

## **NgOIT Landscape Survey Report Case Study**

**Word Count: 461**

### **Odyssey House**

*At Odyssey House, sophisticated reporting and measurement processes have helped the organisation deliver better services for their clients.*

As one of New Zealand's largest addiction treatment centres, Auckland-based Odyssey House is leading the NGO mental health and addiction services sector in the use of tailored outcome measurement tools.

Developing a robust research programme has been a key priority at Odyssey during recent years. Dr Alex Davidson, an experienced researcher and Associate Professor at the University of Uppsala in Sweden, joined Odyssey in 2002 to establish a statistical database that would allow the Odyssey team to analyse their clients as a whole group, rather than as individuals.

During the development of the statistical database, it was widely agreed that the measurement of outcomes would be an important next step for Odyssey House in delivering better services for their clients. Initially, Dr Davidson was limited to measuring improvement while clients were in treatment but since then, Odyssey House has developed a sophisticated tool to measure progress after clients leave the service.

"It can be very difficult to track patients after they leave Odyssey House, but we received a grant from the Problem Gambling Foundation which enabled us to set up an after-care group comprised of all clients who had gone beyond level two in their treatment," says Dr Davidson.

"This group fills in questionnaires that contain five testing areas on a monthly basis. The data is transferred to our database, and the results analysed statistically to show us how clients progress over time after they leave treatment. We now have both in-treatment and after-care models in full use and for the first time ever we can actually demonstrate the effectiveness of our services," he says.

Odyssey House created their outcome measurement tools from selected tests developed overseas. The key requirements were whether it was appropriate for a therapeutic community, whether its validity and reliability had been established and whether it was short and simple to reduce the administrative burden on staff and clients.

Dr Davidson says that Odyssey House is now using their research to inform practice in the organisation. “We are better able to predict success for clients from the outset and we are making changes to improve our services based on what the statistics are telling us.”

“Making the commitment to measuring outcomes puts us in a strong position to be able to justify our work. Because we are a residential service, it is vital that we are able to demonstrate our effectiveness,” he says.

Dr Davidson says that Odyssey House is fortunate to have the infrastructure in place to run their research programme. With a full-time staff of 90, over 500 clients using their treatment services each year and an excellent information technology system, they are one of a handful of larger organisations able to dedicate a full-time staff member to measuring the service’s outcomes.

**ENDS**