

The Rise of the Grid

Sometimes it takes a personal experience to remind us of what's important in life. For Beau Mann, an annual trip to the Sundance Film Festival seemed innocuous until the realization set in that it was nearly impossible to meet a person who wasn't excessively indulging in the weekend's festivities.

Sobriety. Back home there were constant reminders, support groups and meetings that held it all together, however, Salt Lake City was triggering vulnerability. It was in this experience that Mann was able to extract an idea that would fill a tremendous void - a geosocial network for sober people.

Connectivity for those who truly needed it was founded by Beau Mann and his fellow startup team in Boston. With an official release in the summer, [Sober Grid](#) now serves as a special community, providing solace and comfort for its many users on the journey of recovery.



The Status Quo

The statistics are easy to come by. In fact, they glare at you, pulling back the veil on an unsettling reality. [Addiction impacts one-third of American households](#). According to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) [National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#), out of the 23 million Americans coping with addiction, nearly 90 percent are bereft of treatment.

It does not end there. A substantial portion of those who do receive treatment from support networks, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, or inpatient centers experience a relapse. Roughly

[40 to 60 percent of addicts will relapse](#) from their plan of treatment reports the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Angela Garcia, assistant professor at Harvard University, explores heroin addiction in *The Pastoral Clinic*, shedding light on the debilitating effects of high relapse rates at certain medical facilities, which can be circumstance of a region's perverse drug abuse.

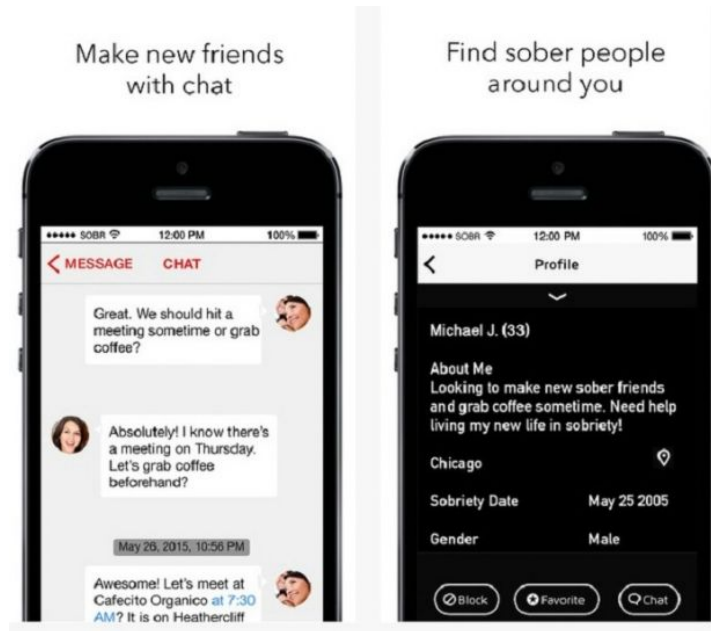
"During the year that I worked as an attendant, it was rare when I would return to work and see the same patients I had cared for during the previous shift... When I suggested to a counselor that the clinic's rates of 'self-discharge' were alarmingly high - nearly 90 percent - he quipped that 'excusas' (excuses) were part of the game" (16).

How the Grid Works

Sober Grid is a geospatial app meaning that it is based on a user's location; hence, the grid. Moreover, the app operates quite intuitively, featuring capabilities that are reminiscent of social networking.

Highlighted Features:

- *News Feed*
 - A timeline view that enables user interaction
 - Post updates, share media content, like and comment posts
- *The Grid*
 - Built-in filters and search query for finding nearby sober people
- *Profile Creation and Editing*
- *Private Messaging, Friend Invites and Favorites*
- *Burning Desire*
 - Alerts the community of a possible relapse
 - Prompts immediate support
- *Stealth Mode*
 - User anonymity is respected



What separates Sober Grid from other social networks and recovery programs are two key aspects: instant connectivity and community. The latter is leveraged thanks to the technological prowess in today's world. Users are empowered via a global community that, by virtue of similarly shared experiences, has created an impenetrable bond. Instant connectivity removes a huge barrier that has previously isolated people from reaching their sobriety goals.

Sober Grid aims to change the status quo by delivering a digital space that makes recovery not only ubiquitous but also more intimate. It is another powerful resource that can complement existing programs and function as a stand-alone tool.