

Project gives drug abusers second chance

by TAMARA MOAN

A project to help former drug abusers successfully re-enter the community after treatment in a residential program is being conducted by the UW School of Social Work.

Assistant Professor of Social Work J. David Hawkins and research administrator Richard Catalano are the principal investigators for the project. Their three-year research and demonstration project is funded by a grant from the National Institute of Drug Abuse and will concentrate on the point of re-entry for participants into regular civilian life.

Two years of prior research in Seattle and San Francisco revealed some similarities among former drug abusers who had gone through residential treatment pro-

grams and had reverted to their old habits. Many of these people were involved in conventional activities such as holding a job, but were not involved in any informal organizations that reinforced their new life. Many also had deficits in social, interpersonal and stress skills.

"You begin to see a picture of people set up to return to old friends or return to drugs that make situations more familiar," Hawkins said.

The demonstration project will try to combat these recurring problems using two formats. Clients will participate in either a discussion group, or a behavioral skills training and social support development program. The emphasis of the program will be on volunteers from the community who will participate with clients in activities aimed to help the client develop a new support system. The volunteer and client might participate in church or political groups, or attend classes together.

"We'll be recruiting community volunteers to become involved on a one-to-one basis with those participating," Hawkins said.

The program's grant became effective last September and program activities thus far have concentrated on gathering baseline data. In February 1982, the project's first services will be offered. In six months to a year the success of the project will be assessed, comparing the relative adjustment of former drug abusers participating in the project with those only going through residential-treatment programs.

"This is a supplement to a regular therapeutic center," Hawkins said. The program will also involve five residential therapeutic centers: Family Health, Seadrumar, Conquest Center, Genesis House, and Operation Awareness.

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