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Introduction
The purpose of this study is to explore the role of religion in the process of recovery from addiction for individuals experiencing homelessness. There exists an inverse relationship between practicing religion and substance use, suggesting that religion may be a protective factor in reducing problematic substance use (Morjaria & Orford, 2002). Additionally, Moos (2007) found that high religious affiliation was correlated with better recovery outcomes, and suggested that spirituality helps individuals manage life stressors and fosters a greater sense of optimism and hope. Bass (2009) found affiliation was correlated with better recovery.

Findings: Participants discussed many factors contributing to and characterizing their substance use history. Social factors, coping with life stressors, and negative self-views were mentioned frequently.

- "I wanted to stop, y'know, a few times. I did stop a few times. But, uh, eventually it gets to the point where you don’t really care about anything but the drugs, cause they’re what’s regulating you.”
- "I had 10 million thousand reasons why I was just worthless. And I believed every single one of them wholeheartedly. And drugs helped me believe that, and then also, like, numbed the sting from knowing that.”

Methods

Participants
- 9 men, 5 women
- 12 White, 1 Pacific Islander, 1 Latino
- Age ranged from 23 to 64 years
- Length of sobriety ranged from 8 weeks to 3 years
- Participants were recruited from 2 residential programs focusing on recovery for individuals experiencing homelessness: one Christian and one non-faith-based

- 40-60 minute qualitative interviews
- Interview topics included recovery history, religious beliefs, ideas of self, and community
- Interviews were transcribed
- Transcriptions were coded, and emerging frameworks were created (Heydarian, 2016)
- Interview data was re-coded according to frameworks, and frequencies were recorded

Conclusions

Findings of this study align with existing literature on the role of religion in recovery. In talking about their faith and recovery, participants referred most frequently to their ability to think differently, including developing new ways to cope and an overall new, more optimistic perspective. According to Moos (2007), the stress and coping theory suggests that high religious affiliation fosters optimism. Additionally, the most frequently mentioned method of keeping busy among my participants was participating in religious activities. Morjaria and Orford (2002) suggest the idea that a protective mechanism of religion may be time-occupying activities incompatible with substance use. Community, family support, and a sense of purpose were also commonly referred to as factors in success during recovery. These results suggest that the social and intrapsychic benefits of religion extend to homeless populations.

In considering these results, it is important to note the limitation that the sample was small and was predominantly White, while the greater homeless population contains many more marginalized identities.

References and Acknowledgements


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