

AA Meeting Reflection

I chose to go to the Southwest alcoholics anonymous meeting. I walked in, sat down with my fellow classmate Kirsten and the meeting started. They started with doing announcements and spiritual and motivational quotes. It was my first time ever going to an alcoholics anonymous group so I was curious as to how they worked. I was there as an observer, but it was interesting to see the amount of people that are active members.

At the beginning of the meeting, I was a little caught off guard when they started repeating a quote or scripture in sync as a group. I was unaware that they did such things at these types of meetings. Once the members started speaking about their experiences, it started to feel more like what I was expecting and what I see on TV. While listening to each individual's story, I felt empathy towards them because I saw how their addiction has caused them so much hurt and damage to them and their families. I then started to put myself in their shoes and really feel for them and picture how hard it would be if I was in their position.

One thing that I thought was neat about this meeting was how comfortable the majority of them were with speaking about their experiences. It felt like a safe place for them and I think that is so important for people who are hesitant about going or speaking about their story. All in all, I think everything went well for my experience.

After attending a meeting, I can see how important emotional support is for this group of people. Almost every member who spoke mentioned how the support of the group and their families played such a huge role in keeping them on track. We constantly hear in lecture and read in textbooks how important emotional support is for a patient, but I never truly saw the impact until I came to an AA meeting and heard the stories of each person.

Something that I think will help members feel more supported is opening up the floor to new members to discuss what they may be feeling and have the active members address their feelings or concerns. What I mean by addressing them is by telling the new members about their experience to try and connect with them and remind them that they are not alone in the process. There were a good amount of people at the meeting and about 60% of them spoke, so I think if they were to start with the new people first and/or members who want to talk about what they are going through, it would be more therapeutic.

In general, I think the experience was something unique to people who have never been to one. It gives us an insight of people's stories and what they go through or the consequences

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that come with this brutal addiction. This experience has opened my eyes to people who are going through withdrawal or trying to stay sober. From a nursing standpoint, it has shown me to push the stigma and bias to the side with people of this group. We are all human and we all make mistakes. This addiction is something that is not easy to get over and should be taken very seriously. Alcohol addiction is a chronic relapsing disorder that is only getting worse and as nurses, we have the power to help these patients and give them the support and resources they need.