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The Role of Social Supports, Spirituality, Religiousness, Life Meaning and Affiliation with 12-step Fellowships in Quality of Life Satisfaction among Individuals in Recovery from Alcohol and Drug Use

Abstract

Many recovering substance users report quitting drugs because they wanted a better life. The road of recovery is the path to a better life but a challenging and stressful path for most. There has been little research among recovering persons in spite of the numbers involved, and most research has focused on substance use outcomes. This study examines stress and quality of life as a function of time in recovery, and uses structural equation modeling to test the hypothesis that social supports, spirituality, religiousness, life meaning, and 12-step affiliation buffer stress toward enhanced life satisfaction. Recovering persons (N = 353) recruited in New York City were mostly inner-city ethnic minority members whose primary substance had been crack or heroin. Longer recovery time was significantly associated with lower stress and with higher quality of life. Findings supported the study hypothesis; the 'buffer' constructs accounted for 22% of the variance in life satisfaction. Implications for research and clinical practice are discussed.

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