Rethinking Drinking: A Client-Centered Approach to Alcohol Moderation, Harm Reduction, and Abstinence

Traditional abstinence-only models have long dominated Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) treatment, yet emerging research demonstrates that harm reduction strategies—including moderate drinking—offer effective alternatives for many individuals, particularly those with less severe or early-stage alcohol issues. For clients whose alcohol use is creating problems, learning to drink more moderately and safely can represent both a realistic goal and a sustainable outcome. For others, managed drinking serves as a crucial stepping-stone toward temporary or permanent abstinence.

This harm reduction framework transforms treatment by lowering barriers to care and creating more inclusive options for individuals intimidated by abstinence-only approaches. The result is more flexible, personalized care that meets clients where they are in their recovery journey.

Since office-based therapists are typically the first professionals contacted by individuals seeking help with alcohol concerns, all mental health practitioners—regardless of specialty—must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to competently address these issues. This comprehensive webinar provides a diverse clinical toolkit featuring practical strategies, integrated behavioral and pharmacological interventions, real-world case studies, and essential clinical considerations. Participants will gain valuable insights into addressing alcohol-related challenges with greater flexibility, empathy, and effectiveness, significantly expanding treatment possibilities for clients seeking help with alcohol use concerns.

Psychologists Therapists **Target Audience** Social Workers Counselors Psychiatrists Nurses Course level: Intermediate

Learning Objectives

At the end of this seminar, participants will be able to: 1. Compare and contrast client-centered harm reduction approaches with traditional abstinence-only models for treating alcohol use disorders

 $2 \cdot Evaluate$ current research evidence supporting the efficacy of alcohol moderation and harm reduction strategies

 $3\cdot$ Identify which clients are most likely versus least likely to succeed with moderation goals based on clinical indicators

4. Demonstrate the process of conducting comprehensive alcohol assessments and utilizing findings to negotiate appropriate treatment goals and strategies

5· Describe available pharmacological adjuncts for facilitating alcohol moderation and/or abstinence, including the unique advantages and limitations of each medication

Seminar Schedule

The webinar outline is attached. See the Live Webinar page for the start and end times.

<u>Outline</u>

Foundation and Evidence Base (60 minutes) Background, Rationale, and Empirical Support for Client-Centered Harm Reduction

This opening segment provides a comprehensive overview of Alcohol Use Disorders, examines limitations of abstinence-only approaches, and introduces moderation and harm reduction as viable alternatives. We'll review contemporary research supporting flexible, individualized approaches in today's evolving alcohol treatment landscape, including prognostic factors that predict success versus challenges in achieving moderate drinking goals.

11:00 - 11:45 AM: Clinical Assessment (45 minutes) Assessment and Initial Goal Setting

Learn the essential components of evaluating a client's relationship with alcohol and other substances, assessing motivation and readiness for change, and negotiating realistic starting points that clients can embrace with optimism and commitment.

11:45 - 12:00 AM: Break (15 minutes)

10-11:00 AM ET

12:00 - 1:00 PM: Clinical Application (60 minutes) Therapeutic Strategies and Techniques with Case Examples This comprehensive segment guides participants through evidencebased therapeutic techniques for facilitating incremental change toward client-selected goals.

1:00 - 1:15 PM: Interactive Discussion (15 minutes) Q&A and Participant Engagement

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Arnold M· Washton, Ph·D· (NJ License No· 3574) is a licensed psychologist and author specializing in substance use and behavioral health treatment since 1975· As Co-Founder of The Washton Group, he provides online treatment services for executives, professionals, young adults, adolescents, and families throughout the tristate area and PSYPACT-participating states·

Dr· Washton has served as Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at NYU School of Medicine, directed several nationally recognized addiction treatment programs, and consulted for professional sports teams, government agencies, media organizations, and major corporations· He has received research grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse and served as substance abuse advisor to the U·S· Food and Drug Administration, special committees of the U·S· Senate and House of Representatives, and The American Psychological Association·

Dr. Washton has authored over 100 journal articles and nine books, including the recently published second edition of "Treating Alcohol and Drug Problems in Psychotherapy Practice: Doing What Works" (Guilford Press, 2023).

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The Presenter

General Information



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