

# PATHWAY TO SOBRIETY: INDEPENDENT RESEARCH FINDINGS

Interim Evaluation Report · Adam Fine, Ph.D., Youth Justice Lab ·  
Arizona State University · August 2025

ASU RESEARCH

An independent evaluation by **Dr. Adam Fine, Director of the Youth Justice Lab at Arizona State University**, assessed the Pathways to Sobriety program delivered through Journey.do over two program years (September 2023–August 2025). The study measured gains across **10 substance-related knowledge and skill domains** using pre- and post-program surveys with matched individual-level data and Cohen's *d* effect sizes.

**289**

**Year 2 Participants**

Scaled implementation with full statistical power

**10/10**

**Domains**

Significant gains across all measured areas in Year 2

**Small → Large**

**Effect Sizes**

Ranging across knowledge, skills & family domains

**2**

**Program Years**

Sep 2023–Aug 2025, with multi-year evaluation

## YEAR 1 · Pilot Phase (N = 33)

No statistically significant effects detected — consistent with expectations for a new program. Small sample size limited statistical power. Focus was on establishing operational procedures and delivery systems. **Null findings are expected and normal in Year 1.**

## YEAR 2 · Scaled Implementation (N = 289)

Clear and consistent gains across **all 10 measured domains**. Participants improved in knowledge, coping skills, decision-making, and family/peer support — evidence that the program is not only building awareness but translating it into **behavioral and relational skills**.

### KNOWLEDGE & AWARENESS

Recognizes Harm		Small
Differentiates Addiction vs Use		Small
Understands Effects on Family		Med

*Smaller gains here reflect already-high baseline awareness at program entry.*

### PERSONAL SKILLS & COPING

Avoids Problems		Med
Makes Safe Choices		Med
Copes Effectively		Large
Resists Peer Pressure		Large

*Largest gains in skill-building domains — critical for long-term resilience.*

### FAMILY & PEER SUPPORT

Families Can Support		Med
Knows How to Help Others		Med
Can Support Those Who Struggle		Small

*Gains extended beyond individual skills into relational and family contexts.*

## KEY FINDINGS

- **All 10 domains showed significant gains in Year 2.** Uniform positive effects across knowledge, skills, and relational domains demonstrate broad program impact once implementation stabilized.
- **Largest gains in coping and peer resistance** - Improvements were maintained from certificate completion through program end, indicating durable rather than momentary change.
- **Knowledge translates into behavior.** Participants didn't just learn about substances — they developed self-regulation, decision-making, and social support skills.
- **Year 1 null findings are expected.** Small pilot samples constrain statistical power; the Year 1 → Year 2 contrast underscores the importance of multi-year evaluation for new programs.
- **Family and peer domains improved.** Gains extended beyond the individual, suggesting the program builds relational resilience as well as personal skills.
- **Strong trajectory for continued investment.** The report concludes the program warrants continuation and potential expansion based on Year 2 evidence.

*Effect size magnitudes (Small/Medium/Large) are based on Cohen's *d* conventions (small ≈ 0.2, medium ≈ 0.5, large ≈ 0.8). Exact values available in full report. Pre-post matched design; causal claims require future controlled study.*

**Citation:** Fine, A.D. (2025). Pathways to Sobriety: Interim Findings from the Empirical Data. Youth Justice Lab, School of Criminology & Criminal Justice, Arizona State University. August 14, 2025. Data collected via Journey.do platform. Pre-post matched design — findings reflect within-person change; causal claims cannot be made.