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0521026342 - A Community Reinforcement Approach to Addiction Treatment

Edited by Robert J. Meyers and William R. Miller

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A COMMUNITY REINFORCEMENT APPROACH TO ADDICTION TREATMENT

The community reinforcement approach (CRA) to treating alcohol and other drug problems is designed to make changes in the client's daily environment, to reduce substance abuse and promote a healthier lifestyle. It is of proven effectiveness, and should be more widely used. This is the first book to present research on the effectiveness of the CRA for a clinical readership. It includes the original study comparing CRA with traditional treatments of alcohol dependence, and summarizes other trials with alcohol, cocaine and heroin users.

The CRA program provides basic guidelines for clinicians, focussing on communication skills, problem solving and drink-refusal strategies, and addresses the needs of the client as part of a social community. Combining practical advice on such matters with a scientific survey of CRA in use, this book offers a new treatment approach to all involved with the support and treatment of those with alcohol and drug problems.

ROBERT J. MEYERS is Research Lecturer in the Department of Psychology and Senior Research Scientist in the Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse and Addictions, University of New Mexico. An internationally known researcher and lecturer, he has been involved in the research and treatment of alcohol problems for more than 25 years, and is one of the original collaborators in the first outpatient trial of the Community Reinforcement Approach.

WILLIAM R. MILLER is Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry, University of New Mexico. He has many previous publications on the treatment of alcohol problems and other addictive behaviors, and has designed treatment approaches and assessment tools for the addiction field.

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A COMMUNITY REINFORCEMENT APPROACH TO ADDICTION TREATMENT

Edited by

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R.J.M.

To George Hunt and Nathan Azrin, the founding fathers.

W.R.M.

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Preface

The Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA), as originally applied to the treatment of alcohol problems and as later widened in its application to other substances, has always seemed to have common sense to recommend it. We only need a nodding experience with the behavior of children or a modicum of personal insight to find persuasive evidence that reward can alter behavior patterns. So, make stopping drinking tangibly rewarding, and troubled drinkers may be able to stop drinking – a psychological postulate much in accord with common sense and ordinary life.

In fact, in the treatment world, CRA has enjoyed a rather odd status up to now. Most researchers believe that the evidence for its efficacy is strong and reviewers have repeatedly rated this treatment approach as being better supported by controlled assessments than a galaxy of more widely favored practices. CRA seems to have become a *succès d'estime* only to be left on the shelf.

This immensely authoritative and comprehensive account of the origins of the CRA concept and the research evidence for its therapeutic benefits must surely do much to counter that previous neglect. It is a book which one must hope to see widely read by clinicians and those responsible for the development and provision of services. Researchers will find in its pages stimulating ideas for new applications and testings.

What is also interesting about this book is that beyond its reporting of the research output it raises questions about how research in this kind of field comes to be made – there is a story here within the story. Research on CRA has been carried forward by a relatively small group of people, most of whom have known each other well, and with ideas and traditions fostered within the group and transmitted across a generation of researchers. It is the continuity in the evolution, the incremental nature of the endeavor, the long slog and the idea followed through which form the

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deeper story. We need better and more widely to understand how science is made, but meanwhile CRA can provide a case study illustrative of that theme.

The rules for IRMA publications require that all material that has not previously been through peer review will go through external peer review before being accepted, while material which has been previously published in journal form will be scrupulously gone through within the office. We aim at a process which will produce a coherent book rather than at bits put together within covers. The preparation of these monographs is therefore an active process with many demands made on the authors. I am grateful to Robert J. Meyers and William R. Miller and their cast of authors for their courtesy and patience, and believe that the outcome is a statement of landmark significance for its field.

Griffith Edwards

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