

2014

Intentions and use of therapeutic homework plans amongst smart recovery group facilitators

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Recommended Citation

Hynoski, Toni; Kelly, Peter James; Deane, Frank; and Baker, Amanda L., "Intentions and use of therapeutic homework plans amongst smart recovery group facilitators" (2014). *Faculty of Social Sciences - Papers*. 1373.

<https://ro.uow.edu.au/sspapers/1373>

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Abstract

Abstract presented at The Australasian Professional Society on Alcohol and other Drugs Conference 2014, 9-12 November 2014, Adelaide, Australia

Keywords

recovery, smart, intentions, amongst, facilitators, plans, group, homework, therapeutic

Disciplines

Education | Social and Behavioral Sciences

Publication Details

Hynoski, T., Kelly, P. J., Deane, F. P. & Baker, A. L. (2014). Intentions and use of therapeutic homework plans amongst smart recovery group facilitators. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, 33 (Supplement S1), 8-9.

INTENTIONS AND USE OF THERAPEUTIC HOMEWORK PLANS AMONGST SMART RECOVERY GROUP FACILITATORS

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Introduction and Aims: SMART recovery groups have cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) as their theoretical foundation. Between session therapeutic homework or “action plans” are a core component of CBT and an explicit part of SMART Recovery. The aim of the current study was to explore the frequency that homework action plans are used and the consistency with which implementation fits with ideal administration procedures. Utilising the theory of planned behaviour, group facilitators’ attitudes and beliefs about homework action plans were assessed to predict their intentions and use of homework.

Design and Methods: Forty-four SMART Recovery facilitators completed an online survey that assessed attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, intentions and self-reported use of homework in their groups.

Results: Only 27% of facilitators indicated they always ensured that every client left a group session with homework, but they estimated 60% of clients had left with homework in the prior two-week period. Comparison of facilitators with high versus low intentions to use homework indicated those with high intentions rated their group meetings as more structured and had stronger beliefs that homework would lead to positive behavioural change through learning new skills and would help group participants take more personal responsibility for their recovery. Binary logistic regression indicated that the theory of planned behaviour variables of attitudes and subjective norms significantly predicted intentions to use homework.

Discussion and Conclusions: Systematic homework administration procedures could be more reliably implemented in SMART Recovery groups. This is important given substantial evidence that homework is related to improved outcomes for individuals receiving CBT.

Implications for Practice or Policy: Improving the training of facilitators with a view to increasing the structure of homework administration procedures is needed. Highlighting that group participants and SMART Recovery organisation would approve of and think homework was important would also likely increase intentions to use systematic homework.