

Addiction and Religion: Alcoholics Anonymous, Recovery, and Side Effects

BY AARON BETTY

This study involves research using secondary sources and focuses on the relationships between substance use disorder recovery, religion, and spirituality.

I dive into these issues by focusing on Alcoholics Anonymous and A.A.'s potential path to becoming an established religious organization. I also focus on religion as a substitute addiction and analyze if religion helps or hurts substance use disorder recovery.

Religion proves to be generally helpful in recovery, but the risk of it becoming a substitute addiction is prevalent. Stigma and its negative effects on recovering from a substance use disorder are also discussed.

HOW DOES RELIGION AFFECT SUBSTANCE ABUSE RECOVERY?

Key Concepts:

- A.A. as a religion
- Religion as a substitute addiction
- Religion's affects on recovery

Helpful Resources:

- The Seven Dimensions of Religion
- The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous
- The Four Models of Recovery
- The Six Pillars of Harm Reduction

Notable Findings:

Chapter One: Twelve-Step-Programs

Examining A.A. (and other twelve-step programs) while keeping the seven dimensions of religion in mind, revealed that without a doubt, A.A. is on its way to becoming an established religion.



Chapter 2: Can Religion Replace the Original Addiction?

After analyzing substitute addictions and religion itself as an addiction, I can confidently say that religion can very easily be used to replace the original addiction.

Chapter 3: How to Handle Addiction and Religion

In this chapter my goal was to analyze whether religion helps or hurts the recovery process more, and a few things were revealed. First, stigma (which is often caused by religion) is a huge deterrent for people looking to recover. Second, it was revealed that faith in higher power does typically help people recover from substance use disorders.