

Adjustment Groups in a Methadone Maintenance Clinic as a Means of Decreasing the Social Exclusion of Heroin Use Clients

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This study describes an evaluation of the efficiency of "adjustment groups" that meet regularly in a large methadone center in Israel for the purpose of adjustment to methadone and abstention from illicit drug use. The evaluation, conducted by a research seminar class at a school of social work, included 44 clients who participated in one of the adjustment groups and 69 clients who were dismissed from these groups (the comparison group). We measured the adjustment group reports on their involvement and satisfaction with the group meetings as well as the extent of their illicit drug use following the completion of the group meetings. We also compared the heroin and cocaine use of the participants of the adjustment groups with those of the comparison group.

Results show that clients who participated in the adjustment groups reported a high extent of involvement in, and satisfaction with, the group meetings. In addition, those who reported more involvement and greater satisfaction achieved higher levels of abstention from heroin.

The discussion emphasizes the need to give preference to anti-oppressive approaches rather than social control approaches, despite external pressures stemming from the privatization of the methadone services.

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