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Abstract

Background: Collegiate recovery programs (CRPs) aim to support the unique needs of students in recovery, promote academic success, and facilitate psychosocial development (i.e. coping, self-efficacy, differentiation of self, self-acceptance, and quality of life). Strategies used to achieve these goals vary considerably based on the culture of the program and host institution and available resources.

Objectives: This study examined the relationship between CRP structure (i.e. program requirements vs. available resources/supports without requirements), students' perceived support, and student engagement and indicines of psychosocial development and adjustment. This study explored how CRP structure, perceived support, and engagement impacts indices of psychosocial development and adjustment differently based on the moderating effects of developmental markers (i.e. recovery capital, length of recovery engagement, and family functioning). Finally, this study sought to better understand the variables used to measure CRP structure, perceived student support, and student engagement as they were unvalidated measures developed specifically for this study based on existing CRP literature.

Methods: 134 students from 32 different CRPs participated in this cross-sectional study. Data was collected through an anonymous online survey. Linear and moderation regression analyses were used to examine the relationships between CRP structure, students' perceived support, and student engagement and indices of psychosocial development and adjustment. Exploratory factor analysis was used to further explore the independent CRP variables developed for this study.

Results: Results revealed relationships between the CRP and indices of psychosocial development and adjustment, but yielded no moderating effects, a surprising finding considering the extensive developmental literature suggesting otherwise. Further examination of the CRP variables suggested perceived support may be associated with personal identity (i.e sexual orientation, racial and ethnic identity, and gender identity), companionship support (i.e. a sense of belonging), and informational support (i.e. problem solving). The available resources for students (but not program requirements) may also be associated with informational supports that help students solve problems and receive guidance from others.

Conclusion: Results highlight important considerations for program development and best practice. Results also highlight the need for more research on measurements of CRP structures, supports, and engagement to better understand the strategies most effective in helping CRPs achieve their goals.