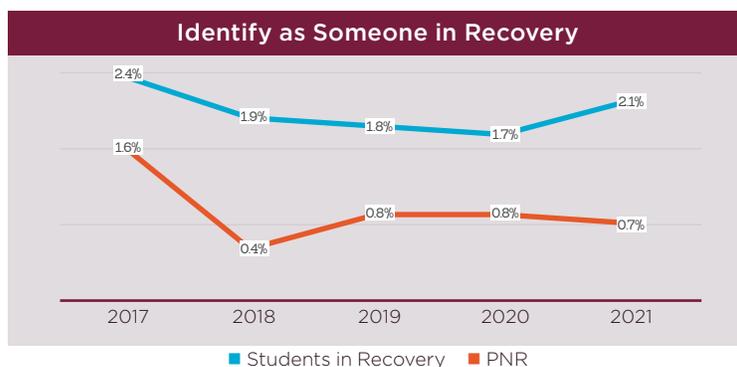


Update of Students in Recovery

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance use consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. The coalition, comprised of 24 public and private colleges and universities in the state, works to decrease high-risk behaviors among college students by implementing strategic plans for prevention utilizing evidenced-based strategies. PIP conducts the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) Survey to measure progress and obtain data. The MACHB is an annual, online survey implemented each spring to assess the impact of alcohol, drugs (illegal and prescription), tobacco, interpersonal violence, and mental health issues on student health and wellness. The MACHB asks students to self-identify if they are recovering from alcohol or other drugs to better understand their experiences and needs during their time on campus.

Prevalence and Demographics

According to the 2021 MACHB, 2.1% (N=213) of Missouri college students identify as someone who is in recovery from substance use, with a range from 0.4% to 5.8% among PIP schools and an additional 0.7% (N=71) of students who prefer not to respond (PNR). Students may PNR if they wish to remain anonymous or live sober lifestyles without participating in traditional recovery approaches. The population of students who identify as in recovery decreased steadily from 2017 to 2020 but increased this past year by 0.4 percentage points.



Thirty-nine percent (39%) of students in recovery indicate that they are 25 years or older, and 33% are under the age of 21. Fifty-six percent (56%) identify as a woman, 39% identify as a man, 2.1% transgender, and 3.1% genderqueer or self-identify. Most students in recovery are non-Hispanic/Latino (85%) and identify their race as white (76%).

Defining Recovery

There are many ways to define recovery based on the type of recovery format practiced. Since 2016, students in recovery have been asked how they define "in recovery" for themselves. The two most common recovery formats practiced by students in recovery are treatment or counseling-based (27%) and "other" (27%), followed by moderation management or harm reduction (23%), and a 12-step program. Additionally, 11% of students in recovery prefer not to respond. For students who indicated "other," responses included but were not limited to quitting cold turkey, religious or faith-based approaches, self-practices, and minimizing exposure to substances. Over the past few years, the rate of students reporting using the 12-Step Program has continued to decrease, with more students reporting using treatment/counseling-based recovery or another recovery format.

What Recovery Format do you Practice?

Format	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
12-Step program	17%	14%	15%	13%	12%
Treatment or counseling-based	11%	23%	18%	28%	27%
Moderation management/harm reduction	19%	23%	23%	22%	23%
Other	30%	19%	22%	23%	27%
Prefer not to respond	24%	21%	23%	15%	11%

Well-Being of Students in Recovery

Students in recovery face a unique set of challenges that their non-recovering peers do not face. Because alcohol typically plays a prominent role in campus life, students in recovery may feel excluded from social events or find it difficult to identify other students who do not drink.

In 2021, students in recovery reported a lower sense of belonging to their campus community than their non-recovering peers (47% v. 59%). They also reported higher thoughts of transferring from their current school (27% v. 23%). Additionally, students in recovery reported higher rates of mental health concerns in the past year in every category* included in the MACHB. This group also reported higher rates of experiencing sexual assault (11% v. 3.6%) and experiencing an abusive relationship (11% v. 4.3%) in the past year.

Well-being of Students in Recovery		
Mental health concern	In recovery	Not in recovery
Anxiety	72%	64%
Major depression	56%	34%
Panic attacks	45%	29%
Chronic sleep issues	43%	25%
Eating disorders	22%	14%
Self-injury	14%	5.9%
Bipolar disorder	15%	3.1%

Collegiate Recovery Communities

Seventy-four (74%) of Missouri college students are unsure if their campus has a collegiate recovery program, organization, or center, and only 19% of students have participated in or with their campus recovery program. The Missouri Alliance of Collegiate Recovery Organizations (MACRO) works with colleges and universities across the state to help establish new recovery programs and support existing ones. Currently, there are eight recovery programs at colleges and universities across Missouri. For more information about MACRO, visit macro.missouri.edu.



For students who are interested in connecting with fellow students in recovery, MACRO also offers Recovery Corner, a virtual meeting space that allows students from across the state to connect, share their stories about recovery, and access recovery resources. For more information about Recovery Corner, visit mopip.org/macro/corner.html

In addition to MACRO, there are national resources that provide resources, workshops, and conferences based specifically on recovery topics in higher education. These resources are available to students, faculty, and staff who support recovery. Two of these include the Association of Recovery in Higher Education (www.collegiaterecovery.org) and the Higher Education Center for Alcohol and Drug Misuse Prevention (hecaod.osu.edu). In addition, Recovery Campus (www.recoverycampus.com) published newsletters, directories, and magazines that share information and stories about individuals and their collegiate recovery programs across the nation.

Conclusion

Although the population of students in recovery makes up a relatively small percentage on Missouri's college campuses, this population has increased slightly over the past year, and campuses must start or continue to create safe, welcoming environments that support these students. These efforts are critical as this group reports lower rates of a sense of belonging to their campus and higher rates of thoughts of transferring and mental health concerns. If a student may benefit from your campus's collegiate recovery program or any community resources, refer them to those resources. For interest in starting a collegiate recovery program on your campus, contact macro@missouri.edu.

Contact Partners in Prevention at (573) 884-7551.

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*question is select all that apply

For more information, visit mopip.org

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