Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.
What works in recovery? Alcohol and other drug professionals lived experiences of addiction, treatment and recovery in New Zealand.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of
Master
of
Social Work

at Massey University, Manawatū, New Zealand.

Rachel Victoria Jowett

2018
Abstract

The New Zealand Government’s health surveys consistently identify that alcohol and other drug (AOD) addiction is an issue for New Zealanders. However, there is a lack of qualitative research on the lived experiences of people who have previously or currently experience AOD addiction in New Zealand. This research provides insight into the factors that contribute to, and create barriers to, successful AOD addiction recovery. The qualitative method of constructivism was the approach used to conduct the research. Eight participants took part in semi-structured interviews, sharing their stories in a narrative style and recounting experiences from the time their addictions began, their entry into AOD addiction recovery and their entry into the AOD workforce. Interview transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis, themes were identified that highlighted what contributed to participant’s successful AOD addiction recovery and what created barriers to AOD addiction recovery. Nine themes emerged through the data analysis process these were: stigma; defining your own recovery; reconstruction of the self; the role of social learning; opportunities for career progression; specific populations including youth, people with co-existing mental health and AOD addiction issues, women, and families; strengths and limitations of the health, social service and AOD workforce; addiction and the law; and barriers to accessing AOD support services. A consistent finding across these nine themes was that the barriers to AOD addiction recovery in New Zealand experienced by the research participants were systemic, and preventable. The recommendations of this thesis are that the barriers to recovery, and contributors to successful recovery identified in this research are addressed; in particular the themes of stigma and systemic barriers to wellbeing.
Acknowledgements

Being successful in my studies over the past five years would not have been possible without the support of my family, so thank you to my Mum, Dad and little sister.

Thank you to my beautiful daughter Connie who is six years old at the time of writing this, Connie you have been raised by a Mum who has studied and worked since you were twelve months old. It is my hope that I have role modelled to you that you can achieve anything even when the odds are against you, and that this will hold you in good stead to achieve all of your dreams as you grow up. The world is your oyster little one, you can do anything you set your mind to.

Thank you to my academic supervisors Ms. Lareen Cooper and Dr Michael Dale. Supervision with you both, always helped to remind me of my passion for this research and I value the way you both freely shared your experiences, knowledge and wisdom.

Thank you to my employer Oasis Network who provided me with study days throughout these two years of study.

Lastly and most importantly, thank you to my participants. Words cannot express what an honour it was to be trusted with your stories. These stories have inspired and motivated me as a person who is also in AOD addiction recovery and as an AOD professional. It is my hope that your shared experiences, strength and knowledge will contribute to positive changes in our AOD and social service sector, making it easier for others to enter AOD addiction recovery.
# Table of contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................. i

Acknowledgements ................................................................................................. ii

Chapter One: Introduction ...................................................................................... 1

- Research questions ............................................................................................. 2
- Rationale ............................................................................................................... 3
- Thesis structure ................................................................................................... 3
- The researchers connection to the research ....................................................... 5
- Glossary of terms ............................................................................................... 7

Background and Context ......................................................................................... 13

- An international history of AOD use ................................................................. 13
- New Zealand’s history with AOD use ................................................................. 15
- An international estimation of the harms and prevalence of AOD use ....... 18
- New Zealand’s estimation of the harms and prevalence of AOD use ......... 19
- Defining addiction ............................................................................................. 20

Specific populations ............................................................................................... 24

- Addiction and Māori ......................................................................................... 25
- Addiction and youth ......................................................................................... 26
- Addiction and mental health ............................................................................. 28
- Addiction and women ....................................................................................... 29
- Addiction and families ..................................................................................... 30

Chapter summary .................................................................................................. 31

Chapter Two: Literature review ............................................................................ 33
Methods for the literature review ...................................................... 34
Perspectives on addiction ..................................................................... 34
Addiction theory and practice .............................................................. 35
The medical model ............................................................................ 39
Addiction as a sociological issue ......................................................... 41
Policy responses .................................................................................. 43
The Criminal Justice System ................................................................. 46
Stigma and AOD addiction ................................................................. 48
Defining stigma ................................................................................... 49
The negative consequences of stigma on people with AOD addictions .............................................................. 49
Challenging stigma ............................................................................. 53
The AOD workforce ............................................................................. 54
An international perspective of the AOD workforce ................................ 55
An international perspective of the peer workforce ............................. 56
The AOD workforce in New Zealand ................................................... 59
The peer workforce in New Zealand .................................................... 61
Chapter summary ................................................................................. 63

**Chapter Three: Methodology and methods** ........................................ 65
Theoretical framework ......................................................................... 65
Constructivism ...................................................................................... 67
Insider research .................................................................................. 70
Participant recruitment ........................................................................ 72
Interview methods ............................................................................... 73
Data analysis ......................................................................................... 74
Chapter Four: Lived experience of AOD addiction, treatment and recovery

Stigma as a barrier to all stages of recovery: Active addiction, early recovery, and recovery maintenance

Stigma and addiction in early recovery

Intra-group stigma

Stigma in the workplace

Internalised stigma

Defining your own recovery

Reconstruction of the self

The redemptive self

The fragmented self

Negative social learning

Positive social learning

Opportunities for career progression

As an exit from AOD addiction

To continue personal growth

To utilise and contribute valuable knowledge and skills
The unique contributors, and barriers to, AOD addiction recovery for specific populations..........................................................106

Factors influencing youth and AOD addiction recovery.........................106

Co-existing mental health and addictions...............................................110

Women and addiction...........................................................................111

Childhood, families and personal relationships.....................................117

Chapter Five: AOD professionals experiences of AOD addiction, treatment and recovery.................................................................123

Contributors and barriers to AOD addiction recovery within health, AOD and social services.................................................................123

Welfare systems.....................................................................................124

Community based social services.........................................................125

The AOD sector.....................................................................................127

Lived experience practitioners: Tangata matua a-wheako......................129

The medical sector................................................................................133

Residential treatment...........................................................................134

Opioid Substitution Treatment...............................................................135

Barriers to AOD addiction recovery created by legal systems..............139

New Zealand’s Criminal Justice System...............................................139

The decriminalisation of all illicit substances in New Zealand..............142

Barriers to accessing AOD support services.........................................143

Lack of adequate funding....................................................................144

Current funding models.......................................................................146

Philosophical approaches to recovery..................................................147

Chapter summary: What works in AOD addiction recovery?.............149
Barriers to recovery.................................................................149
Contributors to recovery.........................................................153

Chapter Six: Discussion..........................................................156

Stigma, the influence of decriminalisation, and self-recovery..............157
The role of decriminalisation in negating stigma and supporting AOD
addiction recovery.................................................................160
Defining your own AOD addiction recovery and reconstructing yourself
contribute to success in AOD addiction recovery..........................162
Existing institutional systems and their impact on AOD addiction recovery.....163
The barriers to AOD addiction recovery created by the Criminal Justice
System.....................................................................................164
The strengths and limitations of the wider social service, health and AOD
sector.........................................................................................165
Lived experience workforce as a contributor to AOD addiction
recovery......................................................................................167
Current models within Opioid Substitution Treatment do not adequately
support AOD addiction recovery ..............................................168
Residential treatment contributes to successful AOD addiction
recovery......................................................................................168
Current funding models and shortages are preventing service delivery to
those trying to achieve AOD addiction recovery..........................169
Social support and social learning as a contributor to successful AOD addiction
recovery......................................................................................171
Families as a source of recovery capital..........................................171
The role of social learning in AOD addiction recovery......................172
The lack of AOD education and health navigation information for youth..............................................................173
Gendered barriers to recovery..............................................................174
Chapter Summary............................................................................176
Chapter Seven: Recommendations....................................................177
Review of the research aims..............................................................177
Recommendations............................................................................178
   The implementation of person-led recovery....................................178
   A workforce that is adequately trained and resourced....................179
   Wider societal and institutional systems that support AOD addiction recovery.............................................................180
Strengths and limitations of the research..........................................182
Concluding comments......................................................................183
Reference List................................................................................185
Appendices....................................................................................208
Appendix A: Ethics approval letter...................................................208
Appendix B: Cultural supervision contract.......................................209
Appendix C: Advertisement for participants......................................212
Appendix D: Email request for advertisement placement.................213
Appendix E: Participant information sheet........................................214
Appendix F: Participant consent form..............................................221
Appendix G: Interview schedule......................................................222