



seeking safety (SS)

Description:

Seeking Safety (SS) is a manual-guided, cognitive-behavioral approach designed for individuals with co-occurring substance abuse and post-traumatic stress symptoms. It is a present-focused therapy that focuses on building current coping skills rather than focusing on past traumatic events.

The central tenets of the treatment are:

- 1) Safety is the first priority of treatment.
- 2) PTSD and substance abuse are treated concurrently and in an integrated fashion.
- 3) Promoting recovery thinking (ideals).
- 4) Four content areas: cognitive, behavioral, interpersonal, and case management.
- 5) The therapist processes are important.

The treatment uses educational research strategies for skill building to focus on building potential rather than current problems.

Treatment Logistics:

Appropriate Age Range: 12 and up

Participants: Adolescent - may be individual or group format

of Sessions: 25 sessions

The treatment tends to be relatively structured within each session; however, the topics can be presented in any order, in a variety of formats, and across a variety of populations. It was designed to be integrated with other approaches.

Topics include:

- Intro to treatment
- Safety
- PTSD: Taking back your power
- Detaching from emotional pain (grounding)
- When substances control you
- Asking for help
- Taking good care of yourself
- Compassion
- Red and green flags
- Honesty
- Recovery thinking
- Integrating the split self
- Commitment
- Creating meaning
- Community resources
- Setting boundaries in relationships
- Discovery
- Getting others to support your recovery
- Coping with triggers
- Respecting your time
- Healthy relationships
- Self-nurturing
- Healing from anger
- The life choices game (review)
- Termination

Each session contains the following parts:

- 1) **Check-in** - five questions are used to find out how patients are doing.
- 2) **Quotation** - to emotionally engage clients in the session.
- 3) **Relating the material to clients' lives** - to connect the topic to clients' experiences in a meaningful way.
- 4) **Check-out** - to reinforce progress and give feedback.

Each session integrates discussion, role plays, practicing, and other techniques. Several handouts are included in the treatment manual along with details on how to prepare the therapist for delivering them.

Evidence-Base:

Results showed significant improvement in substance abuse, trauma-related symptoms, suicide risk, suicidal thoughts, social adjustment, family functioning, problem solving, depression, and cognitions about substance abuse, when compared with treatment-as-usual. The program has been evaluated with a variety of populations and has been validated in outpatient, inpatient, residential, individual, and group formats. Refer to Appendix C for a matrix that lists the organizations that have approved Seeking Safety as an EBP or go to <http://www.uncg.edu/csr/asatp/ebpmatrix.pdf> to view it online.

Reference to Treatment Manual:

Najavits, L.M. (2001). *Seeking safety: A treatment manual for PTSD and substance abuse*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Treatment website: <http://www.seekingsafety.org/> (research, training, etc.)



NC DHHS
DMH/DD/SAS
Community Policy Management
Substance Abuse Services
3005 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-3005
919-733-4670
919-733-4556 (fax)