

Exploring Cultural Competencies within Ethnically-Defined Alcoholics Anonymous Groups



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Background Information

- > Ethnic-minorities face difficulties when attempting substance abuse treatment because of addiction and identity stigma
- > Benefits of a culturally competent framework found in other forms of substance abuse treatment
- > A **Culturally Competent Framework** acknowledges the importance of culture and adapts services to fit culturally-specific needs

Research Questions

1. How do addiction-focused mutual support groups, like AA, exhibit cultural competence in the organizational practices for ethnic-specific groups?
2. What is the relationship between levels of cultural competence within these groups and 12-Step treatment completion?

Methodology

- Qualitative semi-structured interviews with AA facilitators of both general and ethnically-defined AA groups in Seattle area
- Goal sample size: 6 interviewees
- Reality sample size: 3 interviewees (2 general, 1 ethnically-defined)
- Open code meeting structure themes
- Compare and contrast themes to determine extent of culturally competent organization

Themes from General AA

"There is a very familiar structure. And that ritual is important for recovery, because ritual is such a part of substance misuse"

- **Contingency:** resources provided to participants are dependent on the individual
- **Ritual:** initial meeting practices are the same
- **Flexibility:** generally the rest of meeting practices are flexible

Culturally-Competent Themes from Ethnic-Specific AA

"...but these are like truly like white supremacist values but it's like you only get your three minutes, and you know it's like very, very, very much adheres to the structure, which I think is a difference, so in BIPOC, it's much more generous like I'm less focused on time and more about like letting people share."

- **Nonrestrictive Organization:** no time limits to sharing and less rigid rules of order within meetings unlike General AA
- **Open to Outside Topics:** allow for the discussion of controversial topics like race and racism unlike General AA
- **Ethnically-focused Resources:** focus on outside literature or literature that is specifically about POC

Conclusion

- Indications of culturally competent organization within ethnically-defined AA groups
 - Nonrestrictive Organization
 - Open to Outside Topics
 - Ethnically-Focused Resources
- Effect of culturally competent organization on successful 12-Step treatment completion is unknown
- Future research should expand upon the number of ethnically-defined interviewees given the significance of these questions

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