

Multiple Peer-Supported Addictions Recovery Housing Models. Peer Support - An Underutilized Resource

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INTRODUCTION

To meet the needs of individuals with addictions, services need to be long-term, holistic, affordable, trauma-informed, culturally sensitive, and promote positive social networks that model and reinforce a sober lifestyle. Recovery from addiction happens when therapeutic experiences remap the brain's response to previous compulsive behaviours. The recovery process often takes months and years while making significant changes to whole patterns of living. A significant challenge facing many individuals trying to abstain from substance use is finding a stable living environment that supports sustained recovery. Programs like Oxford House that have no set end date provide the stability, time, and peer support needed for an individual to develop new behaviour patterns that support long-term sober lifestyles.

Oxford House Foundation of Canada provides multiple housing models for Peer-Supported Addiction Recovery Housing, both before and after treatment, and now COVID-19 specific. We operate 28 Recovery Homes province-wide with five different models to serve the Addictions and Mental Health Sector. Pre-Treatment, Temporary Monitored, Entry Level, Indigenous (cultural) and Transitional Peer Supported Recovery Housing.

AIM:

To provide people in recovery from addictions, a supportive program and a safe home to achieve a productive, rewarding, clean and sober way of life.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Our Peer Supported Pre-Treatment Housing Model is one of the most unique models in Alberta. The homes provide a safe place for men and women to stay while preparing for treatment after detox. This model has bridged the gap in the continuum of care by filling the void for those on waitlists for treatment.

Our Entry-Level Homes provide a stable peer-supported environment for those who are chronically homeless or institutionalized. This home allows residents to grow at their own pace with multiple resources for employment and education. These residents usually move onto our Transitional homes once employment or education is acquired. These homes have been adapted to our Temporary Monitored homes which provide 10-14 days of isolation in response to our current pandemic in order for individuals to safely move forward in their recovery.

Our other 15 Peer-Supported Transitional Homes for men and women provide a safe, sober environment for people to gain the necessary life skills and level of accountability to move forward in their lives. Most of these residents are in school or unemployed. Some are focusing on recovery and participating in full-time aftercare programs. There is no time limit on how long a person resides in an Oxford House as long as they follow the guidelines and remain productive.

Oxford House has also developed a collaborative model to bring the province's first Peer and Culturally supported Indigenous Recovery homes to Calgary and Edmonton for men and women.

RESULTS:

Oxford House members surveyed in 2015 reported a number of factors that promoted their recovery success in the program. The peer support model was noted as highly effective because it provides an atmosphere of support with others who are experiencing a similar journey and who share the same goal of abstinence. Members are also able to recognize when someone is struggling and intervene with support before a person relapses. Members noted that being in an Oxford House provides fellowship, accountability, and opportunities to develop life skills for self-sufficiency in a safe and supportive environment.

CONCLUSIONS:

Oxford House is grounded in the theories of social learning, self-help and peer support. A safe and sober living environment along with social support are key components of Oxford House program. When compared to individuals who received regular aftercare (self-help groups, out-patient treatment), Oxford House members had lower relapse rates, higher self-efficacy, and higher monthly incomes 2 years after treatment.

KEYWORDS:

Peer-Supported Recovery Housing, Peer-Supported Pre-Treatment Housing, Peer-Supported Indigenous Recovery Housing

BIOGRAPHY:

Earl Thiessen has been with Oxford House for 11 years in various positions and assumed the role of Executive Director on July 1, 2019. The developer of numerous recovery housing models including Pre-treatment housing, Entry Level Housing and the Collaborative Peer Supported Indigenous Recovery Housing Model. From Homelessness to Executive Director, Earl is a strong advocate for Recovery, Homelessness and the Peer Supported Recovery Housing Model.