The Street Scholars project aims to develop a peer-mentoring program and evaluate its effectiveness on rates of substance use disorder, educational achievement, and recidivism in paroled adults enrolled in community colleges in Alameda County, CA.

Individuals with less than a high school education are more likely to have a substance use disorder, commit crimes, and be incarcerated as compared to high school graduates and persons attending college. Substance use recovery and educational access can support the reintegration of paroled men and women. The combination of socioeconomic disadvantage and entrenchment in criminal and correctional systems makes successful reintegration difficult for many parolees to realize. Peer mentoring has demonstrated efficacy in supporting at-risk populations’ engagement in services and promotion of healthy behaviors. However, peer mentorship as a pathway for paroled adults’ reintegration has not been fully explored.

Street Scholars consists of a team of staff from community organizations, paroled adults attending community college, and academic researchers, working together to develop a peer-mentoring program.

The goal of the Street Scholars peer-mentoring program is two-fold: 1) to help formerly incarcerated adults achieve success in school, substance use recovery, and reintegration; and 2) to provide employment and training opportunities to the Street Scholar peer mentors themselves.

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