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AN AFTERCARE INTERVENTION PROGRAMME FOR EMPLOYEES RETURNING FROM SUBSTANCE USE REHABILITATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

Substance use disorders (SUDs) significantly impact public health and workplace productivity.

Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) and wellness practitioners (WPs) provide support for employees returning from rehabilitation.

This study presents a structured 10-week aftercare intervention programme to aid reintegration.

BACKGROUND



THE WORKPLACE SERVES AS A
CRITICAL ENVIRONMENT FOR
SUBSTANCE USE RECOVERY.



CURRENT WORKPLACE
INTERVENTIONS ARE OFTEN
INADEQUATE IN ADDRESSING
SUD RECOVERY.



A NEED FOR STRUCTURED
AFTERCARE PROGRAMMES TO
IMPROVE SUPPORT AND
REDUCE RELAPSE RATES.

METHODOLOGY - STEP-BY-STEP RESEARCH PROCESS

Research Approach:

- **Qualitative research methodology** to explore workplace aftercare for employees returning from substance use rehabilitation.
- Focused on **practice-based problems** and **stakeholder perspectives** to develop an effective intervention programme.



STEP 1: IDENTIFYING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

- Many workplaces lack structured aftercare support for employees recovering from SUDs.
- Existing Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and Wellness Practitioners (WPs) often provide **ad hoc support** rather than a structured reintegration plan.
- **Key question:** How can workplaces better support employees after rehabilitation?



STEP 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

Purposive sampling was used to ensure relevant perspectives were included.

Two-Stage Process:

- **Stage 1 - Data Collection & Problem Identification**

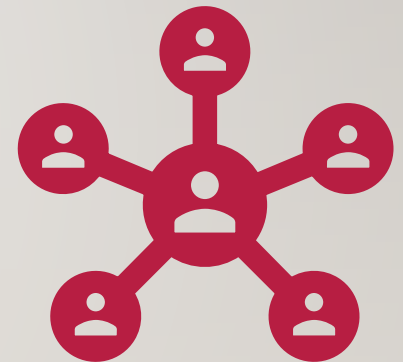
Interviews and focus groups with:

- Employees returning from rehabilitation
- Family members affected by substance use
- Workplace Wellness Practitioners (WPs) and EAP professionals

Goal: Understand challenges faced during reintegration into the workplace.

- **Stage 2 - Consensus-Seeking Activities**

- Workshops and expert reviews to refine the intervention programme.
- Feedback from practitioners, researchers, and affected employees to ensure practical implementation.



STEP 3: STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

- **Employees in recovery:** Shared personal experiences of workplace reintegration challenges.
- **Family members:** Provided insights on external support needs.
- **EAPs & WPs:** Offered professional perspectives on workplace interventions.
- **Academic experts:** Ensured the programme aligned with evidence-based recovery models.



STEP 4: DATA ANALYSIS & THEMATIC REVIEW

- **Qualitative data analysis:** Identified common themes across stakeholder groups.
- Key findings shaped the **three-phase intervention model** for workplace aftercare.



STEP 5: DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

Structured 10-week programme designed based on research findings. Integrated key components:

- 1. Pre-Reintegration** (Workplace preparation & training)
- 2. Reintegration** (Monitoring & counseling)
- 3. Care & Support** (Long-term recovery and policy review)



STEP 6: PILOT TESTING & REFINEMENT

- **Workshops and focus groups** validated the programme's structure.
- Adjustments made based on stakeholder feedback:
 1. **Stronger integration of workplace policies and skills training.**
 2. **Increased reliance on faith-based & community support.**
 3. **More emphasis on long-term aftercare and relapse prevention.**

KEY FINDINGS



Strong need for structured aftercare in the workplace.



Importance of faith-based and community support.



Need for workplace interventions including counseling, skill development, and motivational support.

STEP 7: FINALIZATION & IMPLEMENTATION

- A comprehensive **workplace aftercare model** was developed.
- Designed for EAPs, WPs, and HR departments to implement in real-world workplace settings.
- **Future research recommended** to measure effectiveness and refine strategies.



10-week structured programme with three phases:

1. Pre-reintegration
(preparing the workplace, training, policy awareness).

2. Reintegration
(supporting the employee's transition, counseling, reduced workload).

3. Care & Support
(long-term monitoring, family & community engagement, faith-based support).

WORKPLACE
AFTERCARE
INTERVENTION
PROGRAMME

PHASE 1 - PRE-REINTEGRATION

Timeframe: Weeks 1-2 (Before Employee Returns)

Objectives:

- Reduce stigma around substance use disorders (SUD) in the workplace
- Familiarize staff with workplace policies regarding SUD
- Train managers and supervisors on support roles
- Establish communication with family and community support systems
- Develop a structured transition plan for reintegration

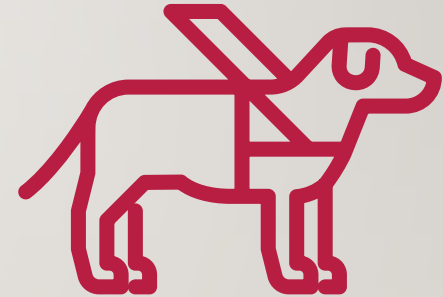


PHASE 2 - REINTEGRATION

Timeframe: Weeks 3-4 (Post-Return Phase)

Objectives:

- Provide a structured reintroduction to the workplace
- Implement a reduced workload to ease transition
- Conduct daily check-ins with Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) or Wellness Practitioners (WPs)
- Monitor the employee's mental and physical well-being
- Arrange counseling and psychological support sessions
- Encourage participation in health promotion activities



PHASE 3 - CARE AND SUPPORT

Timeframe: Weeks 4-10 (Ongoing Support)

Objectives:

- Maintain ongoing counseling and therapeutic interventions
- Establish workplace-based recovery support groups
- Integrate external support networks (community and faith-based groups)
- Conduct regular evaluations of the employee's reintegration progress
- Assess and improve workplace policies on substance use recovery



PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Provides a structured approach to workplace aftercare.

Enhances EAPs and WPs role in managing SUD recovery.

Strengthens workplace policies and support structures.

Encourages a holistic approach, integrating community, faith-based, and workplace interventions.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS



THANK YOU!



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