

World Conference on ADDICTION PSYCHIATRY

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The core conditions for Recovery

Dave Higham

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Building on the work we do to foster trust in ourselves and our services at The Well, (The Well Communities) we have a whole wealth of support for those who find themselves seeking it. We help people find housing, we encourage working with the 12 Steps Programme, engaging in a program of change, we have recovery support, and psycho-social interventions. At the heart of these interventions are the Core Conditions for Recovery, which provide a wrap-around nurturing environment for healing to take place Dave Higham (2022). It is our version of Rat Park – a place where people feel comforted and loved, where they are part of a community and feel a sense of belonging. The rats in Rat Park are basically in their form of heaven; they had lots of wheels to play on, lots to eat, lots of other rats to play with or breed with Alexander B (2010). Addiction: The View from Rat Park. When those rats were exposed to water laced with heroin or cocaine, as per Bruce Alexander's experiment in the 1970s, they almost never used it, compared to the experiment using a single rat left alone, with no rat friends or activities, which drank the drugged water until it died. The lesson here was that rats living happy and connected lives just didn't use drugs. They didn't overdose. They didn't take it compulsively. Journalist Johann Hari (2015) gave a TED talk about this, and he summarised this experiment saying, what if addiction was about your cage? What if it is an adaption to an environment? When we bond and connect with each other, we become free of addiction, but if we're traumatised or alone in our cage, then this is the breeding ground for obtaining some sense of relief. That's human nature. That's what we want as human beings. I have created the six Core Conditions based on my years of experience, both working in the addiction and psychology field and as a recovering addict and survivor of multiple Adverse Childhood Traumas (ACTs) Dave Higham 2022. I believe these conditions are the pathway to supporting sustainable, life-long recovery from any addiction, trauma or mental illness because they create an environment where human beings can connect, share their experiences and create bonds that lead to a drug-free life. Together, these six conditions create a culture for people to heal themselves, to face whatever they need to face within a safe environment, and pave the way to stay better, and even go on to thrive. The six Core Conditions, which are building blocks for healing and recovery, are Lived Experience, Connection, Trauma Safe Environment, Community, Meaning & Purpose, Hope.

Biography

Dave Higham Founder and CEO Of the Well Communities. Dave established The Well with his own money. In the last four years, The Well has grown to become one of the leading providers of Lived Experience Recovery Organizations in the country. The Well has now broadened its reach, establishing communities in Cumbria, Lancashire & Liverpool Sefton. Dave Ex PPO and former drug & alcohol addiction and survivor of Trauma, after Spending over 25 years in addiction, and in that time, spent more time in prison than he did in the community. Dave achieved recovery in prison in 2005 and has been a champion of Lived Experience ever since. Dave with other colleagues Set up the CLERO in 2020 uniting and creating a movement, a set of standards and providing a voice for LEROs across the UK. Author Rat Hell to Rat Park & Bigger Book of Trauma.