Outcomes and Experiences of Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge Graduates

The mission of Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge is to restore hope to people struggling with drug, alcohol, and other life-controlling addictions by addressing their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Wilder Research, in collaboration with Minnesota Adult & Teen Challenge (MnTC), conducted a follow-up survey of adults ages 21 and older who graduated from MnTC's long-term recovery program in 2024. Interviews were conducted with 87 graduates between November 2025 and February 2026 approximately one year after graduation. This was a 75% response rate among those who agreed to participate.

> I've been through 10 [programs] and nothing helped until Teen Challenge. Living with people for a year who have experienced some of the same things [has been helpful]. We all hold each other accountable... It was the people, the time, and the structured schedule that held you to be accountable and productive at all times of the day.

252	212	87	115
Total graduates	**Contact information available**	**Surveyed** (75% response rate)	**Agreed to be contacted**

The majority of survey respondents (68%) participated in the Minneapolis program, while 32% participated in programs in Rochester, Brainerd, or Duluth. Most respondents (67%) were male. The average (median) age was 37 years old.

Overall, graduates experienced improvements across nearly every domain examined. Recovery extended beyond abstinence to include healthier relationships, employment, housing stability, and improved well-being. Graduates consistently attributed these outcomes to the combination of spiritual faith, supportive relationships, caring staff, and the structured environment provided by MnTC. The findings also suggest that continued mental health and aftercare support remain important for sustaining long-term recovery.

Strong recovery outcomes among graduates

One year after graduation, most graduates had sustained their recovery, demonstrating lasting sobriety after completing the program.

83%
never returned to substance use

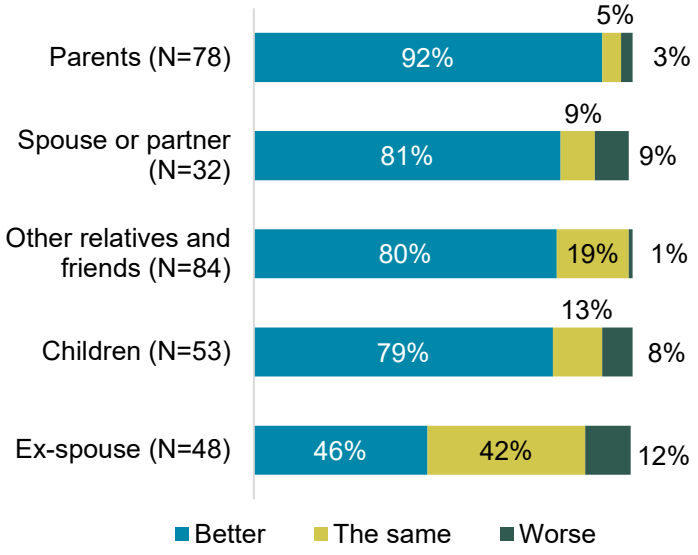
85%
met sobriety criteria

Recovery extended beyond sobriety

Recovery translated into greater stability across employment, housing, education, and relationships. At the time of the study:

- **81%** were employed and **88%** had improved work habits
- **49% lived independently** in an apartment or house they own or rent, which are not part of housing program

- **55%** paid housing expenses without outside assistance
- **More than 80%** had improved relationships with families, relatives, and friends:



Graduates identified contributors to recovery

Top contributors to maintaining sobriety include:

62%	Personal religious faith, relationship with Jesus Christ, and spiritual practice
55%	Connection to a recovery community, sober peers, fellowship, or structured recovery groups
38%	Relationships with and support from family members
31%	Ongoing connection with MnTC's staff and alumni or continued participation in its leadership program
27%	Having meaningful work, staying occupied, or purposeful activity that structures time and provides identity

Challenges and ongoing support needed

Although outcomes were overwhelmingly positive, some graduates continued to face challenges, such as:

38%
had ongoing mental health concerns

14%
had criminal justice involvement

Graduates viewed MnTC as a life-changing experience

Overall, graduates described MnTC as a life-changing experience and expressed high levels of satisfaction with the program.

99%	perceived their life improved
96%	said program taught a sober lifestyle
96%	said program showed them how to positively handle life situations
92%	perceived the program quality to be outstanding and very good

> My entire life has changed. I don't want to go back to the old way. I have a good family. I have a good girlfriend who cares about me. Everything is good. I have a good community around me now.

Mn Adult & Teen Challenge

WILDER