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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

PREDICTORS OF CLIENT RETENTION IN ALTERNATIVE TO PRISON SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

SOCIAL WELFARE

by

Jolae Brocato

2004

To: Dean Ronald M. Berkman
College of Health and Urban Affairs

This dissertation, written by Jolae Brocato, and entitled Predictors of Client Retention in Alternative to Prison Substance Abuse Programs, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this dissertation and recommend that it be approved.

Andres Gil

Mark Macgowan

Linda Sobell

Eric F. Wagner, Major Professor

Date of Defense: April 13, 2004

The dissertation of Jolae Brocato is approved.

Dean Ronald M. Berkman
College of Health and Urban Affairs

Dean Douglas Wartzok
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2004

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother and my daughter who inspired me to realize this effort, and the staff and clients of Spectrum Programs who gave freely of their time and helped me to complete this work.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

PREDICTORS OF CLIENT RETENTION IN ALTERNATIVE TO PRISON SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS

by

Jolae Brocato

Florida International University, 2004

Miami, Florida

Professor Eric F. Wagner, Major Professor

Increased treatment retention among substance abusing individuals has been associated with reduced drug use, fewer arrests, and decreased unemployment, as well as a reduction in health risk behaviors. This longitudinal study examined the predictors of client retention for alternative to prison substance abuse treatment programs through assessing the roles of motivational factors and the client-worker relationship. The sample was comprised of 141 male felony offenders who were legally mandated to community based long-term residential drug treatment programs.

The primary measures used in the study were the consecutive days a participant remained in treatment, Stages of Change Readiness Model and Treatment Eagerness Scale (SOCRATES), the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI), and The Readiness Ruler. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted for four hypotheses (a) participants who are more motivated to change at the time of entry will remain in treatment longer, (b) participants who have a strong therapeutic alliance will remain in treatment a greater number of consecutive days than participants who have weaker therapeutic alliance, (c) motivation to change, as measured at treatment entry, will be

positively related to therapeutic alliance, (d) during the course of treatment variation in motivation to change will be predicted by the therapeutic alliance.

Results support the following conclusions: Among clients in alternative-to prison programs the number of days in treatment is positively related to their motivation to change. The therapeutic alliance is not a predictor of the number of days in treatment. Motivation to change, particularly recognition of a drug problem, is positively related to the therapeutic alliance. Changes in motivation to change in response to treatment are positively related to the therapeutic alliance among clients in an alternative to prison substance abuse treatment programs. These results carry forward prior research and have implications for social work practice, research, and social welfare policy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER Page

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. LITERATURE REVIEW
Prevalence 8
Substance Use, Abuse, Dependence 8
Crime Related Costs 9
Drug Users and The Criminal Justice System 11
Community Justice Treatment Initiatives 12
Drug Court 13
Research on Drug Courts 14
TASC 16
Legally Mandated Treatment 17
Research on Compelled/Mandated/Coerced Treatment 18
Treatment Readiness/Treatment Seeking 20
Caveat: Is Treatment or Research Ever Voluntary? 21
Social Support 23
Acculturation 24
Treatment Effectiveness 26
Treatment Retention 27
Variables Related to Treatment Retention 28
Dynamic Variables Related to Retention 29

III. METHODOLOGY
Participants 34
Treatment 35
Therapists 38
Stages of Change Readiness Model and Treatment Eagerness Scale 38
The Working Alliance Inventory 39
Time Line Follow Back 41
The Drug Abuse Screening Test 42
Readiness Ruler 42
DSM-IV TR Checklist 42
Brief Important People Interview 43
Retention 43
Data Analysis 44
Power Analysis 44

IV. RESULTS
Introduction 46
Sample Description and Frequencies 46

CHAPTER Page

IV. RESULTS (continued)
Violation of Assumptions 53
Bivariate Correlations 58
Tests of Tolerance 58
Data Preparation 59
Data Collapsing and Recoding 61
Hypothesis #1 62
Hypothesis #2. 68
Hypothesis #3 69
Hypothesis #4 76

V. DISCUSSION
Introduction 79
Control Variables 79
Motivation to Change as a Predictor of Retention 82
The Therapeutic Alliance as a Predictor of Retention 85
Motivation to Change as A Predictor of the Therapeutic Alliance 88
The Therapeutic Alliance Increases Motivation to Change 93
Limitations of the Study 96
Suggestions for Further Research 98

LIST OF REFERENCES 100
APENDICES 116
VITA 160

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE PAGE

1. Client Demographics By Location and Average Days Retained 36
2. Characteristics of the Sample by Retention Status 48
3. Legal and Treatment Characteristics 50
4. Acculturation 51
5. Brief IPA Time 1 55
6. Brief IPA Time 2 56
7. Measures 57
8. Acculturation Factors 58
9. Collinearity Statistics 61
10. Days regressed on SOCRATES 65
11. Days regressed on SOCRATES Subscales 66
12. WAI Total Score regressed on SOCRATES Subscales 69
13. WAI Bond Score regressed on SOCRATES Subscales 70
14. WAI Total Score regressed on Readiness Ruler 71
15. WAI Bond Score regressed on Readiness Ruler 72
16. WAI Task Score regressed on Readiness Ruler 73
17. WAI Goal Score regressed on Readiness Ruler 73
18. Time 2 SOCRATES regressed on Time 1 SOCRATES WAI Subscale Scores ... 75
19. Collinearity Statistics 118
20. Collinearity Statistics 119
21. Collinearity Statistics 120