

Week 5 Aspire Clinical Reflection

Step 1 – Description

During my clinical experience at the Aspire Recovery and Fire Sky Ranch, I sat in on a group meeting revolving around the concept of euphoric recall. The purpose of the exercise was to determine the reasons behind initial substance use and how the emotional results from substance use have evolved following the escalation to substance abuse. This effect was achieved by breaking the discussion into the categories of Pre-Addiction, Euphoric Recall, and Long-Term Results. My role in this exercise was to act as an observer.

Step 2 – Feelings

Despite feeling some anxiety while traveling to the clinical site, I was immediately relieved upon meeting with the staff and clientele of the Aspire Recovery and Fire Sky Ranch. After being provided with a tour of the facilities provided by Aspire, I was seated in a group meeting room, and it was there that I met several of the patients involved with that night's meeting. We struck up a quick conversation regarding our relative home and work lives. This effect created a sense of welcoming and immediately helped me establish a good rapport with the group members.

Step 3 – Evaluation

I was expecting a very different outcome from my clinical experience than what I came away with. I expected the group discussion to be populated with emotionally closed off individuals, however, I was able to observe a long-form discussion filled with very willing participants that shared every emotion and thought that came to their minds. I was particularly interested in a portion of the discussion that involved multiple business owners explaining how their substance abuse has affected the way they manage their businesses. The conversation

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always came easily, and the flow of conversation never halted. I contributed to the group conversation by helping manage the therapeutic milieu and creating a positive rapport with the patients at Aspire.

Step 4 – Analysis

During my time at the Aspire Recovery and Fire Sky Race, I was able to utilize my knowledge of therapeutic communication and the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous to help contribute to the establishment of a therapeutic milieu. The staff members at Aspire use the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous to help guide communication during group sessions. I observed as all the members of the group empowered each other to accept the severity of their substance abuse and use their histories as an incentive to achieve sobriety. I personally believe that this approach worked great for the members of the group struggling with alcoholism, however, I observed several members of the group battling with addiction to hard drugs that seemed disinterested in this approach to therapy. I think that the members of the group that have a history with hard drug usage benefitted more when the conversation transitioned to a more individualized conversation between them and the counselor.

Step 5 – Conclusion

This clinical experience helped me to understand how many forms of addiction there are, and how different kinds of addicts respond differently to the same therapeutic method. As I previously mentioned, I think that using the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous for recovery was very effective for those in the group struggling with alcoholism. However, I believe that a more individualized approach of conversation helped those with a history of hard drug use to relate more with the counselor.

Step 6 – Action Plan

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Overall, I believe that the group therapy session I attended helped to further the recovery for many of the attending individuals. I believe this to be true because several members of the group stayed afterwards and conversed with me about how the group therapy sessions help to motivate their passion for sobriety. During my clinical experience this week, I got to hear how substance use gradually evolves into substance abuse, and how this abuse affects the daily lives of the inflicted users. My experience at Aspire has taught me to help my patients with coping. Throughout the group conversation I observed, the act of coping was a repeated theme, when regarding initial drug and alcohol usage. I believe that after my time at Aspire, I will now be able to help my future patients reach acceptance of their substance use disorders, and then provide them with healthy alternative methods of coping with daily stressors.