

Youth Involved in AA-Related Helping Less Likely to Test Positive for Alcohol and Drugs



Youth who become active in Alcoholics Anonymous-related helping (AAH) while they are in treatment are less likely to test positive for alcohol and drugs during treatment, a new study finds.

Researchers at Case Western Reserve University studied almost 200 juvenile offenders. The study also evaluated a questionnaire, called the SOS tool, which helps clinicians identify youths low in service participation and suggests AAH activities to promote their recovery, MedicalXpress reports.

Such activities include acts of good citizenship, formal service positions, public outreach and sharing personal experience to another person struggling with addiction. These activities are free, available seven days a week, and do not require a long-term commitment, prior experience, special skills or a specific length of time sober, the article notes.

"The SOS tool provides a snapshot of a patient's level of service participation. An SOS score of 40 or higher is associated with greater abstinence as measured by urine toxicology screens," lead researcher Maria Pagano said in a news release. "Given AAH participation during treatment significantly improves the likelihood of long-term abstinence, interventions that facilitate early engagement in service are critical during the few weeks of treatment when motivation to change behavior is the highest." The findings appear in *The American Journal on Addictions*.

In 2010, Dr. Pagano published a study that found adults who became involved in Alcoholics Anonymous-related service-type work were more likely to stay sober 10 years after treatment.

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