

A Career as a Drugs Counsellor

Pathfinders are information tools which aim to direct people to further sources of information, including how to find out more, key texts, key websites, and key contacts. They are not aimed to be information about the topic itself.

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Overview

This pathfinder provides a guide to information on ***starting a career as a drugs counsellor***. The Information Service is often asked how to start on such a career, how to get funding, and what background reading or information is recommended. This pathfinder will point you in the right direction to these resources, as well as giving you tips on how to find background material in DrugScope's library.

The qualities you need to have as a counsellor include personal integrity, genuineness, warmth and responsiveness. You should be a member of a professional body, should be able to explain the code of practice that they work to, the limits of your confidentiality, and the range of your counselling training and experience. Age and maturity are often prerequisites for a counsellor.

What type of training might be right for me?

Current training provision ranges from Basic Awareness courses to Masters degrees in addiction studies.

Short courses mainly address specific issues such as basic awareness or harm minimisation as well as courses looking at the skills needed to work with specific client groups such as young people, or courses which address models of counselling or other types of intervention. These courses last between 1 - 5 days and most, but not all, are not accredited. Many of these courses are suitable for staff not currently working with drug and/or alcohol service users, as well as those who are.

Certificate, Diploma, degree and Masters courses are often offered either part-time or as distance learning packages. This varies from one educational establishment to another. Most of these courses are most suited to staff currently working with drug and/or alcohol service users, as assignments are often based on reflecting on practice in the workplace.

There are some specific qualifications on drugs counselling offered by places like Westminster Pastoral Foundation, and University of Kent (see list of courses below). Most drugs counsellors have a generic counselling qualification, and then some experience working with drug users.

There are currently shortages of staff, and it may be fairly easy to get a job with a generic counselling qualification and little direct experience in working with drug users.

In terms of general experience, any experience of providing counselling in a care setting would be useful, across social, health and criminal justice interventions.

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[Click here to see list of courses](#)

Key Texts

The documents listed here are available from DrugScope Library. To access the material, please phone 08707-743-682 to make an appointment. Further information on ordering non-reference material via our document delivery service is available on our website.

Counselling a recovering drug user: a person-centred dialogue.

Author : Bryant-Jefferies R.

Published: Abingdon: Radcliffe Medical Press, 2003. xii, 181p.

Abstract

This text highlights the complexities of dealing with people who have a drug-related problem and offers an insight into the world of drug users and the counselling process. It also provides an explanation of the person-centred model for counseling. It is composed almost entirely of dialogue between a fictitious client and his counsellor and between the counsellor and her supervisor.

DrugScope Library Document Number: 98689 (Classification HK)

Motivational interviewing: preparing people to change addictive behaviour. 2nd ed.

Author: Miller W.R., Rollnick S

Published: New York: Guilford Press, 2002.

Abstract

The second edition of this book, applying MI to the challenges of change within and beyond the addictions field. The volume incorporates emerging knowledge on the process of behaviour change, a growing body of outcome research, and discussions of novel applications.

DrugScope Library Document Number: HM 95196 reference only.

Understanding and counseling persons with alcohol, drug and behavioural addictions: counseling for recovery and prevention using psychology and religion.

Author: Clinebell H.

Published: Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

Abstract

This book is for those who want help in understanding and dealing constructively with persons suffering from alcoholism and other drug addictions, as well as those struggling with obsessive-compulsive behaviour patterns often called 'process addictions' or 'behavioural addictions'. Part I lays a foundation of basic information for understanding the nature and multiple causes of addictions. Part II describes three religious approaches to addiction and evaluates their strengths and limitations. Part III applies the previous parts to the practical work of counselling-for-recovery with addicted persons and their families.

Chapters cover: preparations for counselling, counselling for recovery and beyond; motivating and beginning the process; basic methods, and counselling with families: a systems approach to co dependency. The final chapter describes how to develop alcoholism and drug prevention programs in congregations, schools, and other people-helping agencies

DrugScope Library Document Number: HK reference only

Substance abuse assessment and diagnosis: a comprehensive guide for counselors and helping professionals.

Author: Juhnke G. A.

Published: New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2002.

Abstract

Substance abuse counseling has gone beyond being viewed as optional training; instead it is fast becoming an essential part of the education of helping professionals. In this book, Dr. Gerald Juhnke presents an innovative, practical model to be used in the assessment and diagnosis of substance abuse and related co-morbid disorders. Substance Abuse

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Assessment and Diagnosis includes practical "nuts and bolts" direction on how to facilitate a thorough, multitiered substance abuse assessment.

DrugScope Library Document Number: 96048 H reference only

Drug counseling for cocaine addiction: the collaborative cocaine treatment study model.

Author: Daley D.C., Mercer D.

Published: Bethesda, Maryland: National Institutes of Health 2002.

Abstract

More than 20 years of research has shown that addiction is clearly treatable. The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), which supports more than 85 percent of the world's research on drug abuse and addiction, has found that behavioural approaches can be very effective in treating cocaine addiction. This manual is the fourth in NIDA's "Therapy Manuals for Drug Addiction" series. It presents clear, helpful information to aid drug treatment practitioners in providing the best possible care that science has to offer. It describes specific behavioral /cognitive models that can be implemented in a wide range of drug abuse treatment settings; and gives guidance on session content and how to implement specific techniques.

DrugScope Library Document Number: 96017 reference only

Introduction to chemical dependency counseling.

Author: Levin J.D., Culkin J., Perrotto R.S.

Published: Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 2001.

Abstract

The authors cover the scientific and clinical aspects of chemical dependency with case vignettes to illustrate clinical issues. After an introduction to the general problems of substance abuse counseling, they delineate the different types of drugs and their effects, organise the relevant information used in the assessment and diagnosis of addictions, integrate knowledge of human development with causes of dependency and addiction, and explore the impact of addiction on health and the family. They then focus on the principles of chemical abuse counseling, including treatment planning, the different schools of counseling, how to understand and manage relapse, and special populations.

DrugScope Library Document Number: 95185 H reference only

Family solutions for substance abuse: clinical and counseling approaches.

Author: McCollum E.E., Trepper T.S.

Published: New York: Haworth Press, 2001.

Abstract

This book is designed to equip addictions counselors with a set of skills that will enable them to work competently with families. It provides a practical, positive, real world model for including families in treatment, presenting both a well-rounded overview of the basic constructs of family and system theory and clearly understandable family assessment and intervention strategies.

DrugScope Library Document Number: 95140 HM reference only

Dual diagnosis: counselling the mentally ill substance abuser. 2nd ed.

Author: Evans K., Sullivan J.M.

Published: New York: Guilford Press, 2001.

Abstract

Providing a unique synthesis of chemical dependency and mental health models, this book articulates a framework for assessment and treatment and describes a range of effective counseling and motivational strategies for adolescents and adults. This edition includes discussions of the latest developments in treatment, sample treatment plans, increased coverage of ways to incorporate 12-step concepts into mental health interventions, and a section on trauma-based disorders in addicted female adolescents.

DrugScope Library Document Number: 95119 HM reference only

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Managing addictions: cognitive, emotive and behavioral techniques.

Author: Bishop F.M.

Published: Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aaronson Inc., 2001.

Abstract

The author is a scientist-practitioner and trainer and has written this book for therapists and counselors who seek more effective methods to help clients manage their addictive behaviors. The general approach of the book is based on what has come to be called cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and its precursor, rational emotive behavioral therapy (REBT). CBT/REBT techniques can help people change, especially when many forces are pushing them in the opposite direction. They can help clients understand why they behave as they do and how to change. This book looks at the key principles and techniques for dealing with a client's problems, whether to help them manage their addictions by abstinence or winding down their substance abuse levels, and how anger, depression, anxiety, shame and guilt affects addictive behavior.

DrugScope Library Document Number: 92852 GJHI reference only

Counseling addicted women: a practical guide.

Author: Cohen M.

Published: Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000.

Abstract

The guide aims to be an educational and skills building tool for counsellors to promote understanding of the issues that women substance abusers face, and to provide practical resources for use by counsellors. It includes discussion of the social and cultural contexts of drug use, societal images and stereotypes that effect women's access to, and successful outcomes with, treatment.

DrugScope Library Document Number: 87581 HK reference only

How to find out more....

Searching the Library database:

The main keyword to use when looking for information on this subject in the Library database is *Counselling*. This will bring up a large number of hits – and thus should be combined with another key word using the **&** sign. The index terms that we use in DrugScope library for anybody who works with drug users is *helper-client relationship*. You can also use the index term *social work* or *individual therapy* to specify the work of the counsellor in specific settings.

Eg counselling&helper-client relationship

TIP – remember that we hold many US works, and that the words counsellor and counselling are spelt counselor and counseling in America. A useful way to get round this is through use of the asterix (* sign).

Counsel* covers both counselling and counseling, counsellors and counselors.

Other terms that can be used are *Brief Therapy*, *Motivational interviewing* or simply *therapy* on its own. You can also specify the country (*UK, USA etc*)

Voluntary Work

Voluntary work in a practice setting is a useful starting point for any career working with drug users and is a good way of gaining experience and testing your ability and motivation

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for the work. To get a voluntary position you can either contact individual drugs projects in your locality directly, or contact a national umbrella organisation such as the National Centre for Volunteering.

Telephone numbers for local treatment centers can be found on the DrugScope website, under find a drug service (Helpfinder Database)

Helpfinder Database

(<http://drugscope.soutron.com/helpfinder.asp>)

Helpfinder is DrugScope's database of drug treatment services. This database was developed by DrugScope and funded by the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse. Helpfinder provides contact information and basic service provision details for drug treatment and care services in England. It can be used to search for organisations in your area and print their contact details.

National Centre for Volunteering

(www.volunteering.org.uk)

National Centre for Volunteering
Regents Wharf

8 All Saints Street

London N1 9RL

Tel: 020 7520 8900

Fax: 020 7520 8910

Email: Volunteering@thecentre.org.uk

Do It (the home of volunteering on the web)

(www.do-it.org.uk)

This site provides details of volunteering opportunities throughout the UK and is powered by a large on-line database of current vacancies. Do-It allows users to search by postcode, type of organisation and type of work. The site has a section on volunteering in the drugs field.

Timebank

(www.timebank.org.uk)

This BBC supported campaign gives you the opportunity to share your time and skills with your community. The site allows you to register your details in order to receive a list of organisations in your area that need help, and which match your interests.

National Association of Voluntary Service Managers (NAVSM)

(www.navsm.org.uk)

NAVSM is the national association for Voluntary Service Managers in the fields of health and social care. It has a section on opportunities for volunteers.

Society Guardian – Volunteering section

(<http://society.guardian.co.uk/volunteering>)

Up to date news coverage on volunteering issues from the on-line version of *The Guardian* newspaper

Where jobs are advertised

The best place to look for such jobs is in the Wednesday Guardian.

(<http://society.guardian.co.uk/0,7954,,00.html>)

Many may not be advertised as drug counsellors, might be called drug workers, project workers, substance misuse specialists, etc. but it's probably useful to send off for some application packs to see what the job requires and what qualifications are needed.

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Sources of Help and Advice

DrugsHelper

(www.drugshelper.org/)

A very useful website is Drugs Helper. This describes the work of somebody working in the drugs field, gives case studies, and has an endless amount of tips and useful information.

The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy

(www.bacp.co.uk)

The Information Service provides a wide variety of Information available both for members of the public and for BACP members.

They are preparing a new Information Database in which will give them access to details of organisations which offer support and/or training in a whole range of fields relevant to counselling together with relevant references from a variety of journals.

BACP House

35-37 Albert Street

RUGBY

CV21 2SG

Tel: 0870 443 5252.

DrugScope Training Directory:

(www.drugscope.org.uk/training/gentrain.asp)

At present this part of the site contains two searchable databases which give information on drug training. One database contains information on training specifically for primary care staff. The other is general drug training information for a wide range of people.

The Federation of Drug and Alcohol Professionals (FDAP)

(www.fdap.org.uk/)

The professional body for practitioners in the substance use field.

122a Wilton Rd

London

SW1V 1JZ

Tel: 0870 763 6139

Email: office@fdap.org.uk

ERIT

Federation of European Professional Associations Working in the Field of Drug abuse

(www.erit.org)

ERIT contains news, research, study and courses in Europe, ethical discussions, and aims to increase European co-operation between drugs professionals.

DrugsAlcohol Info

(www.drugsprevention.net)

This website will support those professionals who work in drug prevention, treatment and education in Northern Ireland.

Has details of courses, conferences and training.

London Drug and Alcohol Network

(www.ldan.org.uk)

The London Drug & Alcohol Network (LDAN) is a London-wide voluntary organisation. It was set up in January 2001 to provide advice, information and support to frontline services - those working directly with people who have drug and alcohol problems in London

Unit 14 Canonbury Yard

190a New North Road

London N1 7BJ

Tel: 020 7704 0004

Fax: 020 7359 1317

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Email: info@ldan.org.uk

Funding

At present government funding is not generally available for counselling / psychotherapy training and the cost of training is a considerable commitment. Some students have employers or charitable organisations willing to award a training grant to meet or help towards the cost of training. (NB. DRUGSCOPE DOES NOT AWARD SUCH GRANTS)

Potential sources of funding are:

- Access or hardship loans available from training organisations
- Bursaries from colleges or local councils
- Educational trusts and endowments – check the following publications normally available at public libraries
 - The Directory of Grant Making Trust
 - The Charities Digest
 - A Guide to Grants for Individuals in Need
 - The Educational Grants Directory
 - The Grants Register
 - Scholarships abroad
- Sponsorships and Scholarships from industrial organisations and government – details from the Job Centre
- Career Development Loans – managed by the Government through high street banks. Apply through your local enterprise company
- Benefits Agency. If you have children or if you are disabled, you or your partner may be able to claim income support and housing benefit. Check with the Benefits Agency.

A useful website is the Lifelong Learning site from the Department of Education and Skills: <http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk> which has details of grants and loans.