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## Improving Access to Collegiate Substance Use Prevention Resources

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# Improving access to collegiate substance use prevention resources

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## Introduction

The incidence of substance use is rapidly increasing, and has been declared a public health epidemic. College students are at an increased risk of developing a substance use disorder as compared to the general public. Despite the vast scope of the problem, support resources are inadequate. Students at URI report not knowing what support options are available to them. Through a critical evaluation of current practices and implementation improvement strategies, a more comprehensive model of care was formed. This streamlined prevention-oriented approach could significantly improve outcomes for URI students.

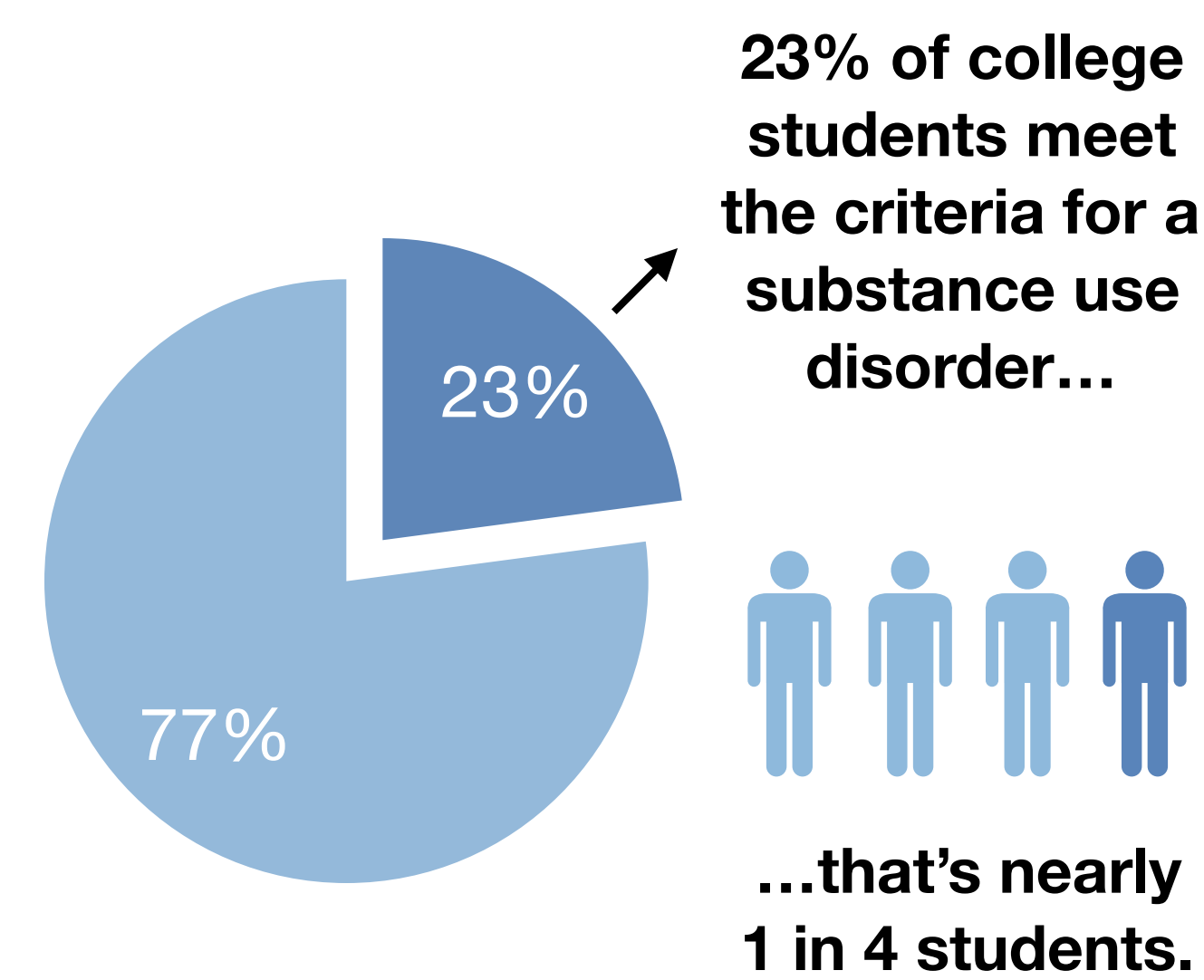
## Goals

- Educate students on the resources available to them
- Make access to these resources simple and effective
- Increase awareness and decrease stigma of addiction

## Methods

- A literature review was conducted that analyzed
  - Data pertinent to college substance use
  - Unique characteristics of the college population
  - Methods for prevention, support, and recovery
  - Barriers to providing/receiving adequate treatment
- Interviewed department staff members from:
  - *Health Education*
  - *The Counseling Center*
  - *Substance Abuse Prevention Services*
  - *New Student Programs*
- Interviewed student leaders including:
  - *Resident Assistants*
  - *URI 101 Mentors*
  - *Students in recovery*
- Proposed improvements to URI Substance Abuse Prevention Services website
  - Inclusion of an emergency number
  - Addition of an updated resource list
  - Reformatting for clarity
  - Easier access from a web search
- Called for a standardized URI 101 curriculum to include substance abuse education
- Compiled a comprehensive resource list to be distributed on campus

## Results



### Literature and Data

- A thorough literature review revealed alarming data regarding college substance use trends
- 8% of the general public has a substance use disorder, at 23%, college students far exceed the normal rate (CASA Columbia, 2007)
- Binge drinking and experimentation with substance use is common amongst college students



### Planning Considerations

- Addiction is a complex disease process
- Addictive behavior is multifactorial
  - Modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors
- Interventions must preserve anonymity, be easily accessible, and cost-effective

### Implementation Strategies

1. A comprehensive resource booklet was distributed to various on-campus departments
2. Proposed improvements to URI Substance Abuse Prevention Services website
3. Proposed a standardized URI 101 curriculum plan to include substance abuse education

**EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

On-Campus: 401-874-2121  
Off-Campus: 911

**OFF-CAMPUS RESOURCES**

Support:  
Catholics Anonymous: 400-439-8860, catholicism-aa.org  
Jehovah's Witnesses: 1-461-1110, jw.org  
Marijuana Anonymous: 1-800-766-6779, marijuana-anonymous.org  
Narcotics Anonymous: 1-781-0044, naon.org  
Alcoholics Anonymous: 1-800-525-6465, aa.org  
Cocaine Anonymous: 1-800-252-6465, caa.org  
Council on Alcoholism & Other Drug Dependence 24-Hour Hotline: 1-800-522-7422, cadd.org  
Treatment Centers:  
CARE: 1-800-252-6465, care.com  
Addiction Recovery: 1-800-254-6170, tinuumri.com  
Penix House: 1-888-671-9392, penixhouse.org

**ONLINE RESOURCES**

Anonymous Self Assessments  
web.uri.edu/counseling/selfassessments

Student Handbook  
web.uri.edu/studentconduct/files/2015-2017-Student-Handbook.pdf  
— See pages 50-56

RI Overdose Prevention and Intervention Task Force  
preventoverdoseri.org

**GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES**

Alternatives: Reducing Substances in Your Life  
Thursdays, 5-8:30 PM, 303 Avedisian Hall  
\*Walk-ins welcome

When a Family Member has an Addiction  
Fridays, 2-3:30 PM, 217 Roosevelt Hall  
\*Pre-group meeting with facilitator required  
— Contact the Counseling Center at 401-874-2288 for additional information

**PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT**

Resident Assistants  
URI 101 Mentors

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION RESOURCE GUIDE**

## Discussion

- Goal Evaluation
  - *Students aware of support options*
    - While the resources are compiled and distributed amongst department leaders, they still need to be more widely distributed at the student level
  - *Simplified access*
    - Scattered resources from each department were compiled into one comprehensive document, simplifying the process of seeking help
  - *Increased awareness, decreased stigma*
    - This project brings needed attention to a widespread health problem that does not currently receive adequate support
- Barriers to Change
  - Impaired interdepartmental communication
    - Staff reports difficulty communicating with other leaders and satisfying administrative requirements for change
  - Monetary limitations
    - Funding is limited and must be allocated based on prioritization
  - Recruitment of affected individuals
    - Those individuals who most require substance use treatment often fear punitive action or deny having a problem at all
- Project Limitations
  - Inability to force change
    - Proposed change options, cannot impose change without approval of University leaders
  - Time constraints
- Future Considerations
  - Started a critical conversation
  - Individuals eager to continue
    - Students and staff
  - Project can be built upon
    - Implement proposed changes
    - Evaluate effectiveness

## Literature Cited

CASA Columbia (2007) *Wasting the best and the brightest: substance abuse at America's colleges and universities*. Retrieved from: <https://www.centeronaddiction.org/addiction-research/reports/wasting-best-and-brightest-substance-abuse-americas-colleges-and>

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