



Desert Spirit Village – Graduate Survey

Executive Summary

November 2013

Program Description

The Desert Spirit village is a therapeutic-rehabilitative community, the first of its kind in the southern region, designed for young and adult drug addicts and alcoholics. Based on the approach of the therapeutic community, participants voluntarily participate in therapy. Residency at Desert Spirit is 12 months, 6 of which involve therapy and 6 months used to prepare them for life and re-integration in the community. The daily agenda includes various therapies, acquisition and completion of education, acquisition of life skills and competencies, vocational training and job experience in preparation for the future.

The Research Goal

The purpose of the research is to examine the quality of the rehabilitation process and to follow the graduates' status and level of integration in the community several months after completion of therapy at Desert Spirit Village.

Methodology

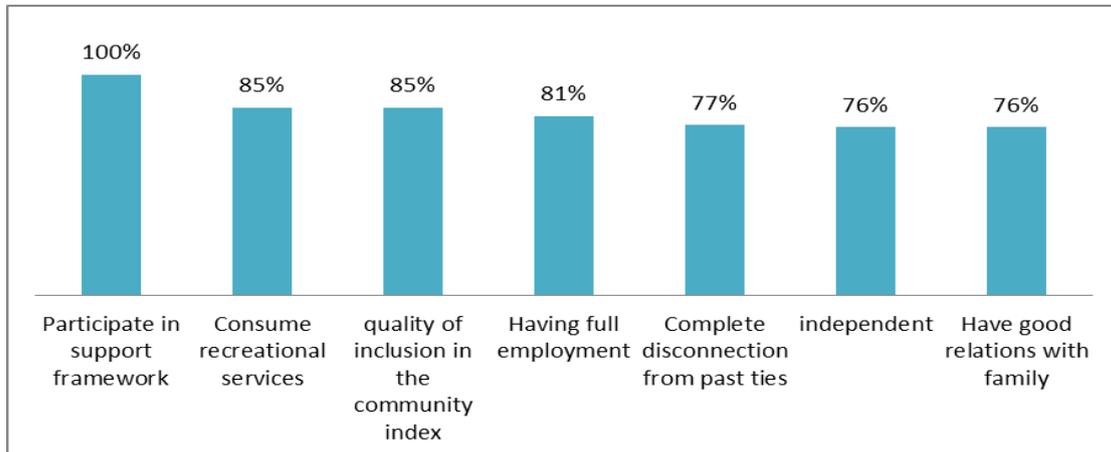
For the purpose of this research, questionnaires were given to 26 graduates of the village who completed the program in its first two years. The questionnaire was largely based on literature review and tools developed for other rehabilitation villages, with adaptations to the context of Desert Spirit. Graduates were asked about their attitude towards the program as well as their present lifestyle and re-integration into the community. Some of the parameters examined were compared to those that refer to graduates of other rehabilitation programs.

Main Findings

- The program was found to be effective in rehabilitation from drugs and other addictive substances. All graduates surveyed claimed that they have not returned to using drugs and do not drink alcohol or take any other chemicals.
- A comparison of Desert Spirit graduates to other rehabilitation programs revealed that village graduates perform better in psychological parameters: they rank higher in self-control (1.65 vs. 1.38 in the comparison group), self-esteem (1.84 vs. 1.68 in the comparison group) and coping with difficulties (2.95 vs. 2.4 in the comparison group).

- A review of the lifestyle adopted by graduates in the community revealed that 85% of them incorporated back into the community in a manner that increased their chances of long-term recovery. For example, 100% of graduates entered community support and therapy programs, 81% work full-time and 12% work part-time or temp. Graduates use recreational services and are largely independent of others.

Percentage of graduates leading constructive lives and integrated in the community (N=26)



- Almost half of the graduates currently live in a hostel, and slightly more than half claim that they know today how to manage in the world, with the main difficulty being economic (e.g. coping with the banks)
- The study revealed that a large majority of graduates uses on a daily basis the tools and skills they acquired during their stay at the village.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The program has been found to be effective for participants who successfully completed it. All of the graduates who participated in the study appear to have remained clean of drugs and other additive substances. At the same time, the number of program graduates is significantly lower than the number that entered. The dropout rate needs to be lowered. Greater emphasis should be placed on managing in real-life, which was found to be weak compared to other areas that were reviewed (rehab and self-empowerment), particularly financial management.