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&
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Moments...An evening with Bill W

The purpose of this paper and presentation is to offer treatment providers and practitioners insight into the development of 12 step programs and their value as a viable option in conjunction with traditional treatment methods for all levels of care including aftercare. Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a self-help group organized through an international organization of recovering alcoholics that offers emotional support and a model of abstinence for people recovering from alcohol dependence using a 12-step approach (Cochrane Library). AA and other 12 step approaches are typically based on the assumption that substance dependence is a spiritual and medical disease. Simply, directing a client to attend AA once a week is not enough. Bill Wilson and Co-founder Dr. Bob Smith, began the practice of telling their drinking stories to other alcoholics early in 1935. Later known as 12 step work, this required each member to carry the message of sobriety to another suffering alcoholic as part of their inherent duty to stay sober. Evidence indicates that 12 step mutual help organizations such as AA can play an important role in extending and potentiating the recovery benefits of professionally delivered addiction treatment among young adults with substance abuse disorders. Dr. Bob provided detoxification services at the Akron City Hospital for almost 15 years from 1935 till his death in 1950 all the while sponsoring over 5000 patients who would later become AA members. Like the professional clinical realm, the therapeutic alliance among sponsees and their sponsors predicts better substance abuse outcomes. Youth treatment programs frequently employ 12 step concepts and encourage participation in AA. Since AA groups are easily accessible at no charge and provide flexible support at times of high risk relapse they hold promise as a treatment adjunct in an increasingly cost constructing economic climate. The main objective of this presentation is for participants to understand the beginnings of the Alcoholics Anonymous 12 step program through the theatrical illustration of Bill Wilson's alcoholism and recovery from the early 1920's right up to 1950. Furthermore, participants would understand how 12 step programs are the forefathers of the treatment programs we know today while much more advanced now what still holds true is the essence of treatment which is one person reaching out and helping another. In addition, participants will become familiar with one person's struggle with alcoholism, how they came to find recovery and how they could successfully pass it on to others which still holds true over 80 years later.

Biography

Andrew Matthews completed his Bachelor's Degree in Theater Arts at State University of New York at both Orange County and New Paltz campuses. In addition, he continues to train at HB Studios and Actors Connection in New York. He has worked in the substance abuse field since 1990 at all levels of treatment including inpatient, outpatient, detox and residential services where he worked as Counselor, Supervisor and Trainer. He currently works for the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse in the Quality Services and Practice Improvement Division and has contact with over 50 programs annually in the New York. In addition, he sits in the Academy of Addiction Studies at the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse and has also studied Social Work at Fordham University.

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