

Naistenkartano ry



NOVAT-GROUPS AS A METHOD FOR SUPPORTING WOMEN WITH ADDICTIONS – EXAMINATION OF EVALUATION RESULTS

Naistenkartano ry
DIRECTOR
Helena Palojärvi



NOVAT groups as a method for supporting women with addictions – examination of evaluation results **SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE - 2016**



- Minna Kivipelto D.Sc. Research Manager, National Institute for Health and Welfare
- Helena Palojärvi, Director, Lic.Soc. Sc. Naistenkartano
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NAISTENKARTANO



- Was established in 1922
- prevents women's harmful alcohol use and early stage dependencies/addictions
- promotes women's health and living without addictions and taking charge of their lives
- pays attention to the quality of treatment services for women
- The organization is financed by Finland's Slot Machine Association



NOVAT SELF-HELP PROGRAMME



- Taylor-made preventive self - help programme for women, early stage support in the field of addictions. Women don't have to confess any addiction or problem or harmful alcohol use.
- Empowering social work with groups Weekly meetings in closing groups. There are usually 10-12 women in one group.
- The groups work according to NOVAT-self help method without a professional as a leader. The method is being taught by the staff. NOVAT-groups get support and counselling from staff and groups use manual based on six level program, which include gender specific themes concerning women's addictions



THE VOLUME OF NOVAT ACTIVITIES IN FINLAND



During 2010s we have had yearly 15 – 26 active groups around Finland with on average 10 participants (5 -17 in each group). Because of decreasing resources we started less groups than earlier and have started on-line 14 weeks courses. About 74 % (2014) of those who started one and half year group process also finished it. Attendance degree is high - in face to face groups 74 – 84 % and on line courses over 90 %. During 2010s together over 5000 women have been listening our NOVAT-lectures, which have been organized in three different areas around Finland.



WHAT IS/ARE ADDICTION/S? OUR DEFINITION



- Addiction is culturally framed concept (Copoeru 2014) Addictions are linked to the continuous process of identity formation, which has come to depend on various everyday choices of how people decide to live their lives (Hellman 2010). Sociologist Anthony Giddens (1991) saw this phenomenon linked to identity shaping. Identity is a fluid construct rather than an essential, core category, and one whose formation is a matter of personal choices. (Reith, 2004)

THE RESEARCH METHOD REALIST EVALUATION



This study is based on 5 empirical evaluations (Salmela 2000, Jaatinen 2005) and studies of NOVAT-groups (Tuomala 2006, Palojärvi, 2009) in Naistenkartano NOVAT-program. This is qualitative data. Empirical data gathered by Naistenkartano registered association (2014) is used as complementary material. The fifth set of data was used as complementary material in this study. It consists of the NOVAT follow-ups (2005–2013), (272 respondents), and feedback (2011–2012), (79 respondents) based on summaries of the questionnaires developed by Jaana Jaatinen.

THE RESULTS



- The most evident result emerging from the research is that the women interviewed in this study feel that they have found a new, more coherent identity. The women defined this as “discovering one’s own self-worth” or “valuing one’s own life”.The women had got rid of restrictive and negative thoughts.
- Women had shifted focus from others to themselves”. This meant that women recognized, listened to and valued their own feelings, needs and thoughts better than before the program



THE RESULTS



- Some women had learned to set limits. They had become aware of their excessive kindness and liberated themselves from it. They had learned to set their own needs above the needs of others.
- Increased responsibility for oneself . Women said, they had learned to take responsibility for their own lives.

THE RESULTS



- Many of the women had problems in their social relationships before participating in a NOVAT group.
- For instance, NOVAT groups gave support to women who wanted to leave bad relationships and find a life of their own. The women have received various kinds of help for their difficult relationships, such as help for co-dependency. Some had succeeded leaving bad relationship and find a life of their own.

THE RESULTS



- Selfexpression. Getting in touch with one's own feelings was considered important. The women said that they were feeling well and that they had learned to label their emotions
- Among the women there were persons who felt that the internal changes were more significant than the visible or "objective" changes in their lives.
- Finally, some women reported having reduced their use of alcohol or other intoxicants and stopped their "tippling". In short, different dependencies had been reduced during the NOVAT program. Abstinence was also mentioned in few cases.



WHY NOVAT-PROGRAM PRODUCE GOOD RESULTS?



- NOVAT-groups are guided by a systematic and organized program, which at its best enables women's personal empowerment. Before empowerment women have to learn to express, discuss and reflect their experiences, feelings and life ambitions. NOVAT groups have offered a platform and structure for women who had a need to discuss their feelings and problems with other women.
- Simply talking about one's problems does not automatically lead to something new unless tools are available for dealing with these issues. Power means that you can determine the content of your own experience (Howe, 2009,p.148) The NOVAT-manual and support from stagg helps with this.



WHY NOVAT-PROGRAM PRODUCE GOOD RESULTS?



- The results showed that the NOVAT program supported several women's independence and personal courage in decision making. Howe (2009, 148) states that empowered people have a say in plans and decisions that affect them. The women who participated in NOVAT groups felt they could define their own needs better and make decisions affecting their own lives. Empowerment equips people with personal resources which enable them to take control

WHY NOVAT-PROGRAM PRODUCE GOOD RESULTS?



- The women described that empathy in the group increased as the members got to know each other better. Thus an important element in the group was an atmosphere of trust and acceptance. A sense of equality was mentioned as a supporting factor. The women had a right to be heard in the groups, which raised their self-esteem, enabling them to express their feelings more openly inside and outside the group.



WHY NOVAT-PROGRAM PRODUCE GOOD RESULTS?



- The combination of peer support and professional help produced experiences of participation and empowerment. At the beginning of the group process, some women felt that it was difficult to engage in the group. This might have been a hindering factor especially for women who have no prior experience of talking about personal matters with strangers. Attendance in the group worked as a strengthening mechanism for the entire group.

WHY NOVAT-PROGRAM PRODUCE GOOD RESULTS?



The structured NOVAT method enables participants to attain the goals they have set for themselves. The advantage of realist evaluation is that it helps participants recognise that looking at the goals is not enough. By applying the realist methodology to the study, **the focus is possible to direct to the experiences and meaning people are giving to their feelings** (see also Linsley, Howard & Owen 2015, 33).





THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

