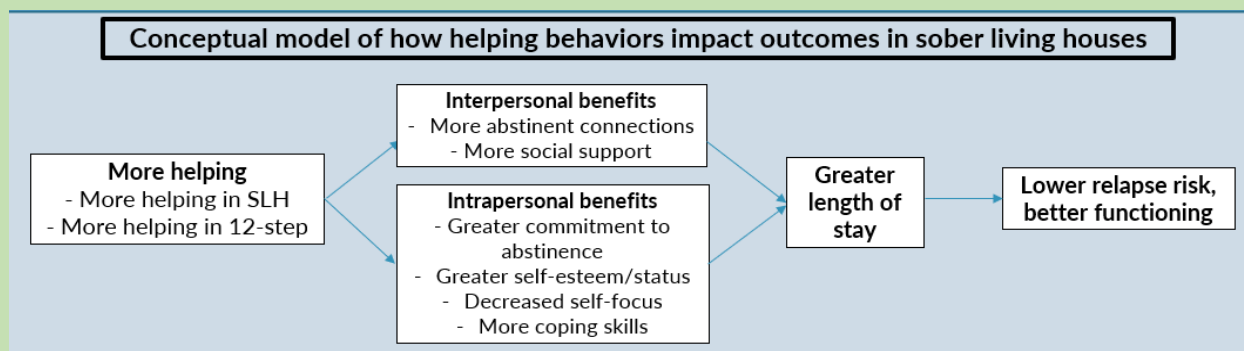# Giving and Receiving Help at One-Month Follow-up Among Sober Living House Residents

Elizabeth Mahoney, M.A., Douglas Polcin, Ed.D., Jane Witbrodt, Ph.D., Meenakshi Subbaraman, Ph.D., Amy Mericle, Ph.D.

Conceptual model of how helping behaviors impact outcomes in sober living houses

BACKGROUND

For people in recovery from alcohol and drugs, sober living houses (SLHs) offer an abstinence-based environment with others in recovery. Research on AA has shown helping behaviors were associated with improved outcomes. Helping behaviors may also be important for residents.

METHODS

- 120 new SLH residents at baseline and 1-month follow-up data from an ongoing longitudinal study
- GEE models: types of help (giving and receiving help) in three social contexts (general, SLH, and 12-step); 12-step involvement on modified AAAS; leaving the SLH; and substance severity on ASI.

STUDY POPULATION

- Predominately male (69%)
- Mean age of 37.7 years (SD=12.7), range of 19-71 years old
- 57.5% self-identified as non-white
- 88% (106) still at house at 1-month

RESULTS

- Women endorsed more helping behaviors at the SLH and in general.
- 12-step involvement predicted both types of help at the SLH and within 12-step, but not general help.
- Specifically, having a sponsor was associated with being involved with both types of helping at the SLH and in 12-step.
- All types and settings of giving assessed predicted with receiving and giving help at the SLH.
- Residents who gave and received more 12-step help were more likely to leave SLH by 1 month.
- People giving and receiving help at 12-step were more likely to report an issue with drugs, but people who gave more help at the SLH were less likely to report drug problems.

CONCLUSIONS

- Residents involved more with 12-step helping are more likely to have drug issues and leave the SLH. Efforts to engage this group to help others within the SLH might be protective.
- Future analyses will examine how 12-step involvement and helping in different settings is related to six-month substance use outcomes.

TABLES: Longitudinal GEE models with *P*s≤0.05, (N=120)

All GEE models were run separately and adjust for sex, age, and race/ethnicity with robust standard errors. N/A=not applicable; NS=not significant (*p*≤0.05).

GEE models predicting helping outcomes from demographics included simultaneously

Predictor	General Help Received	General Help Given	SLH Help Received	SLH Help Given	12-Step Help Received	12-Step Help Given
Male	0.72 (0.67-0.77)	0.74 (0.69-0.79)	0.84 (0.78-0.90)	0.80 (0.74-0.84)	0.48 (0.40-0.56)	0.43 (0.36-0.52)
Hispanic /Latino	1.41 (1.30-1.52)	1.20 (1.11-1.29)	NS	NS	NS	NS
Age	NS	1.01 (1.01-1.01)	NS	NS	NS	NS

Relationships between helping behaviors and settings

Predictor	SLH Help Received	SLH Help Given	12-Step Help Received	12-Step Help Given
General Help Received	1.19 (1.11 - 1.27)	1.18 (1.10 - 1.26)	1.60 (1.42 - 1.78)	1.73 (1.50 - 1.96)
General Help Given	1.19 (1.12 - 1.26)	1.31 (1.23 - 1.39)	1.47 (1.26 - 1.68)	1.55 (1.29 - 1.76)
SLH Help Received	N/A	1.88 (1.79 - 1.97)	1.35 (1.16 - 1.54)	1.42 (1.19 - 1.65)
SLH Help Given	1.85 (1.75 - 1.95)	N/A	2.05 (1.74 - 2.81)	2.31 (1.90 - 2.51)
12-Step Help Received	1.06 (1.03 - 1.09)	1.13 (1.10 - 1.16)	N/A	3.21 (3.21 - 3.21)
12-Step Help Given	1.05 (1.03 - 1.07)	1.11 (1.09 - 1.13)	2.36 (2.36-2.36)	N/A

Predicting helping outcomes from 12-step involvement and treatment

Predictor	General Help Received	General Help Given	SLH Help Received	SLH Help Given	12-Step Help Received	12-Step Help Given
AAAS*	NS	NS	1.03 (1.02-1.04)	1.05 (1.04 - 1.06)	1.29 (1.26 - 1.32)	1.34 (1.30 - 1.38)
12-step sponsor	NS	NS	1.14 (1.08 - 1.20)	1.23 (1.16 - 1.30)	2.48 (2.08 - 2.88)	2.89 (2.34 - 3.44)
12-step meetings**	NS	NS	1.13 (1.06 – 1.20)	1.16 (1.08 - 1.24)	3.12 (2.72 – 3.62)	3.78 (3.07 – 4.49)
Treatment pre-SLH	1.30 (1.20 - 1.40)	1.19 (1.10 - 1.28)	NS	NS	1.76 (1.45 - 2.07)	1.93 (1.54 - 2.32)

*AAAS=Alcoholic Anonymous Affiliation Scale, modified to include asking about 12-step
**12-step meeting variable was dichotomized as low (0-6) and high groups (more than 6) for prior 30 days.

Predicting substance outcomes from helping behaviors in different settings

Predictor	Still at house at 1 month ^	ASI Alcohol dichotomized	ASI Drug dichotomized
General Help Received	NS	NS	NS
General Help Given	NS	NS	NS
SLH Help Received	NS	NS	NS
SLH Help Given	NS	NS	0.42 (0.27 - 0.57)
12-Step Help Received	0.53 (0.38-0.68)	NS	1.37 (1.18 - 1.56)
12-Step Help Given	0.58 (0.44-0.72)	NS	1.31 (1.16 - 1.46)

Note: ASI=Addiction Severity Index; dichotomized (0=no issue reported; 1=issue reported).

^Logistic regression analysis for Still at SLH outcome because not measured at baseline. Odds ratios reported are for baseline scores that were significant, but not for 1-month scores.