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Janus of Santa Cruz Lighthouse Resource and Recovery App:

for Relapse Prevention

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Author Note

Christine Henriques: Janus of Santa Cruz Residential Treatment Center, California State University Monterey Bay. The Capstone project Janus Lighthouse Resource and Recovery App for relapse prevention addresses protracted abstinence and was created to provide all clients with a continuum of care upon exiting treatment to assist in reducing relapse. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Christine Henriques, Janus of Santa Cruz, Department of Collaborative Health and Human Services, California State University, 100 Campus Center Seaside, CA 93955

Abstract

This report addresses reducing relapse rates in Santa Cruz and Monterey County's by providing aftercare resources and support at client's fingertips by downloading the Janus Lighthouse App (JLA). The app contains resources and recovery tools for Janus alumni. Trends were identified in Janus' clients that successfully completed a minimum of 30 days of residential treatment and relapsed shortly after, resurfacing back into to treatment. It was determined that clients that did not commit to follow-up aftercare, or that did not have the insurance to continue aftercare treatment, struggled with their sobriety. Protracted Abstinence, also known as hitting the wall, is an early stage of recovery in which the addict is vulnerable to relapse. During this stage it is crucial to provide the recovering clients with social support and resources to maintain their sobriety. The free JLA provides a continuum of care connecting all clients that successfully complete residential treatment to the app on their personal cell phones. It has been determined through the number of active users, surveys and user feedback that the app is a beneficial resource for Janus Residential Treatment Center (RTC) and for the Santa Cruz and Monterey recovery communities. The app has proven to contribute to reducing relapse rates and keeping alumni clients connected to social support and resources following residential treatment. The JLA is an effective tool that will provide additional resources and support to all clients and is anticipated to contribute to the reduction of relapse rates, overdose and death.

Keywords: Protracted abstinence, Relapse, Social Support and Resources, Phone app

Agency and Communities Served

Janus of Santa Cruz is a non-profit organization that specializes in the treatment of individuals assessed with Substance Use Disorder (SUD) in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. Janus provides a continuum of care offering 9 different programs to oversee specific levels of care. Janus of Santa Cruz Residential (RTC) includes a detox center, that is located on site. Janus utilizes medical and social model approaches to treatment. All counselors are registered with the California Consortium of Addiction Programs (CCAP) providing ethical evidenced-based counseling in a therapeutic environment. Activities include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) groups, relapse prevention, life skills training, 12-step social support groups, meditation, acupuncture, gym workouts and beach walks. Clients engage in 1:1 counseling sessions and mental health counseling if required. Currently, Janus RTC houses 24 men and women for a duration of a minimum of 30 days to 5 months. Janus is physically expanding their program to accommodate 40 clients due to their partnerships and funding with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and Central California Alliance for Health Care Services. Janus has many affiliations, partners with various agencies in the community, and has the continued support of many donors. Janus serves an average of 2,500 clients each year. According to Janus evaluations, the program has an 80% success rate for completion of residential treatment-which is the highest in the nation (Janus of Santa Cruz, 2018). Janus has been around for 42 years and thrives operating from the perspective that addiction is a family disease. Janus restores hope by providing client centered interventions, professional, ethical and compassionate care. For over 40 years, Janus has remained dedicated to its mission:

“To provide supportive, hope inspiring and successful addiction treatment services in a professional and compassionate environment while assisting individuals and families on their journey towards wellness and recovery” (Janus, 2018).

Demographics

Demographics of Santa Cruz and Monterey County aligns with the population served at Janus RTC. According the United States Census (2010), county populations combined consist of approximately 750,000 residents which includes; 30,000 veterans, 18% of the population are disabled, which includes physical and mental disabilities such as Substance Use disorder, 25% or quarter of this population are considered to be living in poverty- with a median house-hold income of approximately \$70,000. The majority of RTC clients possess a high school diploma or equivalent. RTC is one of the few treatment programs that honor Medi-Cal insurance which accommodates many of the residents in these counties.

Problem, Issue or Need

The problem being addressed is clients experiencing protracted abstinence within the Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. There is a grave need for free aftercare support to all clients exiting residential treatment. “Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences” (NIDA,2018). Therefore, relapse is considered inevitable if clients do not have stability and support. It is difficult to obtain accurate data regarding relapse rates due to the loss of contact with clients that complete residential programming. Trends were recognized in Janus clients that successfully completed the minimum of 30 days residential treatment at RTC and relapsed shortly thereafter- resurfacing back into treatment. This was due to several risk factors such as; lack of knowledge and access to aftercare support and resources that are essential to clients in this early stage of recovery. It was

determined that clients that did not commit to follow-up aftercare, or that did not have the insurance to continue aftercare treatment, struggled with their sobriety. Protracted Abstinence, also known as hitting the wall, is a stage of recovery in which the addict experiences a “cluster of vague depressive-like symptoms which can include reduced concentration, low energy level, poor sleep quality, and anhedonia” (SAMSHA, 2018). This stage begins after the first few weeks of sobriety and may continue for months following their initial date of abstinence, known as their sobriety date. According to various research (SAMSHA,2018), the greatest risk associated with protracted abstinence is relapse. During this stage it is crucial to provide recovering addicts with aftercare options to assist in maintaining their sobriety. Lack of knowledge of resources, such as; housing, medical, clothing, food, education, and social support creates barriers in the client’s life that make it difficult for them to sustain their sobriety during this stage. According to a two-year research study conducted by Laudet, Savage and Mahmood (2007), that examined crucial factors that assisted individuals in long term recovery (median =12 years) in establishing and sustaining sobriety. “Key factors reported were social support, affiliation with 12-step groups and negative consequences of substance use” (Laudet, Savage and Mahmood,2007). Negative consequences spanned all areas of their lives including physical, mental, economic and social. It was further noted that having social support throughout one’s life time of recovery, particularly by recovering peers, was found to buffer stress, provide hope, coping strategies and role models, giving strength in trying times” (Laudet, Savage and Mahmood, 2007). The wisdom shared by one addict helping another, connections with recovery, and resources decreases negative consequences due to continued addiction. Lifetime support and resources can be achieved through the JLA platform



Clients that are considered Alumni are often provided with a continuum of care through Janus' Recovery Support Services (RSS). This program was recently created to provide Janus staff with an outlet that offers clients with additional aftercare support following treatment. Clients are assigned to the RSS Case Manager, who will maintain contact with the clients through Telehealth Calls, in which they will continue to assess the client's needs following treatment. Eligibility for this continuum of care is determined prior to the client's departure and is based on specific criteria and insurance eligibility. Not all clients will be eligible for the RSS aftercare support program and not all will consider engaging in aftercare treatment. After leaving the security and stability of residential treatment, the clients are returned into society. Not having a strong social support system and resources in place prior to completing treatment makes the client very vulnerable to going into relapse mode. The consequences of not having an aftercare support are often relapse, overdose and death. Currently the United States is experiencing epidemic levels of persons overdosing with 72,000 deaths reported in 2017- nearly 200 people die each day. Research presented by the Center of Disease Control (CDC), for a 12-month duration ending February 2018 was recorded at 69,073 -which did not include overdose death cases pending investigation. California morbidity rates for the same duration were recorded at 5059 deaths due to overdose. Monterey and Santa Cruz counties combined recorded 304 overdose deaths from 2014-2016. Santa Cruz County reported 27 overdose deaths this year alone

(National Center for Health Statistics, 2018). After recognizing that not all clients were eligible for current aftercare treatment, the need to develop an option that would be available to all clients was addressed and developed.

Project Description and Justification

The Janus Lighthouse App provides viable resources and recovery tools at the end of client's fingertips. Since not all clients are eligible for the RSS aftercare program, there was an immense need to provide support to those who do not qualify for aftercare treatment. To help all clients maintain momentum, structure and support, the JLA was created to provide all alumni clients with a free aftercare resource. The JLA provides Janus alumni with recovery education, social support and community resources by downloading the app on various platforms to their personal cell phones or laptops. Clients can navigate the app with ease, accessing various support groups, meditations, affirmations, educational opportunities and wellness checklists. They can access meeting schedules for alcoholics anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous, Refuge Recovery, Celebrate Recovery, Al-anon and many more. They can seek sponsorship or be a sponsor and acquire real time information on support groups in their local area. There is a daily scheduler, a journal and over 65 community resources. The app provides information on local agencies presented, contact information and maps to these agencies. They can call or email these contacts directly through the app for services. There is also a social media platform for alumni to stay connected, as well as local news and recovery events happening in the area. This will help clients stay informed, provide them with additional support and reduce relapse. The app also includes recovery video such as cognitive behavioral therapy groups, relapse prevention, 3 principles and many more. The app allows alumni to access the additional support as they walk through the most vulnerable stage of their recovery.

Implementation

There were many tasks to be executed in successfully completing the LRA. This developmental process was implemented over several months from March – November 2018. After researching and exploring resource apps presented within the app store, it was determined that there is a critical need for technology-based access to resources and support. The inspiration to design the resource and recovery app initially came from another app creator, Darren Ripley, who produced an app for the state of Maine. Darren confirmed that the project was realistic for the anticipated time frame presented and offered his support throughout the process. Darren set up meetings via skype to interact and demonstrate the app development process. He suggested the app developer, Appy Pie to create the app with ease and to have continuous access to additional IT support throughout the development process. An exploration of the Appy Pie App Builder Website provided valuable information that was presented to Janus for confirmation to proceed with the JLA development. An informal proposal for funding was written and submitted to mentor, Lisa Russell, Director of Research and Evaluations. She presented the proposal to the executive committee for approval. JLA was confirmed and approval given with Janus purchasing the access to proceed with the development of the app. Janus appointed additional support from Lohrie Arruiza, Janus Resource specialist, to assist with the development of a resource spreadsheet. Development was initially completed in collaboration with Lohrie Arruiza, whom resigned from Janus shortly thereafter. Lifeline Program Sales Representative, Roy, was contacted to be the provider for access free cell phones for clients that required one. Upon the resignation of Lohrie Arruiza, Janus provided a resource list containing 65 agencies. This list is currently circulated to their RTC clients via paper format. The continuous process of inputting this data has resumed from July 2018 and is on-going. Videos, articles and other viable resources

are continuously being researched and added to the app. You-tube videos are being applied to the app, and do not require consent to be utilized by the public. The entire app building process is being documented on a google slides PowerPoint which will be available on the app for instructions on how to navigate the JLA with ease. All JLA activity is monitored through the app by Janus to avoid risky behaviors and to address questions and concerns. All clients that successful complete RTC will be given an email address/user identification number and a password of their choice to access the Alumni Forum prior to leaving the RTC. Cell phones will be provided to clients that do not currently possess one, through the Lifeline “Obama” phone program. Meetings with Janus Marketing Manager provided pictures and advice on how to give the app a streamlined appearance that aligns with the Janus theme. Meetings with Jesse Gifford, IT manager provided additional security enhancements and prompted adding a disclosure and consent for use to release Janus from any liability regarding use of the application. A final presentation to alumni allowed for implementation of the app. It is anticipated that the app will be available to the public in future. For the time being, the app will continue to be implemented and provide clients with a valuable and viable resource promoting and enforcing recovery within the client’s life following residential care.

Obstacles and Unexpected Circumstances

Following a presentation on the JLA to Janus executive staff on October 1, many unanticipated obstacles were encountered. It was also determined that the JLA is a very valuable resource tool for not only Janus alumni but for the community and is being considered for public access. A list of modifications, additions and feedback was presented for support. A team was developed and appointed to assist in the development process. The team consists of a marketing professional, Andrea Gifford, IT manager, Jesse Gifford, and Aftercare personal, Scott Wood,

and Christine Bassi, RTC program manager. A disclosure will be developed and is required to release Janus from liability and users can consent for “use at your own risk”. Marketing will be addressing the esthetics of the app to give it a Janus theme and appeal. The IT Manager will work on safety precautions and how to secure the app for confidentiality of the clients according to CFR42 part 2, client confidentiality. The app presents a feature pertaining to Sponsorship which presents the additional user agreements and confidentiality breach. The IT manager was not available during the scheduled week of implementation which caused further delay in publishing the app live. Although mentors were supportive, the late response from Janus Staff created an added stressor regarding getting the app completed in a timely manner.

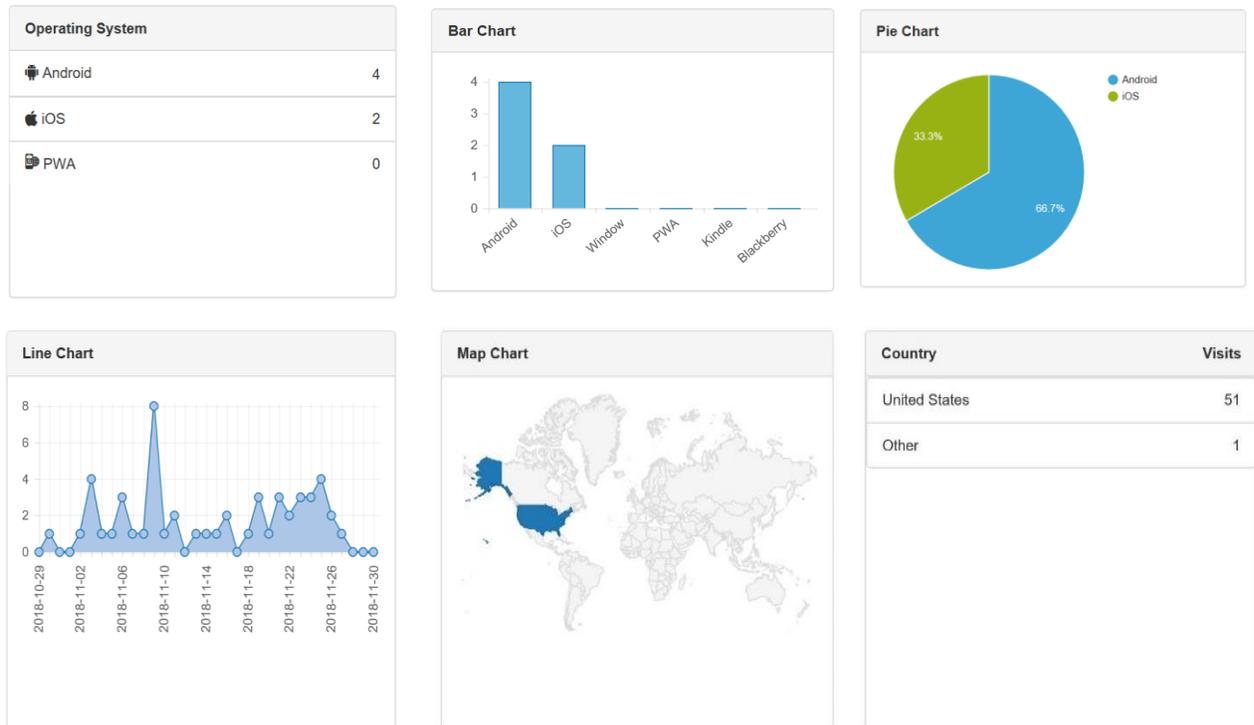
Project Results

Efficacy of the app is measured in various ways; such as, active user counts, app surveys, the “rate this app” feature, and electronic feedback initiated by the current users. The control group consisted of 30 RTC clients (18 years and older) that successfully completed a minimum of 30 days or more of residential treatment in November 2018. Due to legality and technical issues with publishing the app, implementation has been delayed making the results inconclusive and expected outcomes not achieved. Initially, the JLA was to be accessed by RTC Alumni solely but, after the recognition of the app providing a valuable community resource, consideration was made. It was determined that Janus would make the app public and available on the Google and Apple play stores. Therefore, app user agreements and disclaimers pertaining to confidentiality had to be thoroughly reviewed prior to being made available.

Assessment of Project Outcomes

At this time, active users are determined to be the sole predictor in evaluating the efficacy of the app. Due to app store providers, Apple and Google, procedures and policies hindered publishing the app “live” for public downloading. Currently, there are six (6) active users on the app platform which consists of 66.7% (4) Android and 33.3% iOS (2) active users, which are all Janus of Santa Cruz administrative staff testing the JLA for access of ease and navigation. The JLA is in the process of publication for Android in the Google Play Store and will achieve live status on November 29, 2018 for public access. The iOS platform requires Janus of Santa Cruz founder, co-founder or legally appointed administrator to do the initial publishing of the app to the Apple Play Store. It is anticipated that they will be give the process before the year’s end.

Appy Pie App Developer provides analytics to track number of active users, platforms, locations of active users, and number of times the JLA was utilized. This will assist in Janus in determining the app’s efficacy further.



The app is considered a success by Janus of Santa Cruz and is anticipated to give Janus Alumni a greater opportunity at being successful in their sobriety. The app is considered a continuum of aftercare and will keep clients connected to the program, counselors and the recovering community outside of treatment. It will allow Janus to stay connected to prior clients and track their recovery process. This will allow the agency to acquire viable data on relapse rates, which is currently difficult to track due to loss of contact. Janus will continue to elaborate on all the features and possibilities they can implement through the app for years to come. The amount and variety of content that can be introduced on the app platform is considerably infinite. The 230 local county and city resources will be an asset to other agencies within the community. The JLA will need to be updated periodically and additional resources can be added and republished when required.

The current study has several limitations, most notably the small sample size and limited time frame to acquire data which measures the effectiveness of the JLA. The assessment tools that are required to measure data effectively require access to the app survey for further understanding pertaining to the population Janus serves. Demographic information including age, race, gender can only be obtained on the app and are self-administered, not electronically generated. Also, the restricted availability of the app on all platforms eliminated clients that have Apple (iOS) devices and make acquiring a larger sample size challenging. Fortunately, for clients that do not possess a phone, all free Lifeline “Obama” phones are currently Androids. All Limitations were noted and being addressed to conduct further research studies on the JLA in the future.

Conclusion

Although project results were inconclusive, it has been determined that the JLA appears to be beneficial to clients as a continuum of aftercare. The app will provide recovering clients with additional support during the vulnerable stage of protracted abstinence and will assist in them sustaining sobriety following treatment. It is anticipated that the JLA will contribute to the reduction of relapse rates in the Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. It is also considered a valuable resource for Janus of Santa Cruz, the recovering community, and agencies alike. Janus counselors should continue to introduce their clients to the JLA prior to exiting treatment and ensure that they are familiar with the app and able to navigate it with ease. Further research and exploration of the apps efficacy through feedback and surveys will also provide Janus with valuable information on the features utilized on the JLA that are beneficial to their recovery. All active user feedback should be reviewed and considered. App user suggestions and requests for modifications should be explored to ensure the JLA is providing the optimum support and recovery experience possible.

Personal Reflection

Despite the obstacles encountered, I foresee the app being an immense contribution to the recovering community. What I learned from this internship process was that clients want and require after care support to be successful in their recovery. As a member of the recovering community, I recognized this need ten years ago. This was the motivating factor and inspiration for this project. I spent hours during the first year of my internship connecting with clients and inquiring on their biggest concerns around leaving treatment. The answer was always the same; resources, social support and structure. I listened and implemented every single bit of what was conveyed to me into this app.

I recognized during the intake process that the majority of recovering clients came into treatment with merely their cell phones and a bag of clothes. I learned that people in recovery are depleted of everything; often homeless, unemployed, lonely, and disabled- requiring support and direction. Their excitement and curiosity of having everything they require at their fingertips was motivating and well received. We live in an age of technology and having this app is convenient and innovative method of providing resources. Through researching for other viable resource and recovery apps on the Google App Store platform, no other apps were discovered within the Santa Cruz, Monterey and surrounding communities, making the JLA the very first of its kind in the Central California Area. The JLA is a pioneer project, inspiring other resource and recovery apps to be developed in years to come. Janus executives were baffled by the fact that it hasn't been done and were thrilled to be considered the pioneers to this technology-based method of aftercare. It is recommended that other interns from the CHHS program that are interested in working at Janus of Santa Cruz, continue the updating and modifying the JLA in the future. Agencies presented on JLA will also benefit by the "rate this agency" feature. Agencies will be able to track the number of users that visited their resource page and consider the comments presented by the app users. This will help agencies reassess their performance and implement changes if required. There has been immense interest and excitement from other agencies around the publishing of the app. I feel that Janus' decision to make this app available to the public will benefit the community and make a difference in reducing incidence of relapse rates in the future. It is suggested that Janus staff and administration work closely in collaboration with the app developer to obtain the best aftercare treatment outcomes possible.

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Appendix

Activities	Deliverables	Timeline	Estimated Completion Date
Researched & explored apps on Google Play Store Contacted app developer Darren Ripley for guidance	App	February 24, 2018	February 24, 2018
Explored Appy Pie App Builder for pricing	Pricing	March 13, 2018	March 13, 2018
Informal proposal emailed to Lisa Russell to submit to Board of Directors for review and consent	Monies/App builder package	April 9, 2018	May 9, 2018
Called 211 resource information for Lifestyle Obama phone information and location	Location/Brochure Vendor Roy	April 27, 2018	April 27, 2018
Obtain funding approval and set up Appy Pie account	Funding	May 1, 2018	June 1, 2018
Arrange cite visits with peer mentor, Lohrie Arruiza and develop resource list	Spreadsheet	May 7, 2018	November 1, 2018
Enter provider resource information into App	App	June 1, 2018	October 31, 2018
Create a “how-to” instructional sheet for future Janus employees to update or revise app.	Informational sheet	June 15, 2018	November 1, 2018
Create PowerPoint presentation on app for counselor instruction	PowerPoint	October, 2018	November 1, 2018
Counselor instructional meeting on how to share app with clients	Meeting Agenda & Minutes	October 1, 2018	October 31, 2018
Meet Marketing Manager, Andrea Gifford	Pictures for App	October 15, 2018	October 15, 2018

Publish app for utilization	LRA	November 1, 2018	November 28, 2018
Create App Survey and client disclosure add to the App	User agreement and survey	October 20, 2018	October 20, 2018
Report app efficacy through # of users and questionnaires	Survey Questionnaire	October 20,2018	November 20, 2018 – on-going
Create Report	LRA report	November 15	November 26, 2018
Create Capstone Presentation	PowerPoint	November 30, 2018	December 15,2018
Capstone Presentation	Power Point	December 20, 2018	December 20,2018