



ValidationInstitute

2023 Validation Report

Review for: Sober Sidekick App
Validation Achieved: Outcomes
Valid through: December 2023



Company Profile

Category:	Behavioral Health
Website:	https://www.sobersidekick.com/
Public or Private:	Private
Year Established:	2019
CEO:	Chris Thompson
Company contact:	chris@sobersidekick.com

Description:

Sober Sidekick seeks to leverage the strength of community to expand positive health outcomes and preserve lives. Their primary belief is that the opposite of addiction is connectedness, and that isolation stands as the most influential social determinant of health.

Sober Sidekick is a healthcare engagement platform that utilizes gamified peer-to-peer support to foster meaningful connections around sensitive topics that individuals may be hesitant to discuss elsewhere. By applying their unique "Empathy Algorithm," the platform assures a 100% response rate from peers. This means that every member who posts on the platform receives support from their community, without exception. Sober Sidekick's approach aims to scale preventative health and provide comprehensive support to individuals seeking recovery.



Company Profile

Sober Sidekick is a peer-led program that aims to decrease the rate of relapses among individuals seeking treatment for substance abuse. They employ their own Empathy Algorithm, which relies on community support, to achieve a significant 68% reduction in relapse rate after the fifth interaction. The organization's central tenet is that isolation is the most impactful social determinant of health in this population and seeks to drive behavioral change at scale.

Sober Sidekick is backed by the American Heart Association as their lead investor and is the recipient of the 2022 Earnest Young NWA Innovator of the Year award. Their team is composed of individuals who have undergone recovery journeys, as well as world class MDs, social scientists, technologists, and health tech startup veterans.

In prioritizing the health outcomes of their members over short-term revenue and investor pressure, **Sober Sidekick** was recently featured in Fortune Magazine and is the subject of a Harvard Case Study.



Claim Assertion of Validation

As peer-to-peer written engagements rise, a Sober Sidekick user's likelihood of remaining sober (no reported relapse) goes up.

Sober Sidekick users who have five or more peer-to-peer engagements are significantly more likely to stay in the program for 12 months. Approximately 10% of users have five peer-to-peer engagements in the first day of participating and thus become more likely to stay in the program.

Sober Sidekick's portion of users who stay sober – that is, they do not use alcohol after they begin – is in the range of people who have had residential alcohol treatment 6 and 12 months after they have left treatment.





Method / Calculation / Examples

Sober Sidekick users were segmented by the number of peer-to-peer written engagements they had had. For each segment – such as those having 2 engagements – the percentage who reported a new sober date (relapse) was averaged for 12 months. The 12-month average risk of relapse for each segment was then plotted. The sample size was over 50,000.

Enrollment for Sober Sidekick users who had five or more peer-to-peer comments was tracked from month 0 to month 12 and compared to all users. For each month, the percentage of people who remained enrolled was calculated. For month 12, the retention for users with five or more comments was compared to the retention for all users.

The comments from new users for November 2022 through January 2023 were tracked in order to determine how many and how quickly they engaged. The starting point was the total number of new users; then, the analysis tracked the average amount of time before users had at least one comment, two comments, and up to five comments.

The analysis tracked 12 months of activity for 3,617 members who joined the Sober Sidekick app in January of 2022. The number who reported a new (second) sober date were counted as having returned to substance use; those who had not reported another sober date were counted as abstinent. The validity of self-reported alcohol use has been shown. (Simons JS, 2015)





Method / Calculation / Examples

The rate of abstinence was calculated at six months and at 12 months. The rate was compared to the abstinence rate for people discharged from residential drug and alcohol treatment who used a web-based continuing care support program. (Klein, Slaymaker, Dugosh, & McKay, 2012) For this comparison,

Sober Sidekick's abstinence rate was calculated as the percentage of active users.





Findings & Validation

With a sample size of over 50,000. Chart 1 shows the risk of relapse plotted against the number of peer-to-peer engagements. As the number of engagements rises from left to right on the horizontal axis, the percentage reporting relapse decreases.

This data correlates with the key thesis of Sober Sidekick that scaling community engagement results in significant behavioral change and positive health outcomes.

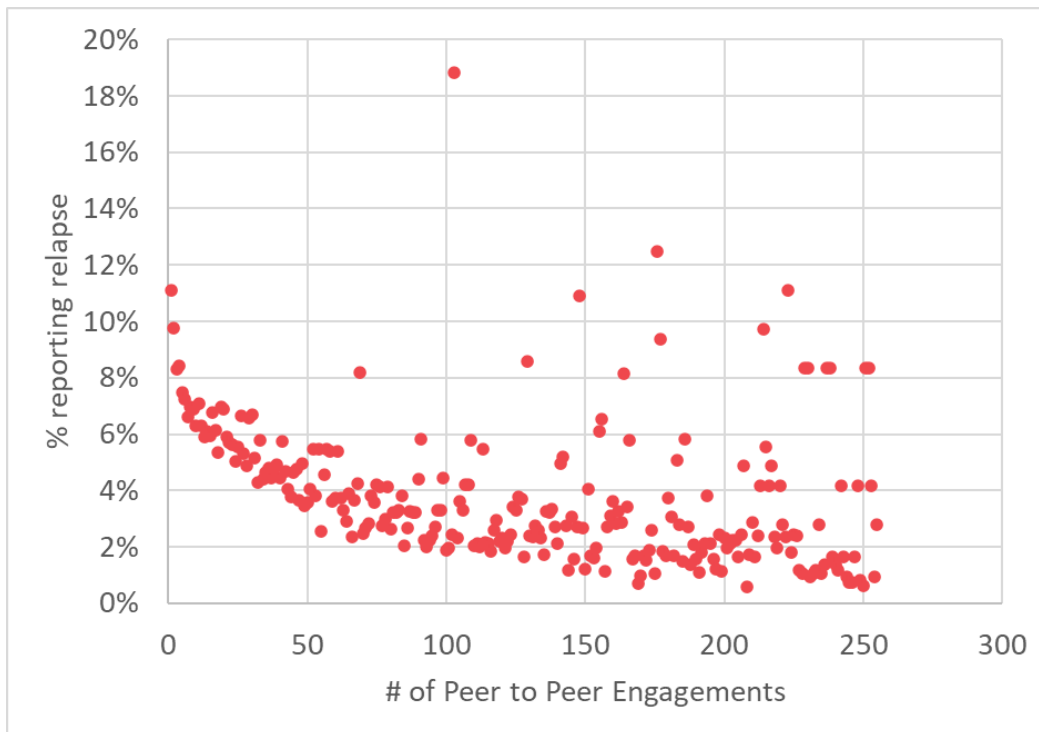


Chart 1: Relapse Risk and Engagement Segments Scatter Plot





Findings & Validation

Chart 2 shows the enrollment trends over 12 months for all users and for users who have had five or more peer to peer engagements. At month 12, approximately 7.5% of the nearly 15,000 users who had five or more engagements are still enrolled, more than double the retention of all users (3.1%). The difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.00001$).

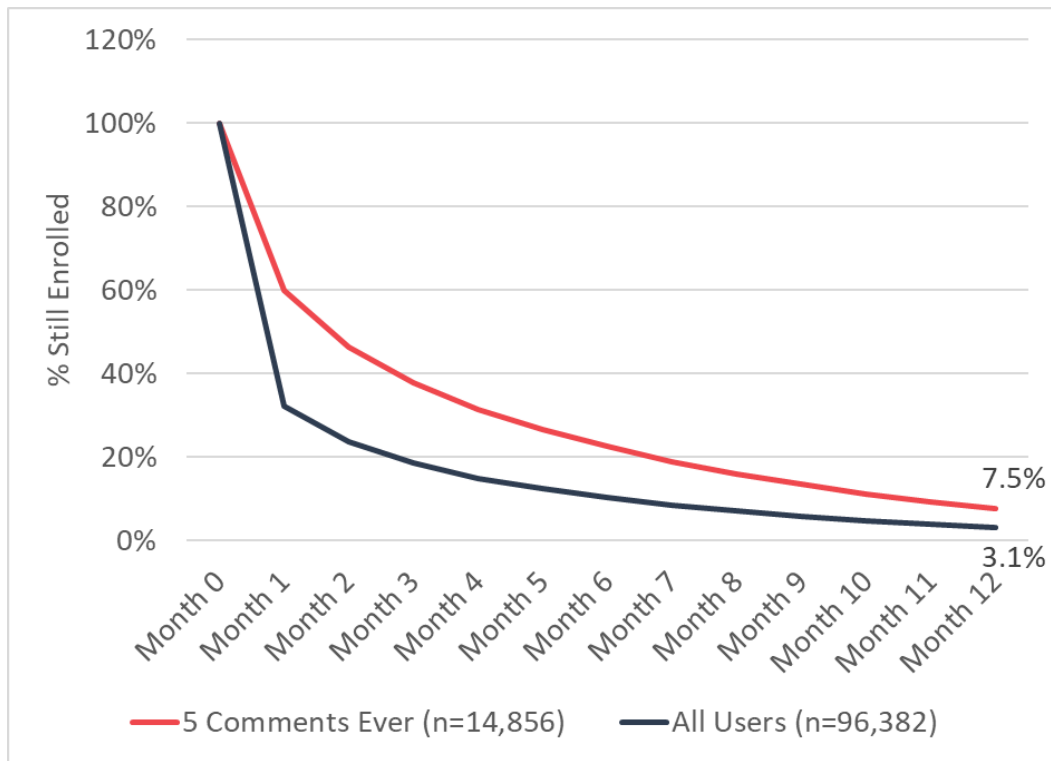


Table 2 – Summary of Calculator Components and Estimates Case Example #2





Findings & Validation

Chart 3 shows the progression of all new users to their first, second, third, fourth, and fifth comments. For the three-month period analyzed, approximately 10% of all new users made five comments in their first day of participating, thus becoming twice as likely to remain in the program for 12 months, and significantly less likely to report a relapse.

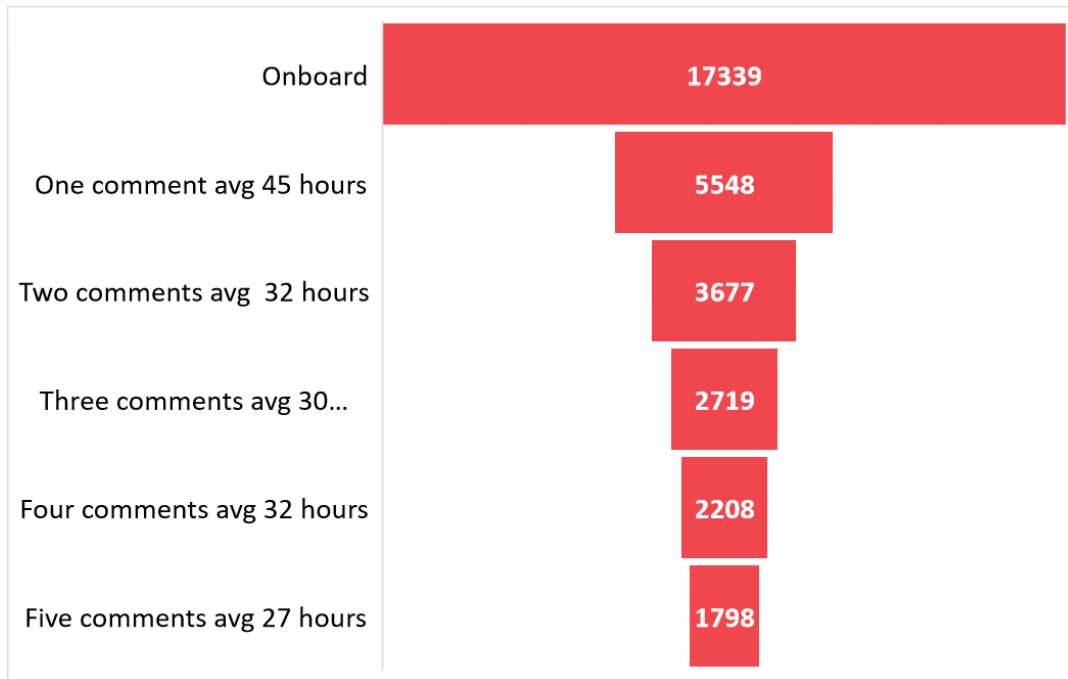


Chart 3: Funnel from Onboard to Five Comments





Findings & Validation

Chart 4 summarizes the abstinence rates for Sober Sidekick and from published literature. (Klein, Slaymaker, Dugosh, & McKay, 2012) At six and 12 months, Sober Sidekick’s abstinence rate for all active members is within the range of Klein’s high and low adherence groups’ rates.

Sober Sidekick is a free platform that costs its members nothing, yet the results are comparable to a costly residential treatment program. This also supports another key aspect of their mission, which is to scale preventive health care for underserved populations.

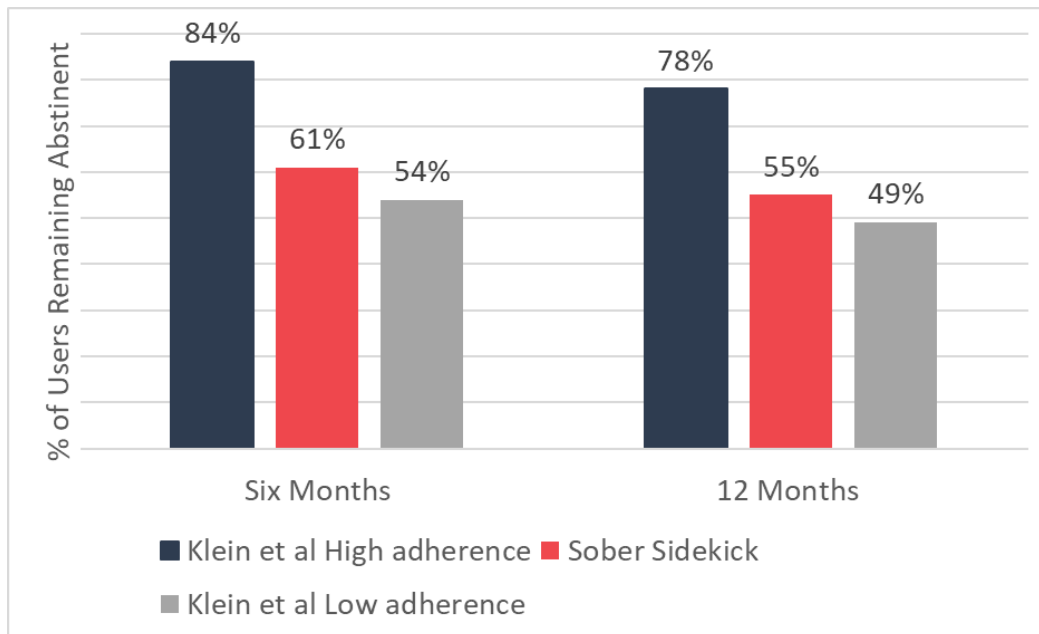


Chart 4: Abstinence Rates at Six and 12 Months





Limitations

The people studied in the Klein et al analysis attended and completed a residential alcohol treatment program. Thus, the type of care that they received is not comparable to Sober Sidekick's users, who may or may not have had formal treatment. Having formal treatment should make the Klein group's abstinence rate higher than Sober Sidekick users. However, this case study found that it was not higher, and Sober Sidekick's outcomes were in the same range, while engaging members with the program at no cost from their mobile device. Sober Sidekick users' abstinence rate was within the range of rates reported by Klein, supporting the strength of the Sober Sidekick platform.





Works Cited

Klein, A., Slaymaker, V., Dugosh, K., & McKay, J. (2012). Computerized continuing care support for alcohol and drug dependence: a preliminary analysis of usage and outcomes. *J Subst Abuse Treat*, 25-34.

Simons JS, W. T. (2015). Quantifying alcohol consumption: Self-report, transdermal assessment, and prediction of dependence symptoms. *Addict Behav*, 205-12.





Validation and Credibility Guarantee

Sober Sidekick App achieved validation for **Outcomes**. Validation Institute is willing to provide up to a \$10,000 guarantee as part of their Credibility Guarantee Program. To learn more, visit

<https://validationinstitute.com/credibility-guarantee/>

Savings

Can reduce health care spending per case/participant or for the plan/purchaser overall.

Outcomes

Product/solution has measurably improved an outcome (risk, hba1c, events, employee retention, etc.) of importance.

Metrics

Credible sources and valid assumptions create a reasonable estimate of a program's impact.

Contractual Integrity

Vendor is willing to put a part of their fees "at risk" as a guarantee.





Validation Expiration: December 2023

CERTIFICATE OF VALIDATION

Applicant: **Sober Sidekick**
13603 Marina Pointe Dr, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292

Product: Sober Sidekick App

Claim: As peer-to-peer written engagements rise, a Sober Sidekick user's likelihood of remaining sober (no reported relapse) goes up.

Validation Achieved: **Validated for Outcomes**

Award Date: February 2023

Linda Riddell
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About Validation Institute

Validation Institute is a professional community that advocates for organizations and approaches that deliver better health value - stronger health outcomes at lower cost. We connect, train, and certify health care purchasers, and we validate and connect providers delivering superior results. Founded in 2014, the mission of the organization has consistently been to help provide transparency to buyers of health care.

Validation Review Process

Validation Institute has a team of epidemiologists and statisticians who review each program. The team focuses on three components:

- Evidence from published literature that a similar intervention had similar results.
- The reliability and credibility of the data sources.
- The rigor of the approach to calculating results.

To achieve validation, the program has to satisfy each of these components. VI's team then summarizes the review into a report which is publicly available. Details of VI's review are available with the program's permission.