

## • Description:

The southwest group AA meeting was such an amazing experience. The amount of support they not only showed us students, but also each other, was incredible. They started by praying, then reading the daily readings. They then circled around & expressed what they needed to say, which at that time they also allowed us to speak as well. They then ended with prayer & thanked us, students, for being so open to the experience.

## • Feelings

In the beginning, I wasn't sure what to expect. Coming from an alcoholic father who has yet to admit to himself that he is an alcoholic, I for sure had a stigma. But once I was in the middle of the experience, the stigma faded & I gained a lot of respect for everyone at the AA meeting. I even got extremely emotional in the middle of the meeting, but felt safe enough to show those emotions. In the end, overall, I felt safe & was so glad I chose that meeting to attend.

## • Evaluation

The overall experience was great and I learned so much! I didn't think it would be as easy to open up like I did, but it felt like such a safe place to open up. It was hard & emotional to hear about similar experiences that my dad is currently going through, but it also gave me hope that one day my dad may also attend AA. Overall, I would not mind attending another meeting for the sole purpose of feeling that immense support & safety again.

## • Analysis

I always heard how beneficial group support is, but I have never seen it first hand. Seeing it first hand & hearing how the meetings impacted each individual was eye opening & made me want to go back even though I'm not an alcoholic! The amount of an impact made from group AA is something I've only read about in literature, but now I understand how amazing it is. From experience, I understand how addiction can rob someone of who they truly are, but from the meetings I saw that their true self can show in most meetings because it is a safe place. I'm so glad I was able to see the impact first hand.

## • Conclusion

In conclusion, I believe I did all I could to take as much from the experience as I could. I made sure to participate and listen to everyone's experience. In doing so, I learned a lot about alcohol addiction & the impact. I also learned that it is not my job to ask my dad to attend AA & it is his responsibility to admit to himself that he has an addiction FIRST. I'm glad I could walk out w/ personal knowledge that pertains to my own family & experiences.

## • Action Plan

Overall, AA meetings are extremely impactful & beneficial. From hearing different experiences to allowing a safe place to share an experience is something I have not experienced to the extent of the AA. I have learned to release the stigma I had about alcoholics and begin to be more understanding about the addiction as a whole. I have also learned to be more understanding with my dad, because it is a disease. I'm so glad I could take the knowledge from AA & apply it to clinicals and personal life.