

# Helping Behaviors and Alcohol Use Disorders

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# This Lecture Will Cover

- Why HB are important
- Behavioral modification in Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) treatment
- Behavioral modification in 12-step programs
- Role of HB in Alcoholics Anonymous

# Helping Behaviors (HB)

- Altruism, volunteering, service
- 5 elements
  - Benefit other person
  - Voluntary
  - Intentional
  - Benefit to another = primary goal
  - Given without reward expectation

# Importance of Helping Behaviors

~Process important to recovery and prevention of health conditions

~Furthers knowledge:  
mechanisms of action within  
12-step programs

~Clinical approach for all patients

# Alcohol Dependence

3+ in past 12 months:

- Not been able to cut down or stop
- Not been able to stick to drinking limits
- Shown tolerance
- Shown signs of withdrawal
- Kept drinking despite problems
- Spent a lot of time drinking
- Spent less time on other matters

# Health Benefits of Getting

- 8458 men, 5 year study OR
- Duodenal ulcer 0.6
- Mortality 0.5
- Controls for
  - Demographic factors
  - Biological factors
  - Health habits

# Health Benefits of Giving

	<u>Mortality OR</u>
■ Giving	0.6
■ Getting	1.0
■ Controls for	
■ Demographic factors	
■ Biological factors	
■ Health habits	

# Overall Health Benefits

- Greatest for isolated adults
- Alcoholism is socially isolating





# Mental Health Benefits

Depression:  $d=.5$

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder  
symptoms:  $d=.2$

Self-esteem:  $d=.2$

Life satisfaction:  $d=.4$

Sense of purpose:  $d=.6$

Michigan Study of Life Transitions, 2003;  
America's Changing Lives, 1999

# Overall Mental Health Benefits

- Greatest for givers with same chronic disease

**Depression:  $d=.9$**

**Self-esteem:  $d=3.2$**

**Life satisfaction:  $d=9.4$**

**Sense of purpose:  $d=1.3$**

- Alcoholism: a chronic disease

# Social Benefits

**Arrests/delinquent acts:  $d=.2$**

**Alcohol/marijuana use:  $d=.3-.5$**

**College attendance:  $d=.4$**

Michigan Study of Life Transitions, 2003

# AUD Treatments

- Cognitive Behavior Treatment (CBT)
  - Enhance motivation
  - Rebuild health, functioning
  - Relapse prevention
- Same core used for chronic disorders

# Motivational Enhancement (ME)

- ✓ Express empathy
- ✓ Develop discrepancy
- ✓ Roll with resistance
- ✓ Support self-efficacy

# Relapse Prevention

- ✓ Coping skills for precipitants
  - Intrapersonal
  - interpersonal
- ✓ Lifestyle changes
- ✓ If slip: get back on track

# Same Tripartite Approach in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

- Motivation increased
- Restoration of functioning
- Relapse prevention

# AUD Chronicity

- 70%: 1+ AUD criterion
- High risk period post treatment
- Self-help groups can help



# AA: A Common Source of Help

- 60% of men go to AA
- 80% of women go to AA

# AA Facts

- 100,000+ groups
- 2,000,000+ members
- 150 countries
- No cost
- 77% inform their doctor

# AA Benefits: Short-Term

- months of abstinence
- Abstinence:  $r=.3$
- Psychological adjustment:  $r=.3$

# AA Benefits: Long-Term

- 50% retention: first 90 days
- Retention rates: after 90 days
  - 70% - 3 months
  - 60% - 6 months
  - 55% - 1 year
  - 50% - 5 years

# Service Dimension of AA

- AA's primary purpose
- Oxford Group
- 3 sided program:
  - Unity
  - Recovery
  - Service



# Service in AA

- Anything that helps fellow sufferers
- Forms of HB
  - Formal roles at AA meetings
  - Helping newcomers
  - Sharing experience (12<sup>th</sup> step)
  - Being a sponsor

# Active Ingredients of AA: What Works?

- 107 cross-sectional studies
  - Increases involvement:  $r=.3$
  - Has AA sponsor:  $r=.3$
  - Leads a meeting:  $r=.2$
  - Does 12<sup>th</sup> step work:  $r=.2$
- HB: half of modest effects

# Longitudinal Studies of HB: Project MATCH

- 8% HB during treatment
- HB not limited to subgroups
  - Drinking severity
  - Demographic characteristics
- 40% versus 20% sober at 15 months



# Conclusions

- HB important to health
- One-third of AA's program
- Evidenced-based method for abstinence
- Clinical approach for all patients

