

# QUINCY COLLEGE

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## **Quincy College Researchers Club Tackles Addiction, Substance Abuse, and Perception of Harm Research** *Supporting Drug Story Theater's unique mission*

**Social Media Release:** Addiction, Substance Abuse, and Perception of Harm. Quincy College Research Club supports Drug Story Theater's mission with data driven insights.

**Plymouth, MA (8/27/2018):** Quincy College at Plymouth students under the guidance of Quincy College Professor of Psychology and Sociology, Dr. Kenneth Texeira are addressing the addiction and the substance abuse and mis-use epidemic head-on, conducting research to support local led, non-profit, Drug Story Theater. Dr. Texeira also serves as Research Director for Drug Story Theater.

The Quincy College Research Team, founded in 2016, provides a platform for students to engage in research outside of the classroom. In the Spring of 2018, the team comprised of five Psychology majors at Quincy College at Plymouth, sought to understand if efforts like Drug Story Theatre changed substance use, mis-use, and the perception of harm. The Quincy College club surveyed viewers of Drug Story Theater performances and evaluated whether or not the perception of harm changed during and after the performance.

Founded in Brockton and Plymouth in 2014, Drug Story Theater is a unique peer education program that teaches improvisational theater to teens in recovery. [Drug Story Theater](#) takes teenagers in the early stages of recovery from drugs and alcohol, teaches them improvisational theater, and engages them in psychodrama to explore their personal stories. The teens then create their own shows about the seduction of, addiction to and recovery from drugs and alcohol. They weave their stories into a theatrical piece and perform for middle and high school audiences and the general public.

" As a faculty member and more importantly as an invested community member, I wanted to use all my skills and talents to help a vulnerable population. Research is not often synonymous with a 2-year, public college like Quincy College. However, it's been enlightening and rewarding to work with Quincy College students to conduct research, analyze data, and help support Drug Story Theatre's unique mission to educate the community at large and its outreach to younger students," Dr. Kenneth Texeira, Quincy College at Plymouth Professor of Psychology/Sociology and Drug Story Theatre Research Director.

The research conducted by the Quincy College Research Team was passive content, surveying Drug Story Theatre attendees who had the option to complete a survey at the end of a performance anonymously and without date or gender identifications. In 2018, Drug Story Theatre anticipates expanding performances to reach 16,000 students throughout the Commonwealth.

The survey was piloted tested by Blue Cross Blue Shield, and reviewed by the Institutional Research Board.

In April of 2018, Blue Cross Blue Shield and Drug Story Theatre partnered to expand the innovative peer-to-peer education program led by local teens in recovery resulting in a \$250,000 grant to support the non-profit programs.

In a recent Blue Cross [opinion survey](#), Massachusetts residents rated the opioid crisis as the number one issue facing the state, with a majority of respondents reporting that they know someone who is addicted.

Dr. Texeira and the Quincy College Research Team then compared Drug Story Theater survey results to national data sources. The research concluded that viewing programs like Drug Story Theater before substance use increase the perception of harm of substances and participants upon viewing a performance are less likely to abuse drugs or alcohol. The research also found that teen addiction education programs are significantly more effective when delivered by peers rather than adults.

Dr. Texeira elaborated: "If we teach kids how beautiful and sensitive their brains area, there perception of harm changes and they are less likely to damage their brains with drugs, alcohol, or opioids."

The Quincy College Research Club will continue to fine tune its research methods and participate in research in support of Drug Story Theater's programs further collaborating to support the community facing a devastating epidemic.

In addition to the Quincy College Research Club, Quincy College offers a [Substance Abuse Certificate](#) program. The College also hosts an annual Substance Abuse Symposium with panel guest, speakers, presentations, and student presentations.

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## ABOUT QUINCY COLLEGE

*Founded in 1958, Quincy College is a two-year, municipally affiliated community college serving approximately 4,500 students at campuses located in Quincy and Plymouth, Massachusetts. Quincy College is an open access institution that encourages academic achievement and excellence, diversity, economic opportunity, community involvement, and lifelong learning. The College facilitates valuable learning relationships that inspire students to realize their educational and professional futures. The college offers 34 associate degree programs and 24 certificate programs in a variety of disciplines, including those within Professional Programs, Liberal Arts, and Natural & Health Sciences. The college is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and is licensed by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education to grant the degrees of Associate in Arts and Associate in Science. The college draws a diversity of students from the greater Boston area, South Shore, and Cape Cod, as well as 121 countries around the world. For additional information, visit [www.quincycollege.edu](http://www.quincycollege.edu)*