

Post-Institutional Release Planning for Youth Undergoing Substance Abuse Recovery and Risky Sexual Relationships: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

This study aims to explore post-institutional release planning for youth involved in risky sexual behavior and drug abuse. While previous studies have focused on planning and intervention during rehabilitation within institutions and agencies, there remains a lack of research addressing post-release planning, specifically after the completion of rehabilitation in institutions, particularly among youth engaged in drug abuse and risky sexual behaviors. Post-release planning is a crucial component of maintaining recovery. This study employs a case study approach and follows qualitative methods. A total of 16 youths aged 19 to 37 years who underwent rehabilitation in five institutions focused on interventions for unwed pregnant youth, same-sex relationships (LGBTQ), and drug rehabilitation were purposefully selected to participate in the study. Data collection was conducted through face-to-face interviews, and the interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results indicate that four aspects of post-release planning were explored in this study: (i) obtaining permanent and stable jobs, (ii) educational planning, (iii) continuous recovery, and (iv) planning related to family and parenting roles. Further interviews revealed that many informants admitted they were not provided post-release planning by the institution. In conclusion, this study recommends that rehabilitation institutions addressing drug abuse and risky sexual behavior examine and organize programs that educate clients on how to plan activities that support recovery after their release from the institution.

Keywords: Post-Institutional Release Planning, Drug Abuse, Risky Sexual Behavior, Rehabilitation Institutions, Youth

Introduction

The moral decline of society, particularly among the youth, is reflected in the rise of social issues such as risky sexual behavior and drug abuse. The Youth Organizations and Youth Development Act (2007), defines youth as aged 15 to 40. Statistics released by the National Anti-Drug Agency of Malaysia from January to March 2023 indicate that individuals aged 13 to 39 recorded a significant number of drug abuse cases, totaling 62,236, which represents

60% of the total cases. This increase in drug abuse among the youth is a troubling trend (Abdullah et al., 2022).

Furthermore, studies by Rizkianti et al. (2020), and Hussin (2018), show that youths involved in drug abuse are also more likely to engage in risky sexual relationships. These findings are particularly concerning, as they align with results from multiple studies in Southeast Asia that highlight a significant correlation between drug abuse and multiple sexual partnerships. Drug use often aims to enhance individuals' engagement in sexual relationships (Wan Shahrazad et al., 2021; Tran et al., 2018; Rizkiyanti et al., 2020; Ngoc et al., 2019). Individuals who engage in risky sexual behavior are more likely to use illicit substances, including drugs, as these substances may enhance pleasure and satisfaction during sexual activities. According to the Durex Malaysia Sexual Health and Intimate Relationship Wellbeing Survey (2022), young people aged 18 to 30 are actively engaging in sexual intercourse, contributing to the rise in HIV infections.

Until now, the most significant contributors to HIV/AIDS infections stem from the sharing of syringes among those involved in drug addiction and unsafe sexual practices, particularly among homosexuals, according to the Ministry of Health (2020). Based on statistics released by the Ministry of Health Malaysia (2021), the transmission of HIV and AIDS infections in 2020 was attributed to heterosexuals and men having sex with other men (MSM), accounting for 30% and 60%, respectively. According to the Asian Epidemic Modelling (AEM) report (2021), it is estimated that by 2030, the leading cause of HIV and AIDS infections will be sexual relations between men (MSM). The involvement of youth in drug abuse and risky sexual behavior also contributes to relapses, leading to repeated rehabilitation sentences.

The National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK) reported a total of 49,373 cases of repeated addiction from January to March 2023. These repeated cases involve the same individuals, stemming from the addiction problems they face, which lead them to relapse into drug abuse. Meanwhile, cases of baby abandonment among the youth are also increasing and are concerning. Statistical data from the Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM) in 2022 showed 256 baby abandonment cases from 2020 to 2022. The increase in addiction cases and social problems, such as repeated sexual relations among teenagers, can be attributed to their lack of clear goals for recovery, particularly after undergoing rehabilitation in an institution for a certain period.

Most addicts undergoing rehabilitation are not yet ready to live an everyday life outside the institution. According to studies by Najwa et al. (2008), Shafie et al. (2015), and Halim (2010), most drug addicts in rehabilitation training in Malaysia are at a low readiness to change, specifically in the pre-contemplation and contemplation stages. This level of preparedness remains unchanged upon release. Juliana et al. (2019), found that trainees in rehabilitation institutions often do not decide to change because they lack clear life goals and confidence about their direction after leaving the rehabilitation center. The findings of previous studies by researchers such as Najwa et al. (2008), Abdul Halim (2010), and Siti Maziah et al. (2020) indicate that future planning for trainees after completing treatment and rehabilitation is crucial and needs to be emphasized.

Post-institutional release planning for youth involved in risky sexual behavior and drug abuse is an issue that requires attention. A well-structured post-institutional release plan can help prevent recidivism and relapse. However, there is still a lack of research focusing on the scope of post-institutional release planning, particularly from the perspective of youths involved in drug abuse and risky sexual behavior themselves. Previous studies have primarily concentrated on the factors and impacts of youth involvement in these behaviors without deeply exploring their post-rehabilitation planning. Therefore, this article presents the findings of an exploratory study that characterizes the post-institutional release planning of the affected group. The study examines the trainees' planning to maintain recovery after completing rehabilitation at the agency.

Literature Review

Post-institutional release planning is a critical issue that needs to be emphasized and implemented. Studies by Habil & Moh (2003), Mohd Ibrahim (2011), and Alif et al. (2022), indicate that most trainees lack direction after being released from the institution. This highlights that many trainees do not have a plan for completing their rehabilitation and are often uncertain about their next steps, such as securing employment after leaving the rehabilitation facility (Habil & Moh, 2003). Furthermore, research by Mohd Asni and Mohammad Irfan (2022,) shows that inmates who have been released and reintegrated into society often lack job-related information and preparation. Fauziah et al. (2016), and Hunt (2014), found that most released inmates experience unemployment. Additionally, Fauziah et al. (2016), Sheppard et al. (2020), and Alif et al. (2022), discovered that individuals released from rehabilitation institutions face challenges in finding employment. According to Fauziah et al. (2016), trainees who underwent rehabilitation for 6 to 11 months received only moderate employer support. Therefore, planning for employment after leaving the institution should be prioritized for trainees undergoing rehabilitation. Employment significantly influences the success of remaining free from drug influence and risky sexual behavior, particularly among youth (McLellan et al., 2005; Zakaria et al., 2016).

Studies by Alif (2022), the Malaysian Youth Council (2019), Schaffer (2001), and Siti Balqis (2013) highlight that individuals involved in social issues such as drug abuse and unintended pregnancies need educational and vocational opportunities upon completing their rehabilitation. According to Schaffer (2001), Mohd Asni & Mohammad Irfan (2022), and Siti Balqis (2013), appropriate education must be provided to trainees after their release from the institution to prevent recurrence of social problems like drug abuse and risky sexual behavior. Implementing post-institutional release planning, particularly educational planning, assists trainees in securing job placements and opportunities for further education after rehabilitation, especially for youth (Siti Balqis, 2013).

Douglas et al. (2020), found that by identifying the trainees' strengths, plans can be developed to teach them how to reintegrate into society and achieve the goal of total rehabilitation after being released. In Australia, aftercare is implemented at home for trainees released from rehabilitation institutions to prevent relapse (Kylie et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the Malaysian government, through the National Anti-Drugs Agency (AADK), has established a rehabilitation goal plan for former drug addicts, which requires them to comply with a two-year supervision condition upon release from the institution (Mohd Ibrani, 2012). According to the study by Nur Zatil et al. (2016), regular observation and monitoring by institutions, families, and

communities will be implemented for former trainees involved in social problems stemming from risky sexual relationships. Goal plans are applied to trainees for post-institution release planning to ensure their successful reintegration into society (Micheal & Jerome, 2012; Mohd Alif et al., 2019).

Juliana et al. (2019), found that the work therapy approach through agricultural activities at the Cure and Care Rehabilitation Centre (CCRC) can help prepare trainees for employment after leaving the rehabilitation institution. This indicates that the skills learned at the rehabilitation institution enable trainees to create their jobs after release. Establishing a Daily Service Centre allows trainees to plan for finding employment upon their release from the rehabilitation institution (Mohd Ibrani, 2019). The findings of previous researchers such as Najwa et al. (2008), Abdul Halim (2010), and Siti Maziah et al. (2020) show that future planning for trainees after completing treatment and rehabilitation in institutions is crucial and should be emphasized. Continuous monitoring of the methods and approaches used during the intervention is essential to ensure the sustainability of the intervention and to contribute to the improvement of ethics and morals after the trainees are released (Hyda Mydin, 2018). This preparation is significant for trainees upon completing their rehabilitation in the institution.

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative method approach in the form of a case study. According to Nur Hazilla and Nur Saadah (2019), qualitative research is a systematic and orderly process involving the research process, data collection, and information reporting. The case study approach is an exploration to analyze and explain in detail the phenomenon or social unit under study. In this study, the researcher also used in-depth interviews to ensure the use of a smaller sample and that the explanations provided by the informants were clear and detailed (Kamarul, 2012). The data collection method uses face-to-face interviews with semi-structured interview questions. This method allows the researcher to obtain more information, and its use is more flexible (Ab Samad, 2015). The interview questions were obtained from previous studies and developed by the researchers. There are two main sections of questions: i) Section A consists of questions related to the informant's profile, and ii) Section B encompasses questions related to exploring the informants' post-institutional release planning.

This study was conducted at drug abuse rehabilitation and risky sexual behavior rehabilitation institutions in the Selangor area. A total of five rehabilitation institutions were selected, namely three drug abuse rehabilitation institutions and two high-risk sexual relationship rehabilitation institutions. To ensure confidentiality, the names of the institutions will not be disclosed.

Next, the study sample consists of youths undergoing rehabilitation in the institution. A total of 16 informants (11 informants undergoing rehabilitation at drug abuse institutions and five informants undergoing rehabilitation at high-risk sexual relationship institutions) were selected. The selection of the study sample was made purposefully based on the justification of the increases in cases (refer to the AADK report (2023) and the Durex Malaysia Intimate Health Survey (Durex Survey) conducted in April and May 2022 for the relevant justification of informant selection).

Thematic analysis has been used to interpret the data. Thematic analysis is a flexible data analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2014). This study applies six steps in thematic analysis. The steps for thematic analysis require the researcher to i) familiarize themselves with the data, ii) create initial codes, iii) search for themes, iv) review themes, v) define themes, and vi) write the report (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Table 1

Profile of Informants Undergoing Drug Abuse Rehabilitation

| Profile | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | D5 | D6 | D7 | D8 | D14 | D15 | D16 |
|---|------------------|--|--|----------------------------|--|--|--|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Age (years) | 19 | 20 | 37 | 34 | 34 | 20 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 21 | 23 t |
| Gender | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male | Male |
| Race | Malay | Malay | Malay | Malay | Malay | Malay | Malay | Malay | Malay | Malay | Malay |
| Religion | Islam | Islam | Islam | Islam | Islam | Islam | Islam | Islam | Islam | Islam | Islam |
| State of origins | Selangor | Selangor | Selangor | Sarawak | Perak | Selangor | Johor | Selangor | Selangor | Penang | Selangor |
| Education | Secondary School | Secondary School | Secondary School | Tertiary Education | Secondary School | Secondary School | Secondary School | Secondary School | Secondary School | Tertiary Education | Secondary School |
| Duration of Rehabilitation | 8 months | 36 months | 24 months | 24 months | 24 months | 24 months | 24 months | 24 months | 36 months | 30 months | 36 months |
| Duration completed | 5 months | 12 months | 11 months | 24 months | 12 months | 13 months | 9 months | 8 months | 8 months | 9 months | 8 months |
| Age at which first drug abuse occurred (years) | 17 | 14 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 17 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 20 | 20 |
| Types of drugs used | Ketamine | Cannabis Crystal Methamphetamine | Crystal Methamphetamine Cannabis | Crystal Methamphetamine | Crystal Methamphetamine Cannabis | Cannabis Crystal Methamphetamine Cannabis | Crystal Methamphetamine Cannabis | Amphetamine Ecstasy Cocaine | Cannabis | Cannabis | Crystal Methamphetamine |
| History of Involvement in High-Risk Sexual Activities | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | X | X | X | / |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|---|----|
| Age at first involvement in high-risk sexual activities (years) | 17 | 16 | 18 | 19 | 26 | 18 | 11 | - | - | - | 19 |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|---|----|

N = 11 informants

Findings and Discussion

This section explains the study's findings and discusses them based on interviews with 16 informants. The exploratory research report will be organized according to i) informant profiles and ii) post-institutional release planning.

A) Informant Profile

The informant profiles are divided into two parts: i) 11 youth informants who are involved in drug abuse, and ii) five youth informants who are recovering from risky sexual behavior. Information about the informants' profiles was obtained from interviews conducted between February 2024 and March 2024. The study results are presented to illustrate information about each informant's profile based on 13 profile question items.

Profile of Youth Undergoing Drug Abuse Rehabilitation in Institutions

Based on Table 1, the youth undergoing drug abuse rehabilitation in the institution are aged between 19 and 37. Most of the informants involved in this study reside in the state of Selangor. Five informants live in different states, such as Perak, Sarawak, Johor, and Penang. Most of the informants have a secondary school education, and only two are at the tertiary education level. The study analysis also found that all the informants were male, of Malay ethnicity, and Muslim.

The duration for informants to undergo rehabilitation in the institution is 8 to 36 months. The current duration of all the informants involved in the study undergoing rehabilitation in the institution is more than 5 months. Most informants were involved in drug abuse as early as their teenage years, around the age of 14. The types of drugs used and abused include Crystal Methamphetamine, Cannabis, Ecstasy, Amphetamine 5, and Cocaine. Some informants took several types of drugs or engaged in polydrug use, namely informants D1, D3, D5, D6, D7, and D8. Additionally, most informants undergoing drug abuse rehabilitation were found to have been involved in sexual relations, with only three informants never having been involved in sexual relations. Most informants who were involved in sexual relations admitted to having experiences starting as early as the age of 11.

Profile of Youth Undergoing Recovery from Risky Sexual Relationships in Institutions

Based on Table 2, the informants undergoing rehabilitation for risky sexual relationships in the institution are aged between 20 and 35 years. Most of the informants in this study reside in Selangor, with one informant living in Pahang. Many informants have completed secondary school education, while only two have attained tertiary education. The data also reveals that there are three female informants and two male informants. All informants identify as Malay and are Muslim. The duration of rehabilitation for these informants at the institution is six months, with the current rehabilitation period for those studied exceeding two months. Most

informants reported being involved in risky sexual activities as early as their teenage years, around the age of 13. The analysis also indicates that most informants were engaged in heterosexual relationships, while one informant identified as gay and another as bisexual, being involved in both heterosexual and same-sex relationships.

Additionally, the informants undergoing rehabilitation for risky sexual relationships admitted to having been involved in drug abuse, with only two informants reporting no involvement. Those who engaged in drug abuse started as young as 18 years old. The study found that informants in high-risk sexual rehabilitation institutions were also involved in the abuse of drugs such as crystal methamphetamine and ecstasy.

Overall, the data shows that most informants have been involved in both drug abuse and risky sexual behavior (11 informants). These findings support previous studies by Rizvi et al. (2020) and Hussin (2018), which indicate that youth involved in drug abuse have a strong tendency to engage in risky sexual behavior. Most studies in Southeast Asia have found a significant correlation between drug abuse and uncontrolled sexual behavior. The justification for this correlation is that drug use often aims to enhance an individual's engagement in sexual relationships (Wan Shahrazad et al., 2021; Tran et al., 2018; Rizvi et al., 2020; Ngoc et al. 2019).

Table 2

Profile of Informants Undergoing Recovery from Risky Sexual Relationships in Institutions

| Profile | D9 | D10 | D11 | D12 | D13 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Age (years) | 35 | 25 | 20 | 21 | 21 |
| Gender | Male | Male | Female | Female | Female |
| Race | Malay | Malay | Malay | Malay | Malay |
| Religion | Islam | Islam | Islam | Islam | Islam |
| State of origins | Pahang | Selangor | Selangor | Selangor | Selangor |
| Education | Tertiary Education | Secondary School | Secondary School | Tertiary Education | Secondary School |
| Duration of Rehabilitation | 6 months | 6 months | 6 months | 6 months | 6 months |
| Duration completed | 72 months | 5 months | 4 months | 2 months | 6 months |
| Age at first involvement with high-risk sexual activities (years) | 13 | 17 | 19 | 18 | 19 |
| High-risk sexual activities | Same-sex | Same-sex and multiple partners | Multiple partners | Multiple partners | Multiple partners |
| History of drug abuse | / | / | - | - | / |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|----|
| Age at which first drug abuse occurred (years) | 19 | 18 | - | - | 19 |
| Types of drugs used | Crystal Methamphetamine | Ecstasy Crystal Methamphetamine | | | |

N = 5 Informants

Post-Institutional Release Planning for Youth Undergoing Recovery from Drug Abuse and Risky Sexual Relationships

Based on the analyzed interview data, several themes of post-institutional release planning have been identified. The interviewed youth acknowledged that they need guidance to make post-release plans involving i) obtaining permanent and stable jobs, ii) pursuing educational planning, iii) continuous recovery, and iv) planning related to family and parenting roles.

i. Obtain Permanent and Stable Job

Based on the results of the interviews conducted, all the youth informants undergoing rehabilitation for drug abuse and risky sexual behavior in the institution have plans to obtain employment after being released from the institution.

All the informants stated that securing a job is one of their primary goals upon completing rehabilitation at the institution. Here are their contributions:

"... if the plan after leaving here is to continue the family business because that is what my parents and I have planned, that is indeed their plan for me ..."

"... because before this, I worked on my own when I worked on my own, I didn't help them (my parents) with their business when I fell; they trusted me to help them, so for me, in that situation, I can help them to gain their trust, my parents are in the tourism sector in Sarawak, so when I come back, I will help them..."

(Informant D4 (34), Drug Abuse Rehabilitation)

"...If my plan goes well after I get out, I will return to Hulu Langat to my brother's house. The plan to work is already set, working with my brother-in-law as a welder..."If my plan after getting out is to return to Hulu Langat to my brother's house, the plan to work is already set, working with my brother-in-law and as a welder..."

(Informant D5 (34), Drug Abuse Rehabilitation)

"...maybe I will work with my aunt; she has a cat house so I will work with her..."

(Informant D8 (19), Drug Abuse Rehabilitation)

Based on the above statement, most informants plan to work with family members or close relatives because they recognize the difficulty of obtaining a permanent job. Fauziah et al. (2016) and Hunt (2014) found that most released trainees are likely unemployed. Additionally, Fauziah et al. (2016), Sheppard et al. (2020), and Alif et al. (2022) discovered that individuals released from rehabilitation institutions struggle to find employment. Referring to the data from Fauziah et al. (2016), trainees who underwent rehabilitation for 6-11 months

received moderate support from their employers. Employment plays a crucial role in influencing the success of remaining free from drug influences and risky sexual behavior, particularly among the youth (McLellan et al., 2005; Zakaria et al., 2016). According to Thompson & Cummings (2010) and Norrueyati et al. (2020), work training and vocational skills should be provided to trainees undergoing rehabilitation in institutions before their release as part of a preparation plan for entering the workforce.

ii. Pursuing Educational Planning

The second theme of post-institutional release planning is pursuing educational planning. Most informants aged between 19 and 23 years plan to continue their education, particularly in technical fields, while informants aged 30 and above are more inclined to pursue training to help them obtain permanent employment more easily. For example, informants D6, D11, and D13 stated the following:

"I plan to continue studying automotive skills, so I plan to continue studying..."

"...my family members have already contacted the counselor to find a suitable place for me to continue my studies..."

(Informant D6 (20), Drug Abuse Rehabilitation)

"...I also have a plan to continue my studies, maybe Nursing. If I get through SPA, maybe I will continue at ILKKM, but if not, maybe I will continue at Gombak because my brother is also with SPA; he is an MA, and for the private sector, my first brother is the one who informed me..."

(Informant D11 (20), Recovery from Risky Sexual Relationships)

"...I plan that after I finish studying at KLUMC, I will try to practice myself to study at UIA Gombak..."

"My mom suggested that I study at KLUMC, so, if possible, I will try to complete my degree there, and then I will stop at KLUMC and pursue postgraduate study in UIA."

(Informant D13 (21), Recovery from Risky Sexual Relationships)

Educational planning is divided into two categories: i) vocational and ii) higher education. According to studies by Alif Jasni (2022), the Malaysian Youth Council (2019), Schaffer (2001), Mohd Asni and Mohammad Irfan (2022), and Siti Balqis (2013), individuals involved in social issues such as drug abuse and out-of-wedlock pregnancies need to be provided with educational and vocational opportunities upon completing their rehabilitation. Trainees require knowledge and skills to pursue suitable education after finishing rehabilitation in the institution. Schaffer (2001), Mohd Asni and Mohammad Irfan (2022), and Siti Balqis (2013) emphasize that appropriate education should be offered to trainees after their release, as it can help prevent the recurrence of social problems, particularly drug abuse and risky sexual behavior. The implementation of post-institutional release planning, which includes educational planning, assists trainees in expanding job placement opportunities and facilitates access to higher education, especially for young people in the productive age category.

iii. Continuous Recovery Planning

The next theme of post-institutional release planning identified in this study is rehabilitation. Informants undergoing drug abuse recovery indicated that after their release, they must participate in a two-year follow-up recovery program at the nearest AADK to their residence. Follow-up rehabilitation is not exclusive to Malaysia; for example, Australia also implements home-based follow-up rehabilitation for trainees who have been released from rehabilitation institutions to prevent relapse (Kylie et al., 2020). One informant stated:

"... for the planning to not get involved again, the first thing I will do is abide with close supervision, I will report myself to AADK and once a month, undergo urine test, and get involved with the religious program and AADK class..."

(Informant D3 (37), Drug Abuse Recovery)

"...I think I need to stay here, in Hulu Langat with my younger sibling, to maintain my recovery..."

(Informant D5 (34), Drug Abuse Rehabilitation)

"...move away from the area, stay a bit further away..."

"...maybe go back to the village or stay with grandma. Grandma is in the village, and no one takes care of her, so it would be okay to stay in the village..."

(Informant D14 (19), Drug Abuse Rehabilitation)

"...If it were me, I would occupy myself with worship and reading the Quran, but for the time being, I would distance myself from my friends who are not good influences, so during that time, I would focus on myself for a while, and only after I feel okay would I meet my friends again, but I wouldn't get involved in those things..."

(Informant D13 (21), Recovery from Risky Sexual Relationships)

The study's findings indicate that the continuous recovery planning mentioned by the informants includes daily recovery planning from a spiritual perspective. Khairul (2018), Fauziah et al. (2011), Galanter (2006), and Nurdeng & Nurfatiha (2018) demonstrate that recovery through spirituality can help trainees reduce their dependence on drugs and avoid re-engaging in risky sexual relationships. The results of the data analysis also revealed that the recovery plans articulated by the informants included periodic recovery. According to Mohd Ibrani (2012), AADK established a rehabilitation goal plan for former drug addicts, which requires them to comply with a two-year supervision condition upon release from the institution. Regular observation and monitoring by institutions, families, and communities are aspects of the plans that rehabilitation institutions will implement for former trainees facing social problems, particularly drug abuse and risky sexual behavior. This goal plan is applied to the trainees for post-institution release planning to ensure their successful reintegration into society (Nur Zatil et al., 2016; Micheal & Jerome, 2012; Mohd Alif et al., 2019).

iv. Planning related to family and parenting roles

This study also reveals planning related to family and parenting roles. The informant acknowledged plans to get married after completing rehabilitation at the institution. One informant involved in an out-of-wedlock pregnancy expressed a desire to focus on childcare after leaving the institution. Here are some verbatim examples from the informants:

"...I will build a new life, focusing on my child and family..."

(Informant D11 (20), Recovery from Risky Sexual Relationships)

"...another plan, especially God willing, looking for a partner, because I am still single, besides looking for a job, that's one of the plans too..."

(Informant D3 (37), Drug Abuse Rehabilitation)

"...God willing, planning to get married after release..."

(Informant D5 (34), Drug Abuse Rehabilitation)

Post-release planning for informants D3, D5, and D11 focuses on building a family and fulfilling parental roles. This finding supports previous studies by Bersani & Doherty (2013), Bersani et al. (2009), Maruna et al. (2007), and Sampson (2003). According to these researchers, marriage is a significant turning point that can reduce former drug addicts' involvement in criminal activities and social problems. Responsibility and commitment through marriage can help individuals avoid re-engaging in drug addiction and risky sexual relationships after their release. Similarly, there is a tendency to take responsibility in fulfilling parenting roles. The study by Salina et al. (2020) highlights the strong inclination of unmarried pregnant women to care for the children born after their release from the institution, even without support from family members.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the context of this study, the researcher identified rehabilitation intervention programs implemented by drug rehabilitation institutions, as well as issues related to out-of-wedlock pregnancies and same-sex relationships. The identified interventions include programs structured around i) religious and spiritual activities, ii) psychosocial rehabilitation, iii) skills or vocational training, and iv) health education. However, the researchers found that the institutions involved in this study emphasized rehabilitation and did not focus on the trainees' planning as preparation for their release. Post-institutional release planning received little emphasis and attention. The rehabilitation interventions mentioned by the study informants primarily focused on recovery while the individuals were still in the institution. The youth interviewed were not informed about plans regarding what they should do after completing their rehabilitation.

The lack of empowerment provided to youth in institutions to prepare for maintaining recovery after release tends to lead to the repetition of risky behaviors. In contrast, post-institutional release planning has been shown by previous researchers to help prevent re-engagement in the same social and criminal problems. According to studies by Najwa et al. (2008), Shafie et al. (2015), and Halim (2010), most drug addicts undergoing rehabilitation training in Malaysia are at a low readiness-to-change stage, specifically in the pre-contemplation and contemplation stages. This level of readiness remains unchanged upon release. Such findings are believed to result from a lack of empowerment in planning and assessing needs after release, which should be addressed while they are still in rehabilitation centers. Former addicts have not yet committed to change and do not have clear goals or confidence in their direction after leaving the rehabilitation center (Alif et al., 2022; Fauziah et al., 2011; Fauziah et al., 2016; Fauziah et al., 2017).

In summary, post-institutional release planning for youth undergoing rehabilitation for drug abuse and risky sexual behavior requires greater attention and emphasis. Drug abuse and risky sexual behavior are concerning issues, as they can lead to other social problems, including crime and the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Without a strong emphasis on post-institutional release planning, the statistics for relapse and recidivism will likely increase. Critical areas for post-institutional release planning that need emphasis include: i) obtaining permanent and stable jobs, ii) pursuing educational opportunities, iii) ensuring continuous recovery, and iv) planning related to family and parenting roles. Holistic post-institutional release planning is crucial for social integration into society. Therefore, implementing agencies must prioritize post-institutional release planning for youth recovering from substance abuse and risky sexual behavior. This study suggests that rehabilitation institutions should assess clients' needs and organize programs that guide planning activities to maintain recovery after release.

Furthermore, community-based post-institutional release programs serve as a crucial intervention, supporting former trainees, especially those in the final phase before release. According to the study by Cappuzzi and Stauffer (2014), a support system significantly aids in the rehabilitation of trainees through social integration. Most youths involved in risky sexual behavior and drug abuse admit that reintegrating into society is challenging due to a lack of social support (Reffina & N.K. Tharshini, 2020; Adibah & Husin, 2018). Therefore, identifying the social support systems available to trainees, such as parents, family, partners, and friends, before their release or completion of rehabilitation is essential. These social support figures can provide strength in facing societal challenges. However, the group must be sensitive to the trainees' needs and aware of their significant role in ensuring ongoing recovery.

It is recommended that three to six months before the trainee completes the rehabilitation period, these social support figures be identified and engaged in an interactive program with the institution. The program should aim to provide psychoeducation to ensure they not only support the maintenance of recovery for their child, partner, or friend but also understand how to help achieve the goals planned by the trainee for life post-institution. The findings of this study related to i) obtaining permanent and stable jobs, ii) pursuing educational planning, iii) continuous recovery, and iv) planning related to family and parenting roles can be referenced and utilized as psychoeducational modules for the trainees' social support figures.

The findings of this study can guide social work education to emphasize a curriculum structure that exposes students and practitioners to the competencies required for planning post-institutional release for clients. The social work education curriculum at universities should focus on holistic case management, considering intervention planning not only within institutions but also outside of them. Preparing social workers to plan post-institutional release for clients during practice is expected to be a key platform for successful social integration programs involving communities and agencies from various sectors. Additionally, from the perspective of enhancing research knowledge and generalization, future researchers can utilize the findings of this study to conduct quantitative surveys. The themes obtained from the thematic analysis of this study can be used to construct questionnaire items for surveying trainees undergoing institutional rehabilitation in future studies.

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