

RCOS Frequently Asked Questions

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What is RCOS?

The Recovery Center Outcome Study (RCOS) examines clients' progress and key factors from before entering Phase 1 at a Recovery Center to 12 months after Phase 1 entry. The study is designed and managed by the University of Kentucky Center on Drug and Alcohol Research (UK CDAR) in collaboration with the Kentucky Housing Corporation.

How does RCOS benefit my program?

Findings from RCOS show how clients' lives change as a result of their participation in the Recovery Center program. RCOS provides state and region-specific findings on substance abuse and other co-occurring problems to providers, the public, and to lawmakers. Many Recovery Centers find the range of questions on the RCOS intake interview to be very helpful to them to learn more about their clients. For example, clinicians can generate a psychosocial narrative report from the data collected in the intake survey.

What is the benefit of state-specific data rather than national data?

National data is always important but many state lawmakers want to see Kentucky specific data. This data helps show how Recovery Centers benefit Kentucky. RCOS is showing that these programs are helping people and saving the state money.

How can I use the RCOS data that is collected for each client?

The RCOS Client Information System (CIS) provides substance abuse assessment reports from data collected in the intake interview. These "narrative" reports summarize the answers from the intake interview in an easy-to-read format. The reports can be edited by the user to meet the specific needs of each client if necessary. Several Recovery Centers say they are using the substance abuse assessment reports as a reference to summarize client status before program entry. Some programs are using the narrative as a psychosocial assessment. Some Recovery Centers also use the narrative as a guideline during program planning with their clients. Others found the information on the surveys to be useful in helping clients clarify program goals. Furthermore, programs sometimes request program-specific data to answer specific questions raised by community members and policy makers.

Where can I see how the RCOS data that I collect is used?

UK CDAR produces several documents using the findings each year. These documents can be easily accessed on the website cdar.uky.edu/bhos. For example, the one-page fact sheet grabs the reader's attention with short, useful sound bites. The Findings at a Glance format provides a 4-5 page brief summary with more graphs and detail. Also, regional and site-specific reports can show how well particular Recovery Centers serve clients in the community.

Why do we have to collect data every year?

It's important to collect data for the study every year because more recent data shows what is happening now. It also helps to see how things have changed from the past. People around the state use different substances in different ways. Their responses to the Recovery Center program vary. It's helpful to track trends over time. Site-specific reports can draw attention to what is happening in particular regions of the state.

How is data collected from clients?

Intake information is collected from all clients who give consent to be in the study as they enter Phase 1 at one of the fourteen Recovery Centers in Kentucky. Information is collected through the CIS which is an online secure system that then sends the information to UK CDAR electronically. A subset of clients who completed an intake survey are selected to be contacted for the follow-up survey by phone with UK CDAR staff about 12 months later. The follow-up information is confidential and secure and clients are paid for completing the follow-up portion of the study.

What if clients do not want to participate?

Participation in the study is voluntary. Clients who volunteer and who complete the study provide important information about the program and program effectiveness.

What if I need any help with the Client Information System (CIS)?

We are here to help you! We understand that staff members are busy and have many demands on their time. We are here to make the data collection process as smooth as possible. UK CDAR wants the CIS to be easy, educational, and beneficial in providing services to Kentucky's Recovery Center clients. If you have any suggestions to improve the intake interview or CIS or have any comments or feedback, we would love to hear them!

If you have any questions on the CIS or require technical support, please do not hesitate to contact Jeb Messer at (859) 257-1400 or jeb.messer@uky.edu. Questions pertaining to the RCOS study can be directed to Dr. TK Logan at (859) 257-8248 or tklogan@uky.edu.