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The effects of involvement in religious practices on recovering substance users.

Taylor Currier
Western Michigan University, taytaycurrier@gmail.com

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Running head: HOW SPIRITUALITY EFFECTS SPIRITUALITY

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The Effect Spirituality Has on the Recovery of Substance Abusers

Taylor Currier

Western Michigan University

Abstract

This paper reviews empirical studies focused on spirituality and its effects on those in the recovery process from substance abuse. This paper will look at qualitative studies as well as quantitative research to see which form has derived the best results on how spirituality has affected substance abuse recovery. Prolonged recovery is the goal for those that struggle with substance use. Behavior change is an important in sustaining sobriety with those dealing with addiction. It is predicted that those who engage in spiritual growth within their community have a higher likelihood of prolonged recovery than those that do not believe in a higher power. This is predicted based on evidence given from the studies being reviewed in this paper. A review of the 12-step program is given along with the results it has on long-term recovery as well as a review on scales of measurement for spirituality are also looked at within this paper, since ways to measure faith is still being discussed for its reliability. I wrote this paper because people engage in spiritual practice on a regular basis without knowing. I think that therapy should try more to integrate spiritual practice because of its positive effects. I thought it was also important that all types of recovery treatment work together and to do that, research needs to find the most effective.

Literature Review

Substance use has been around for many years, being documented in many forms the properties these substances have. Substances have been found being used in ceremonial processes, medical purposes, and as a way to socialize (Marc-Antoine Crocq, 2007). While some substances have been found to have positive effects on humans and able to help them, there are some that have negative side effects and negatively influence a person. Freud was a psychologist doing research on the usage on cocaine and its effects on depression, but people found the substance to be very addicting as well as having aversive withdrawals symptoms. The effects of drugs make quitting difficult for individuals who have been using that substance for some time. There are many theories of what causes a person to become addicted to a substance such as their genetic makeup or environmental factors. While it is important to study why a person became addicted to the substance in the first place, some facilities are trying to research the best way to help an individual recover from their addiction. Sustained recovery is also an important factor because society does not want people to turn back to substance use. Substance use effects people on an individual level as well as a societal level. Usage destroys relationship ties with those close to the user. There are social consequences to substance use, such as the loss of a job or going to jail. There have been discussions on the best way to help people recover, such as hospitalization or cold turkey. It was in 1935 when the involvement of speaking to those that had struggled with alcoholism and got better. Meetings were set up in this fashion, where individuals could talk to people going through the same experiences. They discussed their addiction as being a disease on the mind, body, and emotions (AA.org). By 1935, more groups were popping up over the state and people were recovering by these methods. At this time they also wrote down the twelve steps

that helped them through their recovery. These twelve steps are still used today and are the basis of groups across the country. The 12-steps of AA are as follows:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. 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 the result of these Steps

In order for the impacts of religiosity to be considered effective, there needs to be a concrete way of measuring spirituality (Connors, Gerard J; Tonigan, J. Scott; Miller, William R., 1996). Since the twelve-step program, people were beginning to see the impact the spirituality

had on mental health. In order to measure spirituality, there has to be an agreed upon definition of what being religious looks like (Connors et al. 1996). The Religious Background and Behavior (RBB) questionnaire was utilized by researchers and looked at brief measures of religious practices. In addition, the RBB was intended to serve as a companion to measures of spirituality and purpose in life, which do not necessarily assess religious background and behavior. The RBB taps such domains as the use of prayer and meditation, reading of scripture, attendance at worship services, and experiences of God (Connors et al. 1996). Connors used this questionnaire with a group of 1,637 individuals with a range of alcohol problems. This quantitative study found that scores were related to service attendance and participation in AA meetings. The scores on the Formal Practice scale were negatively related to purpose in life. Connors et al. discussed that this may be due to the ritualistic religious behaviors being used more by those seeking a purpose in life. Relationships were found between the RBB scores and a spiritual awakening in their AA participation (Connors et al. 1996). "In this regard, the RBB components potentially can be used as dependent, mediator, or independent variables in the conduct of such research. The use of measures of religiosity hopefully will extend our understanding of the nature of alcohol problems and the best ways of treating them" (Connors et al. 1996). One downside of the RBB is that it only measures two dimensions of religiosity, taking away from other possible dimensions.

Robinson, Elizabeth A. R; Cranford, James A; Webb, Jon R; Brower, Kirk J. Used a longitudinal study to investigate whether there was a change in alcoholics' spirituality or religiousness behaviors from treatment entry to 6 months later and whether those changes were associated with drinking outcomes. Since this was an empirical research study, Robinson identified spirituality as "a person's feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that arise from a search for and

connection to the sacred, defined broadly to include not only a divine being but also ultimate reality, transcendent truth, or existential meaning” (Robinson, Elizabeth A. R; Cranford, James A; Webb, Jon R; Brower, Kirk J.,2007). Robinson also defined religiousness as a person’s participation in a specific social context related to that search and connection (i.e., social institutions, rituals, and prescribed behaviors), usually tied to a particular belief system and cultural context.

With these definitions in mind, Robinson et al. looked at what behaviors Spiritual or Religious increased in the first 6 months of treatment and if the increases are associated with decreased alcohol use. Results showed that half of the S/R changed from baseline to 6 months later, particularly behavioral and experiential. “Because spiritual practices and experiences increased significantly over time, whereas spiritual and religious beliefs did not, the results suggest that proactive and experiential dimensions of spirituality, rather than cognitive dimensions of spirituality, were contributing to recovery and less drinking during the first 6 months. This pattern of spiritual change is consistent with two common AA slogans: “Bring your body, your mind will follow” and “Fake it ’till you make it” (Robinson et al. 2007). This study found that some of the behaviors are congruent with Alcoholics Anonymous foundation. This is similar to what Connors and his team found in their study back in 1996. Robinson reiterates the importance of the definition group leaders are using for spiritual or religiousness. These definitions mark the way an individual will act in their treatment.

The term addiction has had many definitions over the years, but the modern understanding is the pattern of administration can progress from use, to abuse, to dependence (Crocq, 2007). People understood and saw side effects of drugs since people began settling around the world. Scholars began documenting effects of substances since 323 BC. Addiction has been a concern for many societies, and each had a way of trying to solve it. From stating the dangerous

side effects to punishing those that engaged in deviant behavior, it was not until the American Physician Benjamin Rush wrote that the loss of control was due to the disease of the drink itself not the drinker (Crocq, 2007). In the 1920s researchers began testing the effects drugs had on animals and their brain. These studies led to our current view that drugs act on the brains reward system. The effects cause the user to become addicted to the reinforcing effects, seeing it in a similar way as food (Crocq, 2007).

With the term addiction people also debated the relevance of dependence with addiction. “The meaning of these terms among public health professionals can only be understood in the light of their historical development” (Crocq, 2007). Crocq reports that the term dependence replaced addiction in 1964 because of its ability to apply to the multiple range of drugs in use. It is important to note that people can become dependent on a substance but may not become addicted. “Addiction is marked by a change in behavior caused by the biochemical changes in the brain after continued substance abuse” (addictioncenter.com). History has shown that our relationship with drugs is more complex than what people currently understand. There are many variables that occur in someones process to becoming addicted to a substance. There are opposing opinions on how to treat those who are addicted, who is responsible for the addiction, and how should society respond to the increase in substance use (Crocq, 2007).

Andrea Blanch discussed the integration of religion and spirituality in mental health and spoke that while our health system is powerful, it lacks the ability to see other alternatives. The purpose of her article is to discuss the historical tension concerning integration of religion, current social trends, and strategies for the integration of religion and spirituality in mental health services and practice (Andrea Blanch, 2007). Nearly a century has given no advancement in the

debate of integrating religion and spirituality with science. Researchers struggle to explore without running the risk of being accused as being fictional (Blanch, 2007). Because of recent efforts, psychiatry has endorsed a “bio-psycho-social-spiritual model”. This is making it so that incoming students are familiar with these dimensions in sessions. Current social trends indicate that barriers will become smaller in the near future due to recognizing religion as a social institution. “Introducing a spiritual framework could open the door to a new and deeper vision of recovery—one that has long been espoused by consumer/survivors” (Blanch, 2007). Being able to understand a clients personal views would better serve the people that come to psychologists for help. It is not necessary to completely agree, but it is important to accept that other methods may be available and legitimate. When people believe that the trauma they are experiencing is a result of past lives trying to teach them important lessons, they may have a better perspective to work through the trauma (Blanch, 2007). In addition, for people of deep faith, a spiritual explanation may simply feel correct, and may therefore eliminate tension around finding the right diagnosis or the right explanatory model (Blanch, 2007).

Allen, Thomas M; Lo, Celia C. Study was intended to expand the understanding of how religiosity, spirituality, and the substance abuse may be associated. It hypothesized that more religiosity would be associated with less likelihood of substance abuse (Allen, 2010). Their study aimed to look at extending the present research by focusing on more serious use of hard drugs. Allen et al’s study was conducted with data from the 2004 General Social Survey and allowed for multiple measures of religiosity and spirituality. This allowed for more reliability and a better understanding of their results. They also explored adults’ religiosity instead of juveniles because adults could experience more severe consequences. Adults were also not under their parents control if they were to take group attendance (Allen et al. 2010). This study is different from current

research because they looked at whether, and how, religiosity and spirituality explain abuse of hard drugs. Their research found meaningful empirical evidence showing that spirituality may actually increase substance use, but when religiousness is controlled there is a decrease. Allen suggested that future research should study nonreligious aspects of spirituality and how they affect substance abuse. “The findings of the present study may help, suggesting ways recovery programs can capitalize on religiosity and spirituality to improve clients’ success” (Allan et al. 2010). An example of this would be making religious groups an important part in the recovery process. For future research, Allan also suggested including the connections in religious groups as well as group involvement would improve the index that they used.

There are three common reasons why spirituality or religiosity will come up in therapy. Len Sperry discussed spirituality in clinical practice and came to three that are common. He discusses what spiritual oriented psychotherapy is, what the indications for spirituality oriented psychotherapy are, and if spiritual issues are the same during the various phases of life or are they different. Understanding these questions allow psychotherapists an accurate view of how to offer help to these individuals. The first is using spirituality as a coping method, the second involves trying to find the meaning in life or faith, and the third is looking to increase their faith or spiritual growth (Sperry, 2014). Sperry suggests that proficiency in this area is relatively new as more people are seeking out psychotherapists instead of priests near them. Spiritual oriented psychotherapy has to have the ability to shift along with the shifts in one’s spiritual phase. Pursuing spirituality involves active engagement in spiritual practices and people are finding that they feel more fulfilled as a result (Sperry, 2014). Addressing spirituality in treatment is effective because it helps clients achieve balance between values and behaviors and because it acts as a protective factor against substance use.

Cheryl L. Wing conducted a qualitative study on therapists' perceptions and the effects it had on treatment. Her study looked at the therapists' opinion on the role spirituality plays in treating substance abuse. Wing suggests that these findings could influence the way that future therapists conduct treatment with the importance of spirituality as well as defining the best practices. Spiritual dimensions are important because they address a person's sense of feeling connected and gives meaning to life. It allows the user to make the shift from negativity to positive, forgiving views (Wing, 2014). Wing aims to explore if treatment plans can include spiritual practices and the ethical protocols of such treatment. This study was posed in order to set the stage for future research in individualized treatment plans to help people find a new purpose in life. The study would help clients with long-term recovery and/or if recovery leads to improved spirituality. A qualitative approach allows for eliciting perceptions about spirituality and the role it plays in substance use treatment, because it will seek to investigate the therapists opinions, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about the role, if any, spirituality plays in treating this disorder (Wing, 2014). Wing recruited eight substance abuse therapists and asked a range of open-ended questions to collect her data. She separated her questionnaires into four categories looking for themes or patterns in personal opinions and attitudes, professional experience, outside influences, and ethical concerns across the agencies that she went to. Responses revolved around a common theme when answering what spirituality meant. They answered that it did involve having a belief in God (Wing, 2014). Participants also mentioned that it depends on how the client felt on the inside with their faith. Though most participants agreed that spirituality to them was a way of doing the right thing, many agreed that they feel the need to be careful before integrating this in their work (Wing, 2014). This was later thought to be due to lack of training with spirituality and

religiosity. Wing asked the therapists if addressing spirituality assists in predicting treatment outcomes and the response was that spiritual practice allowed for trust and a new way of thinking among their patients. “Therapists find that spirituality fits into recovery because spirituality addresses the whole person and helps a person create balance in life” (Wing, 2014). If therapy were to move forward to incorporating spirituality into treatment, Wing’s participants said that additional training would be required in order to give the right treatment. This would also help the therapist see precursor signs of the client trying to incorporate their beliefs into their treatment. One of the jobs of a therapist is to help a client find purpose and meaning to their lives. Spirituality is a tool to help clients deal with traumatic events or problems that are occurring in their life.

Antonio Robert Horne wrote “*Counseling African American Male, Low Income, Substance Users: The Relationships Between Spirituality, Active Coping, Drug-Related Criminal Activity, Education, Treatment, and Substance Use*”. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationships between spirituality as well as other environmental factors that impacted the use among male African American substance users. In this qualitative study, Horne found that psychological factors had a greater inconsistency than the traditional social factors in the substance use among African Americans. There is limited research in counseling that covers the influence spirituality has on African American male (Antonio Horne, 2014). “Gaps in the literature present challenges for understanding and/or assessing the normative day to day interactions, decision-making, cognitive processing, self and world views, and psychosocial behavioral patterns of African American males” (Antonio Horne, 2014). Understanding spiritual values help structure the way a therapist will go about helping these individuals. In evaluating current treatment for African American males, it is necessary to look at the past influence spirituality had, the current influence, and the way it could affect those struggling with substance use (Horne, 2014). Horne

looked at 103 African American males from low income backgrounds that had struggled with substance use within the last 12 months. Throughout his essay, Horne identifies his usage of spirituality as being inclusive of religion, religious related activities, and religious institutions and practices. This research is important because there is not much on the relationship between African American males with substance use disorders and spirituality. One reason why not much research has been done is because of maltreatment against this population (Horne, 2014). Past racial discrimination could indicate why African Americans do not trust researchers or to have their best interest in mind. Horne utilized multiple surveys to measure his target population. Among the surveys was the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire. This survey is designed to assess spiritual and religious beliefs and behaviors (Horne, 2014). Horne picked this method because “it is capable of assessing the core beliefs and behaviors associated with a participant’s spirituality or religiosity (2014). The results of this study conflict with the research that we have looked at before. Horne looked at many variables that could affect treatment success. Contrary to researcher’s expectation, substance use mental health treatment demonstrated a significant positive relationship with substance use among African American male substance users as opposed to a negative relationship (Horne, 2014). Offering more coping resources in treatment may provide a decrease in treatment among African American male substance users. Though Horne’s results did not show a significant relationship between spirituality and substance use, participants agreed that their religious faith was extremely important to them, an important part of who they are as a person, and that it impacts their decisions. While this study did not show a relationship between spirituality, it does raise the question of what studies are we learning from in order to provide treatment to other people. As we move forward to integrate spirituality, research needs to focus on specific populations that not a lot of research has been done for.

Horne mentioned that previous African American research and theories was based off of women participants. It will be important to study how spirituality has played a part in other peoples culture.

Anthony Chukwunta wrote a qualitative study evaluating people attending twelve step programs and their experiences of spirituality in 2018. The author saw the need for more research in this area and decided to look at the connection between spirituality and recovery programs. He evaluated themes from peoples experiences of spirituality and found “ (a) feelings of peace and love, (b) higher self-esteem, (c) feelings of joy and happiness, (d) feelings of being in the presence of a higher power, and (e) becoming less judgmental” (Anthony Chukwunta, 2018). Chukwunta saw a gap in the literature because people are reporting that there is not a concrete way of measuring spirituality, but because of this gap there is still limited understanding in this area. “ One way to understand the link between alcohol or drug use recovery and spirituality is to explore how people who are attending a 12-step program for recovery from alcohol or drug use describe their experiences of spirituality because spirituality is the foundation of any 12-step program” (Chukwunta, 2018). Another purpose of Chukwunta’s study, is the hope to give psychologists more confidence when considering integrating spirituality into their treatment. Chukwunta uses Kapuscinki and Masters (2010) definition of spirituality saying that it is defined as a personal connection between an individual and the individual’s higher power. Chukwunta then states that this connection leads to spiritual development.

The author used a qualitative research design because it is a good design for studying peoples’ feelings and behaviors, and allowing him to get every individuals description in detail. Chukwunta assumed that his participants had faced discrimination from his family and those

close to them. Disintegration of mind and body left them placing faith in a higher power. The author assumed that his participants would be answering the questions honestly. Jung's theory of the connections between the mind and body were the basis of Chukwunta's paper. "Twelve-step programs help the individual to confront the shadow or that inner darkness, give up that aspect of human selfishness as a result of the ego, and settle with the real self" (Chukwunta, 2018). He noted that it is important for future research to identify which term, religiosity or spirituality, they want to study. More importantly there has been no agreement on which term should be used when studying substance use. This would provide more validity to the involvement of spirituality or religiosity in substance use treatment. Not having a concrete definition of spirituality has also impacted the psychology realm because it does not allow them to provide consistent research and treatment. The American Psychological Association has recognized the importance of spirituality and religiosity in people's lives and has included religion and spirituality in the category of cultural and individual diversities as prerequisite for psychology graduate degree accreditation (American Psychological Association, 2000). "Spirituality has been associated with forgiveness, gratitude, and empathy, especially among individuals who use alcohol or drugs" (Chukwunta, 2018). Along with differences in definition, Chukwunta has also seen a difference in measurement between the two terms. This is another reason why researchers are still debating the usefulness of the integration.

The researcher recruited eleven participants of mixed race, mixed gender, mixed employment status, and from forty years plus in age. As he conducted the study, Chukwunta identified themes from the interviews. "All 11 participants responded that spirituality gave them peace of mind and a sense of love that had eluded them because of alcohol or drug use" (Chukwunta, 2018). This feeling of love provided them with peace of mind and body. Participant one in

Chukwunta's study stated that, "Higher power is a correct and stronger sense of peace and love. It carries no hangover. It works better" (2018). It was interesting that some of the participants dedicated these newfound feelings to their link to a higher power, while the other half said it was based on their well-being. Another theme that the researcher identified was increase in self-esteem. "Prior to attending the 12-step program, all participants reported feeling worthless, and having nothing to contribute to the society" (Chukwunta, 2018). Involvement in the twelve-step program helped participants feel joy and happiness on positive changes that they saw in their behaviors. Participant 8 shared, "My connection with my higher power and my spirituality has just changed and I don't have to worry about doing something wrong or hurting other people because I'm happy. I'm living a happy, joyous life because of my spirituality." (Chukwunta, 2018). Participant 11 reported, "After calling on him, I felt relieved. It is like the burden in my heart was taken away. I experienced inner joy. I felt like the situation is under control. People around me noticed that I was becoming more cheerful." Participant 11 also said, "All I can tell you is that staying connected to the higher power brings happiness." All participants in Chukwunta's study reported feeling a presence of higher power through the positive changes that were happening in their lives due to the twelve step program. Participant 1 also said, "It is like being reassured that you know someone with a higher power is constantly out there watching over you and guiding you. That is very comforting."

What I found interesting in this study, was that Chukwunta found that participants reported being less judgmental with the people around them. The participants identified becoming less judgmental by acceptance of other people around them and having a better understanding of the people around them. "Participants 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 11 based their becoming less judgmental of the people around them on developing the spirit of acceptance" (Chukwunta, 2018). Some

of the participants based their behavior of becoming less judgmental on the fact that they were beginning on having a better understanding of the people around them. Participant 2 said, “I learned at AA that I’m not perfect and nobody is perfect. I’m not quick to judge or to point out someone’s fault as in blame. I learned that we are all human and we are all vulnerable to mistakes.” Participant 3 reported, “My spirituality has helped me to have more compassion and understanding of other people. I can feel other people’s struggles” (Chukwunta, 2018). These themes reported in Chukwunta’s study seem to build upon one another in the development of their treatment. Even coming from different religious backgrounds, all participants shared similar views of their experiences and spirituality while involved in these programs (2018). Since there are many variables that go along with the study of substance use as well as spirituality, Chukwunta recommends future research to study an individual variable. Some examples would be looking at a specific gender, economic status, race, or spiritual beliefs.

Discussion

The goal of this literature review was to examine previous research and document any gaps in literature or themes to help focus future studies. This review studied both quantitative and qualitative studies. Empirical studies focused on spirituality and its effects on those in the recovery process from substance abuse. This paper reviewed which form has derived the best results on how spirituality has affected substance abuse recovery. Prolonged recovery was also an aspect of this paper. Its focus is to see if spirituality can be measured by actions as well as if there is a difference in recovery from those who engage in spiritual actions and those that do not. Changes in behavior are important in order to sustain sobriety with those dealing with addiction. It was predicted that those who engage in spiritual growth within their community have a higher likelihood of prolonged recovery than those that do not believe in a higher power. This was

based on evidence seen from the studies being reviewed in this paper. A review of the 12-step program was given along with the results it has on longterm recovery. A review on scales of measurement for spirituality were also looked at within this paper, since ways to measure faith are still being discussed for reliability.

The first trend that formed through this review was that research needed a consistent definition for the terms they were using. Researchers noticed that religiosity and spirituality had been used interchangeably throughout the years and may be why other researchers are hesitant to approve the integration into treatment. Chukwunta viewed religiosity as being more ritualistic and measurable behavior. Spirituality was seen to be more about personal experiences and feelings towards the participants belief system. Throughout the studied literature, the author can also point to times when these terms were used simultaneously. Once we can identify the terms we wish to study, we can then move forward with more consistent research. This consistency is important when studying the validity of our research. Consistency is key when studying the effects spirituality will have on people in substance use treatment.

Though spirituality can be more generalized to a larger group of people, the author of this review saw that researchers opted to look at religiosity because of the ways it can be measured. Quantitative and qualitative research methods have different purposes in their use for research. Quantitative can have more validity because they researcher uses more ways to collect and study data. Qualitative research allows the researcher to study participant feelings and perspective on a matter. Connors utilized quantitative research methods to see what type of religious behaviors are best in positively effecting substance use recovery. The Religious Background and Behavior (RBB) questionnaire was utilized by researchers and looked at brief measures of religious prac-

tices. The RBB taps such domains as the use of prayer and meditation, reading of scripture, attendance at worship services, and experiences of God (Connors et al. 1996). Though Connors et al. used this method to measure religiosity, they found that you could only measure certain dimensions at a time. Robinson was the only researcher that used a longitudinal research design with a specific group of people. She wanted to see where participants in a recovery program would be in six months. She looked at what behaviors Spiritual or Religious increased in the first 6 months of treatment and if the increases are associated with decreased alcohol use. Her teams results showed that half of the S/R changed from baseline to 6 months later, particularly behavioral and experimental. Utilizing a mixed methods approach may be able to bridge the gap between previous research. Combined with the definition that researchers want to focus on, they may be able to study peoples' feelings and behaviors along with measurable data as well.

The last theme that the author noticed was the importance of the groups that were being measured. It is important to see the areas that are being the most effected by substance use and focus your study on that area. Some of the findings of the above research may not be applicable to someone of a different race, gender, or economic status. While researchers find the best way to collect data, it is also important that research is being done in non-represented areas as well. Horne (2014) saw that previous research in African Americans was found using women in their studies, but not much research had been done with males. This was one of the main purposes of Horne's study, to see how men's spirituality and other environmental factors effected their substance use.

Future research should look at the effects spirituality has in group treatments. This research should look at the group facilitators as well as the group members to see if there is an influence between the two. It would also be interesting to compare these behaviors to those that are

in a recovery program that does not focus on spirituality. The author would use theories from Cheryl Wing's paper as well as Chukwunta. Both did research on similar themes that are of interest, but it is the combination of the two that has yet to be done. I think it would be interesting to see how groups that do not identify to spirituality would perform in terms of long lasting behaviors as well as their sobriety. I would also want to center this research on an African American target population since learning that more research needs to be done in this area. Researchers struggle with this because this population is reluctant to participate due to historical maltreatment. Another limitation is that the author is of a different race. It would be interesting to see how spirituality has played a part in their culture in the past and how that has shifted to present day. The way the culture responds to substance use is a theme that could come up in the study of this area. The author would use a different way of approaching spirituality as I think we have developed in a way that spiritual practice happens indirectly without needing to define it.

Chukwunta found “ (a) feelings of peace and love, (b) higher self-esteem, (c) feelings of joy and happiness, (d) feelings of being in the presence of a higher power, and (e) becoming less judgmental” (Anthony Chukwunta, 2018). Robinson says, “Because spiritual practices and experiences increased significantly over time, whereas spiritual and religious beliefs did not, the results suggest that proactive and experiential dimensions of spirituality, rather than cognitive dimensions of spirituality, were contributing to recovery and less drinking during the first 6 months. This pattern of spiritual change is consistent with two common AA slogans: “Bring your body, your mind will follow” and “Fake it 'till you make it” (Robinson et al. 2007). These findings support the notion that spirituality can be practiced through daily actions rather than needing to have ties to a specific religion. The correlation between this statement and the one posed in AA slogans shows that this treatment can be accessible to anyone.

Research in this area needs to be explored more as well as the positive effects that the integration of spirituality would have in psychology. Cheryl Wing's study shows that therapists want to discuss more spiritual practice, but do not have the training required to do it correctly. Andrea Blanc discusses the importance of training incoming students in these areas because the positive effects spirituality has in treatment. If researchers narrow down the terms and type of research methods, I think we would be able to see a decrease in substance use. I think we would have more people being able to break the barrier between AA and traditional substance use treatment so that we are able to work together. Through these efforts will we be able to truly see the effects that spirituality has on substance users recovery.

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