

# Plant the SEED and Watch It Grow: Women's Recovery in a Trauma-Informed Sober Living Home

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## Introduction

### Background

- 5.3 million women in the United States suffer from Alcohol Use Disorder, and 4.1 million women suffer from Drug Use Disorder<sup>1-2</sup>.
- Instances of substance abuse may arise from tendencies to self-medicate or to reduce emotional stress. Some major causes of emotional stress include physical and sexual violence<sup>3</sup>.
- Due to the significant association between substance use and trauma, it is crucial to promote recovery in a safe space that addresses both conditions to understand the nuanced impact of trauma on recovery<sup>4</sup>.
- Despite this, few sober-living homes (SLHs) address both issues concurrently<sup>5</sup>, and so it is unclear what the specific benefits of addressing substance use and trauma together in SLHs are.

### Current study aims

- To examine the impact of a trauma-informed all female SLH on healthy behaviors for women. These include both mental and physical health.

## Method

### Procedure

- Women living in the Support, Education, Empowerment & Directions (SEEDs) program were surveyed.
- SEEDs is a trauma-informed SLH in Phoenix, Arizona.
- All women staying at SEEDs have a history of both interpersonal trauma and substance use disorders (SUDs).

### Participants

- 38 current residents
- Age:  $M = 42.5$  years,  $SD = 9.6$ , range 22-67 years.
- Race: 89.5% White, 10.5% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 5.3% African American, 5.3% Biracial.
- Sexual Orientation: 84.2% Heterosexual, 15.8% Sexual Minority.
- Length of time at SEEDs:  $M = 86$  days,  $SD = 169$  days, range: 2-576 days.

## Study Measures

Construct	Measure
<b>Depression</b>	Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale <sup>6</sup> - A 20 item measure of symptoms associated with depression experienced in the past 6 months.
<b>Post traumatic stress</b>	The PTSD Checklist <sup>7</sup> - 17 items assessing experiences of PTSD in the past 6 months in regard to a stressful life experience.
<b>Negative coping strategies</b>	Subscales of the Brief COPE <sup>8</sup> were summed to create a measure of negative coping. These include denial, behavioral disengagement, and self-distraction.
<b>Intimate partner violence</b>	The Conflict Tactics Scale Revised <sup>9</sup> – 8 items measuring psychological and physical intimate partner violence in the past 6 months.
<b>Sobriety</b>	Self-report single-item measuring time since last using alcohol or drugs, measured in days.

## Correlations Among Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Time at SEEDs</b>	1.000						
<b>Sobriety</b>	$r = .545^{**}$ $p < .001$ $n = 38$	1.000					
<b>Depression</b>	$r = -.399^{*}$ $p = .014$ $n = 37$	$r = -.495^{**}$ $p = .002$ $n = 37$	1.000				
<b>Post Traumatic Stress</b>	$r = -.500^{**}$ $p = .002$ $n = 37$	$r = -.476^{**}$ $p = .003$ $n = 37$	$r = .634^{**}$ $p < .001$ $n = 37$	1.000			
<b>Negative Coping Strategies</b>	$r = -.370^{*}$ $p = .022$ $n = 38$	$r = -.350^{*}$ $p = .031$ $n = 38$	$r = .609^{**}$ $p < .001$ $n = 37$	$r = .394^{*}$ $p = .016$ $n = 37$	1.000		
<b>Physical Partner Violence</b>	$r = -.266^{\dagger}$ $p = .107$ $n = 38$	$r = -.328^{*}$ $p = .044$ $n = 38$	$r = .443^{**}$ $p = .006$ $n = 37$	$r = .487^{**}$ $p = .002$ $n = 37$	$r = .116$ $p = .488$ $n = 38$	1.000	
<b>Psychological Partner Violence</b>	$r = -.377^{*}$ $p = .020$ $n = 38$	$r = -.362^{*}$ $p = .026$ $n = 38$	$r = .469^{**}$ $p = .003$ $n = 37$	$r = .546^{**}$ $p < .001$ $n = 37$	$r = .173$ $p = .298$ $n = 38$	$r = .780^{**}$ $p < .001$ $n = 38$	1.000

<sup>†</sup> Correlation is marginally significant (0.10) \*Correlation is significant (0.05), \*\* Correlation is significant (0.01)

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## Results

- Time at SEEDs is positively correlated with sobriety ( $r(36) = .545, p < .001$ ), and negatively correlated with physical ( $r(36) = -.266, p = .107$ ) and psychological violence victimization ( $r(36) = -.377, p = .020$ ). This indicates that more time at SEEDs is associated with longer periods of sobriety and less partner violence.
- Time at SEEDs is also negatively correlated with depressive symptomology ( $r(35) = -.399, p = .014$ ), post-traumatic stress ( $r(35) = -.500, p = .002$ ), and negative coping strategies ( $r(36) = -.370, p = .022$ ). This illustrates that longer stays at SEEDs are associated with lower levels of depression, post traumatic stress, and negative coping strategies.

## Discussion

- While it was expected that sobriety would increase and IPV would decrease while staying at SEEDs (due to SLH requirements), women appeared to also be benefitting in other ways (lower depression symptomology, lower post traumatic stress, and less negative coping) indicating unique benefits of SEEDs that may be arising from the trauma-informed structure of the program.
- These positive mental health outcomes could also be a result of concurrently treating alcohol/drug use disorder and physical/sexual violence.
- Longitudinal data is currently being collected to assess health outcomes after women leave SEEDs.
- These preliminary results demonstrate the need for more sober-living homes that address the co-occurring issues of substance abuse and partner violence.

## References

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