Sexual Health: A New Ally for Improving Drug and Alcohol Treatment

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"In the past decade, there has been increasing attention to the importance of addressing the concept of sexual health, with the premise that promotion of sexual health has great potential to complement traditional disease control and prevention efforts…"

Hypothesis:
Developing drug and alcohol treatment professional sexual health knowledge, attitudes and sexual health conversation skills improves treatment outcomes.
sexual health

Knowledge
Lack of knowledge about sexual health among drug and alcohol treatment professionals
What is Sex/Drug-Linked Addiction?
Sex/Drug-Linked Pattern of Addiction..

Drug and/or alcohol dependent behavior

Sexual Activity

(Braun-Harvey, 2009)
...resulting in the need for specific sexual health based client relapse prevention skills and interventions

(Braun-Harvey, 2009)
sexual health
Attitudes
Sexual health attitudes in drug and alcohol treatment
DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION: BUILDING CONSENSUS FOR ADDING HUMAN SEXUALITY EDUCATION

There is a strong connection between personal sexuality issues and drug/alcohol use/abuse.

Licensed and certified drug and alcohol clinicians receive little or no sexuality training focused on sexuality issues known to be connected to drug and alcohol use.

Drug and alcohol treatment professionals and researchers in the field of drug and alcohol treatment were surveyed to determine what they believe to be the most important sexuality issues that should be offered in the formal training of drug and alcohol treatment professionals.

Drug and alcohol clinicians suspending their judgement about sexuality issues that they find distasteful was considered the most essential by the respondents.

sexual health

Conversation
What is a sexual health conversation?
Where and when is sexuality discussed in drug and alcohol treatment?
How Did Sexual Health in Drug and Alcohol Treatment Come About?
What is Sex/Drug-Linked Addiction?
Sex/Drug-Linked Pattern of Addiction

drug and/or alcohol dependent behavior

(Braun-Harvey, 2009)
resulting in the need for specific sexual health based client relapse prevention skills and interventions

(Braun-Harvey, 2009)
Where and when is sexuality discussed in drug and alcohol treatment?
SteppingStone Client Retention: 1999-2002

Graduated from the Residential Program 1999 to 2002

- Did Not Graduate: 72.1%
- Graduated: 26.5%
- Missing: 1.5%
What is Sex/Drug-Linked Relapse Prevention?
Premature/misapplied diagnosis of “sexual addiction” for sex/drug-linked behavior

What is Sex/Drug-Linked Relapse Prevention?
Motivated to remain abstinent from drugs and alcohol

What is Sex/Drug-Linked Relapse Prevention?
Unprepared for sexuality in recovery

What is Sex/Drug-Linked Relapse Prevention?
Unusual, hidden, misunderstood, shame-filled sexual turn-on

What is Sex/Drug-Linked Relapse Prevention?
What is Sex/Drug-Linked Relapse Prevention?

Sex negative attitudes and behaviors of helper
Deep seated feelings of shame about sexuality

What is Sex/Drug-Linked Relapse Prevention?
Who should consider Sexual Health in Drug and Alcohol Treatment?
Who should consider Sexual Health in Drug and Alcohol Treatment?

Dissatisfied with client retention and treatment outcomes
Client Retention
Who should consider Sexual Health in Drug and Alcohol Treatment?

Dissatisfied with Sex/drug-linked treatment approaches and outcomes
Relapse Prevention
Who should consider Sexual Health in Drug and Alcohol Treatment?

Program leadership willing to talk about the problem
Program leadership willing to Approach Trusted and Informed Sexual Health Resource

Who should consider Sexual Health in Drug and Alcohol Treatment?
Program leadership willing to Engage in an Assessment Process Before Preparing for any Change

Who should consider Sexual Health in Drug and Alcohol Treatment?
Program leadership willing to understand the situation before taking action.

Who should consider Sexual Health in Drug and Alcohol Treatment?
Lesson 5: Talking About Sex
Suspending Judgment
inability to regulate immediate emotional reactivity
Suspend

Stop something, make something ineffective *for a short time*

Delay or defer an action or judgment *until more facts are known*
Judgment

**Formed opinion or decision** about a disputed, controversial or doubtful circumstance

**Ability to form sound opinions, sensible decisions, or reliable guesses**
Abandoning morals?
Rejecting personal values?
Suspending judgment allows us to see things we usually can not see. Allows exploration of sexuality and sexual self.
Containing Mental Attitudes and Emotions
World Health Organization

Health Dimensions

Spiritual  Mental  Physical  Sexual
SEXUAL health
What is Sexual Health?
World Health Organization (2006)
...state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality;
it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity.
Inextricable element of human health
Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships,
the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.
For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.”
Parameters of sexual health conversations?
Knowing One's Own Relationship with Sexual Health
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What is Sex/Drug-Linked Relapse Prevention?
Assessment: Level of Sex/Drug-Link
Triage: Relapse Prevention Plan
Treatment: Sexual Health in recovery

What is Sex/Drug-Linked Relapse Prevention?
Stepping Stone 2002-2006

Sex/Drug-linked relapse Risk Assessment survey

What psychological/attitudinal/behavioral/emotional variables are correlated with high sex/drug linked addiction?
What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug-linked addiction?
Client Retention Data?

What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug linked addiction?
What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug linked addiction?
What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug linked addiction?
Mental Disorders?

What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug linked addiction?
Sexual Sensation Seeking?

What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug linked addiction?
What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug linked addiction?
Safer Sex Boundaries?

What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug linked addiction?
Out of Control Sexual Behavior?

What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug linked addiction?
Motivation for Change?

What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug linked addiction?
Self-Efficacy?

What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug-linked addiction?
Shame?

What psychological-attitudinal-behavioral-emotional variables are correlated with sex/drug linked addiction?
High Sex/Drug Linked Clients > (Double) Levels of Shame
Sex/drug-linked shame most salient risk factor?
Three months later: High Sex/Drug-Linked Clients = Shame Low Sex/Drug Linked Clients.
Shame measure correlated with improvement in **client retention** and increased self-efficacy for **completing treatment**.
Sexual Health in Drug and Alcohol Treatment is a shame-reduction intervention providing sex/drug-linked relapse prevention tools
Status of Clients at Stepping Stone Residential Treatment Center

Stepping Stone Graduation from Program
Nov. 15, 2003 through Oct. 1, 2006 (N = 213)

- Graduate: 36.1%
- Continued Success: 16.2%
- Self-Exit: 30.6%
- Transitioned Out: 5.6%
- Involuntary Exit: 11.6%

(N = 213) updated to Oct 2006.
Hypothesis
Providing a sex positive treatment environment combined with a sexual health psycho-educational curriculum Decreases sex/drug linked shame which contributes to improving self efficacy Resulting in a treatment ready client population.


