

GLOBAL RECOGNITION

U.S. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DRUG ABUSE

Understanding Drug Abuse and Addiction: What Science Says – Self-Help and Drug Addiction Treatment

Self-help groups can complement and extend the effects of professional drug addiction treatment. The most prominent groups are those affiliated with Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and ... SMART Recovery. Most drug addiction treatment programs encourage patients to participate in a self-help group during and after formal treatment.¹

SMART's InsideOut program for correctional facilities was funded by \$1 million in NIDA Small Business Innovation Research Grants. SMART offers the court-mandated nonreligious recovery support that meets the best practice standards set by the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). Major research has established that the program significantly reduces reconviction rates.²

NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM

Understanding the Impact of Alcohol on Human Health and Well-Being – Medical Attention | The Patient is Drinking

Encouraging patients to go to mutual-support groups such as AA or SMART Recovery is the first-line response in this situation. Although some patients will inform you early on that they have no intention of attending these meetings because of previous negative experiences or a fear of groups, encourage them to try these groups by stressing that a different type of

group could be helpful (e.g., going to SMART Recovery instead of AA ...).³

NIH funded CheckUp & Choices (www.smartrecovery.org/checkupandchoices), an evidence-based web app based on SMART's 4-Point Program that helps people stop drinking, which was developed under the leadership of Reid Hester, Ph.D. After NIAAA-funded research proved its effectiveness, new apps were developed for opioids, stimulants, marijuana and compulsive gambling.

NIAAA ALCOHOL TREATMENT NAVIGATOR

Caretaker Support Resources

Just as the needs of each person with alcohol use disorder are different, each family's needs are also different. Several resources are available to help you while your loved one is in treatment, and afterwards.

- Family therapy—often offered as part of a patient's treatment. If not—or if you need additional or continuing support—you can use the Navigator's search guides to find a licensed addiction therapist who offers family therapy.
- SMART Recovery for Family & Friends—a research-based support program that focuses on building skills needed to support recovery. Visit SMART Recovery (www.smartrecovery.org) to learn more and to find an in-person or online support meeting.
- Al-Anon—peer-led mutual support groups for family members and others affected by a person's drinking. Meetings focus on the 12 steps (adapted from AA), and sharing personal experience. Visit Al-Anon (al-anon.ala-teen.org) to learn more and to find nearby meetings.⁴

ALCOHOL TREATMENT NAVIGATOR

Long-term Recovery Support

For someone involved in treatment, it can be challenging to establish a routine free from alcohol or other substance use and away from the situations and social networks that used to support their drinking.

Participating in a mutual-support group can reinforce and extend the benefits of professional treatment and provide much-needed social support over the long term.

There are several groups to consider:

- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)—the most common mutual help group, with meetings in most communities and online. Meetings involve participants sharing their personal histories with drinking and recovery, and encourage progress along “12 steps” that have a strong spiritual component. Because group dynamics can vary from meeting to meeting, people often visit several meetings before they find one where they feel comfortable. Visit Alcoholics Anonymous (www.aa.org) to learn more and find a meeting nearby.
- LifeRing—a secular (nonreligious) peer support network supporting abstinence from alcohol and other drugs. Visit LifeRing (<http://lifering.org>) to learn more and to find an in-person or online meeting.
- Secular Organizations for Sobriety—an alternative to spiritual support groups, this is a network of local and online groups dedicated to helping people achieve and maintain sobriety. Visit Secular Organizations for Sobriety (www.sossobriety.org) to learn more.
- SMART Recovery—a research-based support program that focuses on empowering members to build four sets of skills: motivation to abstain, coping with urges, problem solving, and lifestyle balance. Visit SMART Recovery (www.smartrecovery.org) to learn more and find an in-person or online meeting.

- Women for Sobriety—a self-help program designed by and for women, focusing on emotional and spiritual growth. Visit Women for Sobriety (<http://womenforsobriety.org>) to learn more and find a meeting or online message board.⁵

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

An Introduction to Mutual Support Groups for Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Mutual support (also called self-help) groups are an important part of recovery from substance use disorders (SUDs). ... The most widely available are 12-step groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), but other mutual support groups such as Women for Sobriety (WFS), SMART Recovery and Secular Organizations for Sobriety/Save Our Selves (SOS) are also available.

Clients who are “philosophically well matched” to a mutual support group are more likely to actively participate in that group. Thus, the best way to help a client benefit from mutual support groups is to encourage increased participation in his or her chosen group. ...For example, having strong religious beliefs is related to greater participation in the spiritually based 12-step programs and WFS. In contrast, religiosity was less effective in increasing participation in SMART Recovery groups and decreased participation in SOS.⁶

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

National Recovery Month Planning Partner: SMART Recovery®

This international nonprofit organization offers free, self-empowering, science-based mutual-help groups for abstaining from any substance or activity

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dependence. SMART stands for Self-Management and Recovery Training. The SMART Recovery 4-Point Program[®] helps people recover from all types of dependency behaviors, including alcohol, drugs, substance misuse, gambling, and dependence on other substances and activities.⁷

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT SERVICES LOCATOR

Peer Support ... Self-Help Groups

Lists SMART Recovery and 12-step groups.⁸ SAMHSA funded training for facilitators of SMART and InsideOut meetings, and the video “How to Facilitate a Basic SMART Recovery Meeting.”

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DRUG COURT PROFESSIONALS

Adult Court Best Practice Standards, Volume I Substance Abuse Treatment Peer Support Groups

Participants regularly attend self-help or peer support groups in addition to professional counseling. The peer support groups follow a structured model or curriculum such as the 12-step or SMART Recovery models.⁹

Seven U.S. Appellate and three State Supreme Court rulings found that 12-step programs are religious, and court mandates to attend such meetings violate the First Amendment freedom-of-religion clause.¹⁰

NATIONAL DRUG COURT INSTITUTE

The Drug Court Judicial Bench Book Self-Help Recovery Programs

One important concern about 12-step programs is that they do rely on recognition of a higher spiritual power, which has been interpreted by appellate courts to have religious significance that may trigger First Amendment objections. Appellate courts have held that the State cannot mandate attendance in these groups unless it also offers a secular alternative. Several secular alternatives may be offered to drug court participants. For example, SMART Recovery (www.smartrecovery.org) and Save Our Selves (SOS) (www.sossobriety.org) have a scientific or cognitive orientation as opposed to a spiritual or religious orientation.¹¹

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE: FEDERAL BUREAU OF PRISONS

Self-Help Groups

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) Residential Drug Abuse Program (RDAP) offers treatment based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and self-empowerment quite similar to SMART’s InsideOut program. After inmates are released, the BOP recommends SMART meetings for “... participants [who] immediately reject AA and NA as a result of the spiritual component of these programs and/or as a result of the fact that these programs subscribe to the disease model of addiction. The disease model assumes that you are powerless over your addiction. The disease model can conflict with the bio-psychosocial model that is utilized in RDAP, which asserts that although there are many factors (genetics, personality, societal influences, family environment, etc.) that contributed to one’s addiction, the individual is ultimately responsible for all the choices made in his life.”¹²

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UK GOVERNMENT STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

NICE Quality Standard, Drug Use Disorders in Adults Quality Statement 7: Recovery and Reintegration

People in drug treatment are offered support to access services that promote recovery and reintegration including housing, education, employment, personal finance, healthcare and mutual aid.

Mutual aid services include SMART (Self-Management and Recovery Training) and those based on 12-step principles, for example Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous and Cocaine Anonymous.¹³

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND CARE EXCELLENCE

NICE Guideline, Alcohol-Use Disorders

Diagnosis, Assessment and Management of Harmful Drinking and Alcohol Dependence

1.3.1 General principles for all interventions...

1.3.1.7 For all people seeking help for alcohol misuse:

- give information on the value and availability of community support networks and self-help groups (for example, Alcoholics Anonymous or SMART Recovery) and
- help them to participate in community support networks and self-help groups by encouraging them to go to meetings and arranging support so that they can attend.^{14, 15}

PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND

A Briefing on the Evidence-Based Drug and Alcohol Treatment Guidance Recommendations on Mutual Aid

One of Public Health England's priorities is to improve recovery rates from drug dependency. To achieve this, a commitment has been made to increase the number of areas that have fostered effective links between treatment services and relevant community and mutual aid groups with the aim of enhancing social integration and wellbeing.

The most common mutual aid groups in England include 12-step fellowships and SMART Recovery... SMART Recovery applies cognitive behavioural techniques and therapeutic lifestyle change to its mutual aid groups to help people manage their recovery.

RECOVERY ORIENTATED DRUG TREATMENT EXPERT GROUP

Promote choice by ensuring people in treatment have a range of peer-support options including 12-step, SMART Recovery and other local peer-support services.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE MISUSE OF DRUGS

The report What Recovery Outcomes Does the Evidence Tell We Can Expect? underscores the valuable role played in recovery by mutual aid, including AA, NA and SMART Recovery.¹⁶

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AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGEING

Guidelines for the Treatment of Alcohol Problems

8. Self-Help Programs Lists Alcoholics Anonymous and SMART Recovery, including:

SMART Recovery adopts a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy framework and diverges from AA in that it eliminates the focus on spirituality inherent to the AA 12-step approach.

It uses a four-point recovery program designed to enhance members' motivation and teaches techniques that help manage lifestyle and behavioural difficulties. Skills training involves exposure to (among other things) cost-benefit analyses, identifying and rectifying irrational thoughts, and role-playing.

People who are uncomfortable with AA's spiritual focus may find the more secular approach of SMART Recovery a useful self-help alternative.

It is noteworthy that SMART Recovery is listed since the program was formally established in Australia in 2007, two years before the guidelines were issued. At the time, there were about 50 meetings in the country, compared with more than 300 today.¹⁷

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT: NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

CENTRE OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE | NATIONAL DRUG AND ALCOHOL RESEARCH CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH WALES

Guidelines on the Management of Co-Occurring Alcohol and Other Drug and Mental Health Conditions in Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Settings: Self-Help Groups

Reviews in the research literature suggest that some clients of AOD (alcohol and other drug) services will benefit from joining a self-help group, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, SMART Recovery or alternative self-help groups.¹⁸

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT: PATIENT PATHWAYS NATIONAL PROJECT - TURNING POINT, FITZROY

A study of patient pathways in alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment with recommendation for promotion of aftercare and mutual aid/peer support.

Specialist AOD services should develop and promote interventions and pathways to aftercare such as supportive community groups, including but not restricted to mutual aid groups. This could include assertive linkage to peer support groups, such as 12-step and SMART Recovery, using readily available and evidenced-based models that improve engagement with mutual aid (such as the MAAEZ model developed by Kaskutas and colleagues in the US). Being free and widely available (including online meetings), such support groups can be cost-effective models of aftercare, at least for some clients. Previous research has shown that such approaches require workforce training to support staff to make these initial connections and to develop relationships with mutual aid groups.¹⁹

AWARDS

SMART Recovery Australia's Be SMART Program (family and friends), managed by the Western Australian Mental Health Commission, won the 2018 Excellence in Working with Families and Carers category of the WANADA (Western Australian Network of Alcohol & Other Drug Agencies) awards.

USA

¹NIDA, February 2016, www.drugabuse.gov/publications/teaching-packets/understanding-drug-abuse-addiction/section-iv/5-self-help-drug-addiction-treatment.

²In a study of nearly 6,000 inmates, reconviction rates for violent crimes were 42 percent lower for the 3,000 who attended SMART meetings while incarcerated, according to research conducted in Australia by Chris Blatch et al., "Getting SMART, SMART Recovery Programs and Reoffending," *Journal for Forensic Practice*, 2016, Vol. 18 Iss: 1, 3-6.

³NIAAA, COMBINE: Medical Management Treatment Manual – A Clinical Treatment Manual for Medically Trained Clinicians Providing Pharmacotherapy as Part of the Treatment for Alcohol Dependence, 39, https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/combine/Combine_2.pdf.

⁴<https://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov/support-through-the-process/caretaker-support-resources>

⁵<https://alcoholtreatment.niaaa.nih.gov/support-through-the-process/long-term-recovery-support>

⁶Substance Abuse in Brief Fact Sheet, Spring 2008, 1, 4 (<https://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA08-4336/SMA08-4336.pdf>). This guidance is based on the paper by Randolph G. Atkins, Jr., Ph.D., and James E. Hawdon, Ph.D., "Religiosity and Participation in Mutual-Aid Support Groups for Addiction," *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment* 33 (2007). This research concludes: "Because religiosity influences group participation and outcomes, client religiosity must be considered in treatment planning.... For [individuals] with low levels of religiosity, and especially who have a secular or 'scientific' worldview, it may be very difficult to fit in with spiritually based recovery programs. Individuals with this type of personal philosophy are more likely to feel that sense of belonging in secular support groups that do not use a spiritual approach, such as SOS or SMART, and are more likely to continue participating in these secular groups, thus improving their prognosis for long-term abstinence," 329, 330.

⁷SAMHSA list of Planning Partners for National Recovery Month (September) www.recoverymonth.gov/organizations-programs/smart-recovery[®]

⁸SAMHSA, Self-Help Groups (Addiction), Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator, <https://fjndtreatment.samhsa.gov>.

⁹NADCP, 2013, www.nadcp.org/sites/default/files/2014/D-22.pdf, Chapter V. Substance Abuse Treatment, Section I. Peer Support Groups, 40, including footnote 19, which states, "Drug Courts must offer a secular alternative to 12-step programs such as Narcotics Anonymous because appellate courts have interpreted these programs to be deity-based, thus implicating the First Amendment."

¹⁰See the presentation by SMART President Joe Gerstein at the 2017 NADCP Training Conference, "The Power of Choice in Achieving Recovery" (www.smartrecovery.org/courts/), slides 6-10. In a 2013 case (*Hazle v. Crowfoot*), the court ordered the State of California and a treatment provider to pay \$2 million in damages to an inmate for failing to observe this First Amendment right.

¹¹Eds. Douglas B. Marlowe, J.D., Ph.D., Judge William G. Meyer (Ret.), 2011, www.ndci.org/sites/default/files/nadcp/14146_NDCI_Benchbook_v6.pdf, 75.

¹²RDAP Law Consultants, RDAP: The Bureau of Prisons Alcohol, Narcotic and Prescription Drug Abuse Program, 2014, 4.

UK

¹³NICE Quality Standard, Drug Use Disorders in Adults, November 19, 2012, 26-27, www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs23/resources/drug-use-disorders-in-adults-2098544097733.

¹⁴NICE Guideline, Alcohol-Use Disorders: Diagnosis, Assessment and Management of Harmful Drinking and Alcohol Dependence, February 23, 2011, 17-19, www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg115/resources/alcoholuse-disorders-diagnosis-assessment-and-management-of-harmful-drinking-and-alcohol-dependence-3510939116229.

¹⁵NICE guidelines state treatment should include a motivational component, which is much the same as the motivational aspects of SMART.

¹⁶Public Health England, A Briefing on the Evidence-Based Drug and Alcohol Treatment Guidance Recommendations on Mutual Aid, December 2013, 3-5, www.nta.nhs.uk/uploads/mutualaid-briefing.pdf.

AUSTRALIA

¹⁷Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Guidelines for the Treatment of Alcohol Problem, June 2009, 110-111, [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/0FD6C7C289CD31C9CA257BF0001F96BD/\\$File/AustAlctreatguidelines%202009.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/0FD6C7C289CD31C9CA257BF0001F96BD/$File/AustAlctreatguidelines%202009.pdf).

¹⁸National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use, National Drug and Alcohol Research Center, University of South Wales, Guidelines on the Management of Co-Occurring Alcohol and Other Drug and Mental Health Conditions in Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Settings, 2nd Edition, 2016, 105, https://comorbidity.edu.au/sites/default/files/National%20Comorbidity%20Guidelines%202nd%20edition_0.pdf.

¹⁹Lubman, D., Manning, V., Best, D., Berends, L., Mugavin, J., Lloyd, B., Lam, T., Garfield, J., Buykx, P., Matthews, S., Larner, A., Gao, C., Allsop, S., Room, R. (2014). www.turningpoint.org.au/research/clinical/patient-pathways-national-project