

How (and Why) Odyssey House Works

Long-term residential rehabilitation for alcohol and other drugs dependence is unlike other health treatments. Rather than spending time alone or at leisure in a hospital- or spa-like setting, Odyssey House residents live and work together as a small community of around 80 people. They undertake the rehabilitation process within a highly structured, abstinent environment, with treatment and support provided by professional counsellors and medical staff, as well as fellow clients.

Odyssey House utilises the therapeutic community or TC approach to rehabilitation in which residents actively participate in all aspects of the program to help themselves and each other. This self-help-focused, co-operative concept is integral to the success of TCs compared with treatments that address the physical aspect of a person's drug misuse, such as methadone maintenance.

Rowdy Yates founded one of the earliest TCs in the UK and is President of European Federation of Therapeutic Communities. As he explained during a presentation to Odyssey staff and residents, TCs are a complex intervention, but the core principle is love. "TCs start from a position that, at heart, people's natural inclination is to care for others, to be cared for and liked. Therefore you can harness this and create a framework where people get better. If you help someone with their

recovery, you feel better about yourself... and that helps your recovery."

Rowdy said TCs address not just one, but three key areas of a person's drug dependence:

Drugs: Assisting clients through withdrawal; managing physical and mental reactions; dealing with cravings

Set: Addressing issues in the person's 'internal landscape'; how they think about themselves; how they relate to others; what caused them to turn to drugs; self-worth issues

Setting: Changing the environment in which the person used drugs (starting with the drug-free TC and afterwards rebuilding support networks); addressing circumstances which contributed to drug misuse, such as socio-economic disadvantage

TCs treat drug dependence and its associated behaviours as symptomatic of underlying personal problems such as low self-esteem, sexual abuse, domestic violence, parental drug misuse, health problems and family/relationship issues. These must be addressed for a person to successfully overcome drug dependence and remain abstinent in the long term.

Group therapy work is integral to the TC approach, complemented by the fact that clients must live and work cooperatively with their peers to manage the day-to-day operations of the residential facility and follow structure and rules. They earn advancement and privileges as their

recovery progresses, rather than because of how long they have spent in the program. Importantly, clients must abide by a value system based on the five pillars of love, trust, honesty, personal responsibility and concern. This can be confronting for people whose life might have been characterised by disengagement, pretence, deceit, selfishness and lack of concern for others (and themselves).

For personal growth to replace drug dependency, clients work to change negative attitudes and values, confront the reasons they resorted to drugs, and learn strategies to deal with the ups and downs of life. Like overcoming any health disorder where you need to change your lifestyle significantly, it's hard and requires practise. As one graduate aptly put it "Odyssey House is not Valium and slippers!"

Most clients live at Odyssey House for several months, many for more than a year. The longer a person remains in rehabilitation, the better their chances of remaining abstinent in the long-term (and the better the 'return on investment', both monetary and personal). The ultimate goal of Odyssey House is that clients can take the life lessons they have learnt and leave the protected environment of the TC unafraid and able to be productive, responsible, caring members of the community.



Real men cook

For the past eleven years Real Men Cook for Odyssey has been one of the most anticipated events on the Odyssey House calendar, and 2013 was no exception. The sell-out event was this year held at The Woods Restaurant at Sydney's Four Seasons Hotel. The event continues to grow stronger each year and had male celebrities lining up for the prestigious role of 'celebrity chefs' for the day.

This year's fourteen celebrities all gave tremendous support to help raise money for Odyssey House's Parents' and Children's Program. This is a vital program at Odyssey, which is one of only a few rehabilitation centres that caters for men and women with dependant children, enabling parents to undertake treatment while their children live with them.

Our 'real men' serving delighted guests at the event included comedian Mikey Robins, wine expert Huon Hooke, celebrity chefs Ed Halmagyi and Craig Macindoe, media personalities Tim Davies, Simon Marnie, Justin Melvey and Arnott Olssen, entrepreneurs Chris Gray, James Nathan and Ian Evans, sporting legend Simon Poidevin and Greater Western Sydney Giants player Tom Downie. Channel Seven personality Chris Bath acted as our MC and did an amazing job encouraging guests to support Odyssey.

Guests at the luncheon always enjoy hearing the personal story of a recent Odyssey graduate. This year Jason told of his recovery from alcohol dependence and how grateful he was for his time at Odyssey House, which literally saved his life.

We would like to give a special thanks to everyone who donated auction items and supported Real Men Cook for Odyssey, helping us raise more than \$65,000. Special thanks goes to our principal sponsor Chris Gray, founder and CEO of Empire, as the event would not be possible without his continued generosity.



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odyssey NEWS

'A Calm in the Sea of Addiction'



Chris's Story

Chris (left) receiving his graduation certificate from Member of Campbelltown, Mr Bryan Doyle

My childhood growing up on Sydney's northern beaches was very unstable and my family was highly dysfunctional: my father was an alcoholic and my mother was addicted to prescription pills. Life was difficult and it's been a burden I've carried for many years.

My parents didn't provide me with a lot of boundaries, so halfway through Year 7 I decided I no longer wanted to go to school, dropped out and got a full-time job at 14. I had no trouble holding a job for a few years; I was hanging around an older and persuasive peer group and started using recreational drugs.

By the time I was 18 my drug use had become out of control. I was using not only on the weekend but also at home. My parents were aware of this but they were also using at home: dad with alcohol and mum with prescription pills.

Over the next eight years my life continued to spiral out of control. I had by then been charged with a number of high-range drink driving offenses and had spent time in jail. This cycle of in and out of jail was happening quite often so I began to make a lot of friends, all of whom were criminals. Also during this time my mum passed away which made me spiral even further out of control and into depression.

After mum died I was trying to look after my father but also deal with my own problems. My dad ended up selling his house and

moving up the north coast, so I was left without a home or base. I was feeling depressed and had no self-worth. To top it off, I had no job and was hanging around a bad crowd.

I turned to heroin, and also ended up selling heroin as my only form of income. As a result I would spend half of the year in jail and half of the year living on the streets or in hostels. I was in a vicious cycle that continued for many years. During this time I lost contact with my dad and didn't know if he was dead or alive. I later found out he had gone to rehab to seek help for his alcohol addiction.

I had tried to go into rehabilitation during this period but had failed. Then, on one of my jail stints, the court bailed me into Odyssey House. I was only going to do my allocated time at first, as I had heard it was a long, hard program and I just wanted a way to stay out of jail. However, I came to the realisation that, no matter what, Odyssey would never be as tough as it was being a heroin addict out on the street, and I decided I wanted to start living my life, not just living. So I put all of my energy into completing the Odyssey program.

After about 12 months in the program I have now graduated. The program has taught me so much about myself in regards to self-worth and self-esteem and has given me structure in my life. I had a very poor education prior to Odyssey, but I can now

Odyssey would never be as tough as it was being a heroin addict out on the street, and I decided I wanted to start living my life, not just living.

use a computer and have just successfully completed a Certificate IV in Community Services and next year I will be going on to complete my diploma. I also have rebuilt a relationship with my dad, who is still sober, and I have a very supportive partner.

My main focus at the moment is my new job as a staff member at Odyssey House, which I achieved because of the responsibilities I had while I was a resident and my knowledge of the program. I am very proud of what I've accomplished and am looking forward to what the future holds for me, rather than dwelling on the past.



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www.odysseyhouse.com.au



James Pitts, CEO and Doug Snedden, Chairman, cutting the birthday cake

Celebrate Recovery Day

On 27 October Odyssey House staff and residents celebrated with over 300 visitors including past and present staff, graduates, friends, family and supporters for Celebrate Recovery Day.

Celebrate Recovery Day is held annually to recognise the achievements of Odyssey House clients, educate the public about the organisation's work, and thank staff and supporters. This year marked Odyssey House's 36th anniversary, recognising our continued work helping more than 35,000 people to overcome drug and alcohol problems since 1977.

Always a highlight of Celebrate Recovery Day is the annual graduation ceremony, where clients who have recently completed the Odyssey House residential rehabilitation program are recognised by their peers, families and friends, and past Odyssey House clients.

This year Odyssey hosted a number of special guests including Brian Doyle, Member for Campbelltown, Campbelltown Mayor Clinton Mead, and respected journalist Mike Munro, who was our guest speaker. Mike spoke eloquently about his childhood

and experiences dealing with an alcoholic and abusive mother and an estranged father. His honest account was very moving for guests, particularly those who had been through similar circumstances.

"Mum was always telling me: 'You'll never amount to anything because you're nothing but a pasty-faced nothing. Why wouldn't I drink with a son like you?' I think it's one of the reasons I've worked so hard – I was determined to prove to Mum and myself that I could do something with my life, that I wasn't really a 'nothing'," Mike said.

Mike's key message to residents and friends at Celebrate Recovery Day was to look for the positives in life and don't focus on the negatives or blame others: "With a decent work ethic, a caring personality and a good heart, you can do anything. Just do your best with the cards you've been dealt. Hang in there and be true to yourself."

Celebrate Recovery Day was held on a gorgeous spring day with numerous stalls featuring woodwork, art and craft created by Odyssey House residents as part of their therapy, as well as multi-cultural displays, face painting and food stalls.

continuing the event's tradition of raising money for charities including Odyssey House.

We congratulate the award winners and formally thank the Australian Fund Manager Awards Committee for their ongoing support of Odyssey House and all the sponsors and fund managers who support these awards.

Australian Fund Manager Awards

The Australian Fund Manager Awards celebrated fifteen years of acknowledging the outstanding performers and achievements in the fund management industry at The Star on 17 October 2013.

As in previous years, it was a great night, with new awards committee chairman Charlie Lanchester

A message from the Chairman



Doug Snedden

This is the last column of 2013, which has been a busy and productive year at Odyssey House. During the course of the year we have assisted 652 people to deal with their dependence on alcohol and drugs.

James and the staff of Odyssey House, together with the residents, work as a team to ensure that all aspects of the programs are delivered around the clock, all year round. We rarely stop to reflect on how much is achieved.

Despite the challenging economic times we continue to enjoy the support of all levels of government and from corporate and individual supporters in the community. I thank everyone for their support during the year, in particular those who supported our recent Real Men Cook for Odyssey House lunch and the Australian Fund Manager Awards dinner.

As it is in homes around Australia, the kitchen is the heart of the home at Odyssey House at Christmas time. This year our Christmas Appeal focuses on raising funds to upgrade the kitchen facilities at the main residence to keep up with the demands of providing three meals a day for more than 100 people, every day of the year. I hope you will give generously.

Our Celebrate Recovery Day and Graduation Ceremony was a very happy occasion that was well attended by family members and alumni of the programs. It is heartening to meet people who have been through Odyssey House and are now leading productive and fulfilling lives. I would like to thank Mike Munro, our guest speaker, Campbelltown MP Bryan Doyle and Campbelltown Mayor Clinton Mead for attending on the day and officiating at the graduation.

I would also like to thank my fellow Board members for their contribution this year.

On behalf of the Board, James and the staff of Odyssey House, I wish you a very safe and relaxing festive season, and a healthy and prosperous 2014.

Doug Snedden
Chairman



Margaret Noonan, COO Odyssey House; Paul Mannix, Mark Beach and Fiona Boulos from Guardian Funerals; Loretta Watts, CFO Odyssey House

Odyssey Olympics

Odyssey House New South Wales and Odyssey House Victoria came together to compete in the Odyssey House Olympics during a week-long event in Sydney from 16-20 September. Odyssey NSW emerged victorious and claimed the Odyssey Cup in the Olympics, which included events such as swimming, athletics, golf, bowling, basketball, netball and softball.

A highlight of the Olympics was that the residents played softball at Blacktown Softball stadium which was built for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Odyssey House would like to thank Cathy Kerr, General Manager of Softball NSW for

the use of the Blacktown softball stadium, and also Donna McGrath Development Officer Softball NSW for her assistance.

We also thank Guardian Funerals for their generosity in providing a wonderful barbecue for all the residents while competing at the softball stadium.



ASX Thomson Reuters Charity Foundation Raffle

Purchase tickets in the raffle for the chance to win a Lexus CT200h Prestige - the world's first luxury hybrid hatch - valued at \$46,698.



1st Prize
Valued at \$46,698*

* Includes metallic paint and on-road costs (Dealer Delivery, NSW registration, CTP insurance, NSW Stamp Duty)

2nd prize – South Sea Pearl, diamond and white gold pendant (valued at \$13,000)

3rd prize – Captain Cook Murray River cruise for 2 people (valued at \$2398)

\$20 per ticket or 6 for \$100. Contact jessica@odysseyhouse.com.au to purchase tickets. Closing date – 26 February, 2014

Wilson Asset Management Support Odyssey House riding from Goulburn to Camden

Geoff Wilson, Chairman of Wilson Asset Management was the major sponsor of the charity ride between Goulburn and Camden in September. Geoff and a team of 25 riders battled the hills to make it to Camden and raise money for Odyssey House.

The charity ride is organised by the Macarthur Collegians Cycling Club and is a major highlight in our calendar.

Geoff has been riding this track for two years, but his company has been the major sponsor of the charity ride for three years.

Geoff rides for Odyssey House because he feels that it is fantastic cause.

The event raises funds and awareness of the great work that Odyssey House does.

Geoff has committed to being part of this great event and has already commenced recruiting riders and training for the 150km ride.

Thank you Geoff, Wilson Asset Management and your team of super riders. We look forward to partnering with you again in 2014!



Geoff Wilson at the top of Razorback



Goulburn to Camden Charity Ride

Odyssey House was again a grateful beneficiary of the pedal-power of keen corporate charity riders in the Wilson Asset Management Goulburn to Sydney Corporate Charity Ride 2013, held on Sunday 15 September.

Riders departed Goulburn for the gruelling 150km ride back to Camden bright and early. The riders stopped at Mittagong and then powered through to the finish line in Camden.

A message from the Chief Executive Officer



James A. Pitts

Our year is rapidly coming to a close and we are finishing it on a major high (no pun intended!). We recently marked our 36th anniversary of providing quality services to our clients, an achievement that was aptly displayed at our annual Celebrate Recovery Day where supporters, staff and graduates of the program were congratulated for their efforts over the past year.

The therapeutic community (TC) model has come a long way since it began as a self-help movement in the late 1950s. Our professionalism and rigorous standards of staff training and accreditation are now well recognised, and evidenced in the outcomes we achieve for our clients. I recently presented on Therapeutic Community Training: Past, Present and Ensuring the Future to a plenary session of the European Federation of Therapeutic Communities (EFTC) Conference in Prague, Czech Republic, which was attended by TC practitioners from Europe, the United States and South America, and enhanced Odyssey's reputation worldwide.

Later, Odyssey House was pleased to host the Sydney visit of EFTC President Rowdy Yates, Senior Research Fellow in Scottish Addiction Studies at the University of Stirling, and his wife Kathleen, a psychotherapist, who ran informative presentations for residents and staff (read more about Rowdy's insights into TCs in this newsletter).

We end the year grateful for the continued support of state and federal governments, our donors and the general public. We feel we have rewarded their support by providing the best services possible to our clients, enabling them to regain their dignity, overcome their dependencies and become contributing members of society.

Have a happy and prosperous Christmas and a Happy New Year!

James A Pitts, MA
Chief Executive Officer