



## **Recovery Protection:**

**A research-based model of preventing relapse for adolescents and transitional aged youth in educational settings.**

**Amanda Baker, M.S.**

**Associate Director, Center for the Study of Addiction and Recovery  
Texas Tech University**

**Copyright: Baker 2010**

# Acknowledgements

- Substance and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
- *The statements contained in this presentation belong to the author and in no way represent the opinions of SAMHSA or CSAP.*

# Introduction

- Who are we talking about?
- What is going on here?
- When did we get started looking at this problem?
- Where are we headed?
- Why does it matter?

# Study Criteria

- Nine focus group interviews (5-10 participants/interview) at collegiate recovery communities across the country
- Participants characteristics:
  - Minimum of 30 days in recovery
  - 18 or older
  - Enrolled in a college/university (exceptions were made to this requirement when a recovering student was planning to enroll in a recovery school in the next six months or had graduated within the last six months)

# Participating Sites

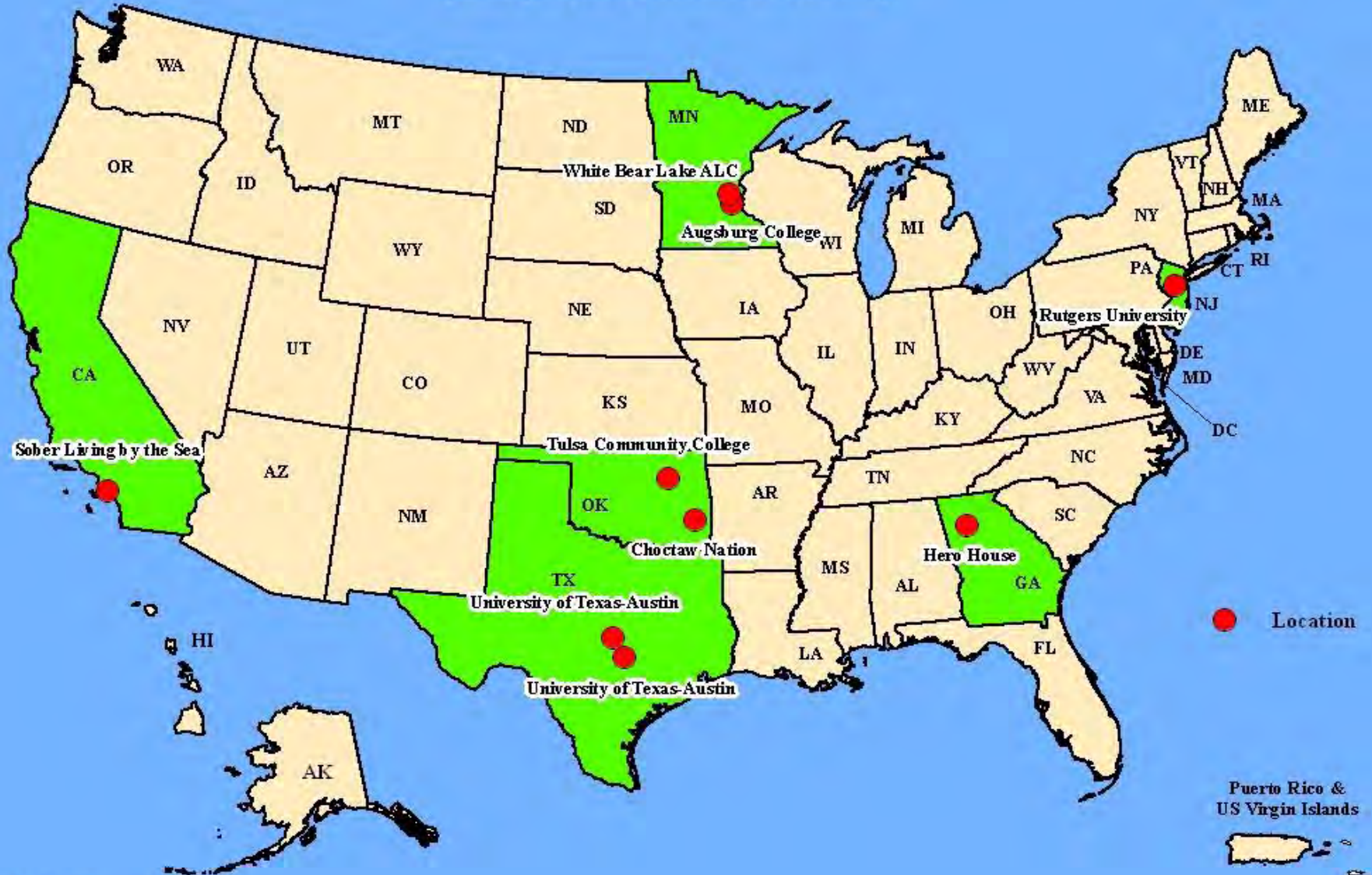
- StepUP Program -Augsburg College
- INSIGHT Program – Area Learning Center
- TEACH Program – Sober Living by the Sea
- Peer Mentoring Program – Tulsa Community College
- Center for Students in Recovery – University of Texas at Austin (2 groups)
- HERO House (2 groups)
- ADAPS Recovery Housing Program – Rutgers University
- Chi Hullo Li – Choctaw Nation\*

# Center For the Study of Addiction and Recovery

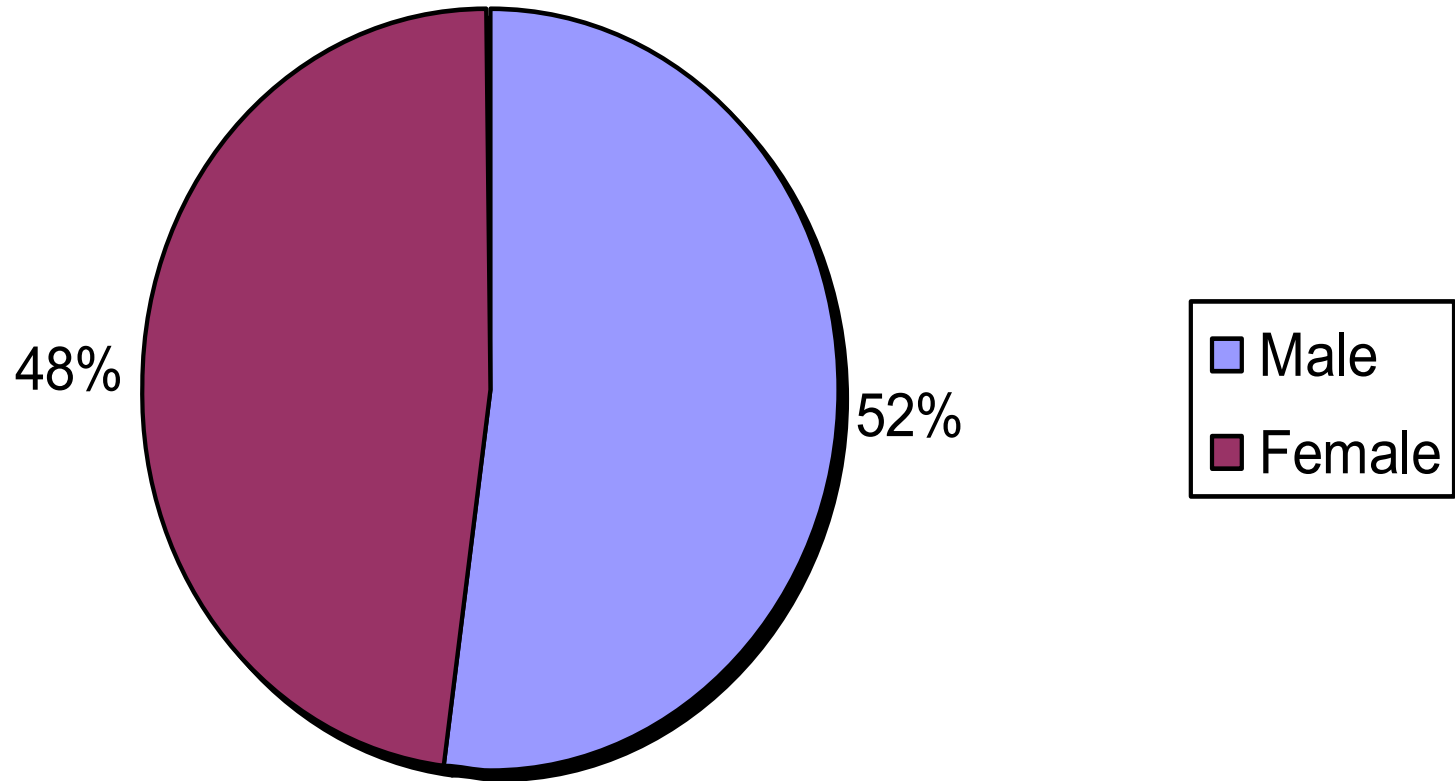
## Creating Effective Relapse Prevention Strategies For Recovering Students

### Focus Group Locations

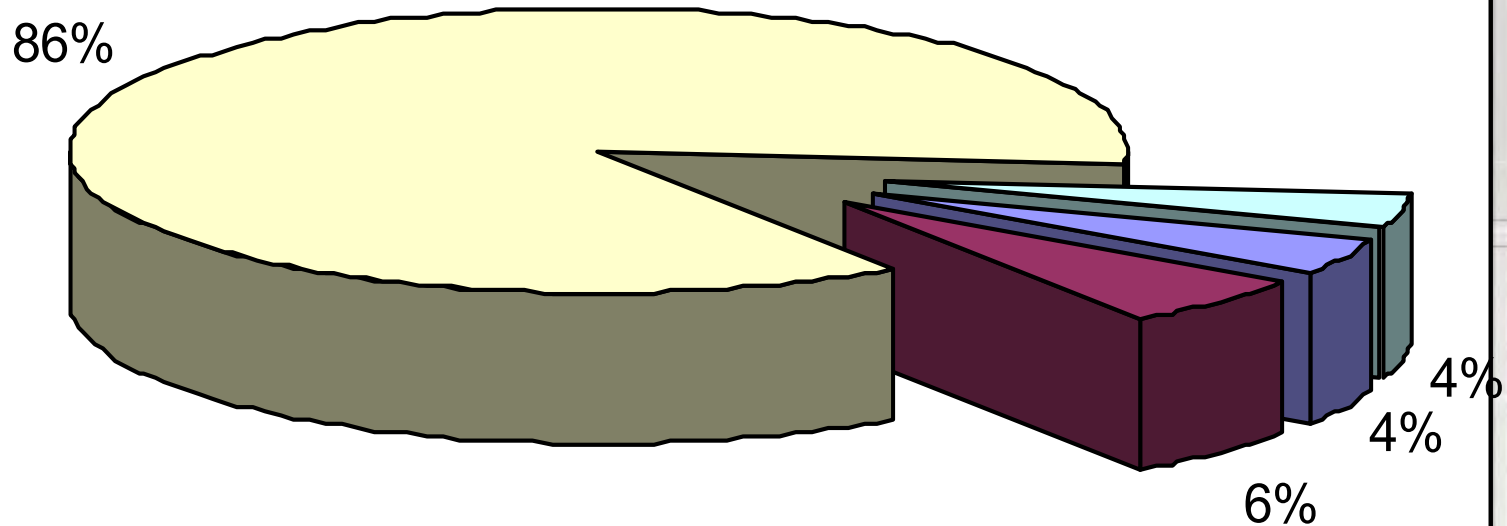
*(Funded by the Center For Substance Abuse Prevention)*



# Gender of Participants (n=50)



# Racial/Ethnic Breakdown



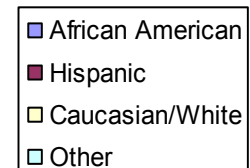
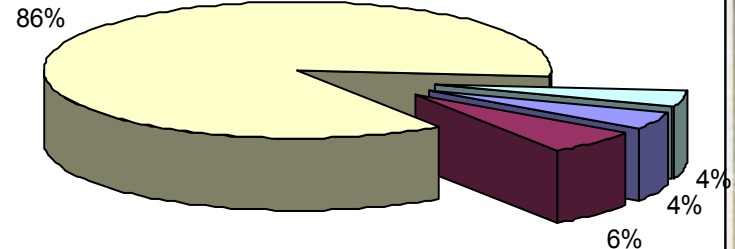
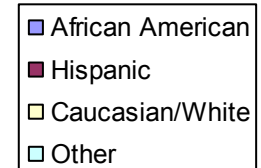
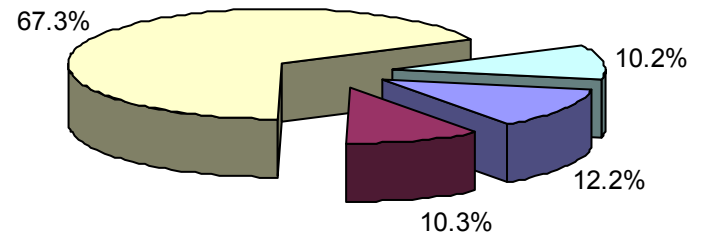
- African American
- Hispanic
- Caucasian/White
- Other

# Comparison to Overall College Population

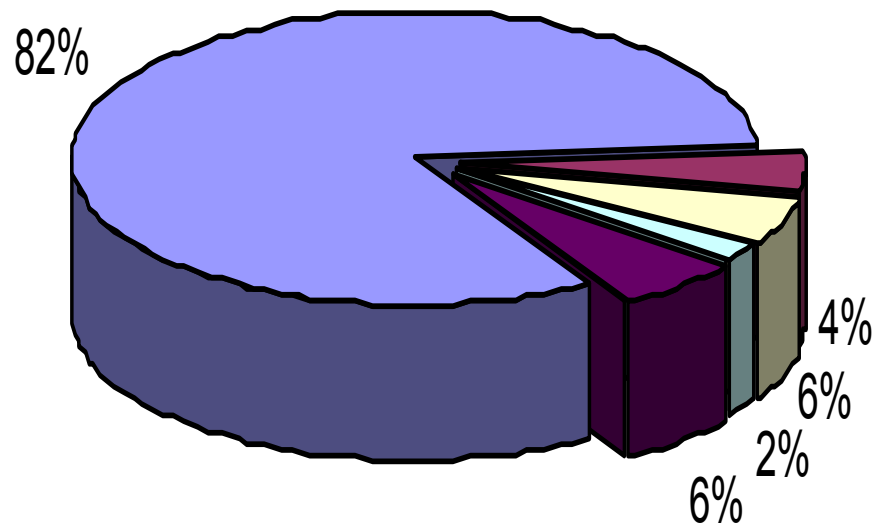
- Overall College Population

(National Center for Education Statistics, Youth Indicators, 2005)

- Study Participants

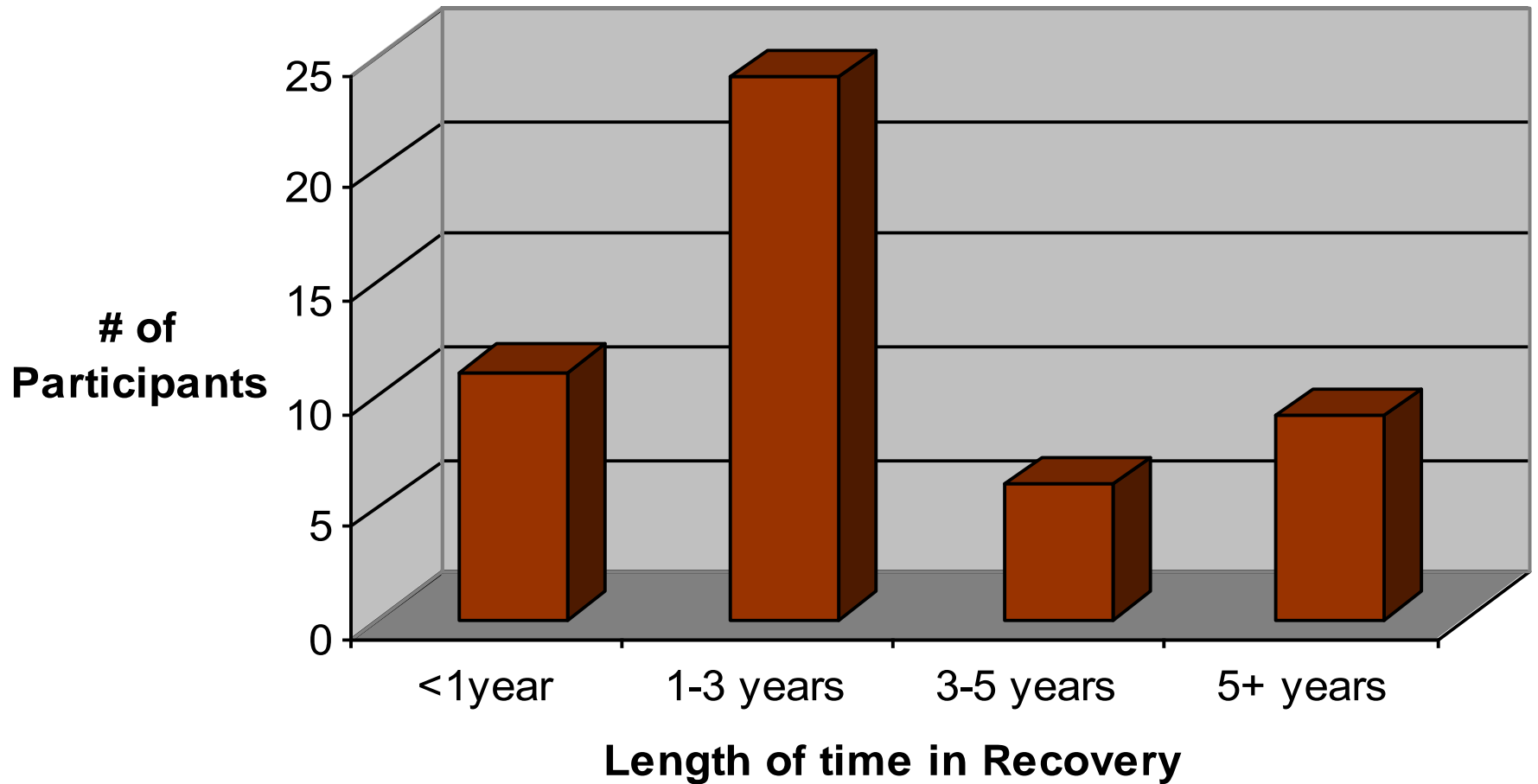


# Enrollment in School



■ Full-time ■ 3/4 time ■ Part time ■ Intend to enroll ■ Graduated

# Length of Time in Recovery



- Minimum = 36 days
- Maximum = 8 years, 10 months

# Aims of the Study

- To understand:
  - How recovery is defined
  - What is considered relapse
- To create:
  - Relapse prevention strategies that work
  - Rationale for recovery support services in communities and on university campuses for this population

# What is Recovery?

- **Abstinence**
  - “Recovery is obviously abstaining from drugs and alcohol...”
  - “Learning how to live with the absence of drugs.”
  - “Being free from drugs and alcohol...”

# What is Recovery? (cont.)

- **Belief in 12-Steps**

- “I think the reason the 12-Steps are so well known and I know the most common ones...they work!”
- “I’ve seen other people get sober through other things, but I haven’t seen their attitudes and their lives be as happy or as productive as the level of what I think those in the 12-Steps are.”
- “I don’t think they have recovery, I think they’re clean, I think anybody that doesn’t do a 12-Step program is sober but they are not recovering.”
- “Any treatment center that doesn’t have a 12-Step program, we wouldn’t recommend for anybody”

# What is Recovery? (cont.)

- **A Conscious Choice**

- “”It’s something you have to choose. You got to be ready, nobody can force you into it. You have to be ready.”
- “I hit rock bottom. Staying on the streets or, you know, making some money and having a family one day...so I picked the second one.”
- “Choosing to live another life.”

# What is Recovery? (cont.)

- **A Transformative Process**

- **Productivity**

- “Learning how to live a new way of life. Learning how to do it proud, learning how to be a productive member of society, learning how to dig in, learning how to love and be with people, and to really just experience what it is to be alive.”

- **Freedom/Gratitude**

- “Recovery to me is freedom in every aspect of your life. Freedom to go to school, freedom to be nice to you, freedom to be looking at the birds, freedom to have the sun on your face. Before, you don’t know that you are a nice person, you don’t have feelings, you don’t notice that the sky is blue cause it is always dark at night.”

# What is Recovery? (cont.)

- **Inclusive**

- “You take a room full of people from different walks of life, with different personalities, races, ethics, backgrounds and sit in a room for one hour and share ourselves. We are looking for solutions, hearing something that will remind us not to go back to what we once did.”
- “Living abstinent from your addiction whether it be drugs, alcohol, eating disorders, gambling, sex, whatever your addiction was”

# Recovery Is.....

*(As defined by participants)*

- **Abstinence**
- **Belief in the 12-Steps**
- **A Conscious Choice**
- **Transformative Process**
- **Inclusive**

# What is Relapse?

- Focus group participants UNANIMOUSLY agree that relapse is “the actual picking up again” of a substance after a period of abstinence.
- Defined by one variable – use of alcohol and drugs.
- **Abstinence**

# Is this Problematic?

- **It Depends!**
  - On how we, as clinicians and treatment professionals are approaching relapse prevention
- **Difference in what we say and how we measure recovery success**

# To Use or Not to Use..... .....That Is The Measure

- **Where is this definition of relapse coming from?**
  - Recovering people
  - 12-Step groups
  - Administrators of recovery support programs
  - Funding agencies/Government

# What We Practice?

- Relapse prevention methods are based on the idea of a progression toward relapse.
  - Warning signs
  - Triggers
- Models of relapse prevention

# Gorski's 37 Warning Signs of Relapse

- 1. Apprehension about well-being
- 2. Denial
- 3. Adamant commitment to sobriety
- 4. Compulsive attempts to impose sobriety on others
- 5. Defensiveness
- 6. Compulsive behavior
- 7. Impulsive behavior
- 8. Tendencies toward loneliness
- 9. Tunnel vision
- 10. Minor depression
- 11. Loss of constructive planning
- 12. Plans begin to fail
- 13. Idle daydreaming and wishful thinking
- 14. Feelings that nothing can be solved
- 15. Immature wish to be happy
- 16. Periods of confusion
- 17. Irritation with friends
- 18. Easily angered
- 19. Irregular eating habits
- 20. Listlessness
- 21. Irregular sleeping habits
- 22. Progressive loss of daily structure
- 23. Periods of deep depression
- 24. Irregular attendance at AA meetings and/or therapy
- 25. Development of an "I don't care" attitude
- 26. Open rejection of help
- 27. Dissatisfaction with life
- 28. Feelings of powerlessness and helplessness
- 29. Self-pity
- 30. Thoughts of social drinking
- 31. Conscious lying
- 32. Complete loss of self-confidence
- 33. Unreasonable resentments
- 34. Discontinues all treatment
- 35. Overwhelming loneliness, frustration, anger and tension
- 36. Start controlled drinking
- 37. Loss of control

# What to Do Next?

- For the young adult population:
  - Change the way we are teaching relapse prevention
  - Make it more difficult to fail at recovery

# Changing the Way we Are Teaching Relapse Prevention

- **Simplify the Steps**
  - Research support of this
- **Change the Language**
  - Talk about Dangers to Recovery not Relapse Prevention

# Dangers to Recovery

- Disengagement from the recovery community
- Inability to enact change in your life
- Isolation
- Decline in life satisfaction

# Change the Way We Do Relapse Prevention

- Talk about recovery protection, rather than relapse prevention
- Simplify the model to include four dangers, rather than multiple steps in a progression
- Remember- relapse is an outcome, not a process

# Make it Harder to Fail

- Recovery Protection
  - Social support for recovery
- Salzer model of social support
  - Emotional support
  - Instrumental support
  - Companionship
  - Informational support

# Social Support and Recovery

Social Support	Recovery Progression
GOAL Recovery Support	GOAL Abstinence
Emotional Support	Participation in Recovery Support Groups
Informational Support	Personal Choice for Recovery
Companionship	Group Identification
Instrumental Support	Transformation in Relational Interaction

# Support, Recovery, and Relapse

Social Support	Recovery Progression	Dangers to Recovery
GOAL Recovery Support	GOAL Abstinence	GOAL Relapse
Emotional Support	Participation in Recovery Support Groups	Disengagement from the Recovery Community
Informational Support	Personal Choice for Recovery	Inability to Enact Change
Companionship	Group Identification	Isolation
Instrumental Support	Transformation in Relational Interaction	Decline in Life Satisfaction