POSTGRADUATE

WELLINGTON

Residential treatment for adults with severe substance use disorder - what works, for whom and in what circumstances? An initial theory.

SSA PhD Conference

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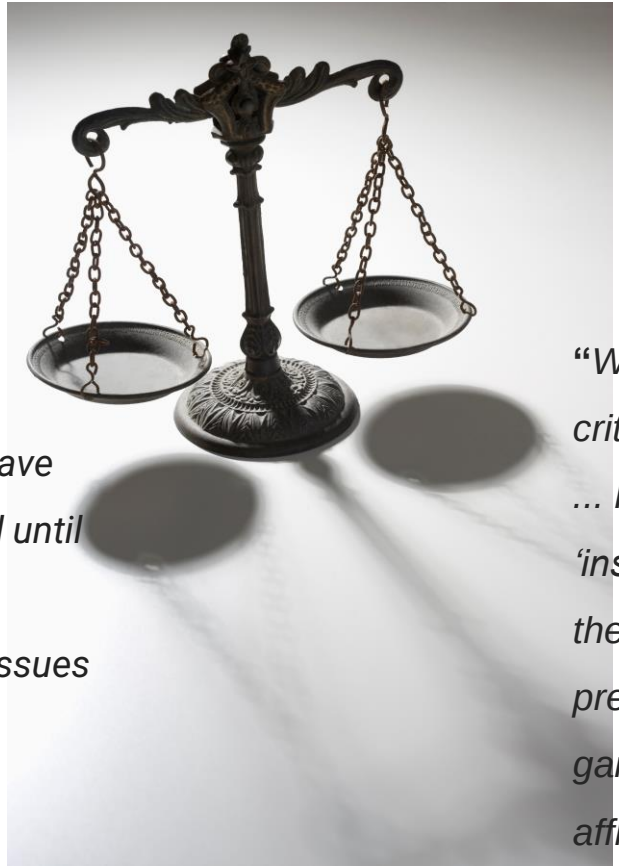
Judgement A

“You suffer from addiction and have endured poverty and trauma, and until this year had never received rehabilitation for your addiction issues or counselling to address your background.”



Judgement B

“When someone like [this] is a critical component to the programme … How do I put aside that ‘institutional knowledge’ and come to the conclusion that [he], as a president in the Mongrel Mob [a gang], is able to rehabilitate those afflicted with methamphetamine addiction?”

Realist Evaluation

Pawson & Tilley (1997)

What works?

For Whom?

Over what timescale?

In what circumstances?

Scope

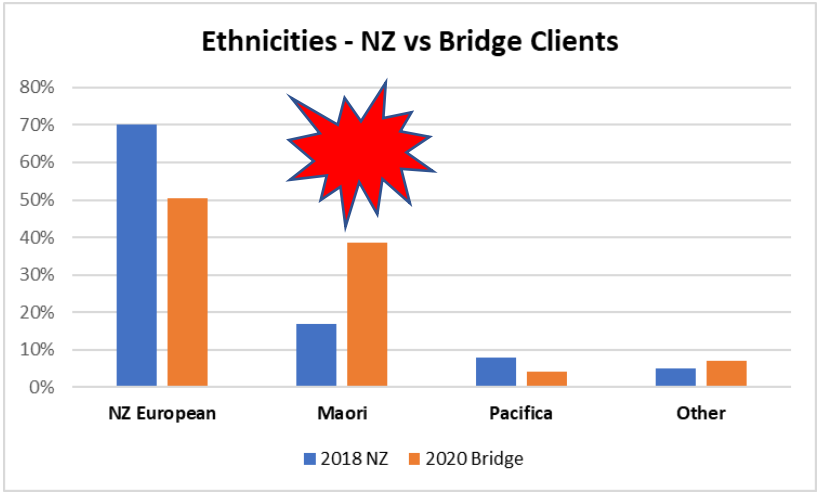
- Ontology
- Setting
- Initial Programme Theory
- Compare and Contrast

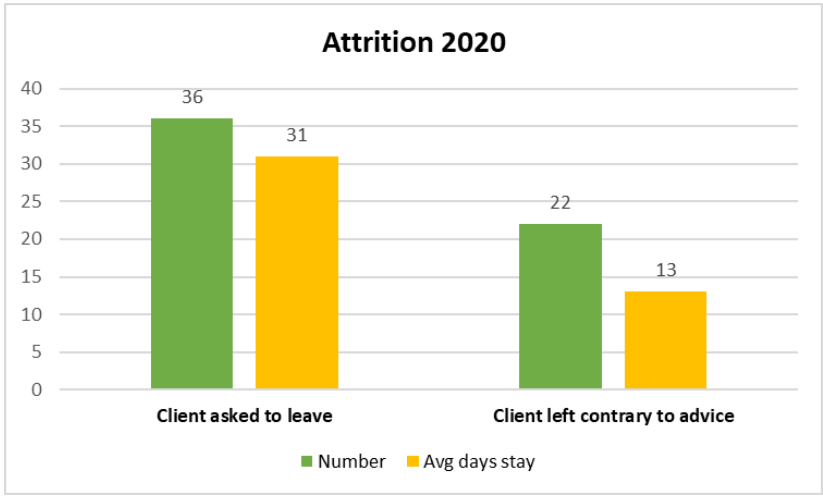
Ontology and causation

Term	Description	Explanation
Realist ontology	What exists	Explains that reality exists in layers (Empirical, Actual and the Real) only some of which is observable. Reality also exists at the levels of micro (individual), meso (organisational) and macro (societal).
Causation	O=f(C.M)	Outcomes follow from the effect of Contexts on Mechanisms
Contexts	Conditions that activate the mechanisms, leading to positive or negative outcomes.	Phenomena connected in space and time. Can be structural (network or organisational), cultural, resource-based (skills, knowledge), motivational.
Mechanisms	The underlying latent process / structure that generates outcomes.	Mechanisms are hidden and sensitive to changes in context. Interventions are not mechanisms.

Setting

- 26-bed residential treatment programme for
  - Adults
  - Moderate to severe substance use disorder
- Operated by the Salvation Army
- Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand
- Staff – clinicians, caseworkers, recovery coaches
- Data collection – funding agreements; 5 x interviews (n=4)



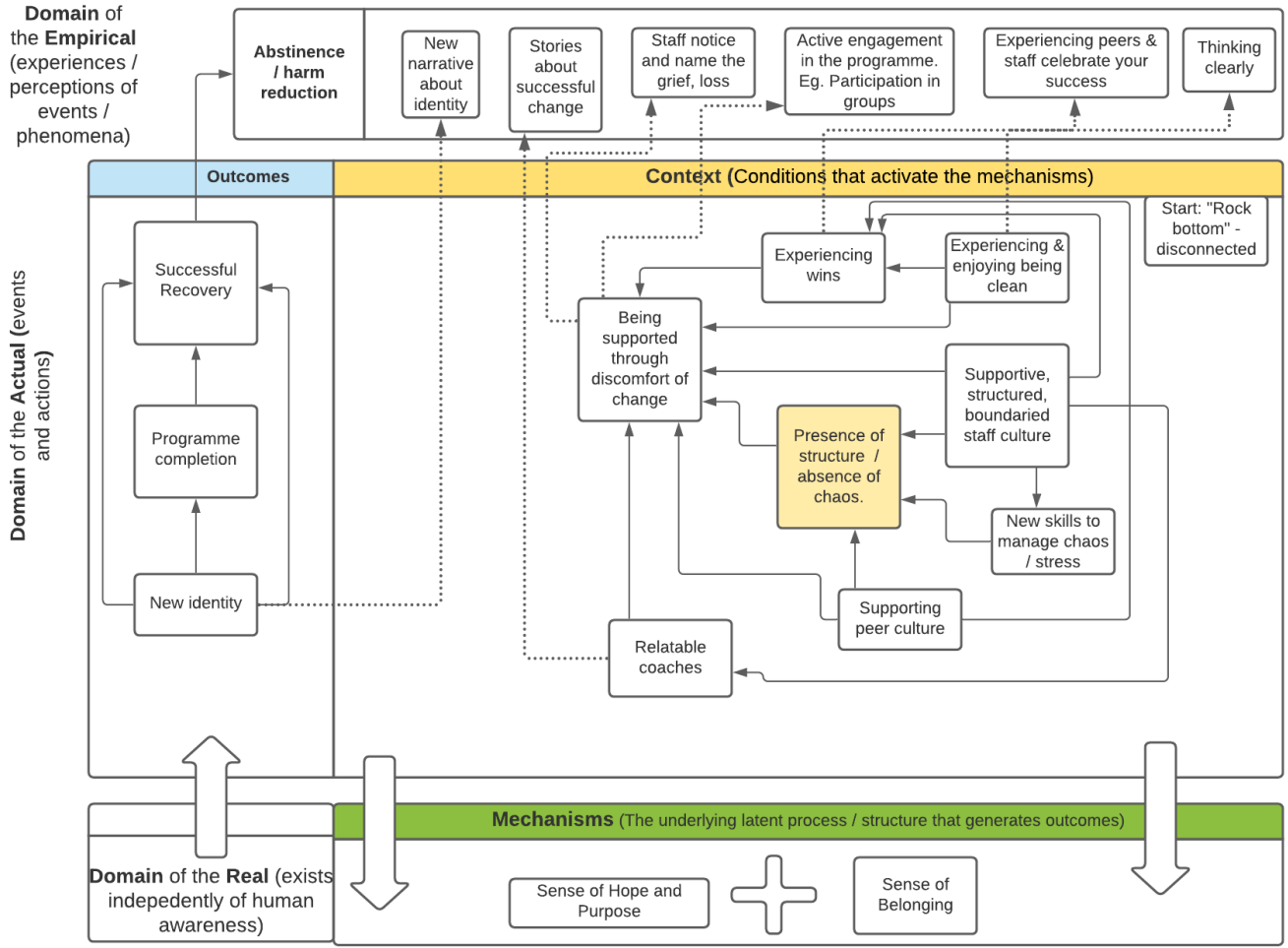


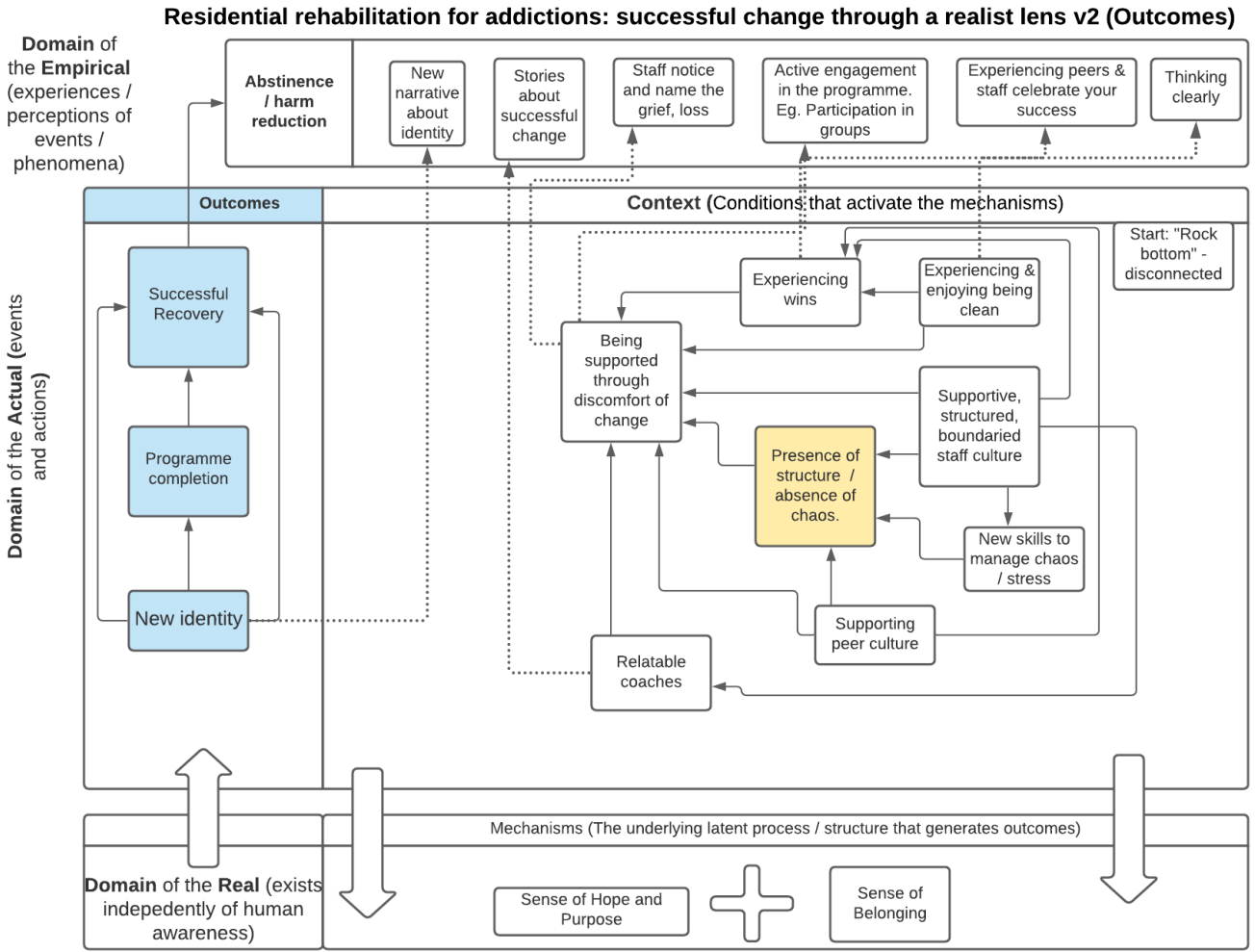
Initial Programme Theory

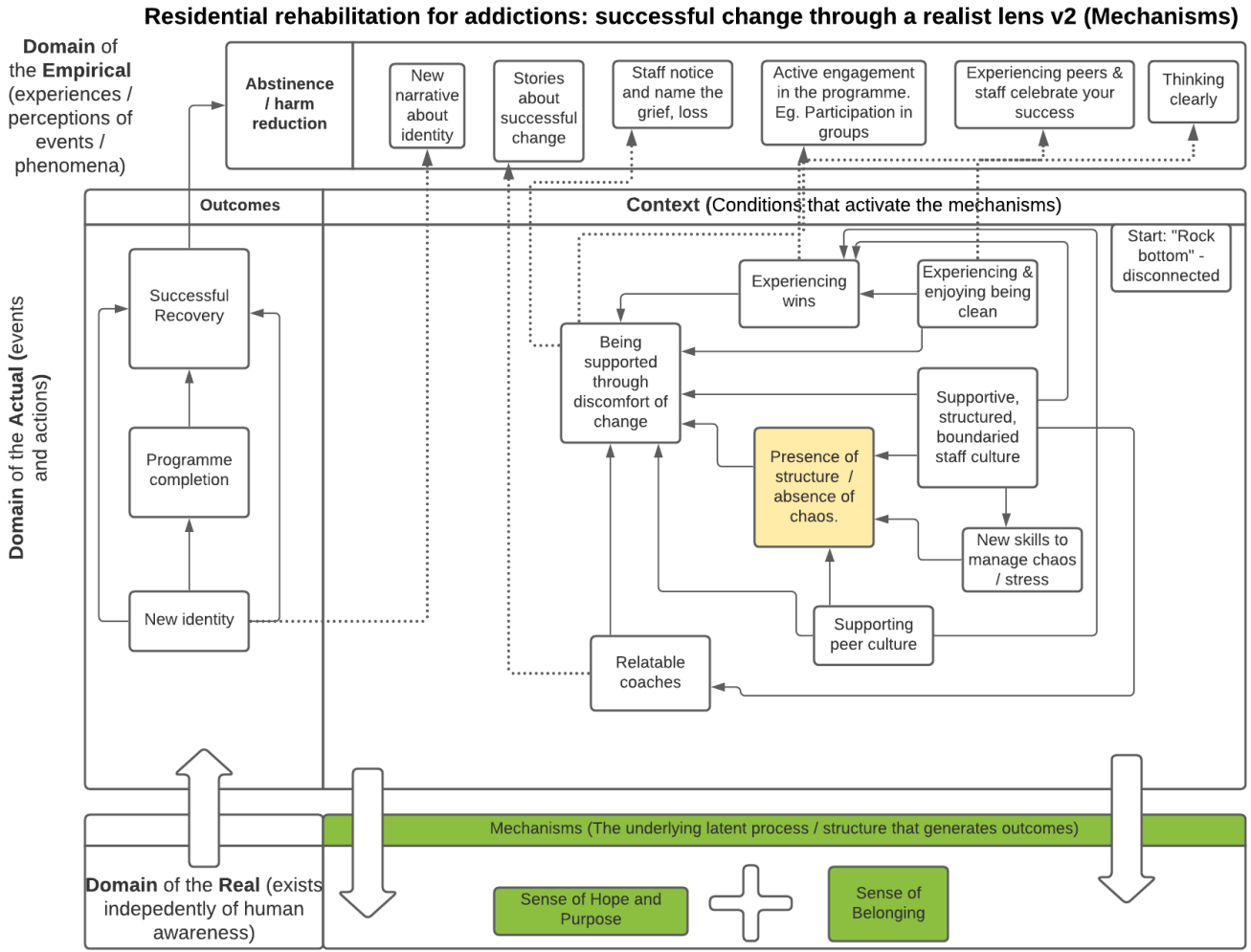
Outcome=f(C.M)

Outcome = Programme completion.
Intermediate Outcome = Change of Identity.
Context = (Presence of structure + support)+(absence of chaos).
Mechanism = (Sense of belonging + sense of hope and purpose.

Residential rehabilitation for addictions: successful change through a realist lens v2




Residential rehabilitation for addictions: successful change through a realist lens v2 (Outcomes)
Domain of the Empirical (experiences / perceptions of events / phenomena)
Abstinence / harm reduction
New narrative about identity
Stories about successful change
Staff notice and name the grief, loss
Active engagement in the programme. Eg. Participation in groups
Experiencing peers & staff celebrate your success
Thinking clearly
Outcomes
Context (Conditions that activate the mechanisms)
Domain of the Actual (events and actions)
Successful Recovery
Programme completion
New identity
Experiencing wins
Experiencing & enjoying being clean
Start: "Rock bottom" - disconnected
Being supported through discomfort of change
Supportive, structured, boundaried staff culture
Presence of structure / absence of chaos.
New skills to manage chaos / stress
Supporting peer culture
Relatable coaches
Mechanisms (The underlying latent process / structure that generates outcomes)
Domain of the Real (exists indepedently of human awareness)
Sense of Hope and Purpose
Sense of Belonging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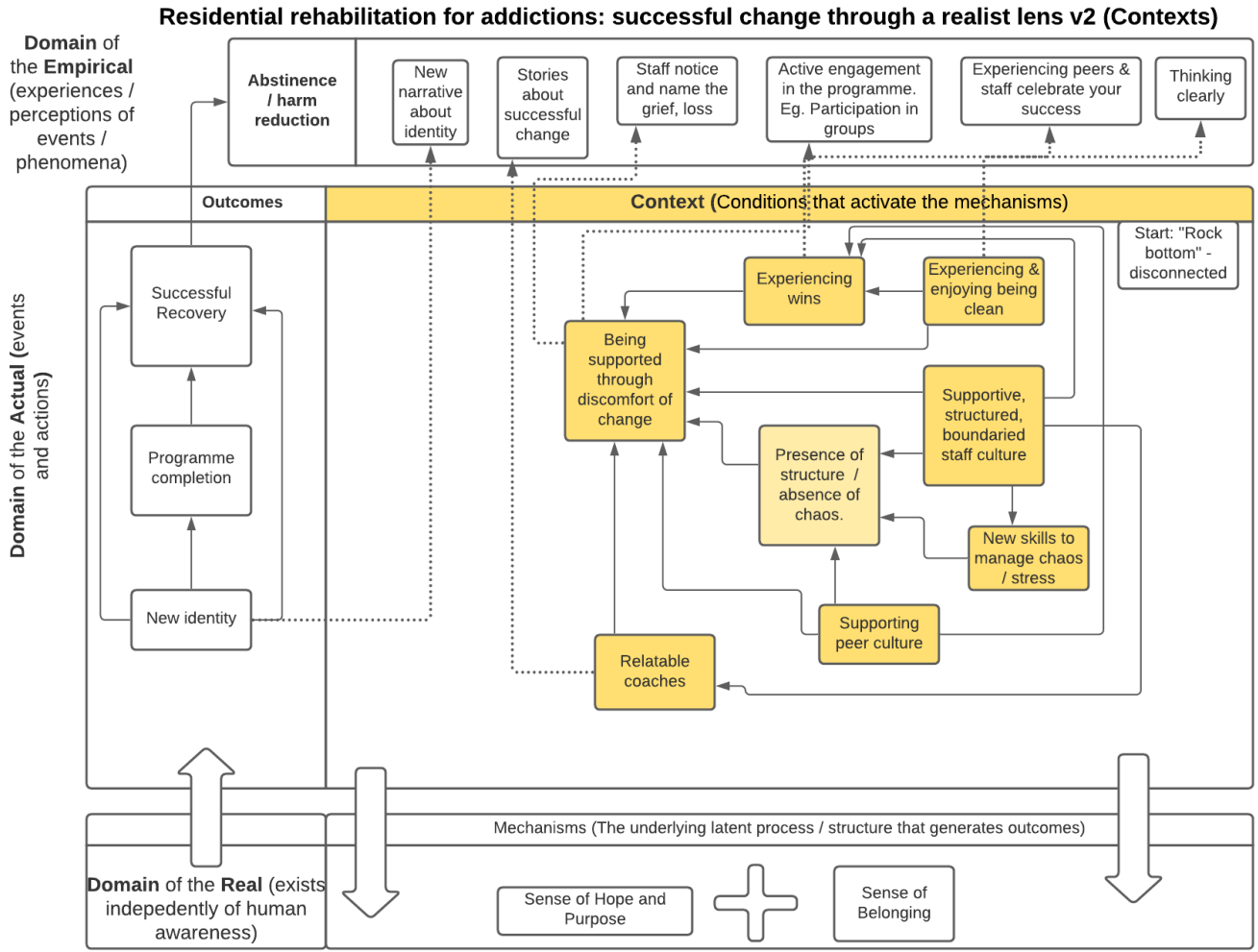
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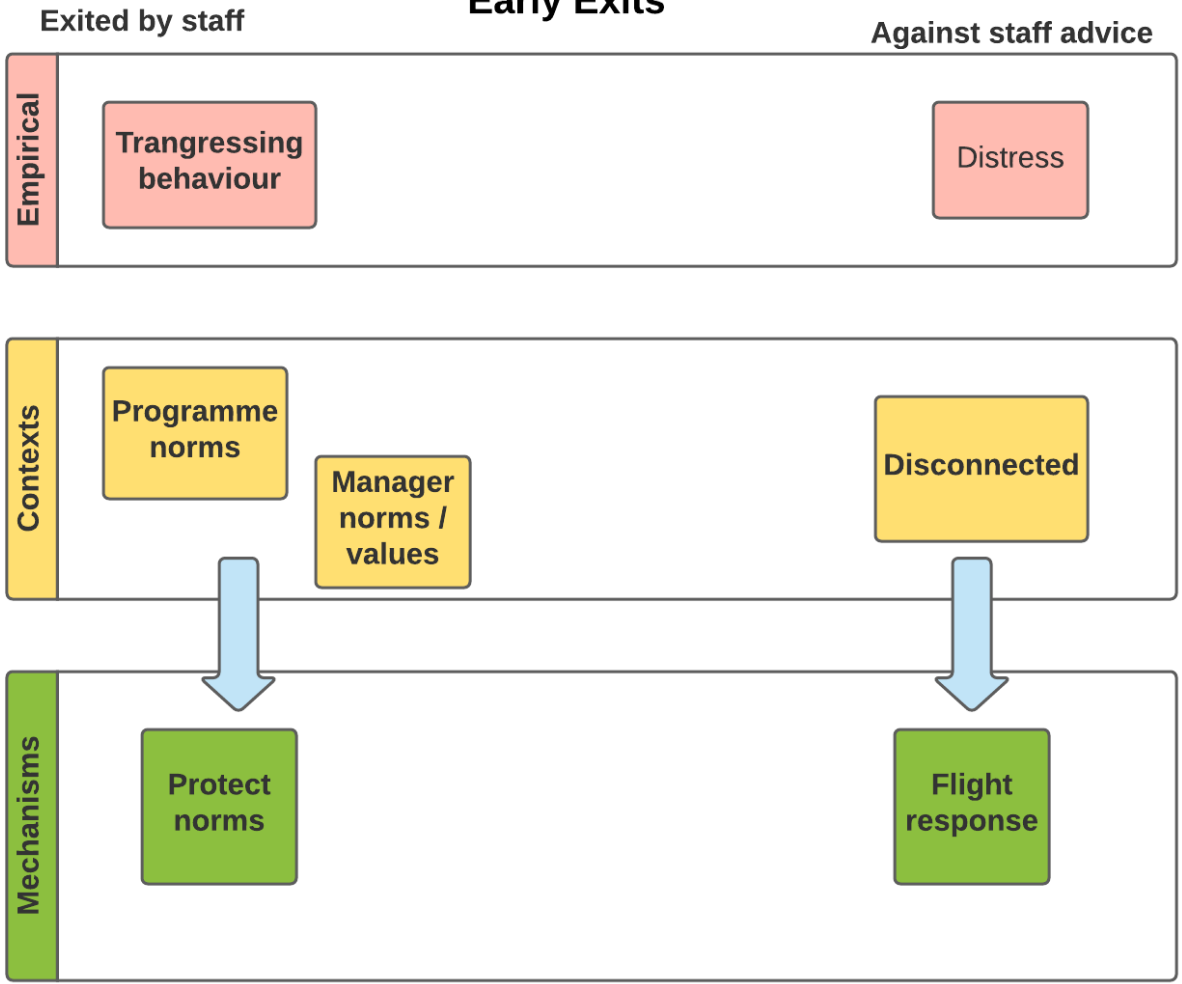
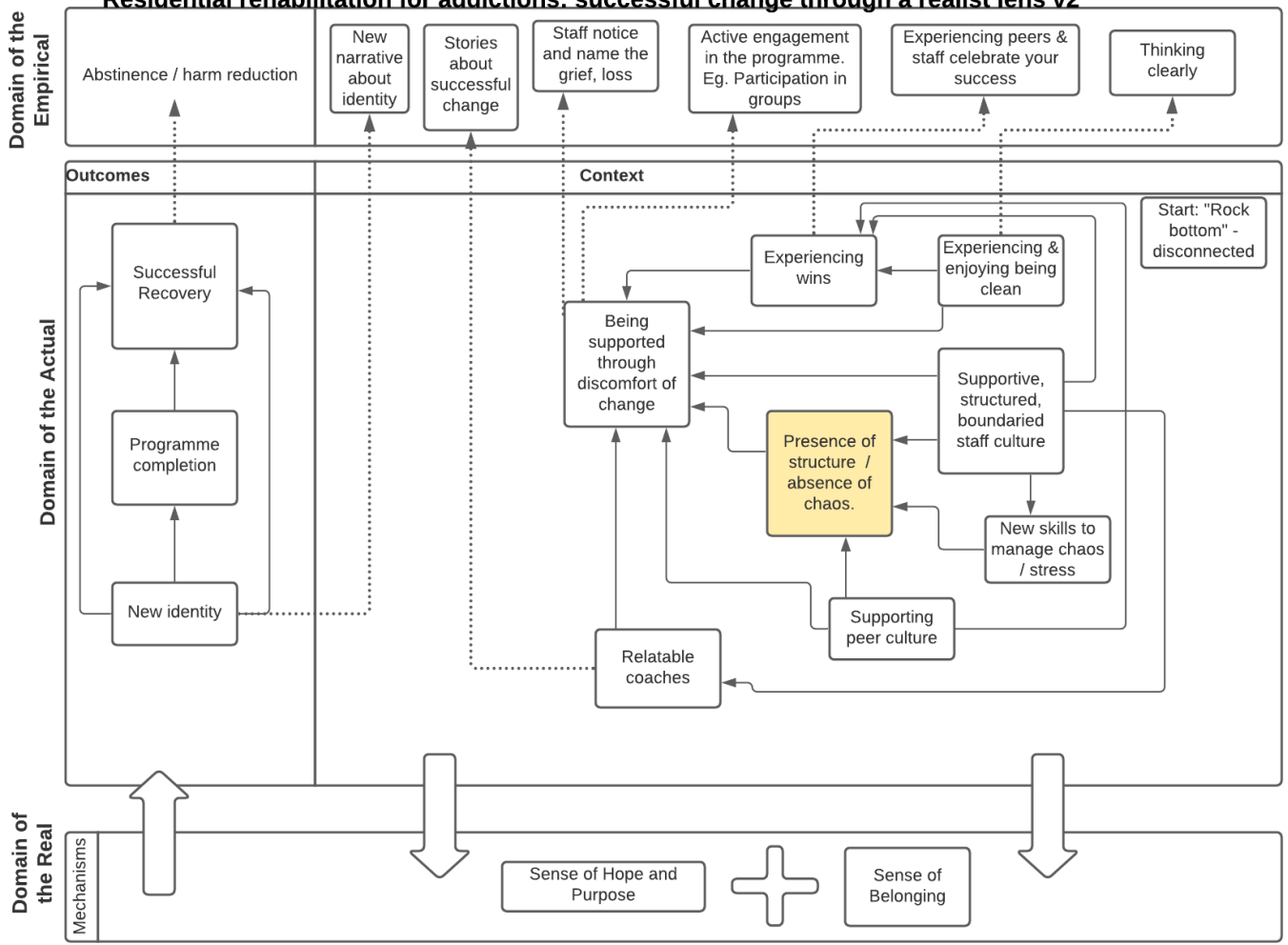
Early Exits


Exited by staff
Against staff advice
Empirical
Trangressing behaviour
Distress
Contexts
Programme norms
Manager norms / values
Disconnected
Mechanisms
Protect norms
Flight response

Residential rehabilitation for addictions: successful change through a realist lens v2



Compare and Contrast

Potential Theories

	Initial Programme Theory	Candidate Theories	Factors of Effective Treatment (Moos, 2007)
Mechanisms of change	Sense of Hope & Purpose	Hope Theory (Snyder, 2002) Spiritual Transformation Process (Neff & McMaster, 2005)	
	Sense of Belonging	Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1974)	
Contexts	Presence of structure & support		Support, structure & goal direction ☑ Rewards for abstinence ☑ Building self-efficacy & coping ☑
	Absence of chaos		

Conclusion

Strengths

- Causal model
- Separates Contexts and Mechanisms
- Explains positive and negative outcomes

Limitations

- Interview population
- Indigenous clients?
- Treatment length?
- Non-completers & successful recovery?

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