Expanding the Dialogue

Life-Changing Experiences, Spirituality and Religiousness of Persons Entering Treatment for Alcohol Problems

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There is little empirical data published on the spirituality and religiousness of persons entering treatment for alcohol problems, particularly in comparison to a national sample. The frequency of life-changing spiritual and religious experiences in this treatment population is also unknown, although there is much speculation and a few qualitative studies on the role that such experiences may play in recovery. This study surveyed 90 patients entering treatment for alcohol problems and found that 56.4% at some time in their lives, had a life-changing spiritual or religious experience, compared to 39.1% in a large national survey. This study's sample also rated their spirituality higher than their religiousness, and higher than did the national sample. About a third, 32.2%, had no religious preference, compared to 13.8% in the national sample. Having had life-changing spiritual or religious experiences was associated with greater use of positive religious coping, some daily spiritual experiences, and higher self-ratings of one's self as spiritual and religious. Such experiences were not associated with patterns of alcohol use at treat-
Predictors of College Students' Binge-Drinking: Experience of an Urban University in the Southwest

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This study explores predictors of college student binge-drinking. Eight hundred and seventy-two students were surveyed using the CORE questionnaire. A stepwise logistic regression model comprising 10 theoretically relevant variables was analyzed. Contrary to the belief of many people, our study found that variables of gender and perception of campus drinking norm were not significant predictors. Six variables survived the logistic regression model in predicting college student binge-drinking: Close friends' disapproval; perception of positive effects of alcohol; with whom they are living; precollege drinking history; marital status; and perception of risks of binge-drinking. Implications for future research and campus substance abuse prevention and intervention are also discussed.

KEYWORDS. Substance abuse prevention, college student binge-drinking, significant predictors

Childhood Trauma, Avoidance Coping, and Alcohol and Other Drug Use Among Women in Residential and Outpatient Treatment Programs

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This study evaluates the different types of childhood trauma, avoidance coping, and patterns of drug and alcohol use among 112 alcohol and drug abusing females in outpatient and residential treatment. A passive research design with self-report surveys was administered to female participants during treatment to assess the relationship between childhood trauma, coping methods, and alcohol and drug use. A multiple regression analysis demonstrated that women with a history of emotional abuse were more likely to engage in avoidance coping skills than those without a history of emotional abuse, which provides some support for the theory that alcohol and drug abuse may be an avoidance coping method for childhood trauma.

KEYWORDS. Childhood trauma, avoidance coping, alcohol and drug abuse

Effects of an Emotional Disclosure Writing Task on the Physical and Psychological Functioning of Children of Alcoholics

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This study investigated the effects of an emotional disclosure writing task on the physical and psychological functioning of preteen and adolescent children of alcoholics (N = 33). Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: An emotional writing group, a non-emotional writing group, or a non-writing control group. Essays written by participants in both the emotional and non-emotional conditions differed significantly in content in hypothesized ways. Contradictory to what was expected, emotional disclosure failed to convey any additional health benefits. A general improvement was found for all groups over time on internalizing symptoms, affect, and physical symptoms.

KEYWORDS. Emotional disclosure, writing task, physical functioning, psychological functioning

PERSPECTIVES

Controlled Drinking as an Appropriate Treatment Goal: A Critique of Current Approaches

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Treatment systems within the U.S. are almost exclusively focused on abstinence as the goal of treatment for alcohol use disorders. This article reviews literature on the natural course of recovery from alcohol disorders and examines the role of testing control over drinking in the course of successful resolution of alcohol problems. Theory, quantitative and qualitative evidence support controlled drinking trials under certain conditions as a necessary and normal stage in the natural course of recovery. Empirical evidence suggests that some who are younger; who have less severe history of alcohol use; who have never been treated or diagnosed for alcohol disorders; who possess no family history of addiction; and who believe in self-efficacy over alcohol use could benefit from a single and well conceived controlled drinking trial. This article concludes with a summary of a controlled drinking treatment protocol that can coexist in abstinence-based treatment programs.

KEYWORDS. Alcohol abuse, moderation, controlled drinking, treatment goal, early intervention, prevention, recovery
Reservations About Controlled Drinking as a Treatment Goal: A Response to Cloud, McKiernan, and Cooper (ATQ Vol. 20, No. 4, 2003)

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The position espoused by Cloud, McKiernan, and Cooper is one of advocacy for controlled drinking rather than a critique of available information on the issues. This response addresses the author's lack of appreciation of the wide options currently available in contemporary complex and multi-modal approaches to the treatment of alcohol problems. Within this broader context the authors' advocacy position for controlled drinking loses much of its impact and in the process their position becomes more balanced.

KEYWORDS. Reservations, controlled drinking, treatment, broader context