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**Sober Houses: The Role of the Environment in Aiding Recovery From  
Addiction**

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## **Abstract**

There is a need for a deeper understanding of the role that the environment plays in an individual's addiction to substances and in aiding recovery from addiction. The aim of the present study is to investigate the impacts the environment has on individual attempts at recovering from substance addiction, by learning from residents of sober-houses. Sober-houses are substance-free living environments for persons attempting to abstain from alcohol or drugs. Qualitative methodologies were employed, with an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach, to take into account the subjective individual differences between residents. A sample of five participants was drawn from residents of a sober-house to participate in semi-structured interviews. The results showed that the most significant impacts on addiction recovery occur with the domain of the social and physical environments. Participants were shown to be able to benefit from physically distancing themselves from destructive environments, and that positive social influences play important roles in the promotion of a sober life-style.

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## Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	iii
Contents .....	iv
List of Abbreviations.....	viii
Introduction .....	1
Sober-Houses.....	1
Confrontation.....	5
Environment .....	6
Environment’s Relationship to Substance-Seeking Behaviour .....	10
Associative learning processes .....	11
Classical conditioning .....	11
Operant conditioning.....	11
Cognitive processing model of addiction.....	13
Research Question .....	14
Method .....	15
Participants .....	15
Materials .....	17
Procedure .....	17
Analysis .....	18
Results and Discussion.....	21
Overview of the Participant Responses .....	21
The Role of the Environment in Addiction and Recovery .....	22

Biological environment .....	23
Social and physical environments .....	24
Super-Ordinate Themes .....	25
Only addicts understand .....	25
The impact of residents with different addictions .....	30
Stages of recovery .....	30
Differences in withdrawal .....	32
Finding support and hope .....	34
Resident group dynamics .....	36
Comparisons from previous groups .....	37
Working well together .....	37
Sharing a space with others .....	38
You can't choose your house-mates .....	38
Incoming residents .....	41
Too much time together .....	42
Support from house-mates .....	44
Social influences .....	46
Nigel .....	46
Bradley .....	49
Cindy .....	50
Paula .....	50
Emily .....	51
Identity and world view .....	52
Identity .....	52
Real world .....	54
Peripheral issues .....	58
Bradley .....	58

Nigel.....	60
Cindy.....	61
Emily.....	62
Paula.....	63
Learning.....	65
Learning life-skills .....	65
Self-understanding .....	67
Environments that foster learning .....	69
Structure.....	71
Levels of functioning .....	71
Keeping busy and fighting boredom.....	74
Thoughts on leaving .....	76
Misplaced self-assurance .....	76
Can't do it out there.....	76
Frightened about leaving.....	77
Plans for after stay.....	78
Long road ahead.....	81
Hard to go back .....	82
Reasons for sober environment .....	84
Case against sober-house philosophy .....	84
Case for sober-houses .....	85
Recommendations for Models of Sober-Communities .....	88
Policies for detoxing .....	88
Different addictions and different stages.....	91
Longer stay .....	92
After-stay care maintenance, outpatient treatment and support groups .....	93
Associative learning processes .....	94

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research .....	95
Conclusion .....	96
Reflexive Note .....	98
References .....	101
Appendix A .....	107
Appendix B .....	111
Appendix C .....	113
Appendix D .....	114
Appendix E .....	115
Appendix F .....	116
Appendix G .....	119
Appendix H .....	120

## List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
APA	American Psychological Association
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
IOP	Intensive Outpatient Programme
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
MDMA	Methylenedioxy-methylamphetamine
NA	Narcotics Anonymous
NZD	New Zealand Dollar