

Pilot group intervention program with CRAFT model: Working with the concerned significant others to help the substance abusers

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Introduction:

It is commonly agreed among clinicians that substance abuse problem is a challenging mental condition. While treatment tailor-made for the individuals is essential, intervening through the substance abusers' community can enhance treatment effectiveness. With this knowledge, a pilot group intervention program for the Concerned Significant Others (CSOs) of the substance abusers was designed and implemented.

Purpose of the Project:

The current program adopted the Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT) model (Smith & Meyers, 2004) which is a scientifically supported psychological intervention program developed in the United States. The objectives of this pilot program are: (1) influencing the substance use behaviors of the substance abusers through training the CSOs; (2) enhancing the relationship status between the substance abusers and their CSOs; and (3) helping the CSOs improve their psychological functioning.

Materials & Methods:

Two group intervention programs had been conducted between July 2009 and January 2010. A total of 10 CSOs joined the group programs. All of them are the parents of the substance abusers in our clinic. Intake assessment was arranged before they were admitted to the group programs. Each group program consisted of 6 weekly 2-hour sessions which were led by a clinical psychologist and social workers. The content of the group sessions was behaviorally oriented with topics such as behavioral management, conflict resolution, communication, self-care, etc. A 1-month booster session was also arranged. A number of scales (including Relationship Happiness Scale (RHS) and Perceived Use of Substance Scale) were employed to study the outcome of the group programs.

Results:

All 10 CSOs completed the group intervention programs with 92% attendance rate. The total RHS score increased by 15.98% (raw score from 54.75 to 63.5; See Table 1). Among the subscales, CSOs' satisfaction towards the drug use status of the substance abusers demonstrated the largest increment (55.4% increase; raw score from 3.86 to 6; See Table 2). The improvements tended to maintain 1 month after the end of the group programs. The number of substance use days of the substance abusers estimated by the CSOs was reduced from 7.38 days in 2 weeks to 0.19 day in 2 weeks. The Program Evaluation Form showed that all participants were satisfied with the group intervention programs.

Conclusions:

This pilot group intervention program targeted at one of the major areas of the community context of the substance abusers. After the CSOs completed the group programs, positive outcomes were shown in their perceived relationship status with the substance abusers and their perceived drug use of the substance abusers. The current data supported the value of working with the CSOs to help intervene the substance abuse problems of the substance abusers.

Table 1

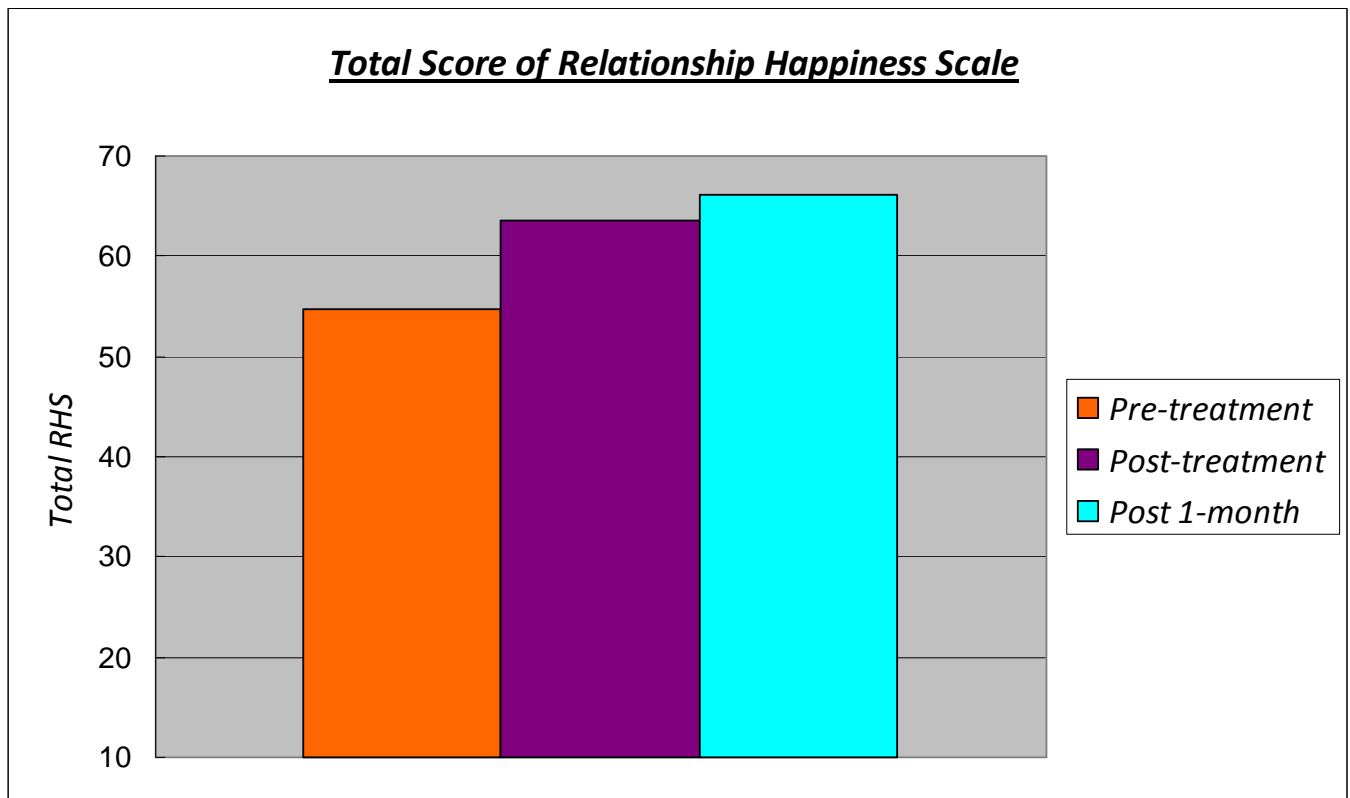


Table 2

