BACKGROUND

Four themes emerged from participants’ accounts: The first focuses on the internal realisation that change is possible, and that support is integral to embracing upon and continuing the recovery journey. Three further themes illustrate the intricate and dynamic sequence of internal and external influences which facilitate recovery, leading to and developing well-being and flourishing in recovery:

**Theme 1: Admitting addiction, accepting support and embarking on change**

- “My recovery is an inside job, nobody can do it for me.” (Tom)
- “I had no inkling of recovery, only had this feeling.” (Daniel)
- “He swept the path but I walked it, in all fairness, he swept it well.” (Tom)
- “I realised I couldn’t do it on my own and there was help out there.” (Faye)
- “I just have to be aware of that sort of stuff and ignoring it.” (Darren)

**Theme 2: Acknowledging strengths and achievements**

- “The journey that lies ahead is nothing compared to the strength that lies within.” (Tom)
- “I believe I am meant to be in recovery 100% of the time.” (Sarah)
- “I’ve got a lot more faith in myself, a lot more faith in my ability, definitely my capabilities.” (Darren)
- “I’m a lot more confident – I mean I had false confidence when I used cocaine and stuff like that.” (Steve)

**Theme 3: Identifying future goals**

- “It’s been slowly progressing-taking baby steps back into life.” (Brad)
- “When you put that stuff down that you have been doing for 20 years there is a hole, a hole that needs filling.” (Tom)
- “I’m going back to Uni. in September, things take time.” (Sarah)
- “I’d like to move up in the company.” (Tom)
- “I want a life I want to start living I want a family I want to be a mum I want to be a wife.” (Faye)

**Theme 4: Giving something back**

- “I’ve gained a wanting to contribute to society rather than wanting to take from it.” (Liam)
- “I love helping people and I will always help someone else.” (Brad)
- “What I wanna do isn’t about money, it’s about sharing my own experience and also gaining experience.” (Daniel)

FINDINGS

Findings support the work of other authors (e.g. Best et al., 2012; Hansen et al., 2009), and reinforce the work of Seligman (2011) with all elements of his PERMA model demonstrated throughout participant accounts.

- **Positive emotions** were noticeably displayed through participants acknowledging their achievements and strengths.
- **Engagement** was clearly evidenced in participants’ accounts of their current experiences whether these were being in employment, paid or voluntary, or attending university.
- **All participants acknowledged that their relationships were far more positive and meaningful since being in recovery, and that with prolonged recovery these continued to develop, thus positively enhancing individual well-being.**
- **Participants evidenced meaning in their accounts of involvement in the NA fellowship, employment or supportive roles.**
- **Accomplishment** was visibly recognised throughout participants’ accounts either directly or indirectly, where individuals reflected on their achievements and spoke about the progress that they had made.

METHOD

- Eight participants were recruited from two UK community drug services; they were substance (minimum 12 months) and medication (minimum six months) free.
- Recruitment criteria were not substance specific to account for poly-drug users. All were no longer in treatment.
- Data were collected through single, semi-structured interviews.
- Interviews were transcribed by the lead author and analysed thematically (Braun and Clarke 2006), using an interpretivist approach.

**Key References**


CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The above evidence of flourishing illustrates a previously unexplored phenomenon in the recovery experience, and suggests practical applications in treatment settings.

- **Enhanced well-being** appears crucial to maximising successful treatment outcomes, facilitating recovery and eliminating substance addiction.
- Further research is needed to address the extent to which flourishing in recovery from substance addiction is maintained over time.
- **Application to treatment:** Participants indicate that one support mechanism should not be used in isolation. Rather, that emphasis needs to be placed on peer support alongside other external influences, whilst facilitating and maintaining focus on the internal drivers that facilitate change.