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**Somewhere to be:  
the spatiality's of  
alcohol abuse and  
recovery in a non-  
interventionist peer-  
led centre**

**Dr Kirstie Soar**

# COI



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- None to declare
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# Recovery and Peer Groups

- A gradual process involving profound psychological changes but also grounded in social relationships and supportive networks
- Role of communities as potential resource for recovery
- Strong evidence to suggest that long term recovery can be maintained by participation in ***peer groups***
- Recovery could be better approached as social as opposed to a solely individualised pathway
- Identity changes facilitated by changing social networks and such communities provide important resources but not all communities are equally equipped and not all individuals have the same access
- People with complex needs might have even less resources



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## Aim

To examine the characteristics of a social space dedicated to individuals in active alcohol use with complex needs and the ways in which such spaces can afford resources that facilitate the initiation of recovery

# The Peer led Service



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- Provides weekend services for people in active use/in recovery
- Mutual aid, non-interventionist approach; providing a safe social space
- We conducted interviews with 9 service users and 3 volunteers (peers)
- Participants were individuals with complex needs facing multiple challenges such as mental health difficulties, homelessness, very low or non-existent financial and physical resources



## Findings:

The functions of therapeutic space within a peer-led service

- 1. Physical and metaphorical spatial alternatives**
  - *Physical spatial maker*
  - *Emotional spatial separations and connections*
- 2. Temporal alternatives**
  - *Interrupted substance use time: test of sobriety*
  - *Structure as a replacement of future using time*
- 3. Occupying and opening up social space**
- 4. Plateau**



# Conclusions & implications

- Individuals with complex needs and low resources might not aim for long term recovery but instead prioritise short term goals that allow the management of every day life within the multiple difficulties they have to face
- Peer led services can assist in opening up the otherwise restricted and isolated space of addiction by creating a safe space that enhances feelings of belonging, connectedness and acceptance
- employing a non-interventionist ethos can enable the transition towards more structured/organised forms of recovery
- Acting as recovery 'connectors' especially for those who might not have prioritised a non using way of life
- Flexible approaches which allow individual choice
- Abstinence requirement is not always needed to initiate recovery



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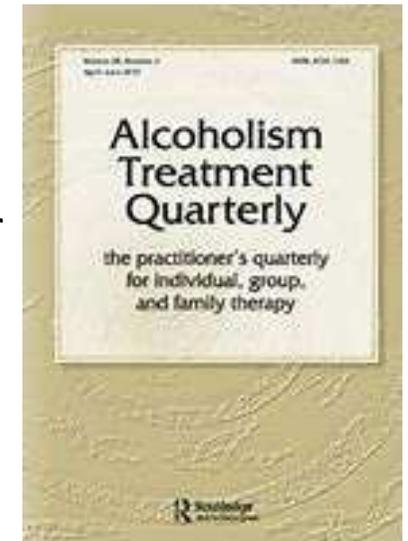
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***Kougiali et al (in press) Jigsaw recovery: the spatio-temporalities of alcohol abuse and recovery in a non-interventionist, peer-led service' Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly***





Any questions?