

Synchronicity Recovery Foundation Attended the 11th Annual Penn State Addiction Conference

The 11th Annual Penn State College of Medicine Addiction Conference was held on December 8th and 9th of 2025. The focus of the Conference this year was on “basic science and translational research and clinical practice aspects of substance use research, treatment, education and community engagement.” Heather Barna-Dowling, CRS and Catherine Campanaro, members of Sync Recovery, were in attendance. Here, Heather Barna-Dowling shares her experience of the conference:



Heather Barna-Dowling, CRS

In one or two sentences, how would you describe your overall experience?

My overall experience at the Penn State Addictions Conference was a feeling of hope. The scientific community, the medical community, and the recovery community came together for two days presenting evidence-based findings, data and personal experience to aid communities in understanding and assisting recovery and addiction.

Did the conference spark any new sense of hope, motivation, or connection for you?

Listening to scientists share firsthand experience through their work and personal lives supporting what individuals actively in recovery have been sharing for years provided a lot of hope. There was a large focus from all groups supporting the importance of “recovery capital,” (*Human Capital, Social Capital, and Cultural Capital.*) Individuals in recovery learn from the beginning of their journey how important it is to have multiple sources to pull from i.e. friends, meetings, connection to self/ body, exercise and physical experience, service opportunities to others, to maintain and sustain recovery.

This idea of many pathways or components is the foundation which our organization, Sync Recovery, is built on. It filled me with a lot of hope, hearing science and clinicians support and promote what we do intrinsically.

Why do you think gatherings like this conference matter for the addiction and recovery community?

In a world that’s focused on data and numbers, conferences like this legitimize and support individuals in Recovery’s personal experiences and that adds power to our words.

The more conversations there are supporting Recovery the more normalized and accessible it becomes not only for individuals, but for their families and friends and communities, shining a light into the dark, stigmatizing places once closed by fear and shame.

Sync Recovery's
**VOLUNTEER
SPOTLIGHT**
Michelle Simon



How did you get involved with Sync Recovery?

I was lucky enough to get introduced to SYNC during the pandemic, through a friend in Recovery. I was so excited to meet my people.

What is your role with Sync Recovery?

I am a Sync Volunteer and will help in any way that I can. I have helped lead a retreat and have taught a few creative workshops. I also attend Sync events.

What does Sync mean for your recovery?

Sync has advanced my recovery to another level. I love connecting with deep people who are having Fun and interested in likeminded activities in Recovery.

Thank You Sync! So Grateful I was led to more of my people and tribe.

**Interview with
Sync Participant
Eileen Reising**



Eileen Reising

How has Sync affected your recovery?

I am a person in long term recovery. I celebrated 33 years in recovery this year and a longstanding member of 12 step programs. Sync has given me more opportunity to meet others in recovery in our community..

Why do you think being a part of this community is essential?

This program showcases how people in recovery can come together from all walks of life. We share in helping to remove the stigma that has too long been attached to addiction. Sync shows recovery and restoration to family, community, and self is not only possible but thriving.

What does Sync offer that is unique in the field of recovery?

Fun! Having fun and enjoyable activities that touch all aspects of healthy recovery. Spiritual, Physical, emotional, and social events

What motivated you to get involved with Sync?

Giving back and being of service is a cornerstone of recovery. What better way than to be in activities that give me opportunities to share my experience strength and hope.

What aspects of Sync's activities do you find most rewarding or enjoyable?

Being in Nature feeds my soul and keeps me active. Whether kayaking, going on an Eco Spirituality walk, being part of a drumming circle or simple being together in community sharing I know I am safe and with my people.