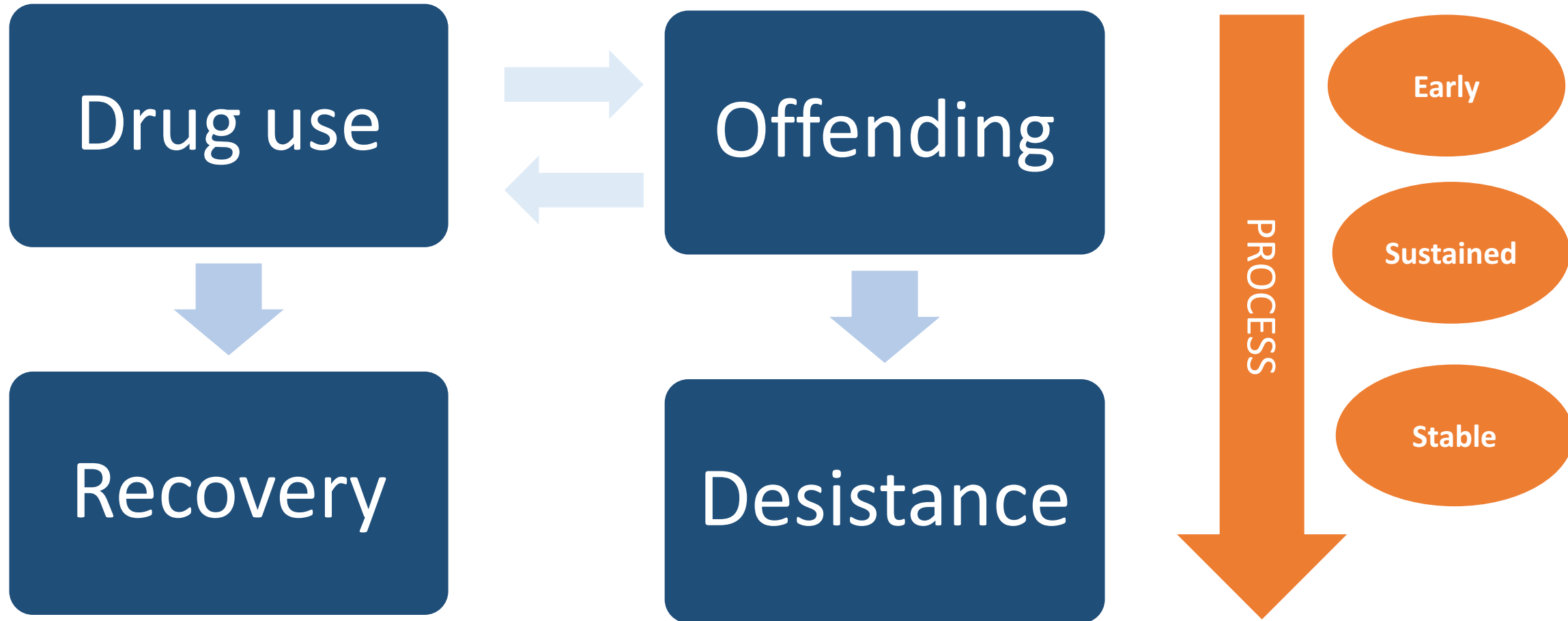


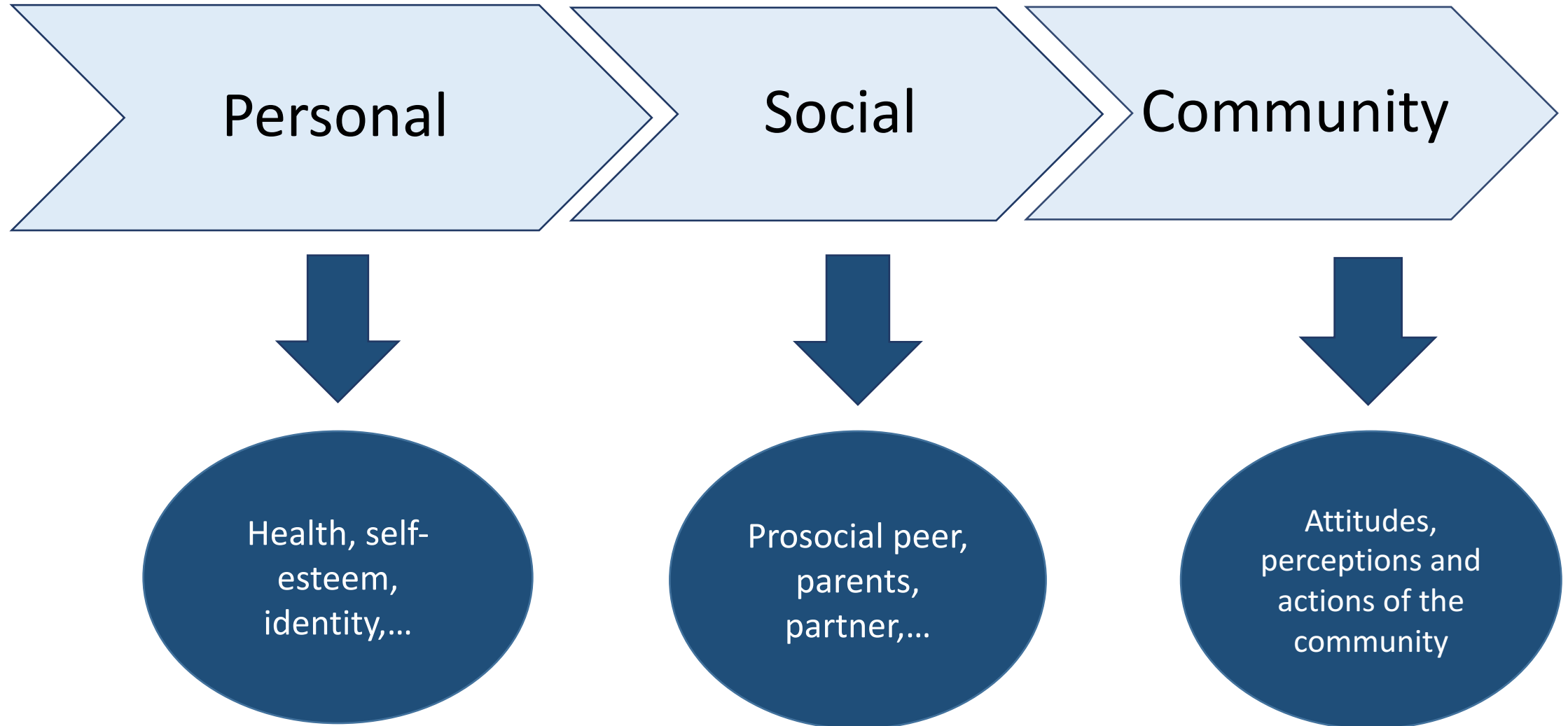
A close-up photograph of two hands clasped together. The hand on the left is dark-skinned and has a large, dark tattoo on the forearm. It is wearing a blue braided cord bracelet. The hand on the right is light-skinned and is wearing a silver-colored chain bracelet. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.


The Criminal Justice System and the Community as Turning Points

Charlotte Colman
Ghent University

Introduction: defining the concepts





A close-up photograph of a person's hands, with prominent veins, gripping a set of vertical metal bars. The background is blurred, showing vertical lines and warm, golden light, suggesting an indoor setting like a prison cell.

I. RECOVERY & DESISTANCE IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

- A large amount of primary drug users in our criminal justice system
- Prison (and the criminal justice system) may present barriers to recovery and desistance
 - Isolation from (prosocial) family/friends
 - A criminal record reducing the likelihood of employment



"Recovery came first": focus on the drug problem (+ problems at other life domains) and not only on the crime problem

- Treatment to promote recovery and desistance among primary drug users who offend
- The criminal justice system could also act as a leverage
- International, European and national drug policies promote alternatives to punishment/conviction

Example: Drug Treatment Court, Ghent (2008-)

- First DTC in Belgium, ° Bottom up, Pre-conviction, 6-8 months
 - Not a copy paste of the US drug courts (continental law)
 - No pre-court session, strict distinction between treatment and criminal justice tasks
 - Focus on empowerment = increased responsibility, holistic and individualised approach (non-drug specific diversions), strengths, from offence-focused to client-focused, relapse = part of the process
 - Time interval between criminal act and diversion to treatment: 6 months (vs 22 months probation)
- A criminal justice intervention that has the potential- if properly implemented- to promote desistance and recovery
- Essential precondition: evidence-based screening and assessment

Outcome evaluation
(Wittouck et al.)
Promising results
regarding:

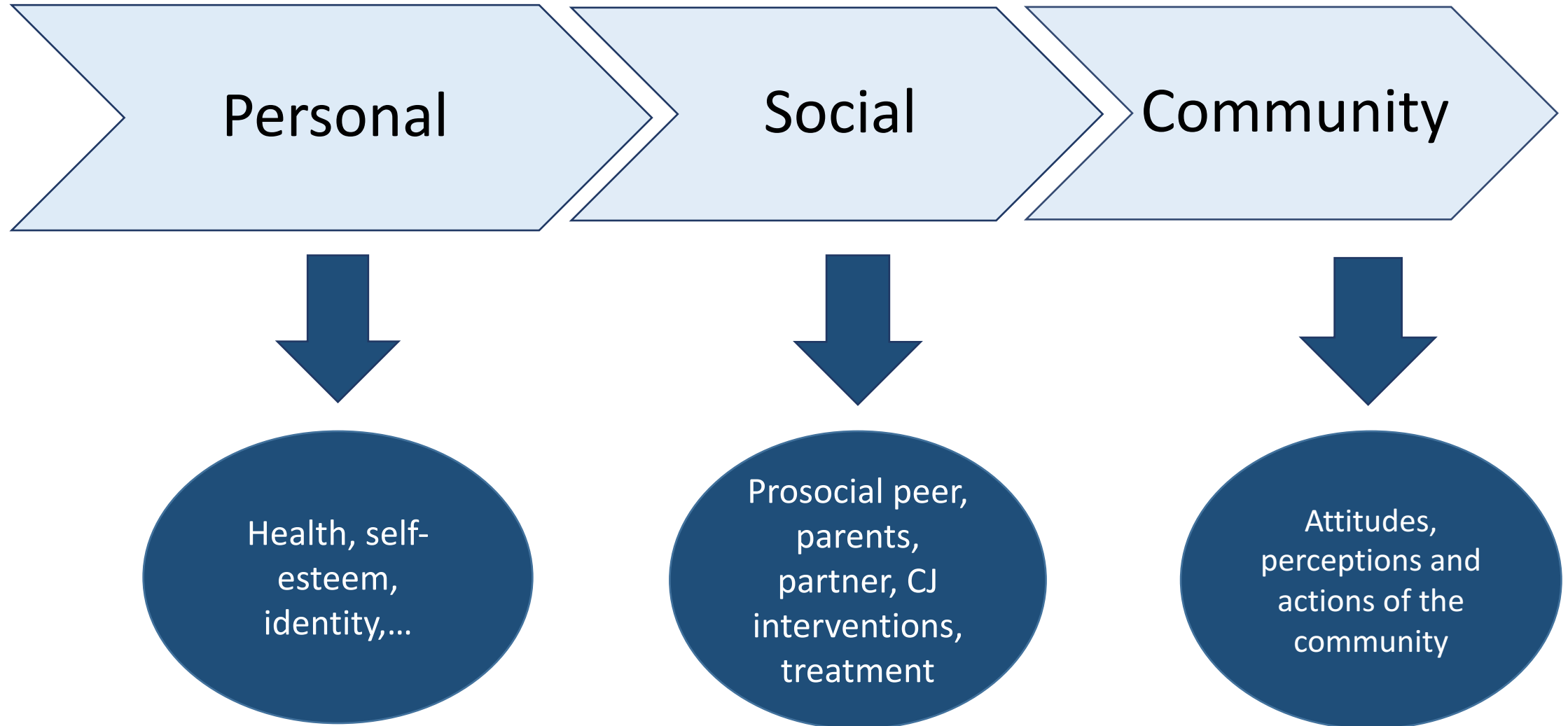
- Recidivism (80 %)
- Drug use (less clear)
- **Psychosocial functioning** (employment)

Focus more on **client-reported** outcomes (f.e. health and social relationships)





II. RECOVERY & DESISTANCE IN OUR COMMUNITY



“Would you want to live next to an
‘*addict*’, even if that person is *in*
recovery?”

40% answered no

Enhancing recovery and desistance at city level: an inclusive city

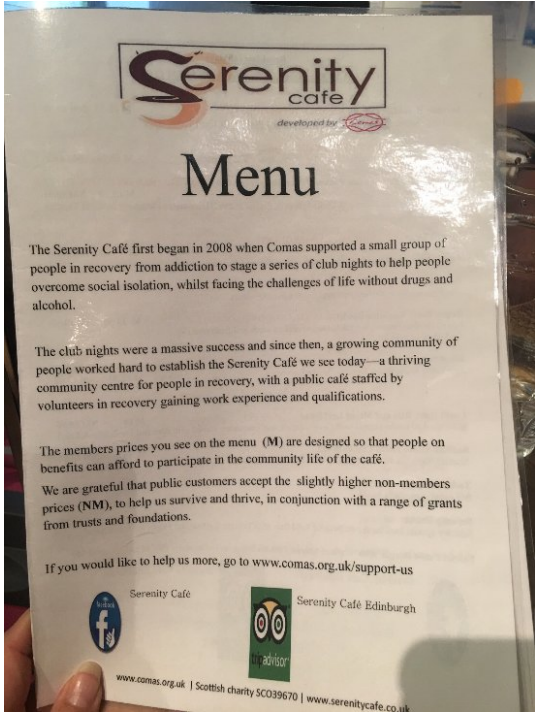
Best & Colman, Addiction Research & Theory, 2019

- Central aim: 1) challenge social exclusion at a city level 2) make recovery and desistance visible and celebrate it- social connectedness & belonging
- Focus on beating stigma, discrimination and exclusion which represent significant barriers to desistance and recovery
- Beneficial for the person in recovery and desistance....
 - “Recovery champions”
- as well as for the community as a whole
 - “The helper principle”



Different stakeholders unite:

- City council
- Public & private organisations
- **Criminal justice actors & treatment providers**
- Family & friends
- Citizens
- People in recovery and desistance



Jobs, Friends & Houses

Serenity Cafe, Edinburgh

Let's start building inclusive cities!
Let's start sharing ingredients and good practices to
improve social justice and community engagement!



Recovery Games, Doncaster



Recovery Week, Sheffield

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486297515

HOME

WHAT IS AN INCLUSIVE CITY?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

WANT TO START BUILDING?

ABOUT US

"Becoming" an Inclusive City is a process that takes time
but even small steps are steps towards the right direction

According to the resources available in your community, the role of the community can range from educational campaigns, bike rides to make recovery visible, over establishing partnerships to promote social inclusion, to setting up structures to change attitudes and reduce stigma towards recovery

Interested in learning more about Inclusive Cities or looking forward to hear more from us?

Register here!

Take home messages

- Criminal justice interventions, diverting drug-using offenders to *adequate* treatment (including several life domains), could **foster** recovery and desistance
- Promote **recovery and desistance-focused interventions** rather than offence-focused interventions
- **Evaluation** of criminal justice interventions is key, don't forget to include client-reported/psychosocial functioning outcomes
- Although recovery and desistance are personal journeys, it happens in **a social context** → the hardest part of recovery and desistance occurs after the criminal justice intervention, when the person is back in the community