

# **Behavioral Couples Therapy for Substance Use Disorders: Building Recovery Together**

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# Alcohol use in the Military (Schumm & Chard, 2012)

- Excessive drinking 32.1% men vs. 8.0% men
  - Higher than same-aged civilians
- Excessive use cost > \$1 billion
- 320,000 lost work days
- 34,400 arrests
- 10,400 unable to deploy
- 2,200 separations





# Intimate Partner Relationships and Substance Use

- ❑ Alcohol use is adaptive and is reinforced
- ❑ Alcohol use is detrimental
- ❑ Marshal (2003)
  - ❑ Alcohol use disorder and relationship satisfaction
    - ❑ Discordant patterns (Mudar et al., 2001)
  - ❑ Alcohol consumption and relationship satisfaction
  - ❑ Where does the drinking occur?
  - ❑ Coded behavioral interactions
    - ❑ Couples with and without alcoholic partners
    - ❑ Effects of being under the influence



# Enabling Behaviors

- ❑ Definition
- ❑ Shifting conceptualization
- ❑ Rotunda et al. (2004)
  - ❑ Enabling behaviors that most spouses exhibit



# Why use BCT?

- Substance use problems & family problems often coexist
- These sets of problems are often intertwined
- Addressing both problems at the same time results in the best outcomes



# Overview of BCT

- Designed for couples who have substance use problems
- Purpose
  - Support addiction recovery
  - Improve relationship functioning
- Duration:
  - 12-20 couple sessions over 3-6 months
- Fits with self-help, medications, and other counseling



# 4 Objectives of BCT

- Engage the couple
- Support abstinence with Recovery Contract (daily ritual to reward abstinence) and other support for abstinence
- Improve relationship by increasing positive activities and improving communication
- Continuing recovery and relapse prevention



# **BCT can work for couples who are:**

- Married or living together relationship
  - Separated but considering reconciliation?
- Willing to try abstinence
  - Controlled use?
  - Both have substance use problem?
- Both willing to work on problems
- Not high risk of very severe violence
- Engaged in broader recovery program





# Successful BCT Therapists

- Address substance abuse problem first
- Tolerate and defuse strong anger
- Structure and control sessions
- Empathize readily with both partners
- Address non-adherence with flexibility and problem-solving



# Research on BCT

- Compared to bona fide individual addiction tx (Meis et al., 2013; Powers et al., 2009)
  - Better substance use outcomes (small-to-medium ES)
  - Better relationship outcomes (medium-to-large ES)
- Partner violence reduced after BCT (for review see Murphy & Ting, 2010)
- Possibly efficacious with non-romantic family members (O'Farrell et al., 2010)
- Possibly efficacious for reducing co-occurring PTSD (Schumm et al., in press)
- VA pilot study integrating BCT with CBCT for PTSD (Schumm et al., 2015)



# Typical BCT Session Structure

- Review substance use and thoughts/urges to use
- Review home practice
- Review any pressing relationship issues
- Introduce and practice new skill
- Assign home practice and answer questions



# **Gaining Commitment and Starting Treatment**



# Engaging Couple in BCT

- A *nonthreatening, positive approach* to get patient's permission to contact spouse
- *Talk directly to spouse* to engage him/her/them for a joint interview
- *Small steps* gain couple's commitment
  - Tx-planning interview that includes partner
  - BCT "info session"
  - Couple intake session



# **Behavioral Couples Therapy for Substance Use Disorders**

## **■ The Promises**

- Not threaten divorce or separation
- No violence or threats of violence
- Focus on present and future - not the past
- Complete agreed-to assignments



# **Building Support for Abstinence**



# Goals of the Recovery Contract

- Rebuild trust
- Reduce conflict about substance abuse
- Reward abstinence

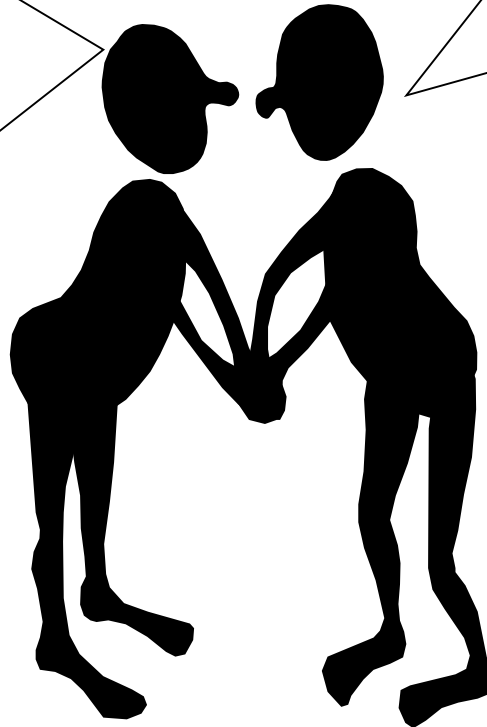




# Daily Trust Discussion Formula

Client

"I have been drug and alcohol free for the last 24 hours and plan to remain drug and alcohol free for the next 24 hours. Thank you for listening and being supportive of my effort to be drug and alcohol free."



Partner

"Thank you for staying drug and alcohol free for the last 24 hours. Let me know how I can help during the next 24 hours."

# Trust Discussion

# **BCT Recovery Contract**

- Daily Trust Discussion (with medication if taking it)
- Focus on present & future, not past
- Self-help involvement
- Weekly drug urine screens (if drug use disorder)
- Other weekly behaviors
- Calendar to record progress



# SOBRIETY CONTRACT CALENDAR

✓ = Trust Discussion Done

D+ = Drug Urine Positive

AA = Mary to AA

D- = Drug Urine Negative

Al = Jack to Al-Anon

October 2001													
S	M	T	W	T	F	S							
	1	2	✓ D+	3	✓	4	✓	5	6				
✓	7	✓ AA	8	✓	9	✓	10	✓ D+	11	✓ AA	12	✓	13
✓	14	✓	15	✓ AA	16	✓	17	✓	18	✓	19	✓ AA	20
✓	21	✓ Al AA	22	✓	23	✓	24	✓	25	✓	26	✓ AA	27
✓	28	✓ Al AA	29	✓	30	✓	31	✓					

# Other Support for Abstinence

- Review urges to drink or use drugs
- Crisis intervention for substance use
- Discuss exposure to substances, including alcohol at home
- Address stressful life problems
- Identify and stop enabling



# DUAL RECOVERY CONTRACT

In order to help with their recoveries Sue and Gene agree to the following.

<u>Sue</u> 's Responsibilities	<u>Gene</u> 's Responsibilities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DAILY TRUST DISCUSSION (with medication if taking it)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States intention to stay substance free that day (takes medication <u>Antabuse</u> if applicable).</li> <li>• Thanks partner for recovery efforts and support.</li> <li>• Records these actions on calendar.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States intention to stay substance free that day (takes medication <u>Antabuse</u> if applicable).</li> <li>• Thanks partner for recovery efforts and support.</li> <li>Records these actions on calendar.</li> </ul>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FOCUS ON PRESENT AND FUTURE, NOT PAST	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agrees not to mention partner's past substance abuse or fear about future use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agrees not to mention partner's past substance abuse or fear about future use.</li> </ul>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WEEKLY SELF-HELP MEETINGS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to 12-Step mtgs: <u>AA mtgs</u> <u>3x/wk</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to 12-Step mtgs: <u>AA mtgs</u> <u>3x/wk</u></li> </ul>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> URINE DRUG SCREENS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urine Drug Screens: <u>weekly at</u> <u>couple sessions</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urine Drug Screens: <u>weekly at</u> <u>couple sessions</u></li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER RECOVERY SUPPORT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> </ul>

### EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

If, at any time the trust discussion (with medication if taking it) does not take place for two days in a row, we will contact (therapist/phone #: Dr. Tim O'Farrell 123-456-7899) immediately.

### LENGTH OF CONTRACT

This agreement covers the time from today until the end of weekly therapy sessions, when it can be renewed. It cannot be changed unless all of those signing below discuss the changes together.

Sue Jackson

Gene Jackson

Timothy O'Farrell Ph.D.

9 / 3 / xx

Therapist

Date



# Dual Recovery Contract Calendar

- ✓ = Trust Discussion Done
- N = Alanon or Naranon
- (✓) = Trust Discussion with Medication (Antabuse)
- D = Drug Urine + or -
- A = AA or NA meeting
- O = Other ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

Sue's Calendar							Gene's Calendar						
September							September						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1							1
	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙		A		⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	
	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙		⊙		⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙		⊙
⊙	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
⊙	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙			⊙	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙		
October							October						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	⊙ D+	⊙	⊙	⊙				⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙		
	⊙ D+	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙		⊙ D+	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
⊙	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
⊙	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
⊙	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙				⊙	⊙ D-	⊙	⊙			



# **Relationship Focus: Increasing Positive Activities**

- Catch Your Partner Doing Something Nice
- Shared Rewarding Activities
- Caring Day Assignment





## CATCH YOUR PARTNER DOING SOMETHING NICE

NAME: Mike PARTNER'S NAME: Nancy

DAY	DATE	PLEASING BEHAVIOR NOTICED
MON	4/6	Waited to have dinner with me when I had to stay late at work
TUES	4/7	Told me she loved me
WED	4/8	Cooked a delicious dinner
THUR	4/9	Was patient with me when I came home tired and moody from work
FRI	4/10	Enjoyed a walk together
SAT	4/11	Woke me gently and rubbed my back
SUN	4/12	Helped plan a picnic with friends

# Catch and Tell



# Increasing Positive Activities

- **Shared Rewarding Activities**
- Each partner lists possible activities
- Plan one activity each week
- Activity can be “date at home”, out with other couples or families, simple or large
- Activities linked with recovery



# **Relationship Focus: Teaching Communication Skills**

- Listening Skills
- Expressing Feelings Directly
- Communication Sessions
- Negotiating for Requests



# Communication Sessions

- Planned structured discussions
- Private, face-to-face, without distractions
- Take turns speaking without interrupting
- Use Listener and Speaker skills
- Try to resolve issue not “win” conflict
- Use to practice skills & discuss concerns



# Improving conflict management: Time Out

- Either partner can call it
- Verbal and non-verbal signal
- During time out, use strategies to reduce anger
- Agreed upon time to return to conversation

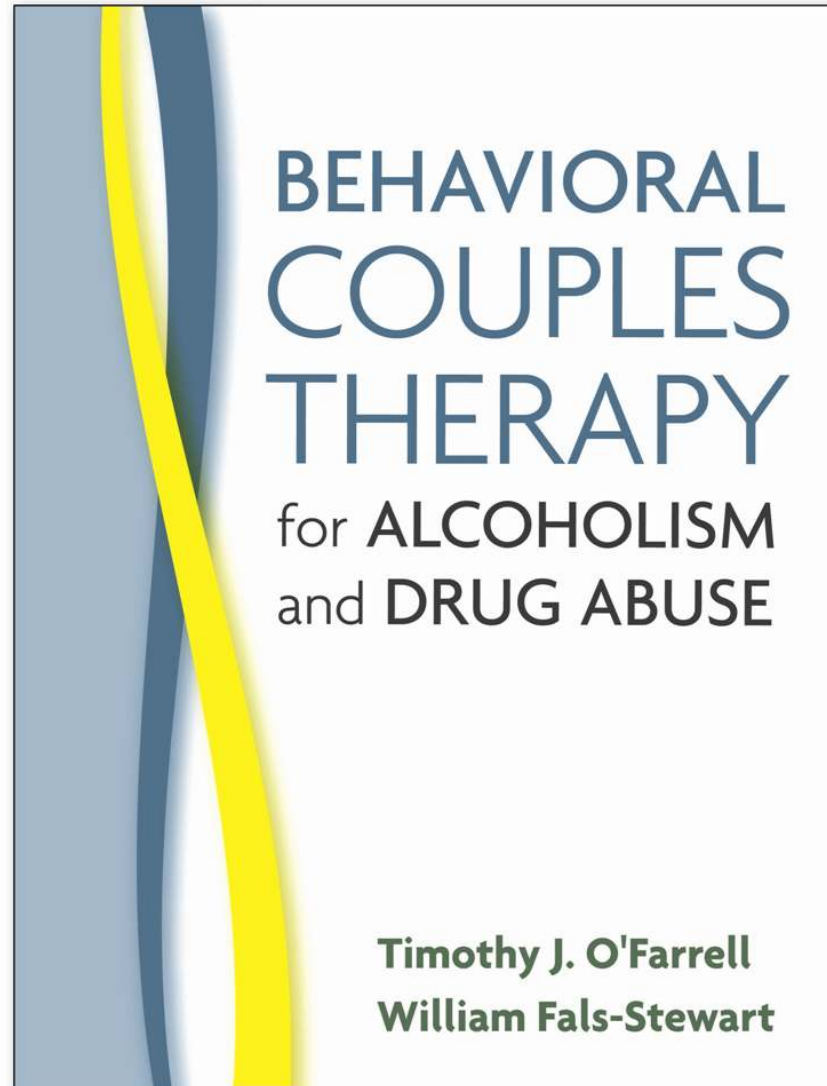


# Maintenance & Relapse Prevention

- Continuing Recovery Plan
  - Actions to maintain recovery gains after weekly BCT ends
- Relapse Prevention Plan
  - Identify high risk situations & warning signs
  - Make plan to prevent or minimize relapse
- Action Plan to keep partner safe
  - Do not argue with person who is intoxicated
  - Get help or leave if fear violence



# Manual





# Contact

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