

SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER AND DISABILITY

Samantha Barb, Master of Social Work Student; Heidi Cloutier, MSW
Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire



The Institute on Disability (IOD)



University of
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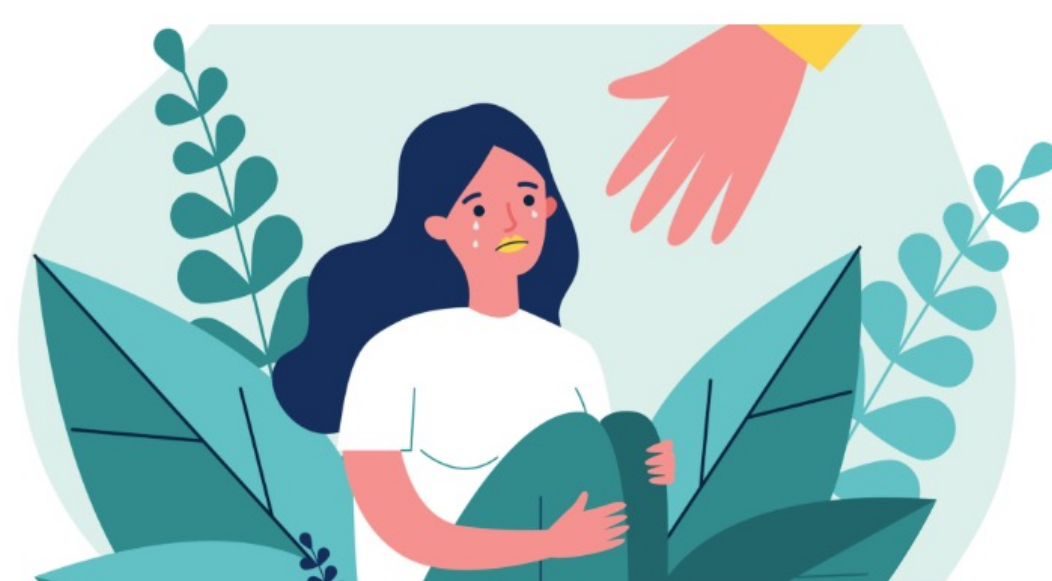
The IOD leads UNH in establishing strong accessibility policies informed by research and emerging evidence-based practice. The IOD's mission is to "promote full access, equal opportunities, and participation for all persons by strengthening communities and advancing policy and systems change, promising practices, education, and research".



Amongst the diverse collection of programs supported by the IOD is a **Supportive Recovery Campus Community (SRCC)**, which is UNH's initiative to develop a Collegiate Recovery Community built on the principles of inclusion and resilience. Fifteen additional UNH departments are collaborating on this initiative, including Student Life and Health & Wellness.

Disability and Substance Use Disorder in NH

- **1 in 8** NH residents has a disability
- Over 100,000 people in NH are reported to be **in need of treatment** for a Substance Use Disorder (IOD, 2021)



- Of that 100,000, only **4-6%** receive necessary treatment (IOD, 2021)

- Roughly 20% of college students nationally meet the criteria of Alcohol Use Disorder, meaning approximately **2756 UNH students may need recovery support** (American College Health Association, 2021)

NH-ME LEND is a collaboration between the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability, the University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies, and the Dartmouth Geisel School of Medicine. It is supported by a grant (#T73MC33246) from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and administered by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). <https://iod.unh.edu/nh-me-lend>

The Elephant in the Room Project

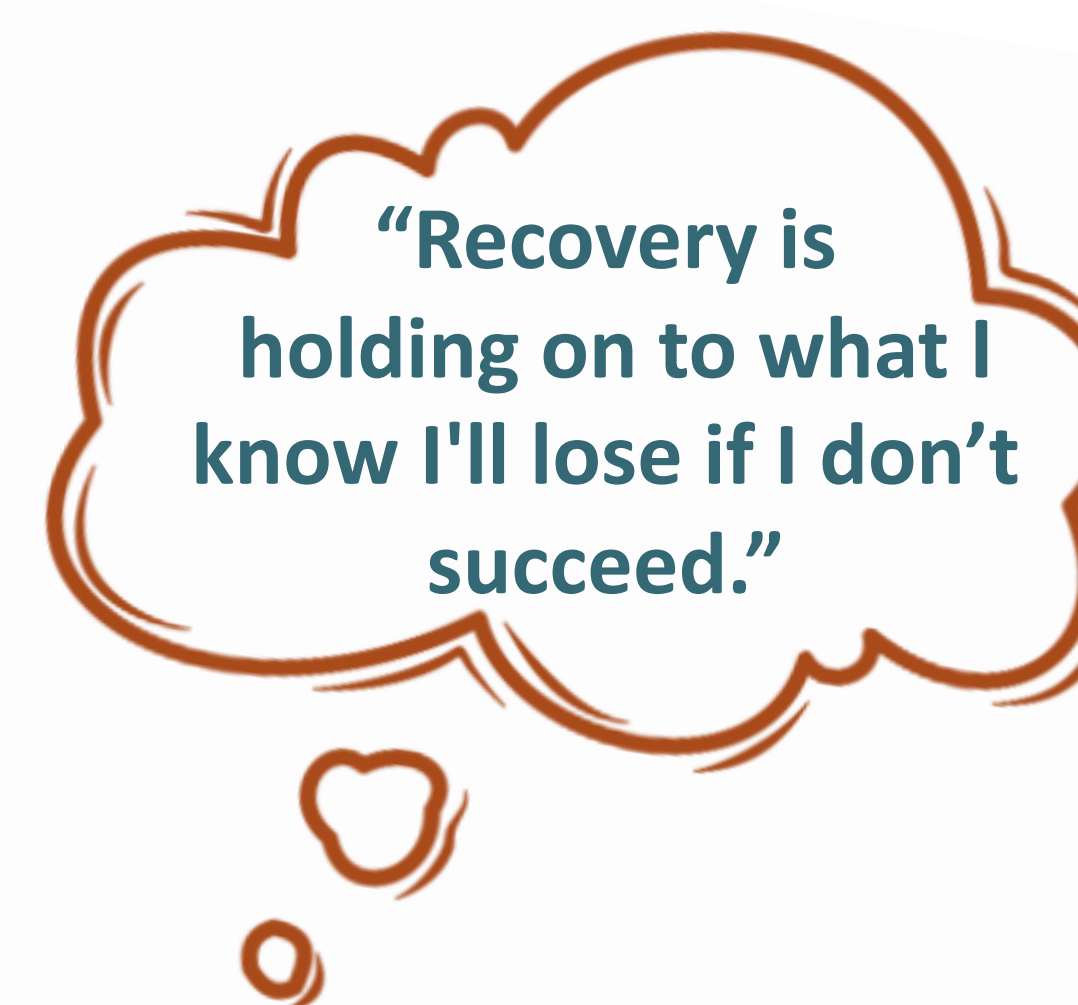
The Elephant in the Room Project, a community collaboration initiative led by the SRCC Work Group, gathered qualitative data on student experiences relating to substance use & recovery.



The results revealed and expressed **need for support** for students struggling with SUD's, including **peer support opportunities** and **addressing stigma** on the UNH campus.



Example of a table setup from the project



Additional SRCC Initiatives

The SRCC Work Group has engaged in a number of developmental planning activities, including:

- Developing a **Practice Profile** utilizing implementation science to ensure best practice for future SRCC activities
- Outreaching benchmarking institutions to collaborate with **Collegiate Recovery Communities nationwide**
- Planning for a Canvas learning portal for peer facilitators to **engage with one another and receive training**

Addressing Comorbidities & Intersections

Individuals with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities, namely Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) display high risk factors for Substance Use Disorder (SUD) comorbidities (Butwicka et al., 2017).

This comorbidity is tied to the following factors that may **increase risk of an SUD**:

- Individuals may self-medicate to cope with the sensory issues, social anxieties, and difficulty with executive functioning and self-regulation associated with ADHD and ASD
- The common use of stimulants prescribed to individuals with ADHD can be habit forming and result in reliance on and abuse of the substance (Butwicka et al., 2017)

Substance Use Disorder Classified as a Disability: Changing the Narrative

- "Drug addiction, including an addiction to opioids, is a disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, when the drug addiction substantially limits a major life activity" (US DHHS, 2018)
- From your disciplinary perspective, how will considering Substance Use Disorder as a Disability inform your work moving forward?

Let's discuss!

References

American College Health Association. (2021). *Reference Group Executive Summary, Fall 2021* [Data set]. https://www.acha.org/NCHA/ACHA-NCHA_Data/Publications_and_Reports/NCHA/Data/Reports_ACHA-NCHAIII.aspx
Butwicka, A., Långström, N., Larsson, H., Lundström, S., Serlachius, E., Almqvist, C., Frisén, L., & Lichtenstein, P. (2017). Increased risk for substance use-related problems in autism spectrum disorders: A population-based cohort study. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47(1), 80–89. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-016-2914-2>
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