

Title: Assessing youth participation in AA-related helping: Validity of the Service to Others in Sobriety (SOS) questionnaire in an adolescent sample.

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Summary:

Positive adult outcomes associated with Alcoholics Anonymous related-helping (AAH) has spurred study of the benefits of AAH among recovering adolescents. However, adolescent addiction research is hampered by few validated child assessments of AA activities including AAH. This study provides psychometric findings of a brief AAH assessment “Service to Others in Sobriety (SOS)” administered to a large sample of adolescents court-referred to residential treatment (93 boys, 102 girls). Multi-informant data was prospectively collected from youth self-reports, clinician-rated assessments, biomarkers, and medical chart records after 2-months of residential treatment. Examination of SOS items revealed that very few (7%) juvenile offenders did not participate in any AAH during treatment. Instrument validity analyses supported the SOS as a unidimensional scale, and indicated adequate psychometric properties of the brief tool, including inter-informant reliability ($r=0.5$), internal consistency ($\alpha=0.90$), and convergent validity ($r_s=0.3-0.3$). Programmatic forms of AAH discriminated youths who tested negative versus positive on urine toxicology screens during treatment. The cut-point of 40 on the SOS was supported empirically by definite case-ness on the Children’s Global Assessment Scale and indicated high AAH participation in approximately one out of four youths. Most youth engaged in some AAH during treatment at higher levels than other programmatic activities. The SOS appears to be a valid measure of AAH suggesting clinical utility in gauging levels of AAH among adolescents. Given prior positive associations between AAH and treatment outcomes, the SOS might be employed to enhance adolescent treatment, identify accessible service opportunities salient to sobriety, and facilitate juvenile offenders’ successful re-entry into the community following treatment.

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