

# “And Now that I Feel Safe...I'm Coming Out of Fight or Flight”:

## A Qualitative Exploration of Challenges and Opportunities for Residents' Mental Health in Substance Use Recovery Housing



### CO-OCCURRING MENTAL HEALTH & SUBSTANCE USE

For people in recovery, untreated mental health conditions can mean higher risks of suicide, overdose, and future relapses.

So, why don't more people get the help they need?

- Stigma
- Mistrust of Healthcare
- High Costs
- Barriers to Care

### HOW CAN RECOVERY HOMES HELP?

Recovery homes offer stability, community, and a chance to heal. But what is it like for people with mental health challenges?

### WHAT DID WE DO?

We interviewed 92 people living in one of Project Homes' 14 recovery residences across Texas to learn about the experiences of those with both mental health and substance use issues.

### WHAT DID WE LEARN?

Overall, recovery homes improve people's mental health. Having similar personal experiences helped people:

- Feel understood
- Open up about their mental health
- Support each other without feeling judged

*“It really makes me feel safe that I have all these people looking out for me.”*

— Recovery Home Resident



In 2023, over 20.4 million adults in the U.S. had both a mental health condition and a substance use disorder.

### A SAFE PLACE TO HEAL

- Recovery homes gave people time to work on their mental health
- The stability helped them move from “fight or flight” and into long-term recovery

### WHAT'S NEXT?

Best practices and policies to guide recovery homes in supporting people who have other mental health conditions.

Share resources to help connect residents to local mental health services.

Reference:

Stewart HLN, Wilkerson JM, Gallardo KR, et al. “And Now that I Feel Safe...I'm Coming Out of Fight or Flight”: A Qualitative Exploration of Challenges and Opportunities for Residents' Mental Health in Substance Use Recovery Housing. *Community Ment Health J.* 2024;60(8):1484-1492. doi:10.1007/s10597-024-01301-7

Project HOMES:

