

Rebuilding Lives of Former Drug Dependents through Rehabilitation: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract:- This study explored the lived experiences of individuals recovering from drug addiction, focusing on key emotional, psychological, and social factors that contribute to both the onset of addiction and the recovery process. Conducted with ten former drug dependents, selected through purposive sampling, the research utilized a phenomenological method to provide a detailed investigation of the subjective experiences of drug addicts going through recovery. The study identified four key themes: (1) Emotional and Social Experiences that Fuel Addiction, (2) The Challenge of Accepting Addiction and Reaching a Turning Point, (3) Recovery as a Journey of Personal Transformation, (4) Restoring What Addiction Took Away. Each theme highlighted the emotional challenges and difficulties encountered in the participants' lived experiences. The findings reveal that emotional pain, unresolved trauma, stress, and social pressures are major triggers for addiction, with many individuals turning to substances as a means of coping. While addiction initially provides temporary relief, it ultimately leads to a harmful cycle of dependence, masking deeper issues. The study concludes by recommending that addiction treatment programs adopt a holistic approach addressing both the emotional and social factors driving addiction, emphasize early intervention and peer support, and provide comprehensive aftercare to ensure long-term success and sustained recovery.

Keywords:- *Addiction Recovery, Coping Mechanisms, Drug Addiction, Lived Experiences, Recovery Process.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Drug dependence and addiction emerged as significant social and public health challenges globally, including in the Philippines. Through the years, the Philippine government intensified its efforts to combat drug abuse through various measures, including law enforcement actions and community-based rehabilitation programs. However, despite these efforts, the problem persisted, with many individuals struggling to break free from the cycle of addiction and rebuild their lives. In 2022, the Treatment and Rehabilitation Admission Information System (TRAIS) received reports from seventy (70) different treatment and rehabilitation centers in the Philippines. Approximately sixty-two (62) of these rehabilitation facilities were residential, while the remainder operated as outpatient centers (Dangerous Drugs

Board, 2022). According to an article entitled, "Pros and cons of residential treatment vs. outpatient care," published by Clear Haven Recovery in 2023, residential or inpatient rehabilitation centers were highly organized and intense, making them most suitable for severe addiction cases. According to the 2022 Statistical Analysis conducted by the Dangerous Drugs Board of the Philippines, there were approximately 3,865 admissions documented from treatment and rehabilitation facilities in the country. Among these, 3,343 were new admissions, 79 were cases of readmission or relapse, and 443 were outpatient cases.

In the Philippine context, akin to several other Asian nations, rehabilitation became mandatory as it was viewed as a more compassionate alternative to the aggressive approach of the "war on drugs." Particularly during the peak of this campaign under the Duterte administration, law enforcement authorities carried out extensive door-to-door searches to coerce individuals involved in drug use to "surrender," essentially resulting in compelled apprehension, followed by enrollment in what was termed as "voluntary" rehabilitation programs (Lataire et al., 2022). Furthermore, Philippine drug courts consistently mandated individuals linked to drug use to undergo rehabilitation, either within government-run facilities or even within correctional facilities, with rehabilitation being regarded as a punitive measure under the national drug legislation (Lasco & Yarcia 2022).

Addiction continued to stand out as a significant public health issue, presenting distinctive challenges that necessitated intervention strategies extending beyond conventional individualized disease models. The perpetuation of addiction extended beyond individual factors and encompassed economic, social, and cultural influences. Indeed, research indicated that the disease model of addiction represented a systemic variable contributing to addiction crises (Volkow & Blanco, 2023). Therefore, adopting a systemic perspective in addiction intervention proved effective. This systemic approach enabled clinicians to grasp how relationships not only contributed to addictive behaviors but could also serve as avenues for addressing them (Mekonnen & Lee 2022).

Although it is negative consequences, addiction was increasing worldwide, and the Philippines was not exempt from it. As addiction rates rose, countries tried out new

methods and treatments to fight it (Sy et al., 2020). One popular option was the Therapeutic Community approach, which many countries preferred and considered an essential part of helping people recover from addiction. The Therapeutic Community approach provides inpatient care in a non-hospital environment (Ayhan et al., 2021). In a published article by Russell et al. in 2021, people who used drugs or PWUDs frequently encountered multifaceted health and social support requirements associated with substance abuse.

Understanding the factors influencing successful rehabilitation outcomes could significantly impact policy and practice. By identifying where current rehabilitation programs need to improve, policymakers and practitioners could make them work even more effectively and use resources more smartly (Law & MacDermid 2024). It, in turn, could lead to better support systems for individuals struggling with drug dependence and contribute to reducing the overall societal impact of substance abuse. Many people in prison had issues with drugs or alcohol. If they did not receive help, they might have continued committing crimes that were not related to drugs. When they were in prison, it was a chance to stop this cycle of drug use and crime (Earnshaw, 2020).

There were different kinds of drug treatment programs in jail, like group therapy or living in a particular community. However, it was not clear how well they worked (Söderström et al., 2024). Studies on substance misuse indicated that changing one's identity was essential for recovery. Theories typically focused on personal or social factors in this process; however, a framework encompassing agency and communion had proved helpful in understanding narratives in similar populations. In 2022, Rowlands and colleagues examined narratives of addiction recovery, highlighting the conflicts between these narratives and the mixed emotions experienced by the individuals recounting them.

Drug rehabilitation was a common and widespread problem affecting individuals, families, and communities around the world. It has influenced increased physical health significantly, leading to social, economic, and psychological consequences. This case study aimed to contribute to the broader knowledge of addiction recovery and rehabilitation (Boroumandfar et al., 2020). By examining the experiences of drug dependents within the unique socio-cultural context of the Philippines, the research could generate insights that might have been relevant beyond the specific setting studied. It could inform the development of more culturally sensitive and effective interventions in the Philippines and other similar contexts globally (Yusay, 2024).

By focusing on a case study approach within the Philippine setting, the researchers sought to understand the challenges and opportunities in the rehabilitation process and identify strategies for improvement. In conclusion, this study on rebuilding the lives of drug dependents through rehabilitation in the Philippine setting was motivated by the need to address a pressing social issue, contribute to the

advancement of knowledge in the field of addiction recovery, and inform evidence-based policy and practice (Leochico et al., 2020).

The purpose of the research project "Rebuilding Lives of Drug Dependents Through Rehabilitation: A Phenomenological Study" was to investigate and comprehend the real-life experiences of those who had received drug dependence rehabilitation. The goal of phenomenological research was to investigate the substance of human experiences by concentrating on how people understood and interpreted their surroundings. It intended to close a few important gaps in the body of knowledge about drug recovery. There was still a big vacuum in the qualitative investigation of people's actual experiences during the rehabilitation process, even when earlier research had concentrated on clinical interventions or quantitative outcomes. This study used a phenomenological method to provide a detailed investigation of the subjective experiences of drug addicts going through recovery. The goal was to shed light on the obstacles that these patients faced as well as the variables that contributed to their success.

While rehabilitation programs existed, comprehensive research was lacking to evaluate their efficacy and identify best practices. By conducting a detailed study, this research could shed light on the factors contributing to successful rehabilitation outcomes and barriers hindering progress. Moreover, although there have been several studies on rebuilding the lives of drug dependents through rehabilitation, only a few have focused on the narratives of experiences. Knowledge and information went hand-in-hand. It means that having prior knowledge about a topic allows people to understand it better. Thus, the need for expertise formed in this study played an essential role in society, given the fact that the world, more specifically in this case, the Philippines, was still time-challenged by drug abuse. Therefore, there was no denying that this study would provide a new perspective in understanding how drug dependents went through rebuilding their lives through rehabilitation.

II. METHODS

This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of former drug dependents in Misamis Occidental, Philippines, focusing on their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The research followed a descriptive design, aiming to document and analyze the phenomena. Ten participants were selected through purposive sampling, with criteria including being former drug dependents, at least three years out of rehab, and willing to participate. Data was collected through a validated questionnaire and analyzed using Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological reduction method, which includes steps like bracketing, horizontalization, and clustering themes. Ethical standards were strictly followed, ensuring confidentiality and participant consent. The study received approval from the Department of Criminology and adhered to ethical guidelines throughout the process.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Emotional and Social Experiences that Fuel Addiction

The emotional and social experiences that fuel addiction are complex and multifaceted, often rooted in a combination of personal struggles, social pressures, and unresolved trauma. This theme highlights that emotional pain, stress, and social pressures are key triggers for addiction, with substances often used as a way to cope with difficult feelings or to fit in. What begins as a temporary escape can turn into a harmful, ongoing struggle.

Participants strongly emphasize how emotional and social factors serve as significant triggers for addiction. Participants cited stress and emotional pain as primary reasons for initially turning to substances.

- *"For me, it started as a way to cope with stress and emotional pain. I think many people turn to drugs because they want to numb their feelings or escape from problems they feel they cannot solve." (P1)*
- *"It started as a way to escape. I grew up in a tough environment, and I used drugs to numb the pain of trauma and personal loss." (P4)*
- *"I started using to deal with stress and to numb the emotional pain. I was going through a lot of personal issues, work pressure, a broken marriage, and family problems, and drugs became my escape." (P5)*
- *"For me, it was all about trying to escape from my emotions. I did not grow up in an easy environment, and I found myself in a lot of unhealthy situations as an adult. I think many people use drugs because they are looking for relief, for a way to deal with trauma, stress, or anxiety that feels too overwhelming to handle." (P6)*
- *"For me, it started as a way to handle the overwhelming stress of life. I was always trying to stay ahead at work and keep up appearances, and drugs helped me feel like I could manage it all." (P7)*
- *"My addiction started as a way to cope with the stress of my high-pressure job. I began using drugs to unwind after work and manage my anxiety, but over time, it became an escape from everything in my life." (P10)*

The roots of addiction are often deeply connected to personal struggles, emotional pain, and social pressures. Many individuals turn to illicit substances as a way to cope with overwhelming emotions, such as stress, anxiety, or feelings of loss (Jones 2024). Initially, drug use may offer a temporary escape or numbness from these negative feelings, but over time, this can lead to a harmful cycle of dependence (Martini et al., 2022). The emotional need for relief from pain or discomfort often becomes a primary reason people begin using drugs, setting the stage for a gradual and potentially lifelong struggle with addiction (Koob et al., 2023).

Additionally, unresolved trauma and difficult life experiences frequently play a significant role in addiction. For individuals who have faced personal loss, childhood abuse, or challenging social environments, drugs can become a way to block out or suppress painful memories

and emotions (Fuchshuber & Unterrainer, 2020). This theme underscores how deeply personal histories, especially those marked by trauma or hardship, can influence the decision to turn to substances as a coping mechanism. The emotional relief provided by drugs may seem like a solution at first, but it often masks deeper issues that need to be addressed through healthier means (Matheson et al., 2020).

Social pressures also contribute to addiction, particularly in environments where there is a strong emphasis on fitting in, maintaining appearances, or managing high levels of stress. Individuals may begin using drugs to cope with work pressures, relationship issues, or the need to conform to social expectations (Üngüren & Tekin, 2023). In such cases, addiction is not just a personal struggle but also influenced by the broader social context, where external pressures exacerbate emotional challenges. Ultimately, the combination of emotional pain, unresolved trauma, and social pressures can create a perfect storm, leading individuals to seek relief from substances that only deepen their struggles over time (Begun et al., 2020).

B. The Challenge of Accepting Addiction and Reaching a Turning Point

The emotional and psychological journey that individuals face as they come to terms with their addiction. For many, the hardest part of their recovery is accepting that they have a problem. Initially, denial plays a significant role, as individuals often make excuses, downplay the severity of their behavior, or compare themselves to others in an attempt to avoid confronting the truth. They may convince themselves that they can quit anytime or that their addiction is not as severe as someone else's, which prevents them from acknowledging the full extent of their issues. This rationalization creates a barrier to acceptance, as addiction is often accompanied by feelings of shame, guilt, and fear, making it difficult to face head-on.

- *"Acceptance came slowly. It was not easy. There were many excuses at first, telling myself I was not as bad as others or that I could stop at any time. However, when I hit rock bottom, lost my job, and got into trouble with the law, that is when I had to face the truth. It was painful, but it also gave me a chance to change." (P1)*
- *"It took me a while to admit it to myself. For years, I denied it, telling myself I was not as bad as others or that I could quit anytime I wanted. However, when my behaviour started impacting my family and my health, I could not pretend anymore. I had to come face to face with the fact that I was addicted, and that was probably the hardest part of my journey." (P2)*
- *"It was a hard pill to swallow. I think the moment I realized I was an addict was when I almost lost my job. I had no choice but to confront the fact that I could not control my habits. I was not just using it occasionally anymore; it had become something that defined me. Accepting that was a turning point. It hurt, but it also freed me up to make changes." (P3)*
- *"It took me a long time to admit I had a problem. I would justify it by saying things like, 'I can quit anytime' or 'It is not that bad.' However, one day, I realized I was lying*

to myself. The moment of clarity came when I saw how my addiction was destroying my family. That is when I had to face the truth and accept that I was an addict." (P4)

- "It took a long time to admit it to myself. I have always convinced myself I was not as bad as others or that I could quit when I wanted. However, when I realized I had lost everything: my marriage, my self-respect, even my job, that is when it hit me. I was at a crossroads, and I had to decide whether to keep going down the same path or face the truth." (P5)
- "I had much pride, and it was hard to admit to myself that I was an addict. I spent so many years lying to myself and others about how bad it was. But when I found myself in a dangerous situation, something that could've cost me my life, that is when I knew I had to face the truth. It was a wake-up call. I could not ignore it anymore. Accepting it did not happen overnight, but it was the first step to getting better." (P6)
- "Accepting that I was an addict was probably one of the hardest parts. I have spent years telling myself I could quit whenever I wanted, but the reality hit when I found myself in situations that could have ruined everything. I had to accept that I was out of control and that I needed help. I think the moment I realized I could not manage it on my own, that was when I knew I had to face the truth." (P7)
- "I accepted the fact that I was an addict when I realized I could not resist the urge to take drugs anymore." (P8)
- "The turning point for me came when my wife and children encouraged me to seek rehabilitation. They convinced me it was for my well-being and the good of our family. I finally accepted that I was an addict when I realized that even when I was not working, my body still craved the drugs with no real reason or purpose." (P9)
- "My turning point came when my older brother, who had seen how far I had fallen, convinced me to seek help. He helped me find a rehab program, and that is when I started to realize that recovery was possible if I was willing to put in the effort. Overcoming my addiction was not just about quitting drugs; it was about changing my mindset and learning to cope with life in healthier ways." (P10)

The struggle to accept addiction is often one of the most difficult parts of the recovery process. Many individuals initially resist acknowledging the severity of their addiction, either by making excuses or minimizing their behavior (Snoek et al., 2021). This denial can be a defense mechanism, as accepting addiction often requires confronting painful truths about oneself and one's life. For some, comparing their situation to others who appear to be "worse off" can further reinforce the idea that their struggles are not serious (Zafar & Farhan, 2020). However, this denial can only last so long before the consequences of addiction become undeniable. It is often at a breaking point, such as the loss of relationships, employment, or physical health, that the reality of addiction hits hard, forcing individuals to face the truth. This moment of clarity, when the full weight of the situation is realized, serves as a crucial turning point in many people's recovery journeys (Green, 2021).

Once individuals reach this turning point, they often become motivated to seek help and make changes. Overcoming addiction is not an easy or quick process, but this moment of realization is what often propels people into action (Marcus & Pekmezi, 2024). For some, this might mean seeking professional help through therapy, counseling, or rehabilitation programs. It could also involve finding support in recovery communities, where individuals can share their experiences and draw strength from others who understand their struggles (Hartley & Tarvydas, 2022). In many cases, people also need to rebuild relationships, re-establish their careers, and work on their physical and mental health, all of which require time, effort, and commitment. Recovery is a gradual process, and overcoming addiction involves developing new coping strategies, addressing the root causes of the addiction, and learning healthier ways to deal with stress and emotions (Gale et al., 2023).

The process of overcoming addiction is deeply personal, and the strategies people use to break free from dependency vary. For some, a structured treatment program is essential, while others might find healing through self-reflection, spiritual practices, or peer support (Patton et al., 2022). Regardless of the approach, what is common is the recognition that change is necessary. The turning point often catalyzes this change, and with determination and the right support, many individuals are able to overcome their addiction and begin rebuilding their lives (Hayes et al., 2020).

C. Recovery as a Journey of Personal Transformation

Recovery from addiction is not a quick fix but a multifaceted journey that requires deep personal growth and transformation. It involves more than just physical detoxification; it is a holistic process that addresses the emotional, psychological, and behavioral aspects of an individual's life. Many individuals who have gone through recovery describe it as a gradual evolution, where they not only stop engaging in addictive behaviors but also work on rebuilding their sense of self, discovering new coping mechanisms, and making meaningful changes to their lives.

- "It was a combination of detox, therapy, and support from people who understood. I also joined a 12-step program, and for me, that made a big difference." (P1)
- "It was not easy, but I started by going to a rehab facility. The first few days were brutal, and I thought I would not make it. However, therapy, especially cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), helped me get to the root of my addiction." (P2)
- "It was not easy at all. I started by attending a rehab center, where they helped me through the physical withdrawal process. However, the real work came afterward: going to therapy, attending support meetings, and learning how to live without drugs." (P3)
- "I went through a long detox period, which was physically hard, but the real recovery work happened afterward." (P4)

- *"Therapy was key. Both group and individual therapy sessions helped me work through the root causes of my addiction." (P5)*
- *"The therapy was incredibly helpful. One-on-one sessions helped me unpack a lot of unresolved emotional issues from my past. Group therapy was just as important because it showed me that I was not alone in my struggles. Hearing others talk about their battles made me realize that addiction is something people deal with together, not in isolation." (P6)*
- *"It was a long process. I checked into a rehab facility and went through detox. That was physically tough, but what really took time was rebuilding my life mentally and emotionally. I went through therapy and participated in group meetings, but what helped me most was learning how to handle stress and anxiety without turning to drugs." (P7)*
- *"Overcoming my addiction happened through gaining self-discipline and following the guidance I received inside the rehab. The activities that helped me recover were meditation, which gave me time to focus on my well-being, and playing games, which allowed me to build communication skills with others who shared similar goals." (P8)*
- *"The activities that helped me recover most were talking to people, interacting with others, and discussing life and personal problems to find alternative solutions that did not involve drugs." (P9)*
- *"The rehab center helped a lot, especially the group therapy, which made me feel less isolated. Meditation and exercise were crucial for clearing my mind." (P10)*

Recovery is often described as a long and multifaceted journey where individuals undergo significant personal transformation. For many, it involves not only physical detoxification but also a deep emotional and psychological process that addresses the root causes of addiction (Kerr et al., 2020). Therapy, both individual and group-based, plays a pivotal role in this transformation. Through counseling, individuals are able to explore and confront the underlying issues that may have contributed to their addiction, such as trauma, anger, or depression (Chouliara et al., 2020). These issues, if left unaddressed, can perpetuate destructive patterns of behavior, and therapy provides a safe space for healing. In rehabilitation centers, participants often engage in a variety of therapeutic practices, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness, yoga, and creative outlets such as art or writing, all of which help them develop healthier coping mechanisms and build new, more positive ways of thinking and acting (Luttenberger et al., 2022).

The process of personal transformation during recovery is not instant, and rebuilding a life free from addiction requires time, patience, and commitment. As individuals go through rehabilitation, they begin to recognize the importance of changing long-standing habits and patterns of behavior that fuelled their substance use (Watkins et al., 2021). Many participants speak of slowly regaining their sense of self-worth and confidence through therapy and personal growth activities. Rebuilding self-esteem, setting new goals, and learning to live in alignment

with these new values are central aspects of the recovery process (Ali, 2023). Support groups, where individuals can share their struggles and successes, also play a key role in fostering a sense of community and belonging, providing emotional support that is essential for long-term success (Lehardy & Fowers, 2020).

Participants in rehabilitation centers often describe a transformative experience that is deeply personal and challenging but ultimately empowering. Many report that their time in rehab helped them confront and heal from past traumas, rediscover their inner strength, and develop a renewed sense of purpose (Sowers, 2022). Through the combination of therapy, support groups, and personal reflection, they are able to break free from the cycle of addiction and make lasting changes in their lives (Miller, 2020). The journey toward being drug-free is not without its difficulties, but it is also an opportunity for individuals to reconnect with themselves and develop a healthier, more fulfilling life. It is this ongoing process of self-discovery and growth that often leads participants to become drug-free and stay committed to their recovery (Kin, 2021).

D. Restoring What Addiction Took Away

The transformative power of peer support in the recovery process and the sense of purpose that emerges when individuals who have overcome addiction help others who are still struggling. During active addiction, many individuals experience isolation, feeling disconnected from friends, family, and society. They may feel alone in their struggles, misunderstood, or abandoned. However, once in recovery, individuals often find solace and a renewed sense of belonging through group therapy, support groups, and recovery communities. These spaces provide a safe environment where people can share their experiences, express their feelings, and receive encouragement from others who understand their challenges.

- *"I think the best way I can help is by sharing my story, letting people know that recovery is possible, even when it seems impossible." (P1)*
- *"I think one of the best ways I can help is by being a real example of recovery. I know how hard it is, so I try to show people that it is possible to rebuild your life." (P2)*
- *"I try to be a source of encouragement for anyone who is struggling. I know it is hard, but it is also possible to make it through." (P3)*
- *"I try to be a mentor to women who are just starting their recovery journey. I share my story with them, showing them that change is possible no matter how long they have been struggling." (P4)*
- *"I think the best way I can help is by being real with people about my journey. I share what worked for me, but I also remind them that recovery is unique for each person." (P5)*
- *"I think the most important thing I can do is share my story. I try to be open about my experiences so others know that recovery is possible, even when it seems impossible." (P6)*

- *"I try to be an example of how recovery is possible. I mentor a few men who are in early recovery, and I make sure they know I am always here to talk." (P7)*
- *"Now, I try to help people who are struggling with addiction by talking to them about why they use drugs and offering advice on how to avoid becoming dependent." (P8)*
- *"I try to help others struggling with addiction by giving them advice on how to control their urges and redirect their attention to other things. I also encourage them not to isolate themselves from the community." (P9)*
- *"I try to help others by sharing my story and encouraging them to seek help, whether through therapy, support groups, or talking to someone they trust. There is no shame in asking for help. It is often the first step toward turning things around." (P10)*

Many participants in rehabilitation centers shared that during their addiction, they often felt isolated, disconnected from others, and trapped in their struggles. However, as they entered recovery, they found solace and a sense of community within group therapy sessions and support groups (Ingram et al., 2020). These spaces allowed them to share their stories, connect with others facing similar challenges, and receive encouragement from people who truly understood their experiences. The peer support they received became a crucial aspect of their healing, as it helped them rebuild a sense of belonging and connection that addiction had previously stripped away (Arao & Clemens, 2023). The shared experiences fostered empathy, understanding, and emotional support, which are essential for overcoming the sense of isolation that often accompanies addiction (Yilmazer & Çınaroğlu, 2024).

Once in recovery, many individuals expressed a deep desire to "give back" by helping others who were still struggling with addiction. It often took the form of mentoring, volunteering in support groups, or sharing their personal stories of recovery with others (Webb, 2022). By giving back, they not only helped others but also reinforced their own healing process. Helping others navigate the challenges of addiction recovery provided them with a renewed sense of purpose and fulfillment, which is essential for long-term sobriety (Kohrt et al., 2020). It also allowed them to confront and process their own recovery in a meaningful way. Participants felt empowered when they were able to offer support to others, as it helped them internalize their own growth and recovery journey. This reciprocal process of helping and being helped solidified their commitment to maintaining sobriety and staying connected to the recovery community (Reid et al., 2020).

In rehabilitation centers, participants often report that their experiences of giving back played a pivotal role in their transformation from addiction to sobriety. By supporting others, they gained a renewed sense of hope and purpose, which was crucial for their continued healing (Snoek et al., 2021). The act of helping others who were still in the grips of addiction reinforced the lessons learned during their own recovery process, and the connections made with others in recovery provided ongoing emotional support (Covington et

al., 2022). It was through these meaningful relationships and the opportunity to give back that many participants found the strength to stay sober and continue their journey of personal growth. In this way, the act of helping others was not only a way to support the recovery community but also an essential component of their own recovery and healing (Witkiewitz et al., 2020).

IV. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that emotional pain, unresolved trauma, and social pressures are significant factors in triggering addiction, as individuals often resort to substances to cope with overwhelming emotions, creating a destructive cycle that masks deeper issues needing attention. The journey to accepting addiction is frequently marked by denial, but a crisis moment can serve as a catalyst for individuals to confront their struggles. Once this turning point is reached, seeking help and engaging in recovery becomes essential for rebuilding lives and developing healthier coping mechanisms. Recovery is a challenging yet transformative process that requires both physical and emotional healing. Through therapy and support, individuals can address underlying issues, rebuild self-esteem, and achieve lasting personal growth and a drug-free life. Peer support plays a vital role in recovery, helping individuals find connection, purpose, and motivation; by sharing experiences and supporting others, those in recovery not only aid in others' healing but also strengthen their own commitment to sobriety and long-term well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that addiction recovery programs address the underlying emotional and social factors contributing to substance use by providing support for trauma and stress management. These programs should foster a supportive environment that reduces social pressures and promotes healthy coping strategies to prevent relapse and encourage long-term recovery. Early interventions to address denial and help individuals recognize the severity of their addiction before a crisis occurs are also essential, along with comprehensive support systems like counseling and coping strategy development to help individuals navigate recovery more effectively. Furthermore, recovery programs should include therapeutic support, such as individual counseling and group therapy, to address emotional and psychological issues, while promoting personal growth, goal-setting, and rebuilding self-esteem to enhance sustained recovery. Peer support systems, including group therapy and mentoring, should be integrated into these programs to foster connection and shared purpose, with individuals encouraged to give back by helping others, strengthening their commitment to sobriety. Finally, future research should explore the long-term impact of peer support in recovery, particularly the role of mentoring and shared experiences in sustained sobriety, and examine the effectiveness of various support groups and therapy models in addressing the emotional and psychological needs of individuals in recovery.

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➤ *Competing Interests Statement*

The authors declare no competing financial, professional, or personal interests.

➤ *Consent for Publication*

The authors declare that they consented to the publication of this study.

➤ *Authors' Contributions*

All the authors took part in literature review, analysis, and manuscript writing equally.

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