

Original Article

Application of Social Support Methods in Intervention with Drug Addicts

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Abstract - In Vietnam, the number of drug addicts in many provinces and cities tends to increase and has complicated developments. The current drug addiction treatment is also facing many difficulties because the forms of drug addiction have changed. Up to this point, the whole world has not found a treatment regimen for addiction other than psychotherapy on behavior change education. With Hong Kong Polytechnic University's support, the University of Labor and Social Affairs' research team has researched and applied social support interventions for drug addicts. In this study, the research team applied 3 social support methods: Case Management, Family Social Work, and Group Social Work to support drug addicts. The intervention results show that the applied methods in social support with drug addicts have positively impacted psychology and health and increased awareness of addicts and addicts' families. Clients have become more confident, live more actively, and especially have access to services and resources to help addicts stabilize their lives, income, and health. When applied to social support, the common point of all 3 methods has achieved the expected results that drug addicts have changed their perception and behavior of drug use from Positive to Negative for all types of drugs.

Keywords - Social support, Social work with family, Social work with the group, Case management, Drug addiction.

1. Introduction

In the current context in Vietnam, addiction treatment in recent years has made remarkable progress with various evidence-based addiction treatment models and effective practices. According to the view and orientation of the Renovation Project on detoxification, (Decision 2596/QĐ-TTg 2013), drug addiction is a chronic disease caused by disorders of the brain; drug addiction treatment (referred to as Addiction treatment) is a long-term process that includes a total of medical, psychological, and social support interventions to change cognition and behavior to reduce the harmful effects of drug addiction and reduce drug use. Illegal drugs (Prime Minister, 2013). However, according to the Ministry of Public Security (2020), the country currently has more than 210,000 drug addicts of all social groups and ages. The number of new drug addicts increased by 10 to 15%. People who use synthetic drugs affect the nervous system, often have delusions, and hallucinations, cannot control their behavior and act dangerously to themselves and society. This situation requires more effective and comprehensive professional interventions, including Physical - Mental - Social aspects.

With the support of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the research team of the University of Labor and Social Affairs has conducted an intervention study to apply the intervention methods of social support for drug addicts. In this study, the research team applied Case Management, Family Social Work, and Group Social Work methods to

support drug addicts from October 2021 to April 2022. the applied intervention results of each method are described, analyzed, and compared to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention methods as well as the limitations. Based on that, this paper further discusses improving the intervention's effectiveness with drug addicts.

2. Description of the Research Object

2.1. Research object 1& 2

The family of Ms. T.T.M.T and Mr. D.H. N has 2 children living in Nghia Tan, Hanoi, with 2 children. First is the 28-year-old eldest son, the son of the first love of T.T.M.T. and ex-husband. Second is the little child, who is in 5th grade this year and is the son of Ms. T.T.M.T. Mr. N. Ms. T was born in 1971 in Ha Tinh and divorced for the first time in 1996. After the divorce, Ms. T was depressed and sad. The first time she used Heroin was on the 28th of Tet in 1996; feeling lonely when she did not return to her hometown for Tet, she met Mr. Nam playing drugs, so Ms. T tried 2 clouds of smoke but did not realize what Heroin was. That time she vomited for 2 days and could not eat anything. Mr. N, born in 1966, also used drugs for a long time, about 20 years. In 1997, he was arrested and sent to a re-education camp after drug use. After being released from prison to meet Ms. T, Mr. N and Ms. T officially got together. Since getting married, the most difficult time was when Ms. T was pregnant and discovered she had H.I.V. At first, Ms. T thought that H.I.V. was going to die; life at that time was so dark; 20 days she lived in hiding, she found all ways to get



money to use drugs to sleep under bridges, parks, being chased by the police, and society. In 2012, Ms. T took Methadone to relieve her miserable days. His family also shunned Mr. N because of his drug addiction. He has lost all his papers and now has no identity card, household registration book, no job. The whole family of Ms. T and Mr. N rely on the small tea shop. The eldest grandchild is 28 years old this year and has been living with Ms. T since childhood, currently teaching fitness and earning enough for her life. During the last epidemic, the family had to rely on the salary of their great-grandchild to live because they could not open a restaurant. Mr. N and Ms. T currently receive Methadone treatment at Methadone Treatment Facility in Dong Da District. However, Mr. N and Ms. T are still owed 2 years of drug bills and have not been able to repay the debt. Currently, Ms. T is in poor health, and Mr. N does not have a job, so the family situation is difficult.

2.2. Research object 3 & 4

Both Mr. P.T.T and Mr. D.A.T have been taking Methadone treatment at the Medical Center of Dong Da district for a long time. The common characteristics of both are that they are male, have finished secondary school, and are taking oral Methadone treatment. P.T.T, 46 years old, is currently single and lives with her mother. He has been using Heroin and meth since he was 30 years old for 16 years. He has a close relationship with and receives his mother's physical and mental support. He has health problems and currently suffering from liver disease and would like to be referred to health care services. D.A.T is 48 years old and has finished 12th grade. He has married and has 2 children. The first is a son studying in grade 11, and the second is a daughter studying in grade 9. He shared that he took drugs under the influence of friends. After using Heroin and meth, he was always worried about his health and wanted a stable job to continue raising his children in school. Mr. P.T.T and Mr. D.A.T are selected to participate in the intervention of group social work, including 15 members. The common characteristics of 15 group members aged 35 to 55 years, including 14 males and 1 female. All group members are using meth and Heroin and taking methadone treatment at a methadone treatment facility in Dong Da district. The common problems of the group members are mental health; there is a lot of stress, fatigue, depression, lack of business capital and difficulty finding work, and little participation in group activities.

2.3. Research object 5

Mr. T X V was born in 1971, the eldest son in a family of 3 brothers and sisters. He was married and divorced because after living together for a while, his wife knew he was addicted to drugs, so she divorced him. He lives with his mother, who is over 82 years old, and currently has a precarious income because of a spontaneous business but lacks business capital. He has been addicted since 1996 due to the urge of his friends and the idea of preferring to show

that he is a man who must know everything. At first, he only inhaled and shared that he felt very high and happy so he would use it again next time. After that, he became addicted to drugs, and he started to use the drug regularly. With the determination to give up Heroin, he entered the Rehabilitation Center once in 2002, but after being out of the Center for 8 months, he relapsed again. It was the first time he had failed to rehab. After that, he used meth, so his health became weaker and weaker. Every day from about 8 am - 10 am, he goes to take Methadone at the Methadone Treatment Facility in Dong Da, Hanoi. His life goes on like that every day, and sometimes he does not want to do anything more, just stay at home because he is afraid that if he goes to work, his friends will invite him to become addicted to drugs again. The last time he used drugs was on November 28, 2020. He had previously been tested for H.I.V. but was not infected. However, since the last time he used Heroin, Mr. V has used it by sharing needles and syringes, so he is now worried about H.I.V. infection but has not been tested yet. He also suffers from the side effects of using meth. Recently, due to the influence of the Covid-19 epidemic, his business has been unsatisfactory, so he is always in a state of stress, thinking a lot.

3. Discuss Methods of Social Support with Drug Addicts

In general, it can be found that the methods of social support interventions for drug addicts bring useful effects not only to the problem of individual addicts but also help them improve their relationships with family, community, neighbors, and friends. The remarkable point is that all the intervention helps clients turn positive to negative and keep cleaning during the intervention. However, because the intervention period is not long, the impact and long-term effects have not been evaluated. In addition, each method has its direction of intervention, so it has not yet brought about comprehensive effects. Specifically, the methods of social support interventions for drug addicts are as follows:

3.1. Methods of social work with family

This method has changed the drug user's perception through the social work method, self-doubt, stress, fatigue, and depression, which have been eliminated or gradually improved. In addition, one of the signals for the effectiveness of this intervention is that drug users had wanted to give up the rehabilitation process and return to reusing drugs before the intervention. Still, after the intervention, they found the motivation to continue with rehabilitation. The drug user's relationships are expanded. They are more proactive in communication and confident in participating in job searching and social activities. Through the support of family members, the drug user has gained more confidence and changed their perception and behavior of drug use. The drug user has been positive in testing and especially does not think about drug use but is directed to Methadone treatment. In

addition, when applying the social work method to the family, it is necessary for a social worker to properly assess the role, strengths, and weaknesses of family members. It will be able to develop helpful interventions, and family weaknesses can also be addressed during the intervention. For family members, through the support activities of social workers, there have been positive changes as family members have more close relationships and care for each other. Drug users will be more concerned about their psychological and physical health and have thoughts about improving their dedication and support to those in the same situation.

However, one of the limitations in the support activities of the family social work approach with addicts is the intensive intervention for the drug addicts to access social work services such as the case management method or the effects of the client's participation in social groups outside the family have not been deeply intervened by social workers.

3.2. Methods of group social work

Group social work is a method that has been confirmed as one of the main and important intervention methods of the professional social work profession in the world. Group activities with drug addicts will positively affect and change group members. For drug addicts, the application in this topic has shown that group social work has helped group members to join the group, share, and experience through activities of other people. Drug addicts have experienced meaningful interactions, respect, and value of themselves with those around them. Drug addicts have been given increased strength and willpower to cope with difficulties in addiction treatment and their life. Through group activities, drug addicts have raised awareness about issues related to drug use, information related to their rights, and how to access social services such as loans, counseling, employment support, vocational training, and medical services. At the same time, drug addicts have psycho-emotional changes, helping them to be more optimistic, realize their worth, and be more confident in social relationships such as with family, friends, and the community. This application research shows that to implement the group social work method. It is necessary to pay attention to the expectation that the scope of change or the purpose of group social work needs to be determined following resources both in terms of time, financial and human resources in different scopes and different audiences. In terms of personnel to perform, the professional or para-professional social worker performing group social work activities is a key factor in its effectiveness. This team should

be adequately trained in both knowledge and skills to meet the professional needs of group social work. Another important point to ensure effective group work is the need for an environment in terms of supportive policies and the availability of support services for drug addicts at all levels, from communes, wards, districts, and central government.

3.3. Method of case management

Applying the case management method with drug addicts showed that there have been positive changes when accessing social work services. The drug addicts have received health support, mental health, access to medical services, and examination. Along with psychological stabilization based on internal and external resources, case management staff conducted activities to support drug addicts in stabilizing job livelihoods. Case management staff supports drug addicts to be consulted and connected with job support centers and banks for social services. As a result, the drug addicts borrowed capital to develop a business to increase income in their own life. Through the impact of the case management method, the drug addicts have improved their drug awareness and changed drug use behavior as the test result is negative for drugs.

However, this method needs to be combined with the group social work method and social work with the family to support the client more comprehensively because this method is more about meeting the needs and supporting the drug addicts to find services like access to resources and services. One of the important points in the intervention of this method is family environments, especially family relationships and related groups environments where the drug addicts can participate in their daily life activities that can bring many benefits, including information, view, and experiences for other members for drug addicts.

4. Conclusion

The applied methods in social support with drug addicts have positively impacted psychology and health and increased awareness of addicts and addicts' families. Clients who are drug addicts have become more confident, live more actively, and especially have access to services and resources to help addicts stabilize their lives, improve their incomes, and improve their health. When applied to social support, the common point of all three methods has achieved the expected results that drug addicts have changed their perception and behavior of drug use from Positive to Negative for all types of drugs. However, in the intervention, many methods should be integrated to bring comprehensive and sustainable effects to drug addicts.

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Appendix

Table 1. Intervention methods and results applied to drug addicts

Contents	Family social work		Group social work		Case management	
Description of the intervention method	A process of intervention and support helps family members of drug addicts improve how they interact with each other to meet the needs of all family members. (Tieu Thi Minh Huong and Nguyen Trung Hai, 2020). The intervention process applied includes: Step 1: Start working with the family Step 2: Assess the family Step3: Build a cohesive space/environment Step 4: Identify the problem and plan the intervention Step 5: Implement family support interventions Step 6: Evaluate and close the intervention and support file with the family		It is a process of intervention and support of social workers with groups of drug addicts to assist in solving the psychosocial problems of the addicts themselves and, at the same time, support them to develop their personality as well as their personality. Positive social relationships through group activities (Tieu Thi Minh Huong and Nguyen Trung Hai, 2020). the intervention applied process includes: Step 1: Prepare and form the group Step 2: the group starts working Step 3 Step Intervene/Perform Task Step 4: Finish		Drug addiction case management is a collaborative process among professionals in assessing drug addicts' needs, identifying, connecting, and coordinating resources and services to help drug addicts access resources to treat addiction and meet their needs effectively (Nguyen Trung Hai, 2013). the intervention applied process includes: Step 1: Build relationships and, collect information, evaluate the problem Step 2: Develop a supportive plan Step 3: Implement a supportive plan Step 4: Monitor, supervise and support drug addicts Step 5: Evaluate and close	
Activities implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with the client to find out the client's information and problems - Find out the information about the client's family members - Find out the relationship between the client's family members - Find out the relationship between the client's family with the community and society - Identify the client's and family members' problems - Plan and implement the planned activities with the client and the client's family: Conduct consultations with the client and the client's family members based on the members' needs to change the perception and behavior of clients and family members with drug addicts... 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess the ability of group members to participate - Forming a group - Orientation for team members - Establish group rules - Plan and execute group activities - Evaluation of group activities and closing. 10 topics were presented and discussed in groups.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct access to collect client information - Identify the client's problems and needs - Find out resources that can help clients - Implement planning and conduct connecting clients with resource services to solve problems for clients: health services, livelihood support resources, loan assistance, gender services, job placement to help drug addicts release psychologically, gain self-confidence and improve living conditions, and support others in the same situation as them. 	
Intervention results	Family social work		Group social work		Case management	
	Before intervention	After intervention	Before intervention	After intervention	Before intervention	After intervention
(1) Problems with drug addicts himself						

Self-discrimination	No	No	Sometime	No	No	No
Stress	Sometime	Rarely	Frequently	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely
Tired	Sometime	Rarely	Sometime	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely
Bored	Rarely	No	Sometime	No	Rarely	No
No need to give up	No	No	Sometime	No	No	No
Drug addiction	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
(2) Problems with the family						
Discord, contradiction, quarrel	Sometime	Rarely	No	No	Sometimes	Rarely
Violence (Slaps, punches, kicks...)	No	No	No	No	Rarely	Rarely
Economic difficulties	Very difficult	More stable	Difficult	More stable	Difficult	More stable
There are addicts in the family	Yes	No	Have	No	Yes	Have
(3) Problems with the community/neighbors/friends						
Being stigmatized, discriminated against	Frequently	Not Occur	Sometime	Rarely	Occasionally	Rarely
Be despised	Frequently	Rarely	Sometime	No	Rarely	Rarely
to be shunned, chased away	Frequently	Not Occur	Occasionally	No	Rarely	No
Suspected	Frequently	Rarely	Occasionally	Rarely	Rarely	Rarely

The extent and frequency of the problem				
Frequently	Sometime	Occasionally	Rarely	No
Every day happens	1 to 3 days/time	3 to 5 days/time	5 to 7 days/time	Does not happen