

Abstract

Background: Treatment and aftercare experience shows that addiction clients do not orient themselves to their experience, perceiving it as threatening with a habitual tendency to avoid it. Negative emotions can act as triggers for relapse, for this reason it is important to pay attention to the topic of emotions also in the aftercare phase.

Aims: The aim of this paper is to describe how negative emotional states and so-called core emotions contribute to the maintenance of addictive behaviour in the aftercare phase. In the practical part, the therapeutic work with a client is presented, focusing on the treatment of two relapses, within the theoretical framework of the cognitive-behavioral model of relapse prevention and using elements of the psychotherapeutic approach of Emotion-Focused Therapy.

Methods: A qualitative research method was chosen in the form of a case study of a client of a aftercare centre who had experienced two relapses. Ethical aspects of the work were observed.

Results: The case study illustrates the client's motivation to avoid negative emotional states through the use of alcohol, thereby easily achieving the necessary calming and release from intrapsychic and external environmental pressures. Two main sources can be considered as triggers for relapses: feelings of loneliness and negative self worth. The presented case study thus confirms the self-medication hypothesis presented in the theoretical part of this thesis.

Conclusions: Working with emotions in the therapy of addiction clients supports awareness of experience that clients avoid by using substances. Contact with wounding core emotions leads to awareness of long-unmet emotional needs and the subsequent possibility of satisfying them, thus leading to healthier self-care.

Keywords: negative emotional states, relapse, aftercare