

N310 Group Dynamics Analysis

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## Group Dynamics Analysis

Narcotic anonymous is the group I attended. This experience was eye-opening and humbling. There were all types of people and aged. I am varying from young and pregnant and retired and clean for 30 plus years. The group dynamics and support meeting provide awareness, accountability, and hope. The outcomes were not discussed out and openly during this meeting. However, I did sit next to a member, and she was willing to help me find the answers needed for the desired outcome.

The goals of NA were not given out in an obvious way. Although the member that sat next to me said they are only expected to come with the acronym H. O. W. H is for being honest about their addiction. O is too open-minded about their and others recovery. W. is for being willing to get help. She took the sheet from me and wrote down what she knew. Upon further investigation, there was some suggestion given. "If you're an addict or think you might have a drug problem, we suggest a meeting every day for at least 90 days to get to know NA members and our program...." (NA, n.d.). However, I believe H.O.W. is more of an informal request for some that might be trying to quit or considering stopping. In they start of the meeting they read off the twelve steps. "These "steps" include admitting there is a problem, seeking help, self-appraisal, confidential self-disclosure, making amends where harm has been done, and working with other drug addicts who want to recover" (Facts about Narcotics Anonymous, n.d.). The twelve steps of NA are the goals in a step by step form.

The NA website stated the following twelve steps:

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. 4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. We humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. Twelve Steps reprinted for adaptation by permission of AA World Services, Inc. (NA, n.d)

The membership eligibility was simple and was only to have the desire to stop using. There wasn't an identifiable referral process. However, the member mentioned that it was based on attraction rather than promotion. On the other hand, nurses are going to have to face many individuals with addictions issues. Nurses could be the first person that an addict encounters when they hit rock bottom. For example, they might have a near-death experience that will make them understand that they need to make changes, or they could die. Now I have experienced

what an NA meeting is like and can advise confidently to patients that are addicts to attend these meetings.

I spent most of my time observing the meeting events. During my observation, there was a fantastic feeling of warmth and openness. Everyone was walking around and getting coffee and snacks and catching up. First, they went around and read a prayer and then the twelve steps. After that, we all introduced ourselves, and they even gave us hugs because they were so happy to have us in attendance at the meeting. The meeting was packed. They also had to get more chairs. Then, what seemed to be the leader, stood up and started mentioning days of how long they had been sober. I felt this was an essential part to show positive affirmation for even small achievements. I felt the power and pride behind each “I’ve been sober for ..... Mother fucking days” (sorry for the language). I didn’t have any judgment for the language but felt it was a way of showing emphasis on how many days they had been sober. This part went on for a while and started from days to months and then to years. Next, people began telling their stories. Each story was very different from the next. Some left crying. Others showed pure remorse for the pain they had inflicted on people in their lives. The meeting went on for about an hour and a half. After it was over, there were a lot of different people that came up to us and showed more appreciation for our attendance. One member stated “we were going to be a lot of peoples point of rock bottom and that they truly appreciated our wiliness to learn so we could pass on the information and give someone a place that they could go and get the help needed” I loved hearing these words.

The NA members had books and many resources for each other to maintain accountability. At one point, they passed around the paper to put their number on so members could reach out to them because they need more help than the meeting itself then. It was for

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members that were about to use or were using and needed help to stop. There were several roles during the meeting. People took turns reading certain topics. There was what seemed to be a leader that kept the topics on track and promptly. When I asked for the signature of the leader, it was stated: “there are no leaders here.” In my opinion, it seemed like it was controlled by the members that had been clean longer — not necessarily the longest, just for an extended period. “Narcotics Anonymous has established a tradition of no endorsement and does not take positions as an organization on anything outside its own specific sphere of activity” (Facts about Narcotics Anonymous, n.d.). I used to go to an AA meeting with my father when I was younger, and they would take turns talking, for example, certain people were assigned to talk during that day. Also, they would take turns providing the coffee and snacks. These meetings give the addict’s accountability and resources needed to either come clean or to help others stay clean. The members passed around a basket for donations for the program. I tried to donate and they insisted that I didn’t and that it was only for members.

The members and roles were varied. However, because there were members that were on drugs in the meeting, I would consider that a growth inhibited. Plus, some of the members that stated they were not on drugs seemed that they were. One even made a scene and was going on and one not making too much sense and not sticking to the topic. In regards to growth-producing roles, I would say it was that members would approach others that hadn’t been to a meeting in a while and thank them for coming: showing gratitude and positive reinforcement for the small step of just going. Any action is positive, and I believe it produces growth.

Addictions will not benefit from having mental health issues. The use of drugs numbs their pain. The lady next to me stated, “it cuts off conscious contact with the higher power. Users are under spiritual attack.” I felt these words were powerful. It seemed as if she was still using.

However, she was so kind and willing to help. Some use drugs for mental issues that are not under control “Alcohol and drugs are often used to self-medicate the symptoms of mental health problems” (Substance abuse and Mental Health Issues, n.d.). In addition to trying to treat mental health, the addicts could be worsening the symptoms rather than helping them. “Substance abuse may sharply increase symptoms of mental illness or even trigger new symptoms. Abuse of alcohol or drugs can also interact with medications such as antidepressants, anti-anxiety pills, and mood stabilizers, making them less effective at managing symptoms” (Substance abuse and Mental Health Issues, n.d.). When talking with a client in New Choice on one of my clinical rotations, she felt incredible grief over the loss of custody of her child and the role it played in their life. She was accountable for causing her child harm but used it as an excuse for using and not knowing how to take that pain away. I think suggesting her to go to the NA meeting after her stay would be beneficial. The meetings give members suggestions on how to utilize their goals in their everyday life. They should know their limitations, and each person is unique in what they attain from the NA meetings.

I gained incredible insight while attending the NA meeting. There was so much warmth and understanding within those walls it was commendable. I feel it’s crucial to approach clients that might have an addiction with a nonjudgmental approach — giving them positive reinforcement on their achievements. I would 100% recommend a client that was struggling with addictions to go to an NA meeting. I would share my positive experience. They would be able to surround himself other people trying to meet the same goals. I felt more warmth and nonjudgmental feeling in that one meeting than I have ever had to go to church.

## References

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