

Dcourier.com: "RECOVERY CITY: One size does not fit all - different philosophies seek common goal "

By Mark Duncan

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RECOVERY CITY: One size does not fit all - different philosophies seek common goal

By Mark Duncan

The goal of everyone in the recovery community is the same: end the addiction cycle and provide each client with the tools to achieve and continue a sober life.

The methods of each provider vary. Some examples:

Pia's Place

For 20 years, Pia's Place has filled a need in Prescott's recovery community: a residential treatment center for women only.

Experience has proven that treating men and women together has many potential pitfalls. Relationships, often based on too much need, often lead to relapse, not to mention distraction from the job at hand.

"For the majority of the women here, this isn't their first time around," said Bevan Gottlieb, executive director of the clinic, which can handle as many as 20 clients at a time. "To come in and do the depth of work we need to do, especially personal things, it just doesn't happen in a co-ed setting."

Gottlieb said that most of the clients at Pia's Place, some of whom have been in treatment a half-dozen times or more, have issues underlying their addictions that a month-long program cannot identify.

"Our goal isn't to parent bash," she said, "but if this is treatment four, five, six or seven, there's clearly something that hasn't been addressed."

The minimum stay at Pia's Place is 90 days, but some stay longer, Gottlieb said. While working in group and individual therapy sessions, clients gradually gain degrees of freedom. As a rein on

temptation, though, they never go out in public alone. As do most of the other treatment centers, Pia's Place requires its clients to do some form of community service because, as Gottlieb said, "It's time to get out of yourself and start giving back."

Noting that many researchers have concluded that emotional growth stops when addiction begins, Gottlieb realizes that it often takes time to get to the honest communication that sheds light on a client's true problem.

"Our goal isn't necessarily to save them," she said. "It's to look at what hasn't been looked at before."

Prescott House

The issue of emotional and social age is one that Prescott House, the city's oldest privately operated treatment center, recognizes.

"Some of these people are learning to live life at 30 years old," said Bernie Florea of Prescott House. "A lot of them have never bought groceries before."

Prescott House, for one, strongly prefers their clients to complete primary care before checking in to this 26-bed facility near the heart of town where family origin issues, nutrition and physical health are deemed important.

Along with alcohol and substance abuse recovery, the center treats all types of addictive and compulsive behavior, from gambling and food issues to co-dependency, anger management and family origin issues.

Volunteer work in the community is required of all clients, with that work marking their first outside contact after entering the program, which last from five months to seven months, plus a minimum of six weeks of aftercare.

One aspect of Prescott House staff echoes a not-uncommon trend in the industry, that being employing staff members who themselves are in recovery.

"Sometimes that makes for credibility with the clients," said Dayton Turberville, executive director. "You don't have to be in recovery to work here, but sometimes it makes it easier to deal with the clients."

A Sober Way Home

In extended care, a client gradually starts to experience more freedom, more responsibility - and more risk, said Pete Stewart, executive director of A Sober Way Home.

"In the first two weeks of transition, you can slip and be back to square one," Stewart said. "At the first slip there are consequences, and those can include discharge. But if they seem ready after 90 days they can have a part-time job.

"We're giving them a chance to try their legs."

The program at A Sober Way Home is designed to last from six months to nine months, with the option of continuing on a month-to-month basis. Once clients' addictions are stabilized, Stewart said, "The intensity and depth of the therapeutic process increases as time passes."

In the center's first of four stages, clients receive primary care and begin group therapy sessions. During this 60-day period, they are introduced to the 12-step program.

During the second 60-day stage, clients begin to work through their relationship and boundary issues and learn the basics of healthy communication. They may also begin a job search, volunteer activities and schoolwork.

The third stage is transitional and also lasts 60 days. Clients begin their re-entry into community life and prepare for sober living. They also begin work on an individualized aftercare plan.

Stage four is sober living. To enter this phase, clients must have six months of sobriety, be involved in AA or NA programs and have a full-time job.

A Sober Way Home treats about 35 people at a time, operating from a central treatment facility in West Prescott, with clients living in five satellite houses around the area.

Decision Point

Decision Point is a holistic, co-ed treatment center that combines group and individual therapy with outdoor "adventures."

Recovery can be a grueling and often emotionally painful experience as therapists cut to the heart of the issues that almost always underlie addiction problems.

"The underlying issue is trauma," clinical director Dr. Lloyd Gillum said, "and we come at it in several different ways. It's a continuum of care and we use everything at our disposal."

Still, said Bob Perrone of Decision Point, "It's often said that you should have some fun in recovery." That fun includes backpacking, rock-climbing, and ropes courses, all under supervision and all designed to not only alleviate the tension of recovery but also to develop attributes such as positive risk-taking, self-confidence and trust in others.

The three-phase treatment at Decision Point takes place in the former Northcentral University campus on Whipple Street, while clients, about 40 at a time, live in two nearby apartment buildings. In all three phases, clients receive daily treatment while increasing their involvement with 12-step programs and the community at large.

Decision Point's therapists dig deep to identify underlying trauma they believe is often the root cause of addiction, compulsive behaviors and chronic relapse.

"If we can identify a core issue within a client such as lack of self-esteem or leadership skills, we can find the aspects of our program that can deal with that," Perrone said.

"All roads lead to Rome, and our Rome is using all the programs at our disposal."

Clean Adventures in Sober Living

Bobby Patton, director of operations at Clean Adventures, knows what it's like to relapse. He's been in recovery for 12 years now, and runs a treatment center that specializes in men who have often fallen off the wagon.

"Most of these guys have been in treatment three or four times before," he said, explaining that the 14-bed center offers a program that is a combination of experiential work such as hiking and backpacking with a variety of therapeutic options.

"Outdoor work keeps them from becoming stagnant," Patton said. "Our success rates increased dramatically, up to four times the national average, when we added the experiential component."

Clean Adventures strongly recommends that clients complete a month-long primary care program before coming in for the advanced course in well-rounded recovery.

"The primary setting is the science course," Patton said. "We're the practical lab."

Clients of Clean Adventures stay in two group homes for the length of their stay, which begins with a three-month commitment and usually involves a recommended six-month stay.