

# THE RELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL SUPPORT AND THE USED STRATEGIES OF COPING WITH STRESS IN DRUG ADDICTS

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**ABSTRACT** – Drug use is one of the non-constructive ways of coping. Even if initially it brings about some benefits (eg. releases from painful self reflection, lets one avoid fear of reality) it eventually leads to self-destruction. The original source of drug addicts' problems is a lack of contact with others, often a lack of emotional relations within a family. Using drugs may fulfill this need of contact, but at the same time an individual deprives oneself of the possibilities of changing one's situation or improvement of relations with others (lack of support). The recovered drug addicts wonder whether they will manage after returning to their environment (that indirectly has contributed to their problem). The specifics of the situation of persons ending the therapy, a number of factors that may make it difficult for them to adapt to life encourage taking a closer look at coping strategies applied by the persons. It is especially important because relapses are frequent in case of drug addicts who ended the therapy. In search of the most efficient methods of drug addiction treatment researchers concentrate their efforts upon finding factors helping long-term abstinence. The insofar research results show that apart from personality variables, abilities of constructive coping with stress play a significant role. In coping with stress social support plays an important role. It is significant for an individual's feeling of happiness, self esteem, it may also influence a state of health and a general satisfaction with life. And a lack of feeling of support may make it difficult to constructively cope with stress. In the presented work the main emphasis has been put upon a level of support received by drug addicts who ended the therapy and its influence on an ability to select strategies of coping with stress.

In order to select groups with high and low social support the scale of social support by Kmiecik-Baran has been used. This tool serves examining kind and level of support that an individual is given by specific social groups. In order to define strategies of coping with stress, preferred by the cured drug addicts, the Polish version of The Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ – by Folkman & Lazarus) has been used.

The dominating strategies in the group of the cured drug addicts with high support are: planned solving of a problem, seeking social support and positive revaluing. In the group with low social support the most common strategies of coping are: wishful thinking, self-blaming, taking responsibility and positive revaluing. The dependence of choosing coping strategy upon sex can be seen very clearly in strategy of seeking social support. In face of difficult situation women choose this strategy more often, irrespective of the support experienced by them generally.

We may suppose that taking actions aiming at increasing social support for the persons ending therapy will result in their focusing upon planned solving of problems.

Properly organized support groups could ease adaptation to life outside therapy centre. Paying special attention at this fact while preparing postrehabilitation programmes may contribute to optimalization of conditions connected with starting life free of addictions by the persons who ended therapy.

**Key words:** Social support, coping with stress, drug addiction, addiction therapy.