

PREDICTING ATTENDANCE AT MUTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS FROM RESIDENTIAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT: THE USE OF THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR AND SPIRITUAL BELIEFS

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Introduction and Aims:

Mutual support groups can potentially play an important role in extending the treatment gains made by people attending residential alcohol and other substance use treatment. However, there has been limited research examining the psychological variables related to participant's intentions to engage in mutual support groups as part of their ongoing continuing care. The present study used the theory of planned behaviour to predict participants intentions to access mutual support groups following residential substance abuse treatment.

Design and Methods:

All participants were attending residential treatment provided by The Australian Salvation Army (N = 5 sites). The study was conducted as a cross sectional survey. Basic demographic information, as well as substance use and mental health history were collected. Participants also completed measures examining the primary components of the theory of planned behaviour (intentions, attitudes, social norms, and perceived behavioural), spirituality, and past experience with attending mutual support groups.

Results:

Two hundred and sixty two people participated in the study. Intentions to attend SMART Recovery groups were successfully predicted ($R^2 = .39$), with attitudes, social norms and spiritual beliefs being significant predictors in the final model. Intentions to attend 12-step groups were also successfully predicted ($R^2 = .46$), with attitudes, social norms, perceived behavioural control and spiritual beliefs all significant in the final model.

Discussion and Conclusions:

Discussion will focus on ways residential treatment providers might be able to build positive perceptions of mutual support groups and encourage the development of continuing care plans to facilitate successful recovery outcomes.