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SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT: PERCEPTIONS FROM THE
CLIENT'S POINT OF VIEW

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Margarita Brunilda Salazar

June 2004


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June 2004

Approved by:


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ABSTRACT

This study measured the effectiveness of an outpatient treatment program from the client's point of view. The study focused on substance abuse clients who were involved in a four-month outpatient treatment program. A qualitative method was used to explore how the substance abuse client perceives the effectiveness of the program. This research provided client-based feedback that can be used in individual and group treatment settings. The responses made it clear that client/counselor relationship and seen improvements in life were some of the major factors in the positive effectiveness of the treatment program. This research will provide information to create better treatment plans with the client expectations in mind.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply grateful to my family, especially my husband Isaias for his continued support throughout the long process and my children Magaly, Felipe, Maria and Melissa for their help, love and understanding.

Thanks to the friends who allowed me to express my frustration and concerns, while still remaining supportive.

Thanks to Bilingual Family Counseling Services and the Executive Director, Olivia Sevilla, without whom this project would not be possible. Finally, I would like to thank my project advisor, Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, for her advice and insight.

DEDICATION

To honor the memory of my son Angel Felix, his early and unexpected departure inspired me to continue my education and complete this program with the vision that I can help in the profession of social work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Problem Statement	1
Purpose of the Study	3
Significance of the Project for Social Work ...	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	8
Historical Perspective	8
Theories Guiding Conceptualization	9
Client/Counselor and Relationship	11
Treatment Setting	13
Summary	16
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	
Introduction	18
Study Design	18
Sampling	19
Data Collection and Instruments	19
Procedures	20
Protection of Human Subjects	21
Data Analysis	22
Summary	23
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	
Introduction	25

Presentation of the Findings	25
Summary	29
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	
Introduction	30
Discussion	30
Limitations	35
Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research	35
Conclusions	36
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE	38
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT	40
APPENDIX C: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT	42
APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHICS	44
APPENDIX E: AGENCY APPROVAL LETTER	46
REFERENCES	48

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Chapter one presents an overview of the project, the problem statement, purpose of the study, and the significance of the project for social work.

Problem Statement

Drug abuse can be found throughout the world, among the educated and the uneducated, the rich and the poor, the employed and the unemployed. There are several million addicts in this country (Hoff, 1993). Those who abuse alcohol or drugs have significant alcohol or drug related problems affecting their work, family life, social adjustment, or health. Drug abuse is an epidemic that is now deeply ingrained in our society despite the fact that treatment programs have been shown to be effective.

The use of drugs and alcohol among teens and adults has increased over the last ten years. In 1985 alcohol abuse cost the United States \$70.3 Billion and drug abuse cost \$44.1 billion. These figures were updated in a report in 1993 made by the Johnson Foundation: the total cost of alcohol abuse increased to \$99 billion and the cost of drug abuse increased to \$67 billion. Given these facts, there are reasons to anticipate an increasing

demand for outpatient alcohol and drug treatment programs (Maisto, Galizio & Connors 1995).

Government agencies also understand that substance abuse has become a significant problem for society and consequently conclude that society needs to address this issue and its associated problems. Instead of sending the offender to jail or prison because they are under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, the State of California has created a diversion to treatment programs under Proposition 36 and Penal Code 1000. These programs are designed to provide the substance abuser with opportunities to participate in relapse prevention classes in an outpatient setting without serving jail time. There is literature available that supports this premise.

For example, Fiorentine (2001) correlates effective outpatient drug-treatment programs with an increase in abstinence. Additionally, the study found that by increasing the frequency of individual and group counseling sessions, the program, as a whole, was enhanced because it promoted greater participation by those involved, thereby promoting overall program effectiveness.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore and analyzed the perceptions of treatment, including norms, from the client's point of view.

The effectiveness of an outpatient treatment program for substance abusers needs to be investigated because it addresses an ongoing social problem. Effective outpatient programs not only enhance the lives of substance abusers, but the entire family also benefits from the experience, as does the community at large. Treatment programs' effectiveness has been addressed by multiple agencies (Fiorentine, Nakashima & Anglin 1999).

California State's budget has suffered severe cuts for funding for these types of programs. Because of this situation the programs for substance abuse under Proposition 36, a court mandated program for first time substance abusers, has been shortened from six months to four months for outpatient treatment in San Bernardino County. The focus of this study was to explore and analyze the perceptions of treatment effectiveness among substance abuse clients involved in the Bilingual Family Counseling Outpatient Treatment. This study also obtained the client's reactions to these changes as it affected their own treatment programs by asking; what are the perceived

benefits of clients participating in an Outpatient Treatment Program?

The instrument used for acquiring this information was a qualitative questionnaire designed to assess clients' perceptions of the effectiveness of the treatment program. Did the program meet the goals and expectations of the client? If it did not, why not? This type of information was critical because it provides us with a better understanding of what a successful program was, from the client's point of view.

The treatment program involved in this study used a psycho-educational approach. The program offered four months of group and individual treatments once a week. Participation in a 12-step program was mandatory for these clients. Bilingual Family Counseling Services utilized a combination of treatment approaches when working with substance abuse. At the core was a client-centered and solution focused philosophy, which requires the participant to assume responsibility for identifying changes that needed to happen. This approach engages the participants in their own treatment planning.

A psychodynamic and psycho-educational approach was utilized in both individual and group treatment to reinforce treatment goals. Participants were challenged

to set achievable goals related to recovery, legal problems, social problems, health, or employment concerns. These goals were monitored as part of the group dynamic, in which the group facilitator assists participants to relate their successes to choices made about sobriety.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

The intent of this investigation was to have a better understanding of a treatment program's outcome from the clients' point of view. Does the program improve socialization skills? Does the client report being more independent and self assured? Did the length of the program affect their expectations? Answers to these types of qualitative questions will provide valuable information on a program's effectiveness from the client's point of view. The criminal justice system, including probation and parole, and other substance abuse treatment centers, would also benefit from the client's perceptions of treatment effectiveness.

Gathering information from the client's perspective specifically provides the social worker with critical information about the client and program. The opinions and experiences expressed by the substance abuser play a significant role in shaping program formats. This

information can also prove valuable to the social worker in his/her understanding of the substance abuser and what is essential to an effective program for that person.

Social workers have, and will continue to provide, valuable, professional, and cost-effective services to the community. New programs could be created, that provide drug and alcohol treatment services, which are culturally, appropriate to the needs of program participants. In addition, well-established programs would be recognized, less crime would be committed, and the beginning of good citizenship would result. The social worker can assist clients who are trying to live a substance free lifestyle when they aid the client in developing new coping skills that do not involve the use of drugs or alcohol.

The purpose of this study was to focus on the client's perception of the treatment program's effectiveness in terms of its usefulness to the client. Social workers, as well as other professionals, have a responsibility to understand clients' beliefs about treatment effectiveness. This study is important because it will provide social workers and other professionals who treat clients, who are addicted to drugs and alcohol, with client-based perceptions of treatment effectiveness.

The generalist model step five is evaluation. This study presents the clients' opinions about the treatment program and interventions. The client evaluates whether this program was effective and meets their goals and expectations. The outcome of this study gives the social worker an overview of the effectiveness of the program. They become determined to change necessities at the micro, mezzo and macro level.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter consists of a discussion of the relevant literature concerning treatment programs and outcomes. In addition, the literature discusses the importance of the client's perceptions regarding the outcome of being in a treatment program for substance abuse.

Historical Perspective

Drug use is not new to American society (Alvin & Silverstein, 1991). In the 1800's, opium abuse began to spread during a time of technological advancement, changing values, and social upheaval. People felt more stress as they moved into the cities looking for work. Many of these people turned to drugs. Cocaine was widely used in Coca-Cola beverages and was known as the "wonder drug" (Ray & Ksir 1996).

At the turn of the century, about one and a half million Americans were drug users (Ray & Ksir 1996). Widespread drug abuse arrived in the 1960's when American youth became upset and rebellious with the government over the Vietnam War. Currently, about 50 to 65 percent of all high school students in America use drugs before they

graduate from high school (Maisto, Galizio & Connors 1995). In order to combat this, the government spends more than 10 billion dollars a year with the intent of preventing the sale and entrance of drugs into the United States (Alvin & Silverstein, 1991).

There have been many attempts to gain control of the drug problem found in American society. Substance abuse has destroyed the lives of families as well as individuals. It crosses racial, ethnic, and social/economic barriers, and has created the need to know which interventions are most effective in treating people suffering from substance abuse.

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

The genetic theory of addiction is one of two models implemented in treatment for substance abusers. Genetic theory indicates that inherited mechanisms cause or predisposes people to be addicted. Inherited addiction has been most studied in the case of alcoholism. The medical and scientific communities have not always adequately treated drug or alcohol problems applying only the genetic theory as it does not take into account the individual's specific needs and situations that would surface when the

individual's perceptions and expectations are accounted for (Goodwing et al 1973).

The second model, learning theory, indicates that drinking and using drugs is a learned behavior that is governed by normal principles of learning. This theory predicts that an acquired, or learned behavior can be unlearned, or at least modified (Ward, 1980).

Effective components of the learning model indicated that motivation to change could help the addict to deal with his or her problem more effectively while in treatment. Motivation appears to be the critical dimension influencing patient to seek, comply and complete treatment as well as to make successful long term changes in their substance abuse (DiClemente et al., 1999). Alcoholics Anonymous, and Narcotics Anonymous are often sufficient for treating the occasional drug user. The substance abuser must be motivated and have the desire to learn how to fight his or her addiction and remain drug free (Morgenstern et al., 2002). Thus understanding the abuser's perceptions and expectations at the beginning of their treatment becomes key.

Self-help groups are designed to assist patients who are ready to take actions and address the problem (Alvin & Silverstein, 1991). Twelve-step cognitive treatment

programs can have a powerful effect on outcomes by helping clients change beliefs, attitudes, and intentions when the client is motivated to change. (Morgenstern et al., 2002). Evidence indicates that client's willingness is one of the factors for treatment success.

According to Neff and Zule (2002) treatment readiness for the out-treatment drug user focuses on perceived problem severity, perceived need for formal treatment, motivation for treatment, and negative attitudes toward treatment. This study suggests the importance of a client's readiness to change and of viewing treatment as the way to make such changes.

Client/Counselor and Relationship

The client/counselor relationship and the involvement of the client in his or her own treatment are components in whether the treatment is successful (Fiorentine, et al. (1999). Engaging the client in drug treatment is generally effective in treating abuse and improving social functioning, especially for those clients that actively participate and stay a relatively long time in the program (Fiorentine, et al. 1999). Research indicates that there is a perceived helpfulness of the counselor and of the

client-counselor relationship when the counselor actively engages the client in treatment (Fiorentine, et al. 1999). Some studies indicates that women respond more favorably to an empathic style that is more personal and warm, whereas men may respond more favorably to a utilitarian style that emphasizes problem solving (Fiorentine, et al., 1999). According to Amaro et al (1995), female clients' social relationships is more significant in treatment outcomes than other components of the treatment program. It appeared that outside influences could jeopardize the total outpatient treatment program. Quitting drugs becomes more or less permanent, and being clean becomes an ongoing process intricately connected to the entire web of social relationships (Amaro & Hardy-Fanta 1995).

While a comprehensive model of treatment is essential, success in treatment may not depend solely on providing the right set of treatment components, and good counselor/ client relationship but rather on integrating the treatment with the client's numerous social relationships. Prevention programs need to include family and peer factors that contribute to a client's recovery (Guo et al., 2002). In research and in practice, relationships with family members can help identify a

client's perception of effectiveness of treatment (Amaro & Hardy-Fanta 1995).

Treatment Setting

Clients' responses to treatment could vary according to the setting they are in while in treatment. According to Chan et al., (1997), clients who received day treatment, compared with those who were in residential treatment, indicated that day treatment offered another approach to treating the difficult problems of drug abuse and that clients were no less satisfied with day treatment than with a residential setting.

Cultural beliefs, values, norms and behavior, that capture the life experience of racial ethnic minorities, are additional issues in the treatment modality to consider. Cultural variables are potential determinants of successful substance abuse prevention programs. Prevention and treatment program for substance abusers had not been tested for effectiveness among multi-racial and ethnic groups (Castro & Alarcyn 2002). Research indicates that most of the prevention and treatment programs for substance abuse are "culturally blind". Therefore, it is important to ask about and consider the client's common heritage or set of beliefs, opinions, expectancies, and

point of view of such a specific program (Castro & Alarcyn 2002). Research in this area is important because it would help to design more effective and culturally relevant treatment programs for substance abusers.

The objective of drug court programs is to treat the underlying problem of addiction amount drug offenders without their serving jail or prison time. Studies of minority and non-minority participants of a drug court program found few differences in program effectiveness (Cresswel & Deschenes 2001).

Coerced offenders perceived effectiveness when they were able to confront and overcoming underlying problems, and were able to become more productive and competent members of society (Cresswel & Deschenes 2001). Drug court combines both concepts of justice and treatment. The coercive power of the law is used to encourage success and compliance with treatment goals. Participants in drug treatment view the severity of their problem and effectiveness of the program in terms of remaining drug and crime free (Cresswel & Deschenes, 2001). Coercing offenders into treatment and then applying graduated sanctions to motivate continued participation is a potentially success strategy (McElrath et al., 2002). After a clear identification of the offender's treatment

perceptions of what, beyond coercion, would have motivated them to succeed.

Summary

Literature selected and cited in this chapter is relevant to the focus of this thesis. The literature suggests that the elimination of drug-use be but one aspect of recovery. Drug treatment in a community setting needs to address the other areas of addiction that are less apparent, but play a significant part in one's recovery. These other areas include the client's understanding of the underlying causes of substance abuse, and awareness of situations that may trigger drug use. These are critical self-understanding components for the client who is in substance abuse treatment. "Reduction or elimination of substance use is an important, if not primary, concern of treatment. It is equally important that treatment result in enhanced employment, life satisfaction and improved social functioning" (Sullivan, et al., 1992).

Also suggested is that understanding the substance abuse client's perceptions and their own assessments of what is required in addiction treatment may result in higher success rates. However, more research is needed. It

is important to understand the client's perceptions both before and after a program so that programs can be modified or customized to gender, personality, social situation, or other factor that may most affect that client, or a certain population's, success or failure in treating their addiction.

The intent of this research was to have a better understanding of how successful or ineffective a program is from the clients' point of view. A model could then be developed for the treatment of addiction incorporating clients' perceptions, and thus provide the changes needed to improve an existing program's effectiveness.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This research project explored the effectiveness of an outpatient substance abuse treatment program from the client's point of view. A qualitative method was used with 12 subjects interviewed. The aim of this research was to add to the knowledge base on substance abuse group treatment programs in direct practice.

Study Design

The focus of this study was to explore client perceptions of substance abuse treatment in an outpatient treatment facility in Ontario, California. The method used was a single group qualitative design. A single group design was selected because no comparable control group could be identified with characteristics equivalent to the sample population. Since the study was to explore clients' perceptions of their own treatment, a qualitative method in the form of open-ended questions was used to capture all possible answers and suggestions for change.

Sampling

The population of interest for this study was clients involved in a treatment program for substance abuse at an outpatient, non-profit treatment center in San Bernardino County. The sample consisted of court-mandated clients under different outpatient diversion programs. The population of interest in this research was males and females over the age of eighteen who have identified themselves as substance abusers.

Data Collection and Instruments

Data for exploring client's perceptions of an outpatient substance abuse treatment program was collected via a qualitative exploratory design. This qualitative approach utilized face to face interviews. The interviews took approximately 20 to 30 minutes with each subject.

The same interview questions were used for each client thereby maximizing comparability of client responses. The data gathered from the interview was based on the following set of questions (Appendix A):

1. What are the strengths about the treatment you are receiving? What do you like about it?

2. What are the challenges about the treatment you are receiving? What don't you like about it?
3. How did you attribute the effect of drugs in your life?
4. Can you tell if you experienced any changes in your life after treatment?
5. Have the services you received helped you deal more effectively with your problems?
6. Did you get the kind of service you wanted?
7. If a friend were in need of similar help, would you recommend this program to them?
8. What have your friends that also attended the treatment said about it?

These open-ended questions allowed the respondents to expand on particular relevant questions.

Procedures

Recruitment of clients took place through the subject's primary therapist at the treatment facility. They were asked whether they would like to volunteer for the study. As a requirement for participation, subjects must have attended the program for the entire four-month period. Once confirmed eligible, clients were recruited using a standard informed consent protocol (Appendix B). From three groups involved in substance abuse treatment,

approximately 35 clients were asked to participate in the study but only 12 participant met the requirements for the study.

Each subject was given a brief statement explaining the study and its voluntary nature. Those who chose to participate were given a consent form. Participants in the study were free to respond to the questions in any way they chose. Participants in the study received a debriefing letter after the interviewer explained the study (Appendix C).

Protection of Human Subjects

Before the interviews proceeded, clients were asked to read and sign an informed consent form (Appendix B). The form described the goal of the study, the method by which the study would be conducted, that participation was voluntary and that withdrawing from the study was an option. In the process of talking about their substance abuse, participants were also assured that their primary therapist agreed to be available if needed for counseling if the subject felt uncomfortable or uneasy.

To insure the confidentiality of study participants, names and identifying data was not recorded. A random research number was assigned to each interview during data

collection process and no information was recorded that identified specific individuals. The researcher safeguarded the confidentiality of the collected data by limiting the number of individuals who reviewed the narrative data (the research advisor and researcher).

The narrative data was identifiable only by case ID number. The data was kept locked at the researcher's home during the study. Once the data had been collected and reviewed, they were destroyed. The researcher adhered to the code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). This research project was approved for protection of human subjects by the Department of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino, and by the Bilingual Family Counseling Services agency (Appendix E).

Data Analysis

Narrative data come from interviews conducted with each subject. Narrative data were analyzed for common themes in the subjects' responses.

A qualitative methodology was used to uncover and understand client's perception of outpatient substance abuse treatment in an outpatient facility. The length of treatment is four months. This study also considered age,

gender, years of education, marital and employment status, as well as other variables that could affect opinions about the effectiveness of the program from the client's point of view.

The data gathered from the interview were collected using the set of questions in Appendix A. Open coding was used to analyze responses. Each response was analyzed and each idea, incident, or event was assigned a name that represented a theme. As each response was analyzed and as an idea or event was recognized, it was categorized and tallied along with other similar ideas or events. If it was determined that an idea or event was unlike any other previously recorded, a new category was opened in order to record that idea or event. The goal was to code the responses in such a way that the maximum amount of information was obtained.

Summary

This study explored clients' perceptions of an outpatient substance abuse treatment. The method and procedures of this study insured that the participants were protected at all times. Since this study was qualitative in nature, its results may be generalizable to the population at large. It was hoped that this study

would provide information that could be used to generate further studies of this population. In addition, it was hoped that social workers, substance abuse therapists as well as the legal system, would benefit from the data presented and be able to effect positive changes based on viewing an outpatient substance abuse treatment program from the client's point of view.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

Chapter four presents research collected from the oral interviews, statistics of the subjects and the categories that each response was placed.

Presentation of the Findings

This study was included of twelve substance-addicted individuals. They ranged in age from 18 to 45 years and their length of treatment was 4 months in an outpatient facility. The ethnic make up was 50% White, 30% Hispanic and 20% African American. For further demographic information, refer to Table 1. (See Appendix D)

Data gathered in the oral interviews were from a set of predetermined questions. Each response was analyzed and each idea was then categorized. The ideas were associated with relevant factors of the client's point of view regarding their substance abuse treatment. The responses to questions were then used to form important themes that pertained to their views of the treatment.

A total of four main themes were identified: effectiveness of client/counselor relationship, the importance of self awareness, motivation to change

addictive behavior and improvement of their quality of life. Important to note is the clients' perception of personal loss underlying each of the four prominent themes.

The following details how the responses were used either to establish main themes or to aid in the formation of important factors. Subjects were asked what they liked about the program and the treatment they were receiving. These responses were used to determine the effectiveness of client/counselor relationship. Subjects 8, 10, 11 & 12 mentioned the care and concern extended by the staff to the client. Other answers suggested an increased awareness of one's own ego and abilities. Awareness of addiction and the ability to cope without drugs were noted in subjects' 2, 3, 5 & 7 responses. "I learned about why we become addicts and how to deal with our day to day activities without drugs and how to understand life sober and deal with responsibilities without alcohol (subject 7)."

The challenges each client faced while in the substance abuse program were also identified. Challenges they faced varied from personal to material factors. These answers were used to establish whether challenges were a factor in motivating the client to continue with the program. Three of twelve respondents were "fine with the

program (Subject 3, 4, & 12)." Five of twelve respondents (subjects 2,11,10, 9, & 7) indicated the challenge was to stay sober. Subject #2 stated the program "forced me to be clean." Four other responses to the challenges of the program were as follows. Subject #5 stated, "The program is a little too short, perhaps 6 months is better for a person with many years of addiction." Subject #3 did not like the small room available for the group. Subject # 6 had objections to drug testing as mandated by the court while subject # 8 felt the challenge was not in the program, but in "just my surroundings at home and actually, the street, it is a bad area."

This research project addressed the effects of drugs in each client's life and the insight brought forth as a result of participating in four months of the treatment program. Seven out of twelve clients spoke of loss in their lives because of drugs use: loss of self respect (subjects 8 & 11), loss of jobs and home (subjects 4 & 7), loss of everything (subjects 1,2 &5), loss of control in life (subjects 3&10), loss of child custody (subjects 12), and loss of freedom due to incarceration (subjects 6 & 9).

The perception of how the program experience actually changed each client's life was also examined. The most common response (subjects 1, 5, 9, 3, &10) indicated that

the program much improved their relationships with their families. Three out of twelve (subjects 1,4 & 11) indicated that they changed their circle of friends. Subject 1 stated, "I have new friends, feel better and a good outlook in life." The remaining four responses included increased success in staying sober (subject 2), a less dramatic life (subject 12), increased control in life (subject 7) and finally subject 6 indicated, "I am more cautious". These responses indicated a key factor of motivation in staying with the program. They also indicated an improvement in their quality of life.

The clients were asked if the services provided by the program were of help or beneficial. Responses to this question were used to develop another factor in the improvement of their quality of life. Twelve out of twelve said "Yes" the program was of benefit. Subjects 11 and 8 indicated better control of anger and temper. Subjects 1,2,5, &7 identified more clear thinking and the ability to deal with life. Subjects 6 & 12 responded, "Yes", subject 3 & 9 responded "considerable," subject 10 said "definitely," and subject 4 responded, "yes very much, the program helped me change my life."

In answers to whether the services provided met their expectation, 11 out of 12 respondents indicated "yes."

Subject 6 said, "no." Responses from this question indicated satisfaction from the subject's point of view.

Each client was asked if they would recommend this program to a friend in need of similar help. Twelve out of twelve responses were positive, all indicated "yes," and that it is a good program.

In answers to the question, "What have your friends that also attended the program said about it," Subjects 1, 5, 9, & 11 indicated their friends saw good changes and effectiveness in the program. Subjects 3,4,7& 10 stated their friends saw positive results and greater control in their lives. These answers were used to determine whether the program was successful from the subject's point of view.

Summary

The summary of responses was obtained from 16 pages of transcripts, which were derived from approximately 6 hours of interviews. The responses of the individuals in this study showed some common themes that are factors in exploring the effectiveness of an outpatient treatment program from the client's point of view.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

A qualitative methodology presented in the form of eight questions during personal interview with twelve substance addictive individuals were used to identify each clients' own perceptions of a treatment program for substance abuse. Following transcription of each client response to the eight universal questions asked, common themes were identified. Four main themes emerged as follow: the effectiveness of the client/ counselor relationship, the importance of self awareness for drug alcohol addicted person, motivation to change addictive behavior and improved quality of life.

Discussion

Throughout the interviews the theme of personal loss appeared in almost every response, loss of one's self-dignity, family, job, and freedom through incarceration. The source of loss was attributed to the fall out from a drug-addicted life style. Not having the tools and skills to effectively manage life, drugs provided an escape from day to day problems. The inability to control the

addiction and its subsequent impact forced each of these clients into treatment via court mandate.

Having been placed in, rather than voluntarily entering, the substance abuse treatment program, the effectiveness of the program clearly lay in each client's perception of the experience.

This research described the clients' perceptions of a substance abuse treatment program, considering the strengths of the treatment program. A major aspect for the client was the client/counselor relationship. The research indicated that the relationship is an important factor in keeping the client motivated and helping them cope with their addiction. All these respondents produced positive statements to identify their thoughts and feelings. For example, "the program has friendly staff and they are very concerned for the individual's recovery but, firm on success of individual (Subject #10)." "They are concerned and caring people unlike other places I have been (Subject #8)." This question was used to establish the main theme of client/ counselor relationship and the effectiveness of the treatment from the client's point of view. "The counselors are actually here to help you. It gave me positive surroundings, a good influence (Subject 8)." Twelve out of twelve said "yes," the program was of

beneficial and offered way to think clearly. It gave them the ability to deal with life. Only one client stated a negative perception of treatment, "I don't like testing and counselor and the counselors don't know how I am. I don't believe in them (Subject 6)." The counselor relationship is still important to this subject, although with the current counselor at the Bilingual Family Counseling Center, the subject did not have a good relationship, which may effect his motivation.

As in any program, motivation is important to have even if the substance abuse treatment program is court mandated. For example, "I lost my job," (Subject 5) or "Drugs took control of my life" (Subject 10) were problems the subject could see as a result of their addiction. These were motivations as to why the client wanted to become sober. Only one reported that the effect of drugs in his life was inconvenient because he had to go to court, and pay for the program (Subject 6). Although he did not see it as a positive motivation, it was none the less a sort of motivation for him not to go to jail again.

Finding motivation from the subjects was not difficult, but keeping motivation after things return to normal was challenging. Did the client see an improvement in the quality of life during and after the treatment

program? "I have a better outlook in my life (Subject 1)", or, "I have better relationships with my family (Subject 9)." Yes, they did see an improvement in the quality of their life, from personal relationships to maintaining new jobs, staying sober, and attaining new goals in life. "The program helped me change my life (Subject 4)." The substance abuse treatment program is seen as a success from the client's point of view because it made the changes they were looking for in their life. "I have gotten dental work complete and I have a better relationship with my wife and family (Subject 3)."

Overall, the survey was looking for the client's satisfaction with the treatment program. "Yes, I got the service I never expected to get which is good (Subject 8)." Eleven of the 12 subjects indicated that they did receive the kind service they expected from the program. From the client's point of view, this program is effective for them to become and remain sober. "Yes, I got the service I never expected to get which is good (Subject 8)." The one subject that did not receive the kind of treatment desired was subject 6 who also had a difficult time making a connection with the counselor, hence the importance of the client/counselor relationship. He also did not see his motivation as positive.

If a friend were in need of similar help, would you recommend this program to them? and Questions 8: What have your friends that also attended the program said about it? These questions identified positive perceptions of treatment, including norms from the client's point of view. All of the clients said they would recommend this program to others because they did see an improvement in their life. Their friends in the programs also saw changes in the client's behavior. Although some did not have friends in the program, there was no reluctance in advising their friend to enter this program to become clean and sober.

The final theme captured the importance of each client's self-awareness. For example, "It gives me a chance to learn more about myself and addiction. I feel it gives me a lot of insight on what makes me trigger relapse"(subject # 3). Another client responded, "I learned about why we become addicts and how to deal with our day to day activities without the drugs and how to understand life sober and deal with responsibilities without alcohol"(Subject 7). The program helped the client get in touch with their feelings and inner turmoil. The program helped them gain insight to manage their life.

This is another motivation factor for the client to feel that this program is effective.

Limitations

The following limitations applied to this study. The ethnic composition of the respondents did not give a wide enough sample of different ethnic views on the treatment program. No African American females were represented in this study. In addition, the study presented the opinions of only twelve individuals involved in treatment at a single location and the results are limited to that population. It is also difficult to deal with the addictive personalities of the subjects. Often they were reluctant to give clear information and they appeared to want to please the interviewer instead of giving honest answers.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

Social workers at the micro level must advocate on behalf of clients by offering training and consultation to traditional drug treatment programs that fail to address clients' perception of an affective treatment. They must also educate one another and those in other helping professions as to the impact of gender, ethnicity, and

education issues on substance abuse treatment, and the need to refer clients to the programs that support those needs (Magura, 1994).

At the macro level, social workers must actively work to influence change in social policies that affect the quality of substance abuse treatment programs. Policies that provide rehabilitation programs with extended time for clients involved in treatment programs must be developed and supported. (Nelson- Zlupo et al, 1995)

Additionally, social workers must advocate for funding that addresses substance abuse treatment's unique needs by educating legislators and program administrators.

It is the hope of the researcher that the results of this qualitative data will enlighten helping professions, will foster the addition of programs and program components compatible with the clients' points of view on the effectiveness of substance abuse treatment.

Conclusions

Within this small population at Bilingual Family Counseling Center, the effectiveness of the treatment can be summed up in four main themes. Self-awareness and the need for motivation to change their addictive behavior were credited to positive counselor/client relationships.

The respondents made it very clear that the clients participating in this treatment program saw the effectiveness of a counselor/client relationship and the possibility of an improved quality of life. These were major factors in their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the treatment program. For most subjects being treated for his or her substance abuse resulted in improved quality of life. However, possible changes to the program were also noted from the subjects' opinions that would make the treatment program even better.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What are the strengths about the treatment you are receiving? What do you like about it?
2. What are the challenges about the treatment you are receiving? What don't you like about it?
3. What was the effect of drugs in your life?
4. Can you tell if you experienced any changes in your life after treatment?
5. Have the services you received helped you deal more effectively with your problems?
6. Did you get the kind of service you wanted?
7. If a friend were in need of similar help, would you recommend this program to them?
8. What have your friends that also attended the program said above it?

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to explore perceptions from the client's point of view regarding the substance abuse treatment programs at the Bilingual Family Counseling Services in Ontario, California. Margarita B. Salazar is conducting this study, as a student at California State University, San Bernardino.

This study has been approved by the Department of Social Work Human Subjects Review Committee, California State University, San Bernardino.

I understand that my involvement will consist of a face-to-face interview for approximately 30 to 40 minutes with Margarita B. Salazar. In addition, I understand that my interview will be audio-recorded.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that all information is confidential, and that my identity will not be revealed. I am free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time. My participation or lack of participation in this study will in no way jeopardize or compromise my treatment stay. In fact the agency will not know whether I participate.

If you have questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact my research supervisor, Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, at California State University, San Bernardino Phone (909) 880 5507

By initializing below, I acknowledge that I have been informed of and I freely consent to participate. I acknowledge and I understand the nature and purpose of this study, and will be audio-recorded during the interview. I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

I agree to participate in the study.

I agree to be audio-recorded for this study.

Today's date _____

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Substance abuse treatment: Perceptions from the
client's point of view

TO: PARTICIPANTS

FROM: MARGARITA B. SALAZAR.

The research project that you have just participated in was designed to obtain your opinions about the outpatient substance abuse treatment program that you are currently involved in at Bilingual Family Counseling Services. These findings will assist the agency in improving and providing better services, important to you and others being served at the treatment center.

If you feel uncomfortable or distressed as a result of participating in the study, you are advised to contact Bilingual Family Counselor at (909) 986 7111

A copy of the findings of the study will be shelved at Pfau Library at California State University, San Bernardino after July 2004.

Thank you,

Margarita B. Salazar

APPENDIX D
DEMOGRAPHICS

APPENDIX D

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Total Study Group

6 Males 4 Females

Ethnic Breakdown:

4 Caucasian Male 2 Caucasian females
 2 Hispanic male 2 Hispanic Females
 2 African American 0 African American

Total Study Group Breakdown

Subjects	Age	Ethnicity	Gender	Marital status	Source of Income	Years of education
Subject 1	36-45	Caucasian	Male	Divorced	Work	Some college
subject 2	36-45	Caucasian	Male	Living together	Work	High school
subject 3	36-45	African American	Male	Married	Work	High school
subject 4	36-45	African American	Male	Single	Work	High school
subject 5	36-45	Hispanic	Male	Married	Work	High school
subject 6	26-35	Hispanic	Male	Single	Work	High school
subject 7	36-45	Hispanic	Female	Divorced	Work	Some college
subject 8	18-25	Caucasian	Male	Single	Work	High school
subject 9	46-Over	Caucasian	Female	Divorced	Other	High school
subject 10	26-35	Caucasian	Male	Single	work and family	some college
subject 11	36-45	Caucasian	Female	Living together	Support by husband	High school
subject 12	18-25	Hispanic	Female	Living together	Other	High school

APPENDIX E
AGENCY APPROVAL LETTER

APPENDIX E

AGENCY APPROVAL LETTER

To: California State University, San Bernardino,
Department of social work, and the Institutional
Review Board Sub- Committee.

SUBJECT: Bilingual Family Counseling Services Letter for
Approval of Research.

I Olivia Sevilla, as director of the Bilingual Family Counseling Services, authorize Margarita B. Salazar to do a Research Study on the target population served by the agency, specifically the clients in substance abuse treatment programs. This study is being conducted under the auspices of California State University, San Bernardino.

The purpose of the research study is to explore and define the perceptions of the program from the client's point of view. I understand that the study will entail face-to-face interviews with consenting clients. The interviews will be conducted over a one-month period during the fall schedule. I further understand that prior to completing the research study (June 2004), I may be contacted for follow up data.

It is my hope that the completed research will assist in identifying and defining the perceptions of an outpatient substance abuse treatment program in our agency, from the client's point of view.

Olivia Sevilla LCSW.
Executive Director

Date

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