Charles Sturt University

The effectiveness of online counselling for rural family members of people struggling with substance use

Heidi Gray

Other contributors:
Prof Julaine Allan
Dr Nicole Snowdon
Dr Nicola Ivory
Dr Kedir Ahmed
Dr Matt Thomas

Acknowledgements

Concerned significant others

01 Substance use can greatly impact CSOs physical and mental health [11]

02 Families with someone using substances tend to have higher rates of mental health distress [3, 4]

03 Providing support to CSOs benefits their wellbeing AND reduce IP use of substances and increase willingness to enter treatment [1, 5, 6]

04 Few substance use services provide support to CSOs [2]

05 Rural Australians face additional barriers to accessing substance use support, with most services located in major cities [2]

Community Reinforcement and Family Training

CRAFT

CRAFT

01 Grounded in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Motivational Interviewing [10]

02 Teaches safe removal of positive reinforcement for problematic substance-using behaviours while increasing positive reinforcement for non-using behaviours [10]

03 Aims: to increase CSO social and emotional wellbeing [13] and encourage the IP to enter AOD treatment [12]

04 Studies show CRAFT improves CSO wellbeing [13] and is associated with increased IP engagement with AOD services [12]

05 However, few studies have evaluated CRAFT when delivered online/telehealth and few studies have evaluated CRAFT in rural communities or within the Australian context

Aim

To evaluate the effectiveness of an online delivery of CRAFT to CSOs with a loved one using substances

Method

- A randomised waitlist control trial with a 1:1 allocation ratio was used to compare online CRAFT against a wait-list control group.
- Participants were randomly allocated to the intervention or waitlist group

Sample Population

Study participants were **self-selected people with a relative or friend who has a substance problem.**

Inclusion:

- Family member/s of someone with substance dependence and a mental illness
- Speaks English
- Over 18 years of age
- Is able and willing to attend FEP sessions
- Is able to provide informed consent
- Having at least one contact/day on four days over the past month (in-person or electronic) with the Identified Person (IP)
- Access to a computer with internet or mobile phone with video conferencing capabilities
- Living in regional Australia (MMM2-MMM7)

Exclusion:

- Domestic and family violence from the person with substance dependence to the family member
- Current participation in other family support/therapy programs

Measures

An outcome evaluation was conducted within and between the groups.

The outcomes for family participants who received CRAFT were compared to those who received reading material while on the waitlist.

The following measures of psychological well-being was used:

Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21)

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The Flourishing Scale (FS)

Brief-COPE

Participants accessed six structured CRAFT sessions

All sessions were conducted online via face-to-face video conferencing

CONSORT

Enrolment

Expressions of interest (**n=192**)

Screening

Screened (**n=159**)

Allocation

Completed baseline (OM1) (**n=126**)

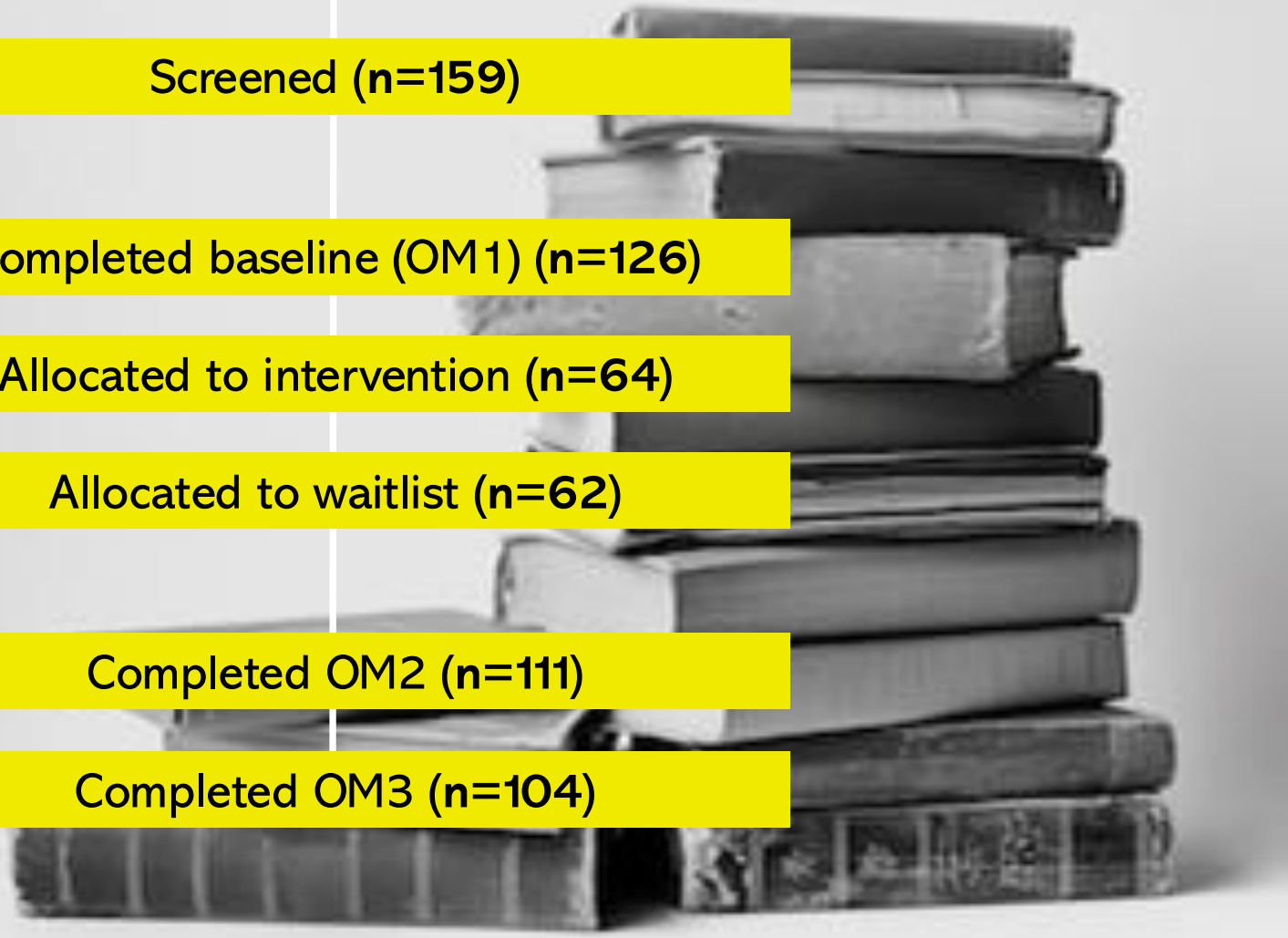
Allocated to intervention (**n=64**)

Allocated to waitlist (**n=62**)

Follow-up

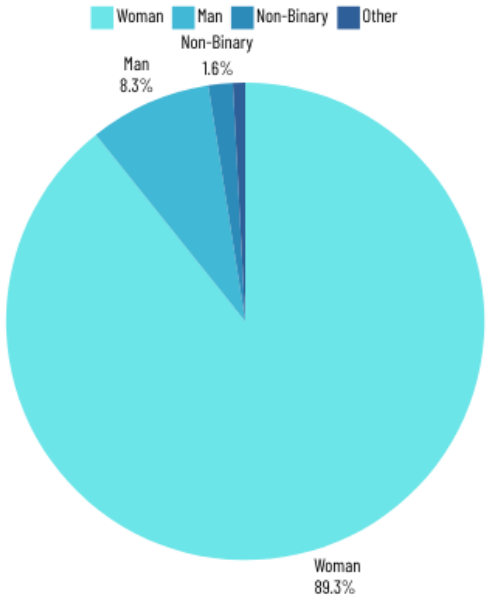
Completed OM2 (**n=111**)

Completed OM3 (**n=104**)

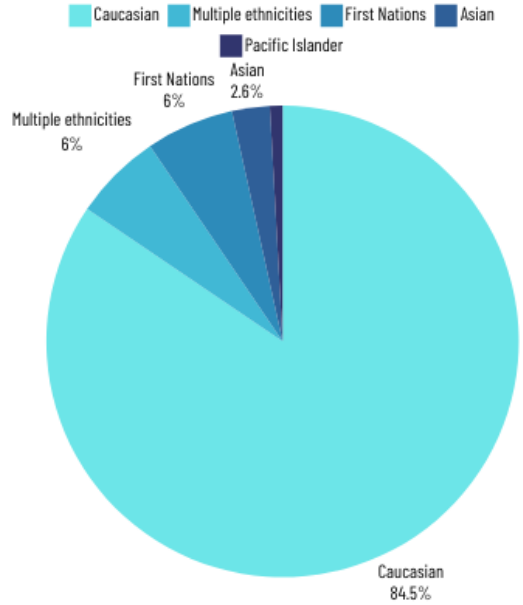


Demographics

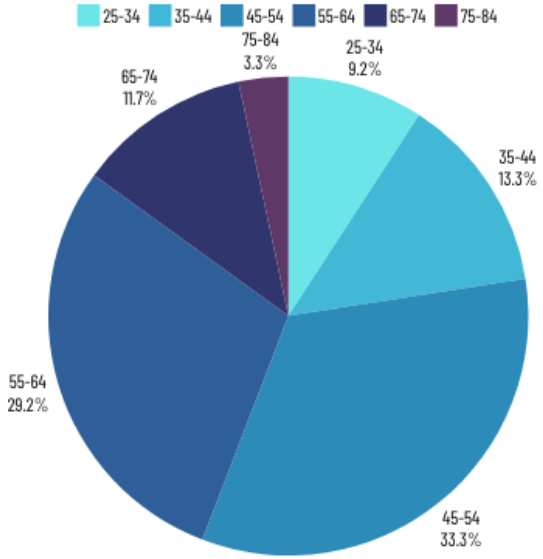
Participant Gender



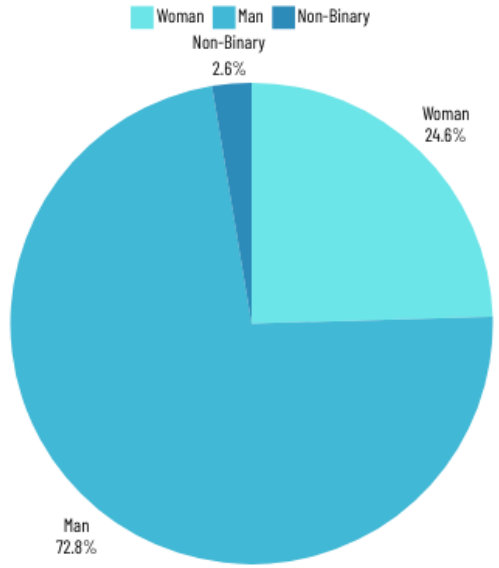
Participant Ethnicity

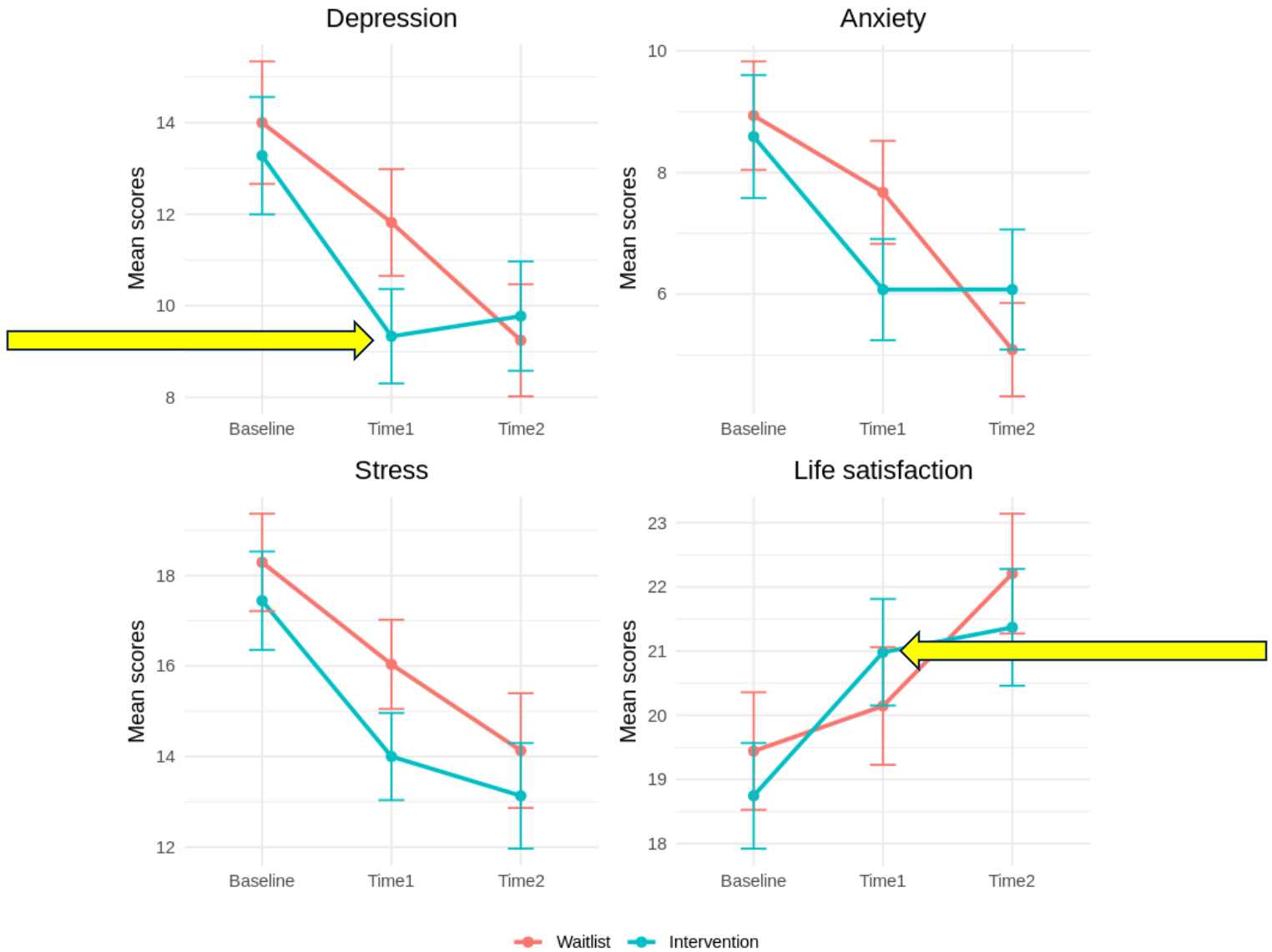


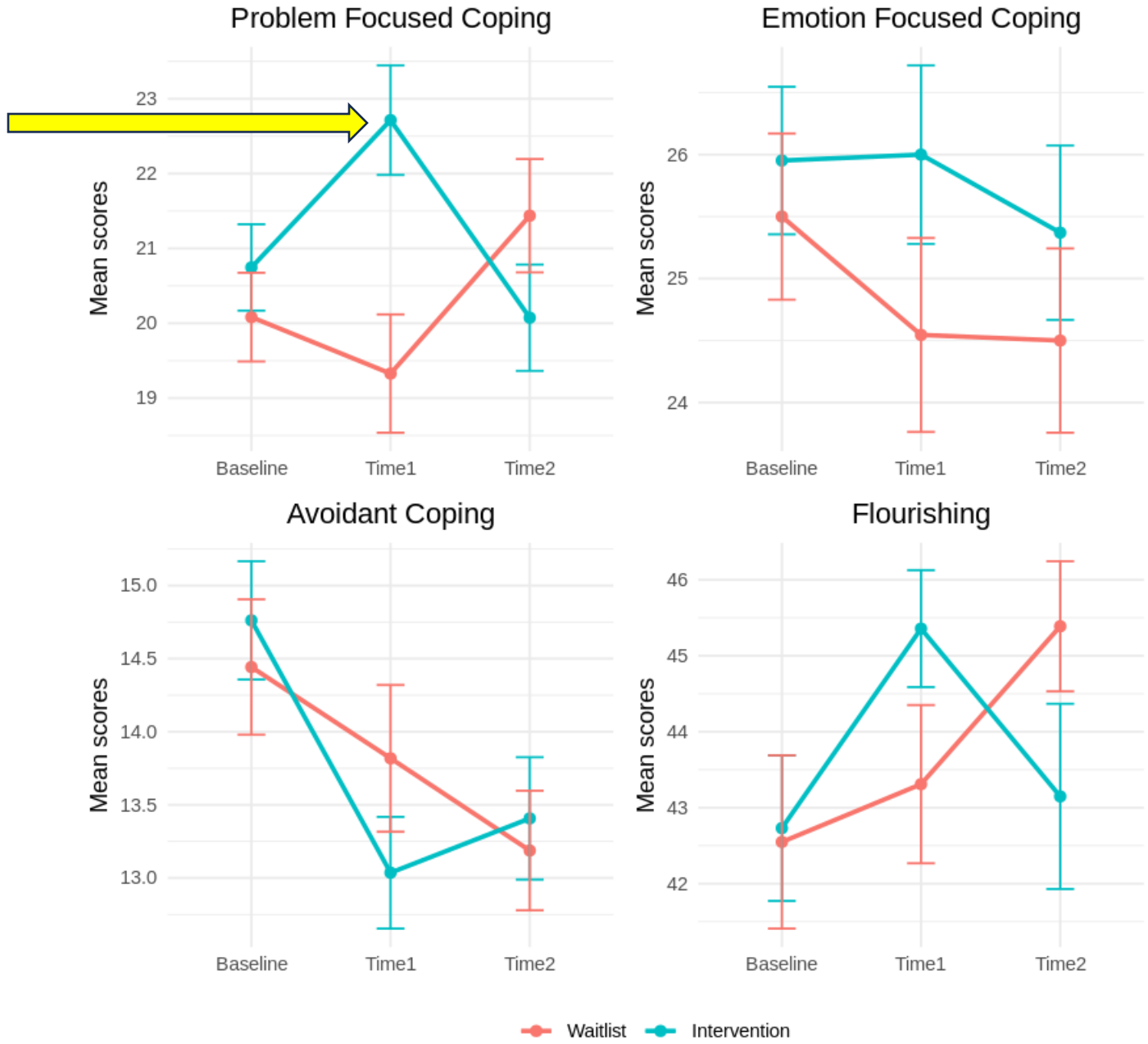
Participant Age



Gender of person using AOD




Depression
Anxiety
Stress
Life satisfaction
Mean scores
Baseline
Time1
Time2
Waitlist
Intervention


Problem Focused Coping
Emotion Focused Coping
Avoidant Coping
Flourishing
Mean scores
23
22
21
20
19
26
25
24
15.0
14.5
14.0
13.5
13.0
46
45
44
43
42
Baseline
Time1
Time2
Waitlist
Intervention

Experiences of CRAFT

Communication strategies

Mental health strategies and self care

Practitioner's understanding and flexibility

Professional support for CSO

Next steps

- Articles
  - Effectiveness of online CRAFT to rural Australians – RCT
  - Women's experiences of caring for someone who uses substances in rural Australia
  - The enablers and barriers to accessing support as a CSO
  - The experiences of CRAFT – participants
  - The experiences of CRAFT – practitioners
- Working with Drug and alcohol treatment groups

Take home messages

- Effectiveness of online CRAFT in rural Australia
- First known RCT to deliver CRAFT entirely online in Australia
- Potential to address key access barriers in rural Australian
- Contribute to the increasing world-wide use of CRAFT
- Implications for future funding and support

Charles Sturt University

Questions?

@: hegray@csu.edu.au

Listen to our podcast or read more here

References

1) Ariss, T., & Fairbairn, C. E. (2020). The Effect of Significant Other Involvement in Treatment for Substance Use Disorders: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, *88*(6), 526-540. https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000495
2) Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2023). *Alcohol and other drug treatment services in Australia annual report*. https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/alcohol-other-drug-treatment-services/alcohol-other-drug-treatment-services-australia/contents/treatment-types
3) Gandhi, R., Suthar, M., Pal, S., & Rathod, A. (2017). Anxiety and depression in spouses of males diagnosed with alcohol dependence: a comparative study. *Archives of psychiatry and psychotherapy*, *19*(4), 51-56. https://doi.org/10.12740/APP/79459
4) Gohil, J., Patel, M., & Samani, M. (2016). Quality of Life and Psychiatric Morbidity in Caregiver of Alcohol Dependence Patients. *IOSR Journal of Dental and Medical Sciences*, *15*, 98-101. https://doi.org/10.9790/0853-15080198101
5) Higgins, S. T., Budney, A. J., Bickel, W. K., & Badger, G. J. (1994). Participation of Significant Others in Outpatient Behavioral Treatment Predicts Greater Cocaine Abstinence. *The American journal of drug and alcohol abuse*, *20*(1), 47-56. https://doi.org/10.3109/00952999409084056
6) Kelly, S. M., O'Grady, K. E., Schwartz, R. P., Peterson, J. A., Wilson, M. E., & Brown, B. S. (2010). The relationship of social support to treatment entry and engagement: the Community Assessment Inventory. *Subst Abus*, *31*(1), 43-52. https://doi.org/10.1080/08897070903442640
7) Lawrinson, P., Copeland, J., & Indig, D. (2006). Regional differences in injecting practices and other substance use-related behaviour among entrants into opioid maintenance pharmacotherapy treatment in New South Wales, Australia. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *82*(supp 1), S95-S102. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0376-8716(06)80015-3
8) McCann, T. V., & Lubman, D. I. (2018). Help-seeking barriers and facilitators for affected family members of a relative with alcohol and other drug misuse: A qualitative study. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, *93*, 7-14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsat.2018.07.005
9) Meyers, R. J., & Godley, M. D. (2001). Developing the community reinforcement approach. In Robert J. Meyers & William R. Miller (Eds.), *A community reinforcement approach to addiction treatment* (pp. 1-7). Cambridge University Press.
10) Meyers, R. J., Miller, W. R., Hill, D. E., & Tonigan, J. S. (1998). Community reinforcement and family training (CRAFT): engaging unmotivated drug users in treatment. *Journal of substance abuse*, *10*(3), 291-308. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0899-3289(99)00003-6
11) Orford, J., Natera, G., Copello, A., Atkinson, C., Mora, J., Velleman, R., Crundall, I., Tiburcio, M., Templeton, L., & Walley, G. (2005). *Coping with Alcohol and Drug Problems: The Experiences of Family Members in Three Contrasting Cultures* (1 ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203759608
12) Roozen, H. G., De Waart, R., & Van Der Kroft, P. (2010). Community reinforcement and family training: an effective option to engage treatment-resistant substance-abusing individuals in treatment. *Addiction (Abingdon, England)*, *105*(10), 1729-1738. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2010.03016.x
13) Smith, J. E., & Meyers, R. J. (2004). *Motivating substance abusers to enter treatment: Working with family members.* The Guilford Press. https://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=qR_8jr5-kt4C&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&ots=KOTXXojleV&sig=pKV-c7YnpgVYPjjPSX4kW8Oh2ls&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false
14) Thorn H, Olley R. Barriers and facilitators to accessing medical services in rural and remote Australia: A systematic review. Asia Pacific journal of health management. 2023;18(1):20-9.

Charles Sturt University is an Australian University, TEQSA Provider Identification: PRV12018.
Charles Sturt University CRICOS Provider Number: 00005F.