

Project Embrace – Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Drug Abusers with Alcohol Problem

An Impact Case by Dr. Raymond CHUI

Mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) has become an important component in conventional treatments, and has been incorporated as a strategy in therapies for various disorders. Despite the rapidly growing empirical support, the application of mindfulness in addiction treatment is unpopular in Hong Kong and there is lack of empirical research into the effectiveness of this intervention in the local Chinese context, especially for abusers with multiple expressions of addiction. The project will bridge this gap and approach the treatment of drug abusers with an alcohol problem by adopting MBI in various formats under the theoretical framework of the syndrome model of addiction. The evaluative study combines both quantitative and qualitative aspects of data collection to examine the change in the major outcomes of the participants after joining the intervention, in order to confirm the effectiveness of the project.

The project delivered 434 individual counseling sessions to 72 drug abusers with drinking problems; 32 sessions of the mindfulness-based relapse prevention group (MBRP) to 72 drug abusers with drinking problems and 18 family members with a total attendance of 144 man-times; 21 sessions of regular mindfulness reunion to 72 drug abusers with drinking problems and 18 family members with a total attendance of 80 man-times; 32 sessions of experiential group activities with various topics (i.e., food tasting, tea meditation, zentangle, photography, floral design, and mindful yoga) to 72 abusers with drinking problems and 18 family members with a total attendance of 150 man-times.

A total of 90% of the participants reduced drug use and 79.6% of them reduced alcohol use; 88.0% demonstrated a reduction in risk of relapse; 70.6% demonstrated an improvement in self-efficacy to avoid drug use; 75% demonstrated an improvement in their capacity to support drug abusers; and 96.3% agreed that the workshop helped them gain understanding on the application of mindfulness-based interventions in addiction treatment.

Based on the results of the study, the service team developed a second phase of the project, "Project Embrace 2.0 – Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Drug Abusers with Alcohol Problem" and successfully obtained the support from the Beat Drugs Fund; the project was implemented in 2021 and will run up to 2023.



Experiential activities



Online experiential activities



The Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention Group