

Twyla Jones

PSY345

Meeting type: Alcoholics Anonymous

ADDICTIONS COUNSELING AND THEORY
Twelve Step Meetings: Journal Reflections

1. What thoughts and feelings were you aware of as you prepared to attend the meeting?

I was very nervous attending the first meeting as I was unsure of what to expect. The fact that the meeting was online really helped ease that initial nervousness

2. How did people respond to you in the meeting?

People were very welcoming, announcing that newcomers were entering and that we could participate as much or as little as we wanted to. The leader and the online administrator of the meeting were very kind, and acknowledged me specifically as they recognized I was unfamiliar.

3. What thoughts and feelings were you aware of as you sat in the meeting?

In the beginning I was quite anxious, but as it went on I felt a little more at ease. I felt a sense of sadness in seeing the faces of the addicts, but I was also moved with compassion and hope for the future, as my career will eventually be able to touch similar situations.

4. How was it for you to know that the other people in the meeting assumed you were an addict?

I was particularly aware of the way that the other members looked and it made me sad. There were over 80 people on this zoom call, and to know that they were all battling addiction (and the abuse/hardship that probably fueled the addiction) was difficult for me. It was a sobering experience of attaching faces to name, numbers, and facts that we learned over the semester

5. What did you see and hear in the meeting that surprised you?

I was surprised to hear how many activities they offered in support of fellow addicts: 24-hour open zoom call, extra support and call numbers on upcoming "drinking holidays" (like Cinco de Mayo), and sober cruises for them all to fellowship and learn to have a good time without drinking.

- 6. Did you experience a sense of community, fellowship, and support among the group members in this 12 step meeting? Why or why not? Explain.**

There was definitely a sense of community in this group, they all spoke very vulnerably even saying things like "I love each one of you." Even though it was a large group, people shared their daily personal experiences but also just their thoughts of appreciation for the group. As a newcomer, I actually felt inclined to speak myself and just express my own appreciation for this meeting and its leaders; the fact that I came in very nervous and left at ease speaks volumes to the sense of community that they have fostered!

- 7. Would you recommend this particular 12 step meeting to a friend, family member, or client? Why or why not? Explain.**

I would definitely recommend this group, it was very welcoming and communal. I think it would be perfect for newcomers.

- 8. What might be some potential obstacles to participating in this particular 12 step meeting?**

I think that an obstacle may be presented in the amount of people. Because of the allowed 60 minutes, if everyone wanted to share there would not be enough time. I also think that it would be easy for a participant to just coast along the meeting to get their mandated meetings in. There isn't a ton of accountability unless you choose to actively participate

- 9. Did you find this 12 step meeting to be a learning experience for you? Explain. If yes, what did you learn about others, about yourself, and about addictions?**

I think that it was definitely a learning experience, as I have never been to an AA meeting. I learned some things about the "Big Book," some of the philosophy behind the 12-steps, and also that going to an AA meeting doesn't have to be scary or nerve wrecking. I would feel more comfortable recommending to someone who may need it

- 10. How will you use this experience to grow as a person? As a professional?**

I will use this experience as a way of being more empathetic to those who are addicts; I experienced a lot of nervousness in anticipation of the first meeting, and i imagine it is much harder for an alcoholic to admit their problem and be able to actually engage in an activity that consistently reminds them of their current state and challenges them. As a professional, I think it has certainly expanded my perspectives as a counselor in the way that I might be able to understand the position that

my client may be in and even reassure them that going to an AA meeting is not the worst thing in the world - in fact, it can be fun and is meant to be uplifting and strengthening, not shaming.