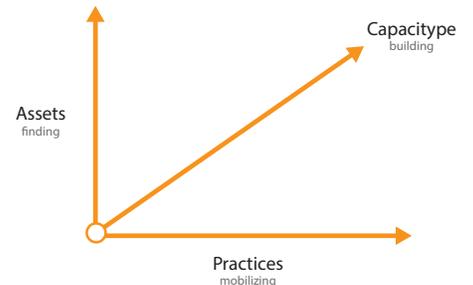
### Asset

An individual, association or institution that a student in recovery can draw from to thrive in the fullness of the college experience.



### Practice

The mobilization of assets into a clearly defined, easily accessible recovery service that honors the uniqueness of individual recovery paths.



### Capacity Building

The activities that make visible and mobilize community-based assets into practices and coalitions to help students in recovery to live their best life while getting the most out of everything a college experience has to offer.



### Capacitytype

A certain type of capacity that can be replicated across similar colleges and from one campus environment to another.



## A FOCUS ON EARLY STAGE COLLEGIATE RECOVERY EFFORTS

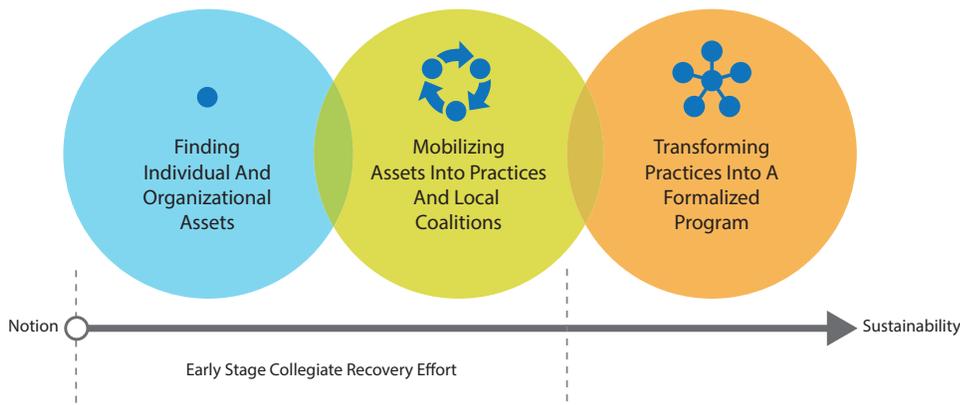
Working with the findings of asset-based research supported by The Stacie Mathewson Foundation, we have designed a set of tools intended to help you discover and connect with those individuals, associations and institutions that can support a group of students interested in working toward recovery and academic goals. These community assets most often already exist on a college campus. They may just be hidden from view because you do not always know what you are looking for. Our focus is on showing you what to look for—a view-finder of sorts to uncover the building blocks for each collegiate recovery effort. Looking at communities in this manner offers a way for any effort to be more purposeful and lasting.

The “early stage” of any collegiate recovery effort is characterized by a group of students, with assistance from advocates, finding and connecting with individual and organizational assets within their community. From there, assets are combined and mobilized to begin adopting certain practices that are accessible to any student in recovery on the college campus. There is a point along this continuum of capacity building when awareness and participation enables an opportunity to institutionalize the effort. That is, the college community begins to accept your practices as a necessary part of the healthy and academically rewarding environment everyone values. Typically, early stage collegiate recovery efforts transform when a distinctive set of practices appear ready to be called a formal program. Formalization is not a necessity for all experiences, but is viewed as an important consideration for long-term sustainability.

*“We bring a different kind of diversity to the college, people from all walks of life, from all over the United States.”*

—Program Director

### Continuum of Capacity Building



A critical outlook in your early stage efforts is to remain mindful that you are striving to scale those practices that work for students. At first, new practices can be introduced and validated by the students. Over time, it is students themselves who will generate the most valuable practices for sustaining their recovery and pursuing their academic goals.

*“When I look at it as student led, it’s mainly having like a board of directors, an advisory board. We do what the students want to do, and we help them get there.”*

— Program Coordinator

You may find it helpful to reference the known community lifecycle adapted for collegiate recovery efforts. In our experience, the biggest mistake those in early stages can make is to ignore this path. Too often, many try to skip ahead on the lifecycle without realizing the consequences of doing so. It is important to maintain focus on the process versus the end results. It is a process intended to start small and grow gradually in early stages. For this reason we encourage specific early stage capacity building activities that support the lifecycle steps necessary to reach maturity and sustainability.

### Lifecycle of a Recovery Community

	NOTION	ESTABLISHMENT	MATURITY	SUSTAINABILITY
Growth	Advocates individually invite people with whom they have developed relationships.	An increasing number of referrals into the community come from students in recovery.	The majority of referrals into the community and the practices of the community come from students in recovery.	The collegiate recovery community is self-sustaining and may contribute to the creation of smaller, focused coalitions.
Practices	Initiation of services, discussions and activities that participating students in recovery appear interested in.	Collegiate recovery practices shift from serving individual needs to being group focused to instill the habits of positive participation.	Implementation of practices from similar communities to best serve the majority of students in recovery	Sharing of practices so that similar communities can initiate like services for students in recovery.
Sense of Community	Not yet.	Local coalition and social network established; community guidelines recognized.	Community norms adopted and external influence established through communications and activities.	Connection to broader national movement of students in recovery thriving in the fullness of the college experience.
Goal	To cultivate a small group of highly active students in recovery as the foundation upon which to build a community.	To create a sense of community among students and participating coalitions.	To assess the community desire to formalize the collegiate recovery community experience into a defined program.	To identify potential sub-groups which can form to strengthen the coalition of supporters for students in recovery.



## HOW CAPACITY BUILDING WORKS

The capacity-building approach being championed for early stage collegiate recovery efforts can be best expressed through a conceptual framework of keystone activities.

**These reflect a progression that students in recovery, and the advocates that support them, can go through to initiate and undertake capacity building on their college campus.**

Advocates are usually sponsoring staff and faculty members at the college, and their role is to support and encourage students as they organize for capacity-building activities. The amount of time you spend on each activity will vary. To use a simple example, in the early stages of any collegiate recovery effort, more time will be spent on finding and mapping your community-based assets. As the collegiate recovery effort and community matures, you might spend more time on institutionalizing and improving your collegiate recovery experience.

*We utilized people from student services, faculty to support staff, (and) current students – they were all involved.”*

*—Program Director*

Each of these activities has a goal of benefiting students in recovery. We have found that students in recovery often connect first with each other and then seek those assets that can best support their recovery and academic goals. The value of “doing recovery together” is undeniable. For this reason, capacity-building activities should always entail groups of students in recovery at a specific campus working together to make connections within their collegiate community. The breakthrough connection will come when we can help them connect with a larger community of campuses that have similar types of capacity for change, and in turn identify with a national capacity-building movement to help students in recovery thrive in the fullness of their college experience.

**This publication is focused on the concepts and tools created for the early stages of capacity building: *Clarifying Intentions; Finding your Community Assets; and Mobilizing for Recovery Practices.***

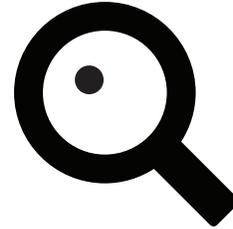


# The Keystone Activities of Capacity Building



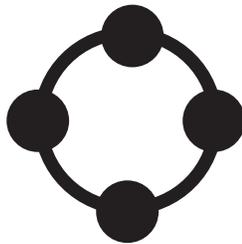
## Clarifying Intentions \*

The clear, concise and compelling narrative you tell others about why you are doing what you are doing



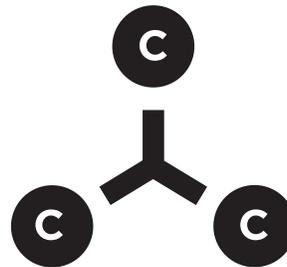
## Finding Your Community Assets \*

The mapping of those relationships and associations that can offer service and build community influence



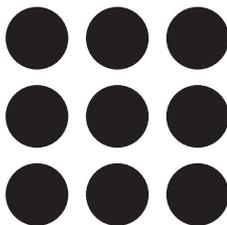
## Mobilizing For Recovery Practices \*

The combining of assets so as to create practices and coalitions that remove barriers to desired activities



## Connecting Capacity Types

The sharing and expansion of similar types of capacity to strengthen recovery communities



## Institutionalizing Your Recovery Community

The steps you take to formalize the collegiate recovery experience within the community



## Improving the Collegiate Recovery Experience

The connection to the broader movement of students in recovery thriving in the fullness of the college experience

\*Activities are applicable to early stage collegiate recovery efforts





# THE ACTIVITIES AND TOOLS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING



## CAPACITY BUILDING STARTS WITH THE GROUP AND IS STUDENT LED

Everything we have seen and heard about cultivating and supporting a community of students in recovery has led us to the importance of starting with the small group. Peter Block, a noted author in the area of community-building and restoration, reminds us: “A shift in community benefits from shifts in individual consciousness but needs a communal connectedness as well, a communal structure of belonging that produces the foundation for the whole system to move.” He goes on to point out that such shifts occur only after periods of small steps that are organized by small groups patient enough to learn and experiment and learn again.

This is the essence of capacity building.

*There was a recovery group with four students. When I came on, I took over that group. They started taking newcomers to the meetings; that’s how we got started.”*

—Program Director

At the core are those who are seeking a shift in the way their community supports them in pursuing their everyday goals. It is a shift that must be driven by conversation. We believe the activities of capacity building offer the ways to have such conversations. Importantly, these are conversations that focus on the future and protect against the limitations that come from conversations about the past.

*My view is, if we talk about addiction all the time, we’re talking about the negative. What we really want to focus on is sober.*

—Program Coordinator

For those who already engage in efforts around collegiate recovery, promoting capacity-building activities may seem obvious. Emphasizing the small support group, for example, is a known ingredient to maintaining and thriving in recovery. **But there is a power in being explicit about creating a connected environment that encourages the telling of stories and narratives that focus on the inherent potential within recovery, versus the perceived deficiencies associated with addiction.** There is a strength that builds when community members are collaborating and conversing while they look for and identify those assets that can help students in recovery to thrive in the fullness of the college experience. And there is a value in always being grounded in the empirical data collected directly from community members – which are the students in recovery themselves. In early stages, the concern is not for thriving programs, but for thriving students in recovery. To the extent that thriving students in recovery tell you that certain assets and practices are helpful to them, you should value those components accordingly.

*Collegiate recovery program communities should provide more than just a place. They should provide opportunities for a lot of personal development.*

— Collegiate Recovery Community, Pennsylvania State University

**Such opportunities result from the capacity-building activities you will find promoted in the pages ahead. They are described from the student perspective so as to encourage their engagement, leadership and stewardship during the early stages of any collegiate recovery effort.**





## CLARIFYING INTENTIONS

### The Foundational Conversations

It's just you and some other students you know. All of you are in recovery ...and going to school...and wanting to get everything you can out of your college years. And as you talk to each other, there seems to be a notion, an inclination, an impulse – that your recovery, your academic progress and your participation in the fullness of the college experience could all be enhanced by a supportive community. There has been talk of working to establish such a community; if it's going to happen, you're going to have to get involved.

So how do you get started?

As you just read in the previous section, you are starting to make a shift that must be driven by conversation. At this “notional” stage in your lifecycle as a community, the key conversations are about “relationship” and “possibility.”

#### Conversation 1: Your Recovery Story

In a group setting, each of you should tell your story of being in recovery:

- Make it personal, for credibility.
- Keep it simple and in the present tense, so it's real and understandable.
- Be clear that you understand that recovery means you are no longer using alcohol or other drugs.



- Use concrete examples from your life to talk about stability.
- Mention the length of time that you have been in recovery.
- Talk about your recovery, not your addiction.
- Be clear that you understand there's more to recovery than not using alcohol or other drugs – that part of recovery is creating a better life.

As a storyteller, you will want to focus on being frank and open but also concise. As storylisteners, you should concentrate on listening empathically – that is, listen for what the story means to the teller and for what decisions the teller has made and actions they have taken.

### Conversation 2: Making a Commitment

In a group setting, each of you should explain your commitment to seeking a shift in the way your college community supports students in recovery in pursuing your everyday goals – focusing on the future and protecting against limitations that come from conversations about the past. Be sure to include these four points:

- Why working to build a supportive environment for recovery and academic success is important to you.
- Why thriving, as a student in recovery, in the fullness of the college experience, is a worthy goal.
- What is personally at stake for you in this student-led quest that all of you are undertaking together.
- If you were to cut back on your participation at some point, or drop out altogether, what would be the most likely reason for that.

Conversations 1 and 2 will help build the *relationships* you need within your community. The next conversation will address the *possibility* that the group will be working toward.

## Recovery Story Template

I'm (name) and I am in recovery, which means that I have not used (substance) for more than (length of time).

I am committed to recovery because it has given me and my family new purpose and hope for the future, while helping me gain stability in my life (insert concrete examples).

I am now speaking out because recovery has helped me change my life for the better, and I want to make it possible for others to do the same.



### Conversation 3: Stating Intentions

In a group setting, imagine a time far in the future when you could look back and say, “Much of who I am and what I have accomplished, I owe to the group I helped establish as a college student in recovery.”

In many ways, this future state might resemble a compilation of what each of you said you had *at stake* in your commitment conversation.

- Working from the future back to the present, create a “from/to” chart that compares the future state to the present state.
- Write a paragraph that “paints a picture” of your intentions to work together toward a desired future state.
- Keep that paragraph in front of you as the community you are starting to create through the steps you are about to take.

You can download the [Creating a Statement of Intentions](#) worksheet to assist the group in this conversation.

*“Our students go to class, they’re engaged, asking questions, and their reflections are very profound and meaningful. Once they figure out where their passion is and what they want to do, you’re not going to stop them. The professors here just love our students for all those reasons.”*

—Assistant Director

### Example of a Statement of Intentions

Today we are in long-term recovery, successful in the life we have chosen for ourselves, strong in our relationships with others, secure in our self-awareness, generous in helping others in their recovery, thankful for our education and the lifelong friendships that we built in college, and much of that started when a handful of us went out that first time to begin identifying the resources that could help us be at our best – as students and in recovery.





## COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING

### The Discipline of Community Mapping

Community Mapping is a dynamic discipline for creating an inventory of individual, organizational and physical assets that can inform and shape the practices of each campus-specific collegiate recovery effort. The idea of mapping has roots in the community development process of uncovering local talents and gifts that can contribute to a healthy and fulfilling recovery community. The true value of the mapping discipline, and why it is promoted as a keystone activity for capacity building, is the promotion of an ongoing process of outreach and relationship-building. Just as every recovery path is unique, so is every recovery community. It is the act of mapping that will reveal the unique characteristics and associations that can be brought to bear on helping you, as students in recovery, to thrive in the fullness of your college experience.

In many places we have introduced the terminology: “Helping students in recovery to thrive in the fullness of the college experience.” Every institution of higher education is rich in the experiences it has to offer. Typically, only a fraction of an institution’s resources are accessed fully by students – whether you are in recovery or not. What we have found interesting is that recovery can open wide the doors to experiences that have long remained hidden. Providing access to and encouraging new relationships, support systems, life skills and educational resources is the intent behind any collegiate recovery effort. It is the pathway to thriving, and it is the mapping discipline that yields those assets capable of providing access to the fullness of the college experience.

Community Mapping is a starting point for the establishment of early stage collegiate recovery efforts. Your inventory of “assets” make visible those things that can contribute to the supportive environment you seek and the lifestyle you wish to pursue.



Based on the 2012-2013 community-based asset research conducted by The Stacie Mathewson Foundation, potential community assets for early stage collegiate recovery efforts are a composite of eight categories that can combine to connect, support and serve students in recovery.

## The Nine Categories of Community-based Assets

- Advocacy and Education
- Activity Spaces
- Health and Wellness
- Life Skills
- Mental Health Services
- Recovery Support
- Student Services
- Substance Use Counseling
- Treatment Services

## The Asset Mapping Tool

A key part of the capacity-building approach is transforming college environments into *asset-rich* communities that have a positive vision for students in recovery. The **Statement of Intentions** that you created may provide a good starting place for setting out to find those individuals, associations or institutions that you can draw from to thrive in the fullness of your college experience.

Here are a few principles to consider as you begin your mapping process:

### 1. Walk the Talk; Talk the Walk

Using the common language of capacity building and community-based assets can bring together entire communities and strengthen the sense of belonging within groups. Recognize that this activity is as much about finding your assets as it is about building a sense of community and belonging.

### 2. Leverage Students in Recovery

This is easier said than done, but capacity building is all about the fundamental shift from people working *for* students in recovery to people working *with* students in recovery. You will find invaluable assistance from staff, faculty and invested adults in your college community. Because they are more permanent fixtures within the community and can provide access to certain assets, those who are advocating on your behalf play a critical role in your efforts. They can provide needed guidance, open doors and create stability year-to-year

A 2013 survey of self-identified collegiate recovery programs operating in the United States identified the following 11 community-based assets as “critical to start” any collegiate recovery effort on a college campus:

- Individuals available for 1:1 recovery support (coaching, guiding, supporting, mentoring).
- Individuals who are dedicated staff for a collegiate recovery program (faculty, staff, students; full or part-time).
- Individuals who are influential within the University and/or in the broader community and are interested in advocating for students in recovery.
- Individuals who can help students in recovery build self-efficacy (confidence, social skills, budgeting, general life-skills, etc.).
- Individuals who can serve as positive mentors (professional, recovery, or as a general role model) for students in recovery.
- Mutual aid support groups near or on campus for students in recovery (i.e. AA, NA, GA, and other 12-Step meetings in addition to groups such as Celebrate Recovery, SMART Recovery, eating disorder recovery, Teen Challenge, etc.).
- Organizations, departments and services that a collegiate recovery program can refer students who need outside services (treatment centers, mental health professionals, counselors, psychologists, etc).
- Physical space for students to get together socially, soberly, and safely (organized meals, dances, bowling or other age-appropriate activities).
- Physical space that is dedicated for students in recovery to gather and meet.
- Students in recovery who are interested in growing the recovery community on-campus.
- Students in recovery who are interested in mentoring other students in recovery (vocational, recovery, or as a general role model).

The full list of [The Assets for Building Collegiate Recovery Capacity](#).



as collegiate recovery communities grow and transition. The caution is not to underestimate the role you must play in cultivating relationships on campus. The easy solution is to ask others to find and mobilize community assets on your behalf.

### 3. **Plan and Act at the Same Time**

Planning provides a road map for where you want to go, who you want to talk with. But you can get trapped spending too much time planning and never advancing. The other extreme is to jump right in without much thought or planning. The best approach, in our experience, is to do both simultaneously. Develop an immediate plan for finding and mapping your community assets. At the same time, devote some energy to a bigger picture outlook for finding the type of assets that can best support your recovery and academic intentions. Start acting on your immediate plan right away so people can see and experience capacity building.

### 4. **Think Purpose, Then Program**

Relationships among all kinds of individuals and associations are what makes any collegiate recovery effort unique and special. In its early stages, capacity building is more about building positive relationships among students, college faculty and staff members, and other adults than it is about starting new programs. This is about people and purpose first, with events and programs taking a supportive role.

### 5. **Honor Anonymity**

There will be cases when you feel it is important to maintain anonymity during the mapping process. While placing a focus on the development of individual recovery stories is meant to help overcome this barrier, what is most important is your engagement in the planning and evaluation process to foster a sense of connection and belonging within the community. In our experience, the “voice of the student” often has the greatest influence.

### 6. **Build on What Works**

As those leading collegiate recovery efforts learn about capacity building, they often assume that they need to develop something new, such as adding special events and activities, creating a structured program or developing a robust curriculum. Although these are great ideas in time, they can sometimes deflect your attention from what is already in place or emerging as helping you connect and thrive in recovery. Focus first on your community strengths and making them even stronger by infusing them with assets before you start to examine what you can add or change within the collegiate recovery experience.

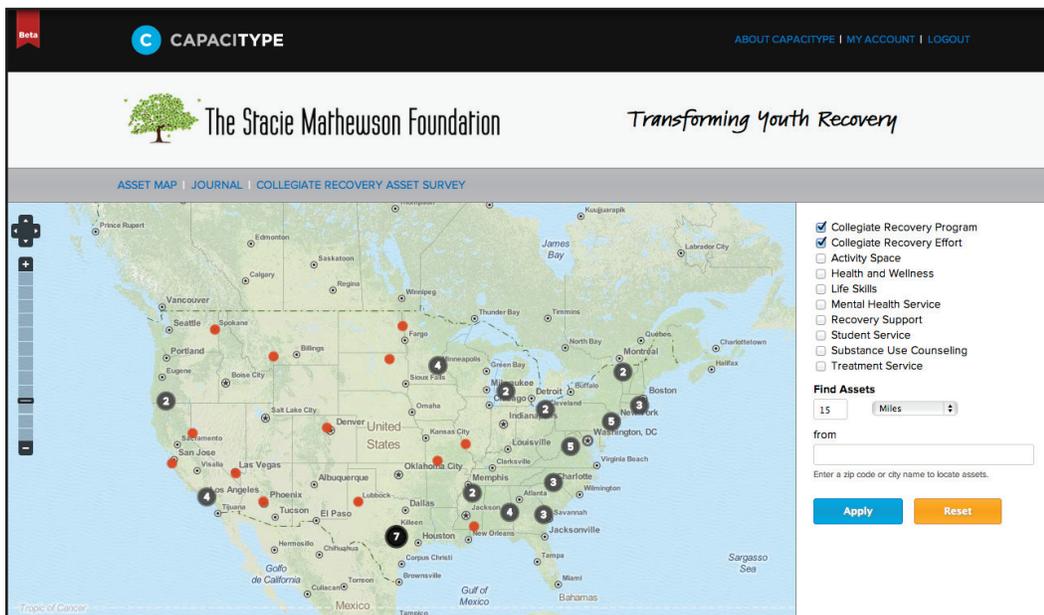


*“Who are those key stakeholders and influencers that you might have as allies? Building those relationships is important, particularly to give yourself some gravitas, some legitimacy within the higher levels of the organization.”*

—Anonymous

The web-based asset mapping tool developed for early stage collegiate recovery efforts provides direct support for your community mapping. As with any tool of capacity building, it is designed to complement the face-to-face interactions that are expected during the process.

[Go to the Collegiate Recovery Asset Mapping Tool](#)



When you first visit the Asset Map, you can register to create an account that will allow you to add assets from your local college community. To record any asset, you can enter data directly into the online form that is also mobile-phone friendly (**Add An Asset**), or you can use the [Community Asset Form](#) to record information and enter it at a later date.

Beyond the convenience of one location where your assets can be catalogued and accessed, every asset mapped will be represented by a dot on a map of the United States. As clusters of assets begin to emerge, you will be able to see where capacity is building and look in on those capacitytypes that may be similar to your own efforts, partnerships and local coalitions. This is a critical point in any capacity building approach – when those leading the efforts can look out, find and learn from what others are doing to build



similar capacities on like campuses.

The day will come when the dots will be contiguous from coast to coast, and they will form the footprint of a national movement for collegiate recovery.

## A Good Starting Point for Asset Mapping

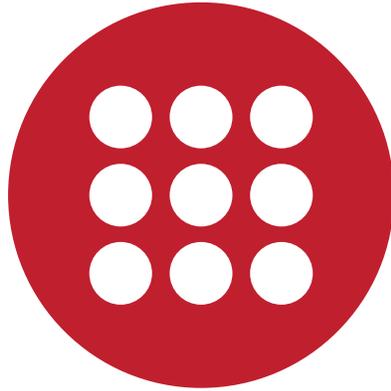
There is no magic formula for when or how to best start other than just starting. You will quickly find the value in the conversations you start having, and the stories you start sharing. We have found it helpful to initially consider approaching those individuals and groups that you believe will be most receptive to your idea of capacity building for collegiate recovery.

As you begin acquiring asset information, stay mindful of three questions:

- Which factors seem to make an individual or group receptive to your efforts?
- How might they help others become more receptive to the importance of your collegiate recovery efforts?
- Which stories and methods seem to be most effective in getting individuals and groups on board with your capacity building effort?

**The answers to these three questions provide you with the insights that can help enhance your ongoing community mapping activities. They also form the basis for the final activity in early stage capacity building – mobilizing your assets into recovery practices.**





## MOBILIZING FOR RECOVERY PRACTICES

### The Steps to Mobilizing

Up to this point you have focused on those things that can contribute to your capacity for supporting students in recovery on your campus. This has been undertaken by crafting statements on intended change and building relationships during community mapping. Our attention now shifts to the mobilization of discovered assets into recovery practices, inclusive of local coalitions that can aid in removing barriers to progress. This can be thought of as identifying your specific capacity for helping students in recovery in their desire to thrive in the fullness of the college experience.

**Capacities are useful in concept only. In reality, it takes more than identifying a potential capacity to make it relevant to a recovery community. Community assets must be *activated and mobilized* in order to create the type of capacity that is useful to those in recovery while at college.**

Mobilizing begins by expanding those conversations you started when you set out to find and identify your community assets. Now you will want to talk about how assets can combine to create experiences, support structures and collaborations you feel are useful to your community of students. The ultimate step is to build coalitions among those who expressed a willingness to support and serve students in recovery.

The progressive steps toward mobilizing assets into recovery practices begin with conversations, but it doesn't end until practices are supported through coalitions of cooperation that deepen community awareness and work toward the institutionalization of your collegiate recovery efforts.



## THE STEPS FOR MOBILIZING



### step one

#### Conversations that mobilize assets

- Conversations are how relationships develop. Among those who have expressed a willingness to help, explore common interests and shared opportunities to get involved in one another's activities.
- Students in recovery are the best advocates and wherever possible should be directly involved in conversations about supporting and serving the community.
- Consider new opportunities to cooperate to meet diverse needs of students – both in terms of recovery and academics



### step two

#### Practices that combine into assets

- Those opportunities that are acted upon become practices – experiences that bring assets to life in the recovery community.
- Identify low-hanging fruit for connection and cooperation. Quick wins often take the form of speaker opportunities, support groups, social events, newsletters, and referrals.
- Focus on what works for your group of students and ensure you are creating a diverse breadth of experiences and activities that advance recovery and academic goals.



### step three

#### Practices that build coalitions

- The final step is to build cooperation among those contributing to practices by creating a local coalition of support for students in recovery.
- Those people who step up to get involved are good candidates for coalition-builders. Build relationships between such people, groups and organizations – unite with a common voice behind a common cause.
- Strive to create a local coalition that has enough 'key players' on campus so that those left out cannot block progress.
- Over time successful practices are repeated and local coalitions are institutionalized. This is the point when a more comprehensive and formalized collegiate recovery program can be considered.



## Establishing Recovery Practices and Building Local Coalitions

To start, look back over your community asset inventory and make a list of individuals who might have something to offer to students in recovery. Using the [Recovery Practices and Local Coalitions Worksheet](#), list these names on the left and place each person's organization to the right. There is space provided to keep track of your relationships. As you fill out the worksheet you will instantly see gaps where limited conversations about potential activities or services have taken place, and you can put your time toward filling those gaps.

Once you begin, patterns will start to emerge. Some individuals will be involved in multiple organizations. Some organizations will be more involved than others. Patterns will appear between like-practices, showing what can be pieced together into experiences and activities for the recovery community.

Lastly, the worksheet provides space to mark down the cause or causes that motivate any one person or group. When patterns begin to emerge between like causes, coalitions can be built. When you are ready, bring this group of people together to talk about your common cause and interest. Ask them if they can agree on a common cause, and unite for a common voice. A coalition is, after all, an alliance of people and groups for combined action.

*I felt like a lot of these students they just did the same stuff every day. They weren't really expanding their knowledge. They weren't really opening their mind to what else the world has to offer you – arts, culture, going and doing different things out in the community. Just go, go try different things because you don't know what you like until you go try it. Let's go rock climbing, let's go ride roller-coasters, stuff to get us out of this recovery bubble.*

—Student in Recovery

## Removing Barriers to Mobilizing Assets

Just as each individual may choose a different pathway to their recovery, each community will have different opportunities available to support those in recovery. Those opportunities are determined during community asset mapping, but this data is not complete until interpreted in the context of what it takes to establish practices and build local coalitions to support recovery efforts in your community.

A 2013 focus group of students with recent collegiate recovery program experience identified some practices they felt were important to helping them meet academic and recovery goals while in school:

- Connecting students young in recovery to those further into recovery upon admission into a collegiate recovery program
- Mandatory weekly meetings with an addiction counselor and psychiatrist
- Opportunities for volunteer placement in recovery clinics
- Passes to fitness facilities, nutrition coaching, and yoga classes
- Dedicated meeting space for recovery meetings
- Mentoring opportunities and speaking programs at high-schools
- Budget and finance trainings
- Professional etiquette workshops
- Academic course planning with enrollment advisors trained to support students in recovery
- Rock climbing trips, intramural sports, tickets to sporting events and documentary viewings
- AA meetings on campus and in the broader community

The Research References for Collegiate Recovery Capacity Building publication from The Stacie Mathewson Foundation provides a full listing of those practices recent graduates relied upon during their collegiate recovery experience along with the companion research paper, *The Assets for Building Collegiate Recovery Capacity*.



Specifically, community mapping will help you surface answers to the following questions:

- **What's possible?**  
What do we have now that we can leverage for students in recovery?
- **What's needed?**  
What do we need to find or create to meet the needs of our community?
- **What's stopping us?**  
What do we need to address to better connect assets, establish practices and build coalitions?

The first two questions inform capacity building for your recovery community. The last question is about barriers to mobilizing assets. It is about identifying what must be removed – not added – in order for the community to start or continue to support students in recovery.

Barriers can come from anywhere within or outside of the community, and may not be uncovered during the community mapping process. It is not until conversations start moving toward practices and coalitions that some barriers to cooperation make themselves apparent.

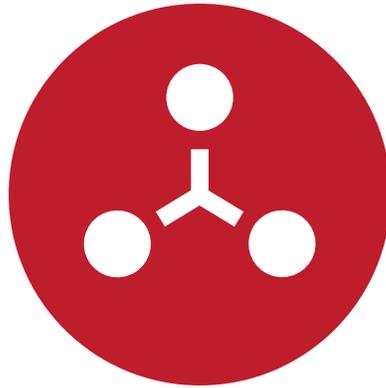


## CAPACITY BUILDING FOR COLLEGIATE RECOVERY

The chart of common barriers, countermeasures and tactics show how the keystone activities of capacity building are intended to help you fulfill your intentions for early stage collegiate recovery efforts.

BARRIER	COUNTERMEASURE	TACTIC
<p><b>Limited Bandwidth</b> It's a big world out there, and there is only so much time in a day. The building of relationships, practices and coalitions takes a long time, which can slow progress and momentum.</p>	<p><b>Prioritize</b> Some assets will be easier to engage than others, some will be used more frequently and some will be considered more impactful. Collect data from your community – ask students in recovery what they want first.</p>	<p><b>Students Lead</b> Students in recovery are the first community asset and play a central role in identification, prioritization, and mobilization of community assets.</p>
<p><b>Lack of Confidence</b> Students in recovery are the most effective advocates for their community, but sometimes lack the confidence to represent themselves as someone in recovery to those outside of their immediate community.</p>	<p><b>Recovery Stories</b> Create environments and opportunities that encourage students in recovery to change their personal narrative from <i>the telling of their addiction story</i> to <i>the telling their recovery story</i>.</p>	<p><b>Asset Mapping</b> The Community Asset Mapping exercise provides an opportunity for students in recovery to talk about the positive attributes of their recovery identity and community.</p>
<p><b>Stigma</b> Every recovery community has a stereotype. The challenge is that the default of this stereotype is often negative, which makes <i>every single thing</i> more difficult. At most colleges, for example, the culture of binge-drinking obscures the separation of and sympathy towards those truly struggling with substance use disorders.</p>	<p><b>Share and Tell</b> While inspiring, stories are difficult to re-tell without some assistance. Provide advocates with the information they need to speak empathically about your recovery community. By sharing with your advocates they can educate their peers, increasing their engagement and knocking down unseen barriers on your behalf.</p>	<p><b>Build Coalitions</b> Stigmas are spawned through ignorance. When people actually meet and connect with students in recovery they often become aware for the first time of their biases, and are forced to reconsider their views. Bring together those individuals and associations that emerge to support you and invite them to work <i>with</i> you to expand outreach and create a healthier college community.</p>





## CONNECTING CAPACITIES

Of great assistance during any capacity building effort is the ability to look out and connect with other communities whose type of capacity may be similar to your own. The intention is to encourage collegiate communities to explore, copy and emulate the diverse capacities emerging across the country.

Through the research activities of The Stacie Mathewson Foundation, we have begun to identify and name the types of collegiate recovery efforts that are emerging. While each effort is a unique expression and composition of institutional community-based assets, there are patterns that you might be able to learn from as your efforts mature. We encourage you to look in on those capacities that reflect your efforts and forge those relationships that will change the trajectory of support for college students in recovery.

Over time, we will all follow the story of how students in recovery are thriving in the fullness of their college experience - by connecting with others who are working in similar ways to live their best lives throughout their college years.

