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Ethnic Minorities & Recovery Support Groups: Fact Sheet

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Conventional wisdom about the inappropriateness of AA and NA for ethnic minorities is being challenged in a series of studies that tests such assumptions. Here are some of the key facts related to ethnic minorities and recovery support groups.

- The program concepts and meeting rituals of mainstream recovery support programs (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous) have been adapted for greater cultural relevance to particular ethnic minorities (Womak, 1996).
- Community surveys indicated that AA is widely recognized and accepted within ethnic minority communities and that this level of recognition and acceptance is increasing (Caetano, 1993). No comparable surveys have been done of other recovery support societies.
- African Americans and other ethnic minorities affiliate with and benefit from AA and NA following treatment at rates equal to or surpassing the affiliation rates of Caucasians (Humphreys, Mavis & Stoffelmayr, 1994).
- Ethnic minorities are at higher risk of dropping out of AA and NA (Humphreys, Mavis & Stoffelmayr, 1994), but this may reflect a migration toward indigenous recovery support institutions (e.g., the Black Church) during the transition from recovery initiation and stabilization to recovery maintenance (White & Kurtz, 2006).
- There are particular recovery support frameworks that have been developed out of the shared experience of particular ethnic group members that serve as alternatives or adjuncts to mainstream recovery support groups (see Williams, 1992 and Coyhis & White, 2006).
- Minority representation in AA and other recovery support meetings within predominately White communities can remain low until a critical mass of core minority members is achieved, after which the growth in representation of people of color can be quite rapid.

References & Recommended Reading

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