

ABSTRACT

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Expressive Writing to Increase Emotion Regulation in Drug-Use

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An adolescent may have trouble in their emotional development. Problems in emotional development may lead into behaviors that are against social norms, including drug use. Drug use in adolescents may cause them to have more difficulties regulating their emotions. Difficulties in emotion regulation mean that an individual have difficulties in understanding and accepting their emotions, controlling impulsive behavior, and using emotion regulation strategies that are appropriate. Difficulties in emotion regulation may cause adolescents to have trouble in having interpersonal relationships, develop psychopathological symptoms, high aggression, and difficulties in controlling their need to use drugs again. This study uses a mixed method approach to see whether expressive writing, through writing sessions on one's feelings and thoughts towards a negative event, can elevate the emotion regulation skills. There are four participants included in the expressive writing intervention that have been selected through *purposive sampling*. The participants involved are adolescent boys with substance use disorder, have difficulties regulating their emotions, an average intelligence, and undergoing rehabilitation. Participants are chosen through the process of interviews, IQ tests, and projective tests. The data from this study is analyzed through the changes in the pre and post test scores and from the interviews conducted before and after the intervention. Participants reported that they experience change in their emotion regulation skills after the intervention through change in their behavior and thought process where they become more conscious about their emotions, understand their emotions better, have more self control, and they have better strategies to regulate their negative emotions.

Keywords: emotion regulation, adolescents, drug users, substance use disorder, expressive writing