parenthood. Presented at Health, Wellness, and Society Conference. University of California, Berkeley, USA.


Publications


Abstract

Peer support groups (PSGs) for addiction recovery are the most common source for aftercare services once professional treatment has ended (Cloud, Rowan, Wulff, & Golder, 2007), and a significant number of individuals who seek help for a substance-related problem only seek that help from peer support organizations, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (White, 2010). In the last two decades, a different, more secular culture of “recovery” from self-defined problematic substance has led to the emergence of new PSGs (White, 2009). However, very few research studies to date have examined how more recent, typically secular, PSGs work, what aspects of them attract participants, and what participants find helpful about the group. Further, very little is known whether theories that have been applied to clinical treatment, such as the Stages of Change model, relate to the peer support environment. LifeRing is a secular PSG that views substance misuse as a learned habit that can be changed through taking responsibility for one’s actions and actively engaging with peers (Nicolaus, 2009). A particularly relevant model to LifeRing is Stages of Change, because LifeRing encourages personal responsibility and choice, does not prescribe any specific steps, and encourages individuals to build their own recovery plan that can help them stay motivated in recovery (Nicolaus, 2009). The current study examined data from 50 participants that attend LifeRing meetings on Vancouver Island. The results were not consistent with the Stages of Change framework. Specifically, readiness to change and active group participation did not predict group engagement outcomes. Analysis of open-ended follow-up questions indicate that group cohesion and match in beliefs were significantly associated with greater active group participation and convenor alliance was significantly associated with group satisfaction, paralleling findings on the topic in the psychotherapy literature. Information from qualitative follow-up questions regarding helpful and unhelpful aspects of LifeRing are also discussed.

Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Award Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-2015</td>
<td>PhD Fellowship, SSHRC</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>IMPART PhD Fellowship for Studies in Gender and Addictions, CIHR</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>IMPART Master’s Award for Studies in Gender and Addictions, CIHR</td>
<td>$18,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>CIHR Frederick Banting and Charles Best Master’s Award</td>
<td>$17,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presentations


5. Sotskova, A., Coghlan, M., Woodin, E. M. (2011, Jan). The relationship of intimate partner violence to health-related quality of life among couples during the transition to