

a TCU/DATAR Training Module

Time Out! For Men

A Communication Skills/Sexuality
Workshop for Men



**Institute of Behavioral Research
Texas Christian University**

Time Out! *For Men*

A Training Manual
from the TCU/DATAR Project

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Preface

The Texas Christian University/Drug Abuse Treatment Assessment Research (TCU/DATAR) Project is concerned with enhancing drug abuse treatment in order to increase client retention and reduce relapse rates. Research for the DATAR project was conducted by the Institute of Behavioral Research (IBR) at TCU in collaboration with methadone outpatient treatment programs in Texas.

A variety of psychoeducational interventions were developed as part of the DATAR project to help increase client retention and involvement in treatment programs. These interventions use curriculum-based modules to assist substance abuse counselors in leading group sessions that are both enjoyable and meaningful to clients. The treatment modules address such topics as relapse prevention, assertiveness training for women, social support and life skills enhancement, and HIV/AIDS prevention. A contingency management protocol also was developed and evaluated.

The present manual, ***Time Out! For Men: A Communication Skills and Sexuality Workshop for Men***, was developed as a companion piece to an assertiveness and sexuality workshop for women developed by IBR staff for use in the DATAR project. The manual is designed to provide counselors with a structure for helping men in substance abuse treatment programs explore issues related to communication, intimacy, and sexuality in their relationships.

Introduction

Time Out! For Men: A Communication Skills and Sexuality Workshop for Men has been developed by the TCU/DATAR project to assist counselors in substance abuse treatment programs who want to lead men's groups on sexuality and relationship issues. Close, stable, supportive marriages and significant relationships are important anchors for recovery. The workshop addresses communication skills, self-esteem, problem solving, and sexuality in the context of helping men improve their intimate relationships.

The development of this specialized treatment intervention for “men only” followed the success of a similar workshop designed for women (***Time Out! For Me: A Sexuality and Assertiveness Module for Women***). Counselors who were using the women's module began to get feedback from male clients and from the women who attended the groups that a companion workshop for men was needed. In fact, requests for information about the women's ***Time Out!*** program from colleagues in the field often would include the question—“Have you developed a similar workshop for men?” It became apparent that there was an interest in, and a need for, male-targeted materials on relationship skills in treatment settings.

The module focuses on communication skills such as listening, assertiveness, I-Statements, sharing feelings, and conflict resolution. In addition, sexual and reproductive health information for both men and women is covered, including anatomy and physiology, self-examinations for cancer, symptoms of sexually transmitted diseases, and options for safer sex. Human sexual response and sexual functioning are discussed, and men are provided a forum for discussing and dispelling sexual myths and stereotypes.

The materials are organized for presentation in eight (8) two-hour group sessions. Ideally, groups should be led by a male counselor, social worker, or other treatment staff member who has had experience conducting educational workshops. We do not recommend that the material be presented by a female counselor working alone, based on feedback received from the men who attended our pilot workshops. These participants said they would feel most comfortable discussing the issues presented in a “men-only” group. Many also were open to the idea of a male counselor and female counselor serving as co-leaders of the group; however, most said they would have a difficult time “opening up” without some male leadership in the group. Homework assignments are included to encourage men to work on specific skill areas with their partners or significant others. Each session contains instructions for preparing class materials, along with handouts, discussion questions, and ideas for presenting information on each topic. In addition, the manual features a reference section which contains informational articles, teaching resources, and a bibliography.

Time Out! For Men encourages the development of intimacy, open communication, and practical problem-solving—important areas of personal growth and stability for recovering men. Research has suggested that improvements in personal relationships during treatment may be strongly related to positive treatment outcomes such as reduced drug use and greater program compliance. It is hoped that by offering men a forum where relationship issues can be honestly discussed they will feel empowered to make changes that can lead to strong, supportive relationships.