

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

6. Sotskova, A. & Woodin, E.M. (2010). Early Trauma, Intimate Partner Violence, and Substance Misuse: Interaction of Risk Factors during the Transition to Parenthood. Poster presented at Association of Cognitive and Behavioural Therapies Convention. Nov 18-22, San Francisco.

Publications

1. Sotskova, A. & Woodin, E.M. (2013). PTSD symptoms, intimate partner violence, and substance misuse: Predicting post-natal relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 17, 3320-3342. doi: 10.1177/0886260513496896
2. Woodin, E.M., Sotskova, A., & O'Leary, K.D. (2013). Intimate partner violence assessment in a historical context: Divergent approaches and opportunities for progress. *Sex Roles*, 69(3-4), 120-130.
3. Woodin, E.M., Sotskova, A., & O'Leary, K.D. (2012). Does motivational interviewing competency predict behavior change for partner aggressive men and women? *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 50(1), 79-84.
4. Sotskova, A., Coghlan, M., & Woodin, E.M. (2011). The relationship of intimate partner violence to health-related quality of life among couples during the transition to parenthood. *International Journal of Health, Wellness, and Society*, 1(2), 141-160.



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

PROGRAMME

The Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(Department of a Psychology)

Alina Sotskova

2011
2007

University of Victoria
York University

MSc
BA Honours

**“Peer Support Groups for Substance Misuse:
Understanding Engagement with the Group”**

Friday, May 23, 2014
1:00 PM
Cornett Building, room A228

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Erica Wooding, Department of Psychology, UVic (Supervisor)
Dr. Tim Stockwell, Department of Psychology, UVic (Member)
Dr. Cecilia Benoit, Department of Sociology, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Colleen MacQuarrie, Department of Psychology, University of Prince Edward Island

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Joshua Ault, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, UVic

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

2013-2015	PhD Fellowship, SSHRC, \$40,000
2012-2013	IMPART PhD Fellowship for Studies in Gender and Addictions, CIHR \$42,000
2010-2011	IMPART Master’s Award for Studies in Gender and Addictions, CIHR \$18,000
2009-2010	CIHR Frederick Banting and Charles Best Master’s Award \$17,500

Presentations

1. Sullivan, C. L., Caldeira, V., Sotskova, A., & Woodin, E.M. (2013, Aug). Emerging Secular Peer Support for Addictions Program: Self-efficacy, locus of control, and the view of spirituality in recovery. Presented at American Psychological Association Convention 2013.
2. Sotskova, A. & Woodin, E. M. (2013, Aug). Effects of LifeRing addiction recovery group on alcohol use and mental health: The role of group alliance. Presented at American Psychological Association Convention 2013.
3. Woodin, E. M., Caldeira, V., & Sotskova, A. The Role of Intimate Partner Violence during the Transition to Parenthood. (2012, May). Paper presented at the Society for Prevention Research 20th Annual Meeting, Washington, DC.
4. Sotskova, A. & Woodin, E.M. (2011, Nov). The Impact of PTSD Symptoms, Intimate Partner Violence, and Substance Misuse on Relationship Satisfaction in Early Parenthood: Differential Effects for Men and Women. Presented at Association of Cognitive and Behavioural Therapies Convention, Toronto.
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