



Young People in Recovery

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Toolkit



Overview of YPR + Commitment to
serving BIPOC Communities
in substance use disorder recovery.

Mission

Young People in Recovery is a nonprofit whose mission is to give young people the life skills and peer support to aid in substance use disorder recovery. YPR's core values include community, caring, respect, inclusion, and commitment.



Why?

To better serve young people in recovery from substance use disorder (SUD) from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, **YPR** believes in researching and garnering feedback from the community on a regular basis.

For this study, YPR focused on the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) recovery community in California. A sample group of both stakeholders (researchers, social workers, counselors and others) and young people aged 18-30 provided qualitative data about their lived experiences. During this study, a sample group of both stakeholders (researchers, social workers, counselors, etc), and youth (ages 18-30) primarily based in California were requested to provide qualitative information around recovery.

B.I.P.O.C

Definition of BIPOC

*Black, Indigenous,
& People of Color.*

BIPOC is a term used to describe racial minorities, acknowledging the nuanced experiences of Black and Indigenous people in America from other People of Color (POC).

The term was created to show inclusivity and unity among those who have been affected by discrimination, oppression, and racism.

It is also a way to recognize the distinct issues that affect different racial minority groups.



What is Diversity?

Practicing inclusion starts with understanding.

Diversity,Equity,and Inclusion (DEI) is a term used to describe the concept and practice of providing fair and equitable policies and programs for all,including underrepresented groups that are often discriminated against,oppressed,and disregarded.



Diversity is the presence of differences in groups that include but are not limited to gender,race,sexual orientation,religion,and political affiliation.



Equity is the quality of being fair and impartial as it relates to justice and standing in society.



Inclusion is the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for all people.



Barriers to Substance Use Disorder Recovery for Individuals of **BIPOC Communities**

Access to Effective Treatment

Systemic factors that target race and class affect access to treatment. Lower-income areas often have fewer medical facilities and overall, BIPOC communities don't have as much access to specialized SUD treatment as predominantly white communities do.”

Stigma in Receiving Treatment

Though not exclusive of BIPOC individuals, there is a stigma largely associated with medication-assisted treatment (MAT) of substance use disorder. It is considered by some as replacing one addiction with another, but this perspective is not seen as the same for other chronic conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes.

Lack of Cultural Competence

Some treatment and other health-care professionals including therapists lack the cultural competency and/or the ability to understand and effectively communicate with those from other cultures and races. This results in a lower standard of care for BIPOC individuals than their white peers.

Criminalization

The most common way that individuals can access treatment is under legal mandate or court order. It is important to offer non-coercive routes to proper treatment and support.

Socioeconomic Status

Not having a job and a strong professional network can lead to a recurrence of substance use. In addition, lack of income often results in less access to expensive methods of treatment like therapy, medication, and other programs.

Important Areas of Support to Aid in Recovery

Mental Health

Access to affordable and effective mental health services is imperative to the BIPOC community. More than 1 in 4 adults living with serious mental health issues also experience substance use disorder, meaning the two are often co-occurring. This is sometimes due to substance use disorder causing mental health issues, self-medication, or common underlying causes both share such as stress and trauma.

Professional Development

It is important for all people in recovery to have structure to their days and to engage in pro-social activities such as work and/or volunteer opportunities that improve their sense of self-worth. Financial self-sufficiency is also important to recovery.

Peer Groups

Collective support among peers curbs isolation on the journey to recovery. Support groups also allow for individuals to hold each other accountable and unite around common goals. Studies show that peer groups help individuals increase self-esteem and belief in one's ability to recover as well as cope with the obstacles around recovery.

Language Matters:

Do's and Don'ts

When Talking About SUD

Individuals dealing with substance use disorder often face stigma around their experiences and condition.

- ✓ When discussing SUDs, it is important to use the term **“substance use disorder”** in lieu of terms such as “addiction,” “user,” or any other derogatory term related to the type of substance or label of the individual.
- ✓ Avoiding labels to describe an individual also helps to distinguish between the individual having a problem and being the problem. Blame, however subtle or indirect, should not be placed on the individual.
- ✓ In discussing recovery, YPR avoids terms like “clean” or “sober” because they prioritize specific abstinence-based recovery pathways that may not work for everybody. It’s more inclusive to simply say someone is “in recovery,” which reduces stigma.

We asked members of the B.I.P.O.C community **how**
to aid in recovery.

What do you feel organizations get right and wrong about supporting substance use recovery?

What do you feel organizations get right and wrong about supporting substance use recovery?

Done Wrong

**Ignoring patients
and medical needs**

Done Right

**Showing respect
and giving honest
feedback**

What are some barriers to substance use disorder recovery?

What are some barriers to substance use disorder recovery?

It's the part everybody loves but it helps. Therapy is an integral part of recovery by the fact that it helps you cope.

Having no one to make proud or change the way they see you. Feeling like no matter all the good I do, the bad past of me has messed everything up.

**How do you feel about therapy
being part of recovery?**

How do you feel about therapy being part of recovery?

It's the part everybody loves but it helps. Therapy is an integral part of recovery by the fact that it helps you cope.

I think it's really important to learn about yourself and your triggers.

**How do you feel about career
development being part of recovery?**

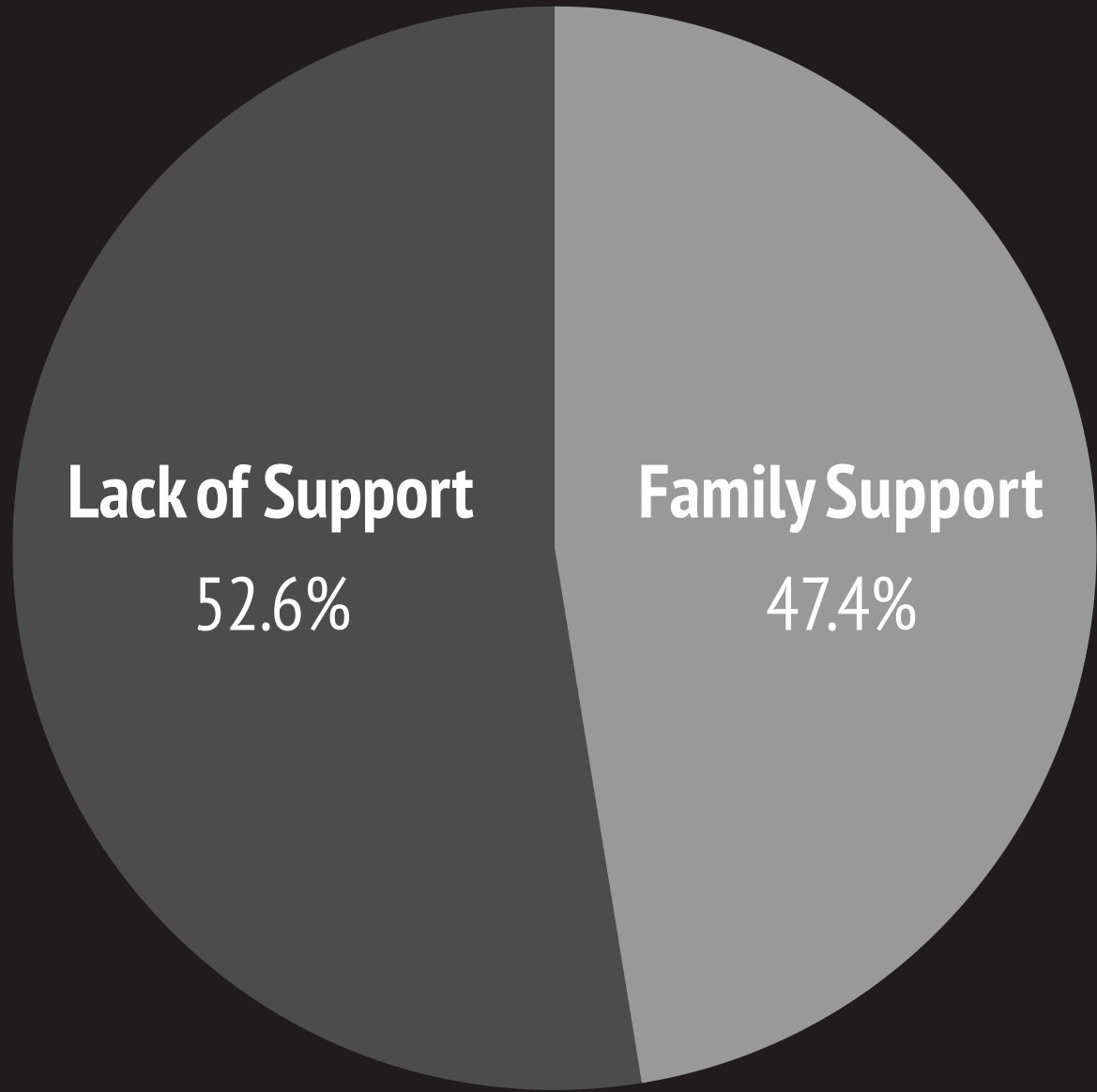
How do you feel about career development being part of recovery?

I think that opportunity would be really helpful to those that can capitalize on it.

I feel strongly about it because having stability is very important.

We surveyed 18 young people
to find out if they were given family support during recovery.





Tips for outreach and engagement

Here are ways that
allies can **build
trust:**



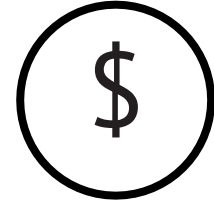
Build Trust

BIPOC individuals don't always feel comfortable in mutual group settings due to discrimination and lack of cultural competence of peers and group leaders. It's important to build trust by allowing a safe space and honesty in discussion.

Different ethnic groups have various moral, social, religious, and gendered systems and therefore assumptions shouldn't be made of individual circumstances and background.

- **Keep Your Word.** Make sure you're being consistent in outreach, check-ups, and meet ups. Ensure that you're establishing a trustworthy process and peer group.
- **Respect Boundaries.** When engaging in BIPOC communities, making sure you are aware of people's boundaries and refrain from meeting your own needs. Be aware of the nuances of trauma, family dynamics, and other experiences that young people may express or not express.
- **Communicate.** Truth and honesty in your conversations are essential to the recovery community and help continue to build credibility. Be aware that some individuals might prefer connections that are impersonal, while others may want a more one on one relationship.

Tips for outreach and engagement



A snapshot of resources
available through **Substance
Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration:**

Offer Financial Support

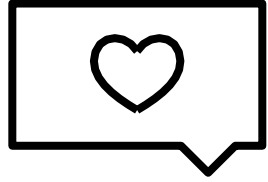
Financial independence is a key indicator of achieving recovery as recovery is often expensive and inaccessible without it.

Offering and providing referrals for resources that give funding to aid in recovery is important in supporting the BIPOC community in recovery.

- **Block grants:** The Substance Abuse Prevention And Treatment Block Grant (SABG) program. The grant includes funding for all states in the United States.
- **Partial scholarships:** Offers funding that covers a portion of rehab costs.
- **Full scholarships:** Offers funding that covers the entire portion of rehab costs. 10,000 Beds is a rehab scholarship for those needing help for addiction. This scholarship covers the full amount of rehab scholarship funds for patients in need.

Tips for outreach and engagement

Here are ways that
allies can improve
understanding:



Improve Understanding

A lack of cultural sensitivity is one of the reasons that BIPOC individuals are less likely than their white peers to complete recovery treatment programs.

This problem would be easy to fix if healthcare providers and recovery allies took the time to learn more about the many resources and effective strategies for reaching BIPOC populations.

- **Understand the role of faith and spirituality in recovery pathways.** Different institutions and their leaders have historically played a key role in responding to community concerns. People in or seeking recovery often look to their faith community for spiritual leadership and guidance. Be open minded around discussions of faith and spirituality in aiding the journey of recovery.
- **Respecting the voices and decisions of young people.** Respecting someone's voice looks much more than 'decorating' safe spaces with young BIPOC people or seeking their guidance on specific instances. Young adults have to be seen as experts of their own lived experiences. Support their development as leaders by encouraging them to speak up and lead in some decision-making.
- **Educate yourself.** Keep yourself aware of the resources available to help communities such as <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/ebp> and <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma14-4849.pdf>.

Activities to cultivate creativity and communication

Our research showed that BIPOC individuals largely want to be understood and engaged in interactions around their recovery. It is important to have open channels of communication and compassion. Fun, pro-social events offer a stress-free way for individuals of all races and ethnicities to forge connection and feel supported by each other as they recognize the common ground in their recovery journeys. Below is a brief snapshot of potential activities that can be done to foster mutual understanding while sparking joy.

- Host a Painting Class
- Host a Cooking Class
- Utilizing Coloring Books
- Vision Board Party
- Playing Board Games
- Journaling Your Feelings
- Hosting Karaoke Event



Thank you.