

## Alcohol as a Hidden Danger: Case Study of Five Nigerian Alcohol Addiction

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### Abstract

#### Synapse services

Individual with personality disorders agonize from emotive unsteadiness. Impulsivity and the absence of self-control, changing self-esteem and inability to maintain some stable relationships can all lead to the desire to turn to alcohol to cool the pain and heartache. Five men and women described their experiences of alcohol abuse and their respective life trajectories towards freedom and recovery. The study further draws insinuations of this phenomenon to counseling, individual advocacy and tertiary education; and eventually offered a theoretical framework of the breaking through process. This investigation utilized the case study approach, using the in-depth interview method. Five men and women between 28 to 40 years old participated in this study. All of them were single. They experienced the cycle of alcohol abuse or dependence from 2 to 29 years. The case studies show how the men and women lived a tormented life in the bondage of alcoholism. Individual with genetic tendencies towards alcoholism also turn to have a genetic tendency towards personality disorders. Furthermore, personality disorders and alcohol addiction appear similar in symptoms. The recovery stage began after the men and women leave the cycle of alcoholism. Their endurance of the alcohol for years allows them to develop and push advocacies to help other people who share the same experiences. Through the reawakening of the self, alcohol dependence is able to highpoint their own strengths, consequently, were able to skill a new thought of the self through self-empowerment.

**Keywords:** *Alcohol Addiction; Alcohol Dependence; Rehabilitation; Multiple Approach; Craving; Coping Method*

### Introduction

Alcoholism is a long-term illness. It's neither a weakness nor the absence of willpower. On Like many other illnesses, it has a course that can be predicted, has known symptoms, and is influenced by your genes and your life condition. Alcohol is part of numerous people's lives and may or may not have a place in cultural and family traditions. It can occasionally be hard to know when you begin to drink too much. Alcohol dependence is always a growing social problem world-wide. It occurs not only in the streets but inside the greatest basic component of the society- the family. Alcohol abuse inside the family means having unhealthy or unsafe drinking habits, such as drinking every day or drinking too much at a time. Alcohol can be tag as a universal phenomenon that can happen in all group nor culture. Alcohol drinking has been considered normal, especially when drunk without outright intoxication in Nigeria and other parts of the globe. Beer, spirit, Wine and other fermented alcoholic drinks were drunk in traditional societies and some of these drinks are still used in this contemporary era for different purposes. Specifically, in Africa, these and other alcoholic drinks such as palm wine, and so on were consumed for pleasure soon after brewing or tapping [1,2] and were rarely traded in the market [3]. However, alcoholic drinks have been consumed for hundreds of years, the pattern and purpose of drinking differ significantly among cultures and even within groups.

**As noted by the American Psychological Association**

(Alcohol abuse is a drinking pattern that results in important and recurrent adverse consequences. Alcohol abusers may fail to fulfill major school, work, or family obligations. They may have drinking-related legal problems, such as repeated arrests for driving while intoxicated. They may have relationship problems related to their drinking. People with alcoholism, technically known as alcohol dependence, have lost reliable control of their alcohol use. It doesn't matter what kind of alcohol someone drinks or even how much: Alcohol-dependent people are often unable to stop drinking once they start. Alcohol dependence is characterized by tolerance (the need to drink more to achieve the same "high") and withdrawal symptoms if drinking is suddenly stopped. Withdrawal symptoms may include nausea, sweating, restlessness, irritability, tremors, hallucinations and convulsions).

Conferring to the (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) [4], one in twelfth American adults is an alcohol abuser or alcoholic. Thus, says (NIAAA), young adults aged eighteen to twenty-nine are the most likely to have alcohol problems. It's stated that an example of government survey revealed that almost eight percent of the young people aged twelfth to seventeen and almost forty-one percent of young adults aged eighteen to twenty-five indulge in binge drinking, downing 5 or more drinks on the same occasion at least once during the previous month. Needless to say, the prevalence of alcohol dependence is very disturbing and permits a thorough investigation. Hereafter, this study is a step toward a more thorough understanding of the lives of selected Nigeria Alcohol Dependence. This study is academically significant as it covers the scope of present knowledge on the impact of Alcohol. Insinuations for counseling can be drawn from the results of the study. Similarly, possible advocacy on the plight of this specific Alcoholic population can be introduced to impact gender socialization practices, among others. Precisely, the researcher endeavored to answer the following questions:

1. How the alcohol dependence described their experience of alcoholism?
2. How the alcohol dependence described the pathways toward recovery from alcohol?
3. What are the cultural influences that could have brought the Nigerians to be subjected to alcohol dependence?
4. From the content analysis of the five cases of Nigerians, what vital pieces of information that served as input toward the development a theoretical framework that depicts the breaking through process?

**Methods**

This investigation used the case study approach, using the thorough interview method. Story telling was encouraged because it reveals the essence the partakers to share their lived experiences. Five men between 25 to 40 years old partaken in this study. All of them were single. They experienced the cycle of alcoholism from 3 to 17 years. Three of them were selected upon recommendation of a rehabilitation center in Nigeria and the other two were personal referrals. They were selected to become the cases to study based on the following criteria: (a) had experienced alcohol abuse for at least three years; and (b) no longer in alcoholic for at least three years from the time of the data gathering. An unstructured interview guide was used for the data collection. The interview guide included seven universal questions; some of which had follow-up questions. The questions were fashioned to enable participants to tell stories about themselves before and during alcoholism and after they left their alcoholic manner. At the start of the interview, the researcher oriented each partaker on the purpose of the study. Each participant was informed that the interview would be audio recorded as clearly stated in the consent form. The interview session with the five partakers which were held in a private rehabilitation in Awka averaged four hours. The interview proceedings were transcribed literal for data analysis. The data analysis comprised of two stages. The first stage was intended for the write-up of each case which comprised background information, how alcohol abuse was experienced, revolving points toward leaving the cycle, and paths toward recovery from the alcoholism. The second stage, the gratified analysis, shadowed the following steps: (a) production of the two sets of the records of the interview and independent analysis by two judges, a researcher and one external judge who were also clinical psychologists; (b) meeting of the team and differentiation of portions of the transcripts, identification of connotation units that structured the data; and (c) institute of the resources around themes found in the transcripts of the interview.

## Results

This section presents the report of each case which comprises some background information, partakers' explanation of their lives in alcoholic abuse, revolving points toward leaving the cycle, the paths toward recovery from the alcoholism.

### Case Study No. 1: Atunle

#### Background information

Atunle had a happy childhood spent in Mbaise. When he was seven years old he and his family moved to Owerri where his dad was assigned in a branch of the First Bank. In his first year in Owerri he experienced culture tremor because of his local accent. In primary three, he experienced being haggard by a classmate because his classmate hated him for his being Yoruba. Later, Atunle with his family, moved to Lagos because they bought a house there. Atunle studied in Lagos from primary four until he graduated from secondary school. Notwithstanding enjoying the company of his elder siblings and some friends in his town, he was still pretty introvert because his mother kept him from going to parties in his adolescences. Because of his mother's harshness, Atunle grew a liking to drink while staying at home and avoiding parties. He became closer to his father than to his mother. He always thought that his mom frequently got mad at him for things that he thought did not warrant a rebuke. He also thought that his mother played partiality and was very strict. In his primary days, Atunle was often in the top two to six of his class but he never experienced how it was to be the first honor. In secondary school, he still received honors and frequently elected as a class officer although, after school he joined his few friends to drink alcohol. In university, he lifted to Biology. He took up master's degree in Psychology. Finally, Atunle felt like he was somebody with a master's degree, he felt proud but deep inside he knew he was still shy to interact socially but drink alcohol alone at home and in secret places.

#### A life in the cycle of alcohol addiction

He met his girlfriend at the mall. He was taking up his master's degree then. Because of his parents' harshness, he had limited interactions with his girlfriends. Hence, he had no interest in girls until he met his girlfriend. He was fond of going out alone for drinking alcohol at least 6 bottles a day without friends, eating out, and watching movies. At that time, Atunle knew very little about his character of drinking alcohol. Atunle's mother would often call him demeaning names like stupid and incompetent. He shouted at him when he could not find his things. When he was even more riled up, he would hit him. Slowly, his self-confidence diminished. After the incident Atunle went to his father's house in Lagos. Atunle's dad saw his face but he did not say anything. At around mid-night, Atunle went to his usual place and drank seven bottles of alcohol. The abuse had escalated, he would punch, hit, and shout at his father. He showed bruises in his eyes and body which occurred after drinking alcohol. Atunle became a subject to the town and villagers he aggravated his temper toward people. He once hit his friend with a car after drinking alcohol.

#### Paths toward recovery from alcohol addiction

Atunle pursued his studies and completed his PhD degree. He realized he was not stupid. He regained his confidence and stayed in rehabilitation center for six months. He considers his life as the most important. He is now content with his education as he is able to combine his two passions: Biology and education. When Atunle was young he dreamt of having a good education and now he has achieved it. Now he wants to form a support group for alcohol dependence, build orphanage center, and attend yoga classes. He is currently involved as a sponsor for alcohol abuse. Despite all the hardships, recovery circle he rose up to where he is today. He can smile and say no to alcohol. If he were to look back at his life experiences, he would not desire to go through his life again. It was terrible.

### Case Study No. 2: Ken

#### Background information

Ken was the youngest in a brood of five. All of them went to private schools for their primary and secondary school education. And when his siblings went to the University of Nigeria, Ken wanted to follow as well. But his parents wanted him to work at their family

business photography studio. Despite his parents' disapproval, Ken went to UNN and pushed himself to become a self-supporting student. He left his parents' house and stay with a friend while studying then introduced to alcohol. He drank a lot of bottles of alcohol during his self- support studies.

### **A life in the cycle of alcohol addiction**

Ken described himself as a very strong man after drinking alcohol. He felt that he was pushed into drinking alcohol. Shortly after, he was forced to a closer rehabilitation after constant monitoring of the university authority. He lost his outgoing nature and felt that he was treated like a prisoner. He felt useless. His sexual appetite was insatiable. He wanted multiple partners. He became violent inside the rehabilitation if hid demand is being resist. He physically abused people and treated his parents like a doll to do all what he pleased. His desires were animalistic. He did not care whether people would cry in pain or lose consciousness. He was totally insensitive to people.

### **Paths toward leaving the cycle of alcohol addiction**

At first, he thought he was the only one being alcoholic until he met friends. He found out that alcohol was not the only drink to high someone, so he went to higher alcoholic drinks. Ken was furious, he could not take it any longer and he make up his mind after passing through some counseling process.

### **Paths toward recovery from alcohol addiction**

He was in the rehabilitation center. It enabled him to successfully move on. Ken underwent continuous therapy and was referred by a psychiatrist to a trauma section to address the memories in his subconscious. He moved back to his family's house and had since reconciled grievances with his whole family. He used to be so mad at his parents but realized that the reason they did not want him to go was he was the "apple of the eye" of his dad. They did not want him to live far away from them. His relationship with his father and mother became stronger than ever. Ken's elder brother was like a dad to him. Ken's elder sister started to give her emotional support. Three years after rehabilitation, Ken became a successful business man and a pioneer to alcohol addiction.

## **Case Study No. 3: Matins**

### **Background information**

Matins had just turned 21 when his parent asked him to marry his childhood lover. He did not even reach the University and had only finished secondary school. It was then when he refused to his parent's request to marry the girl he started drinking alcohol until he became addicted. Shortly after, he gave in to other drugs. After having lived all his life in Ogun State, he moved to Delta State to be with his uncle who went there to work in banking firm. Matins stayed at his uncle and continue his drinking habits. Shortly after, his mother followed him there and Matins found it convenient to visit one of the drug rehabilitation there. Matins realized that he was good at doing "sales".

### **A life in the cycle of alcohol addiction**

This was the time when he was working in Ogun State. He made it clear that he, as a man, had to be respected. So even when it was painful for him to have alcohol. Thus, it resulted in having sacked, he would get angry if he didn't have his way to alcohol. Matins was ill-tempered. He was easily furious by unimportant things such as when the friends were reluctant to eat meals with him.

### **Paths toward leaving the cycle of alcohol addiction**

Everything changed in 2007. He was into gambling and drugs. He no longer gave attention and would often come home late and drunk. He stopped working and took contractual jobs. His friends often drank. His anger worsened, and his shouting became more frequent.

### Paths toward recovery from alcohol addiction

It has been four years since he recovers from the rehabilitation. He is still trying to make ends meet so he could finally take his job. If there is one thing Matins would really want, it is the drug education. He dreams of becoming a mental health practitioner someday because he says that there is delight in helping other people. It was only in the rehabilitation that he learned about the bad side of drugs. He realized that, under any circumstances, a man should not abused alcohol. He vowed never to return to alcohol. He told the mental health workers in the rehabilitation that one important lesson: "Taking alcohol is never a solution to anything. Don't ever do it".

### Case Study No. 4: Jose

#### Background information

During his younger days, Jose was attractive and had a strong presence. He described himself as hardworking and determined especially when he was a student. When he was in SS2 secondary school at a private school in the village. He was often teased of a girl, but no relationship ever materialized. When he was in SS3 secondary school, he had to transfer to another private school. Though he was in another school, he then developed drinking alcohol with classmates. He thought it was just normal because they were friends. He went to university in the city and took a course in Marketing majoring in management. In his 300 hundred level, his parents moved to Canada, so he also had to move to Lagos to stay with his Nephew and study in inclusive university where his nephew worked. There he met a friend who was his neighbor before also a drunker. They became close, drank together and eventually live together.

#### A life in the cycle of alcohol addiction

Jose was a smart and intelligent man, a good provider but an ill-tempered person. Terribly embarrassed, Jose cried and felt bad about himself after he drank and destroyed things. Jose temper and shouting bouts worsened. Every time his friends answered back to him, Often, Jose would confide these things to his closest friend both would cry. He quit his job because drinking and arriving home late made Jose more furious. He tried to forget all his alcohol abuses, he consoled himself that, despite of his being abusive, and he was a good provider. His parents persuaded Jose to go with him for a professional counseling. But despite being counseled for 6 years, things did not change much he was later admitted in the rehabilitation center.

#### Paths toward leaving the cycle of alcohol addiction

He had an intense argument where his parents kept cussing him. Jose answered back with a disobedient cuss. That was the start of Jose strong attitude. Not long after. When Jose went to stand up and leave instead, his parents barred the door and exclaimed he could go ahead and kill him if he wanted to. After 18 years of enduring the alcoholic manner, he finally was confined in the rehabilitation. He said because of his parents.

#### Paths toward recovery from alcohol addiction

During the time he was in the rehabilitation he really lost his freedom. He felt like being in prison. He had to start his life from scratch. Besides, he had a house. He sold it and earned profit after his rehabilitation. Almost 8 years since he left with nothing, he is thriving. The love and respect he learned from his rehabilitation truly inspired his patient. Also, her parents taught him and his siblings the virtue of patience, forgiveness, and understanding.

### Case Study No. 5: John

#### Background information

John seemed like a height of intelligence and strength. He graduated from one of the good schools in Nigeria and was a consistent lecturer". he was an active member and officer of a famous choir in his university. he went to the United Kingdom to sing and after coming back he found himself performing in musicals events. He was even one of the top best in the talent show. He always had a secret drinking with his friends and some drug before going to show.

### A life in the cycle of alcohol addiction

When John was first introduced to Kingsley. Everything seemed to point at the right direction. So, despite his parents strong disapproval of John drinking pattern. Barely four months in the rehabilitation. according to him, the parents just wanted him to “feel the pain he was feeling because of alcohol”. A year after he had rehabilitation, the slapping kicking, punching, and dragging his mother across the floor. The mother was physically and verbally abused. She got multiple injuries in his arms, legs, thighs, and ribs because of her son alcoholic life. Two months later, despite what he got, he was blamed for allowing such incident to happen which kept him in the rehabilitation.

### Paths toward leaving the cycle of alcohol addiction

John did not have any family to turn to. The only person he confided about the physical, verbal and psychological alcohol abuse was his friend peter, that had also suffered similar abuse from alcohol. Peter had also suffered verbal and physical in alcohol abuse from his. John thought he deserved such maltreatment because of alcohol because he committed sexually abused after drinking. Besides the physical and psychological abuses to others, he suffered from drinking alcohol. He had sexual relations with eight women in the village each time he drank. Thinking that the alcohol gave him more power. He met almost every day with his friend in the bar to drink. John felt that he was enslaved in alcohol. It was only in June of 2006 that he reconnected with his friend William a psychologist with whom he was sent to rehabilitation. William kept in touch with him and gave him emotional support. Gradually, John regained his confidence and realized that he was a good and intelligent person talented of doing whatsoever. With William’s strong emotional support.

### Paths toward recovery from alcohol addiction

John admitted that he found it hard to leave his alcohol even inside the drug rehabilitation, because he was afraid he would not be able to give himself a better future. Soon after he left the rehabilitation, John found a job, got an apartment, and found a new life. He has sought therapy for himself. John has reconnected with his whole family and his relationship with his parents became stronger than ever.

### Discussion

The study observed intensely into how the five individuals described their lives in alcoholism. In addition, attempted to identify some cultural influences that could have subjected Nigerian to victims of alcoholism. Most significantly, the study apprehended the turning points which made these alcoholics decide to leave their alcoholism and the paths toward their recovery from their alcoholic lives.

### A life in a cycle of alcohol addiction

All the alcohol dependence in the case studies experienced psychological problem. As the individuals discovered their resilience, they were able to survive the pain and turmoil of alcoholism. These changes enabled them to cope with the cyclical nature of alcoholism inflicted. The consequences of alcohol are frightening. All of the individuals shared that their self-esteem was seriously affected. The recurrent name calling, labeling, and put-downs slowly worn their self-confidence. Considering that four in the five participants were well-educated, the consequence of name calling and put-downs on their self-worth was deeply overwhelming. The stories further exemplify how the five-alcoholic lost control of their thoughts and emotions as they faced the predicament in an alcohol dependence. Atunle and Ken saw themselves like alcohol prisoners, enduring all the chain in alcohol. Ken admitted he totally lost his freedom. Ken held that he used to be a joyful person but at the time of alcoholism he lost the mannerism and suddenly saw himself like alcoholic prisoner. Jose after discovering that his two younger sisters were molested by his close friend and his peers felt as though he fallen, he then went on drinking alcohol thinking that alcohol will calm him down or solved his problem rather it became the beginning of his problem, and he lost her mind. Matins recalled he attempted to commit suicide twice because of depression. Most of the responses suggest that these individuals were like servants for alcoholism. They performed their duties like servants to alcohol and they had become emotionless of the power-play systems of their alcoholism. John gave up his careers and stayed at home. John said he was like a hand helper to alcohol, because he did not receive any rewards. The role and identity of being an alcoholic were severely affected by the individuals. The partakers placed

their alcoholism over their own life despite their educational attainment. Their alcoholism blinded them from making wise decision such as settling down with a wife and have their own families. The family conflict and “do as I said” from the cultural stand of a Nigerian father were their primary reason why they stayed and kept going with alcohol. Their being alcoholic buried their decisions which further resulted in misperception, and passivity.

### Cultural influences that could have predisposed Nigerian alcohol abuse

In the five cases studied, seemingly, the major underlying theme was the loss of willpower, both over own life and household. The compliance of willpower to alcohol, freely or unfree, may have been dictated by the Nigeria culture which emphasizes the preference for and dominance of males. Drinking of alcohol was culturally abided as part of traditional lives of many ethnic groups in what is now known as Africa specifically Nigeria, especially in communities where it was not prohibited by religion prior to the arrival of colonization [5,6]. An exceptional feature of this part is in Nigeria that different locally produced alcoholic drinks distinguished ethnic groups. In the north, pito were frequently consumed. The south consumed palm wine tapped from the palm tree [7] was general while the native gin, known as kai-kai (Demehin, 1984; Korieh, 2003), akpuruachia, refined from the fermented palm wine was extensively consumed, particularly in the Niger-delta part of Nigeria. Alcohol has been generally consumed since primitive times by man as a module of the normal diet, for health reasons, for its euphoric effects, for fun drive for a musical inspiration, and for other explanations. Some drinks have been capitalized with figurative significance signifying the supernatural use of alcohol. Yet, in many developing countries, traditional home made drinks are likely to be inexpensive than factory made registered brews, consequently certifying their ongoing admiration, especially among poorer people (Ellison, 2005). Precisely, in Africa they tend to be inexpensive than factory made beverages. From the case studies of the five partakers who were able to free themselves from the bondage of alcoholism, the subsequent opinions were evident: Support from significant people. This support came from their family of origin which made them feel accepted again despite they broke their alcoholic addiction. Ken, Jose, and Atunle returned to their parents home. John and Matins, on the other hand, found refuge in their maternal home.

Aid from organizations and assisting professionals. This assistance was extended by non-government organizations for the alcohol dependence. Ken, Jose, John and Atunle were temporarily sheltered in the private rehabilitation and underwent appropriate therapeutic intervention. Their experiences in this rehabilitation helped them recover their sense of steadiness and started life afresh. Matins also sought the help of a psychiatrist at the Federal Medical Center. He had sessions with the psychiatrist once a month in Benin [8-12].

Having an advocacy. Consistent with her professional background, Atunle plans to organize a support group for alcohol abuse as well as to establish an AA meeting. Similarly, Matins wants to go back to university to become a Psychologist because he finds delight in helping others. He evidently showed his love for others during his stay at the rehabilitation.

### Implications

Based on the forgoing outcomes and discussion, it can be inferred that the partakers’ victims of alcoholism were able to break free from the bondage of alcohol abuse in a very gradual manner that needed social support and professional intervention. Thus, for counselors who deal with alcohol abuse, the focus should be on the recovery of the abuser’s self-esteem and improvement.

As a precautionary measure on alcohol abuse, specifically alcohol dependence, worried authorities should thrust stronger supports to include a substantial campaign through nationwide information diffusion, precautionary education can be executed through a compulsory teaching of the “Sociology with drug education” which will include topics on the local and global prevalence of drug abuse. This could reinforce the cognizance of the youth about this essential social problem of alcohol. Also, the/topic on “how to make good decisions about alcoholism” can be discussed in the Psychology course (mainly on the conversation about motivation) to provide the youth with better viewpoints about alcoholism. The emphasis of the areas of both research, counseling and psychotherapy has always been on alcohol dependence the effects of abuse, in specific, and on the resolve of their subjects and recovery, less attention is placed on the effects of disclosure to alcohol abuse.

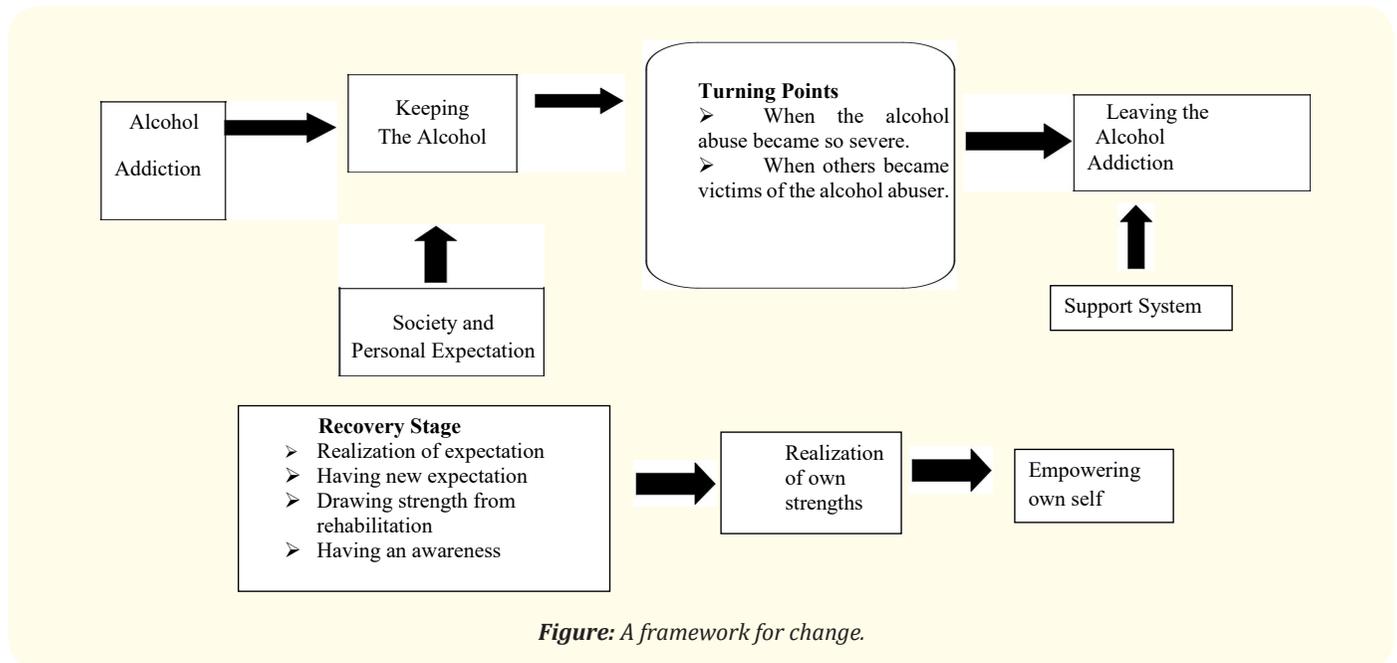


Figure: A framework for change.

**Conclusions**

The case studies illustrated how the five individuals live an anguished life in the hands of alcohol. Their experience of alcoholism, nevertheless, propels them to exhibit resiliency which empowers them to survive and recover from it. Upon experiencing alcohol abuse, the individuals in this study engage in continuous and deep deliberation whether they should leave their alcoholism. Personal and social expectations play a key role in their decision making. To some point, Nigeria culture reliefs to abet their dilemma. Nevertheless, some facts which force the individuals to leave their alcohol for good. One is unconditionally life threatening. The cruel alcohol abuse intended to these people which require the intervention of the authorities like medical doctors, psychologist, social workers, and police officers. In contravention through process, the obtainability of social support is of utmost significance. Social needs include professional assistance from mental health practitioners for them to recover from alcohol abuse experiences. The recovery stage commences during the rehabilitation of the individuals.

During this time, they rediscover themselves through the self-actualization of old dreams and the improvement of new ones.

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