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HIGH FIVE YEAR POST-DISCHARGE ABSTINENCE IN HOMOGENEOUS RESIDENTIAL FAITH-BASED SOBER LIVING PROGRAM

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Freedom from use of any abusive substance of over 40% through 750 days and over 40% up to 1750 days with very tight error bars was noted in a specific therapeutic community based on a single ethnic group. This total abstinence following discharge is far higher than any follow-up figures in addictions literature. This institution runs residential facilities for drug and alcohol addicts for only Jewish clients. They are test-documented “clean” on admission, ideally live in the houses for one year, and are subject to being discharged early for: documented drug use, failure to be gainfully employed despite staff assistance, failure to pay nominal rent covering room and board, failure to do chores needed for maintenance of facilities, or on request. They are required to intensively attend 12-step programs. Symbols of Jewish faith are prominently displayed, holidays are observed, and residents participate in a monthly joint Sabbath dinner, also open to family, board members, donors, and interested members of the general public. Clients are randomly drug-tested. Following discharge, follow-up information on freedom from relapse was obtained by telephone and with help of program graduates. Kaplan-Meier curves for abstinence through five years were constructed showing very superior results in this relatively homogeneous group. The circumstances seem conducive to development of an especially strong therapeutic community. While this is only a single cohort study, and more in nature of a pilot program, results appear to be so especially compelling that the value of addiction recovery engendered by homogeneous groups needs to be further validated in a controlled fashion.