
Part 1

Foundations of Empowerment Principles and Practice in Substance Abuse Services

This section introduces the reader to the book's purpose and conceptual framework related to empowerment and substance abuse services. Chapter 1 addresses the book's purpose by explaining how various authors have struggled to define, study, and apply concepts of empowerment. In essence, this chapter captures the complexity and richness of social work practice focused on helping consumers to empower themselves. The discussion clarifies how empowerment has become an overused and poorly defined concept. Consequently, the author's analysis of various rubrics for defining empowerment and use of a social work framework for highlighting basic components of an acceptable definition should be beneficial to readers. Similarly, a brief description of this author's research and findings, the basis for many of the following chapters, adds to what is known about empowerment-related theories and their application to the service delivery and recovery process at the personal, interpersonal, and political levels. Substance abuse program factors that have been found to enhance clients' empowerment experiences and outcomes at all three levels are clarified, based on the research literature and on the author's recent empowerment research.

Chapter 2 further develops the book's conceptual framework by applying, for the first time, empowerment and narrative concepts to the development of substance abuse and addiction problems. This discussion identifies a combination of individual, interpersonal, and environmental influences on that process, ranging from clients' attitudes and values to relationship problems and unemployment to the availability of substances and presence of many

social, economic, and political barriers to self- and collective sufficiency. An analysis of power issues related to addiction development includes the effects of staff and programmatic responses as well as social work's historical philosophical approaches to those issues. Basically, this chapter, and part 1 as a whole, clarifies how empowerment concepts help to explain the development and maintenance of individuals' substance abuse problems as well as their lifelong recovery. The implications of this perspective on substance abuse for empowerment practice and social work education are also presented.