

# Evidence-Based Addiction Treatment





# Evidence-Based Addiction Treatment

Edited by  
Peter M. Miller



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# Preface

The addictions treatment field is undergoing a period of increased scrutiny, upheaval, and change (McLellan, Carise, & Kleber, 2003). The growing emphasis on treatment accountability and cost-effectiveness is leading to major changes in standards of care. Inconsistent practices based on clinical experience and intuition rather than hard scientific evidence of treatment efficacy are rapidly becoming unacceptable. Consumers, administrators, and legislators are increasingly unwilling to support treatments for which there is little or no empirical support.

Evidence-based treatments are interventions that show consistent scientific evidence for positive therapeutic outcomes. It seems self-evident that, as is true in medical practice, interventions that have demonstrated their effectiveness through rigorous scientific investigation would be the treatments of choice by practitioners. Unfortunately, in the field of substance abuse treatment, this has not been the case. Substance abuse clinicians are only recently beginning to be exposed to efforts aimed at the translation of addictions science into practice (Miller & Kavanagh, 2007).

Translating science-based treatments into clinical settings is an important priority in the addictions field and has been the subject of an influential Institute of Medicine report (Lamb, Greenlick, & McCarty, 1998). The report estimated that, historically, it has taken approximately 17 years for science-based therapeutic interventions to be implemented in substance abuse treatment programs. This disquieting fact prompted substantial responses from several federal agencies. Such programs as the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment's Addiction Technology Transfer Centers and its Practice Research Collaboratives, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism's Research-to-Practice Forums and its Researcher-in-Residence Program, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse's (NIDA) Clinical Trials Network were established to address this problem.

To further expedite this process, treatment programs in the United States are being mandated to provide evidence-based therapies, with funding and insurance reimbursement being contingent on their doing so. In addition, in 2001, NIDA, in collaboration with the Addiction Technology Transfer Center of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment),



launched the Blending Initiative, designed to improve the development, effectiveness, and utility of evidence-based practices (Condon, Miner, Balmer, & Pintello, 2008). It is hoped that these noteworthy efforts will speed up the process of adoption and implementation.

In the meantime, the push is on for future and current clinicians to learn science-based treatments and begin the process of putting them into routine clinical practice. To that end, this textbook provides a state-of-the-art compilation of evidence-based assessment and treatment practices in the treatment of addictions. While research on treatment effectiveness is still ongoing, a substantial body of evidence is available to provide students, academics, and clinicians with specific science-based practices that work.

## **APPROACH**

This book is written at a level appropriate for graduate students, upper-level undergraduate students, and students enrolled in courses preparing them for licensure or certification in alcohol and drug counseling. In addition, the book also provides practicing counselors with a much-needed, up-to-date resource on evidence-based assessment and treatment methods. While research studies are discussed in the chapters, a highly sophisticated knowledge of research methodology is not required.

The chapters provide a timely resource for evidence-based practice just when such methods are being required and monitored in addiction treatment centers. While the theoretical basis of treatment methods will be addressed, this coverage will be relatively brief, with emphasis on descriptions of methods (along with case examples) and evidence of efficacy and effectiveness (with emphasis on controlled clinical trials and meta-analyses).

Chapters are authored by well-recognized authorities in the field of substance abuse treatment. Authors demonstrate the rare quality of being top behavioral scientists that conduct and publish treatment research as well as being dedicated, experienced, and caring clinicians.

## **TEXT ORGANIZATION**

The book's 23 chapters are divided into six major sections. In Section 1, two chapters provide an introduction to an evidence-based approach to treatment and an overview of nonspecific factors influencing the therapeutic process with addicted individuals. Section 2 includes chapters focusing on clinical assessment of alcohol and substance use patterns (both currently and historically), diagnosis and dependence, psychiatric comorbidities frequently associated with addiction, and cognitive,



behavioral, and lifestyle problems that are closely related to chemical dependency. In addition, these assessment methods are equally useful in objectively monitoring treatment progress and outcome.

Section 3 consists of chapters describing current major evidence-based treatments for addictive behaviors, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, motivational interviewing, brief intervention, relapse prevention, behavioral couples' therapy, contingency management and the community reinforcement approach, self-change, and adjunctive pharmacotherapy. In Section 4, chapters address special populations and special applications of evidence-based approaches, including ethnic and minority populations, clients with psychiatric comorbidities, adolescents, college students, and Internet-based treatments. The chapters in Section 5 discuss evidence-based treatment in action both with the individual client and on a clinical organizational level. Finally, Section 6 consists of a chapter on challenges posed by evidence-based treatments and their implementation in clinical practice.

## **A FINAL WORD**

This volume is designed to provide both the student and the practicing clinician with a basic knowledge and understanding of current major evidence-based assessment and treatment methods. While the goal is to educate students and health professionals in the latest practice methodologies, the eventual aim is to improve the quality of care for addicted individuals and improve their lives.

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