

**WORLD VIEW TRANSFORMATIONS OF NARCOTICS
ANONYMOUS MEMBERS IN ISRAEL***

NATTI RONEL

Tel Aviv University, Israel

KEITH HUMPHREYS

*Veterans Affairs Health Care System and
Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto, California*

ABSTRACT

The 12-Step mutual help organization Narcotics Anonymous (NA) has spread from the United States to a number of other societies, including Israel. In order to shed light on how substance-dependent Israelis adapt to a self-help program of foreign origin, this phenomenological field study describes how NA members in Israel undergo the process of "world view transformation" in four domains: experience of self, Universal Order/God, relationships with others, and problem of addiction. NA members in Israel experienced changes in philosophy and values which were similar to those documented in studies of addiction-related 12-Step self-help groups in the United States. Methodological and substantive explanations for the apparent cross-cultural similarity of world view change in 12-Step self-help groups are offered, and future directions for this research area are proposed.

In recent decades, addiction-related 12-Step mutual help groups (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)) have proliferated rapidly throughout the developed world (Mäkelä, 1991). Because cultures differ in many elements that may influence the emergence of behavioral problems and the cultural definitions of these problems, 12-Step groups may vary cross-culturally in organizational function-

*Preparation of this article was supported by the Israeli Anti-Drug Authority and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Mental Health Strategic Health Group.

ing and experiences of individual members (Gidron & Chesler, 1994; Mäkelä et al., 1996). At the same time, there may be psychological and sociological universals which transcend cultural differences (Gidron & Chesler, 1994; Triandis, 1987), such that a mutual help group developed in one culture may be adapted with little modification in another (Master, 1989; Ronel, 1997; Sutro, 1989). The present article examines the interlay of culture and mutual help organizations by describing how substance-dependent persons in one society (Israel) experience involvement with a 12-Step organization—NA—that was developed in and reflects the nature of another society (the United States).

Two drug-dependent Israelis who had become familiar with the organization in the United States introduced NA to Israel in 1984. Today, about 200 NA groups operate nationwide, generally using a format closely patterned on NA meetings in the United States (Ronel, 1993). NA membership in Israel is estimated at 3,000 to 5,000, with the majority being men from low-income families and neighborhoods. As in the United States (Terry, 1996), many Israeli members have a background of participation in criminal activities.

The present study of NA in Israel employs the analytic concept of world view transformation (Antze, 1979; Humphreys, 1996; Kennedy & Humphreys, 1994). Most mutual help organizations have a developed philosophy (or “world view,” see Kennedy & Humphreys, 1994) that guides the organization’s activities and prescribes ways for members to cope with problems. As in other organizations, this world view may be recorded in written materials, in oral accounts of the organization’s history and members’ experiences, or both.

Becoming socialized into an organization such as a 12-Step group often involves the adoption of some or all of its world view. World view change has implications for how members address their problem and how they approach existential issues in general (e.g., the meaning of suffering and spirituality). A few members experience world view transformation in a dramatic fashion akin to religious conversion (see Tiebout, 1954), but most go through a more gradual change process.

Four life domains have been proposed as key sites of world view change for members of mutual help groups: experience of self, Universal Order/God, relationships with others, and the problem that brings the group together (Kennedy & Humphreys, 1994). These four domains have been demonstrated to be broad enough to describe mutual help groups that deal with a variety of problems, including being an alcoholic woman (Humphreys & Kaskutas, 1995), having a chronic mental illness (Kennedy, 1994), and being the child of an alcoholic parent (Humphreys, 1996; Kennedy & Humphreys, 1994). However, Kennedy and Humphreys (1994) caution that these four domains are based on analysis of American self-help organizations and hence have unknown utility in other

cultures. The present article presents an initial study of whether world view transformation occurs in an addiction-related 12-Step self-help organization outside of the United States, and if so, whether it occurs in the four domains previously described.

Since NA's traditions and world view are explicitly based on those of AA (Narcotics Anonymous, 1988; Peyrot, 1985), we briefly summarize findings from the extensive research on world view transformation in American AA groups (e.g., Dorr et al., 1983; Humphreys & Kaskutas, 1995; Maxwell, 1984; Kurtz, 1982). In the domain of self, AA members replace the view of the self as a grandiose "captain of its own ship" with the concept that the self is a flawed, limited, yet still valuable entity. This change is paralleled by changes in the domain of Universal Order/God, in which the individual comes to perceive God or a "Higher Power" as more powerful than the self and an ally in recovery. Hence, members are encouraged to consider the self as a humble servant of a loving God's will. In AA, God is primarily portrayed as a forgiving and accepting source of strength rather than as a punisher of the sinful.

In the domain of close relationships, committed AA members shift from viewing close relationships as competitive environments in which each person can be elevated only at the expense of the other, to seeing relationships as cooperative contexts in which helping and being helped are allied (cf. Bateson, 1971). Sponsorship institutionalizes this viewpoint, for members are told that in order to stay sober, they must help other members do the same.

Lastly, regarding the problem of substance abuse, those members who fully incorporate AA's world view reject the concept that alcohol is an external enemy that can be mastered through will power. Rather, the problem of alcoholism is seen as being rooted permanently within the member's character, and hence can only be arrested rather than permanently cured. Further, surrender rather than will power is viewed as the key for recovery. Surrender does not mean giving up responsibility, but accepting that recovery can only be accomplished through the help of a "Higher Power."

The current article describes how NA members in Israel incorporate the NA/AA world view. This description serves several purposes: 1) it provides an analysis of the change process of NA's members as they perceive and experience it; 2) it supports a greater cross-cultural understanding of addiction-related 12-Step groups for substance-dependent individuals; and 3) it evaluates the cross-cultural utility of the world view transformation framework.

METHODS

Qualitative data were gathered by the first author during a three-year-long participant-observation study. Prior to data collection, the first author received approval of the research goals and design from representatives of the National Service Committee of NA Israel. Because of past personal experience, the primary researcher (NR) could participate in NA activities as a member, although he made clear his dual-role as a researcher in both formal and informal meetings. The majority of the members accepted the primary researcher into their informal social network and approved the idea of a study carried by a NA participant. Hence, this project could be termed an "inquiry from the inside" (Evered & Meryl, 1981) because the primary researcher also acted as one of the participants.

Almost all of the data were gathered in a naturalistic fashion during NA meetings and informal interactions between members (cf. Borkman & Schubert, 1994; Tunnel, 1977). By "naturalistic," we mean that: 1) the behavior and thoughts of the participants were recorded as they occurred without prompting or shaping by the researcher, and 2) all data collection occurred in participants own "territory." Specifically, data were gathered via participant-observation at over 300 NA meetings in Israel from 1991-93. Various kinds of NA meetings were observed: open meetings (open to the public); closed meetings (for addicts only); "group conscience" meetings (for group decisions); National Service Committee meetings; informal "home" meetings; and "steps" meetings (where members study the steps with their sponsors). To safeguard naturalness and participants anonymity, only short notes were taken during meetings. Full reports of fifty-seven NA meetings were written afterwards, and all the main topics of the meeting were recorded. The need for anonymity precluded taping, except for sobriety anniversaries, where it is customary to record the members story. In addition to during NA meetings, data were also frequently collected naturalistically at informal social gatherings in cafes, parties, etc., and during unstructured conversations with members.

These naturalistically gathered data were supplemented by qualitative data from twenty-one semi-structured interviews conducted with individual members. These individuals may have been unrepresentative of the fellowship because most NA attendees who were asked to take part in formal interviews expressed suspicion and refused. After the primary researcher had spent considerable time becoming known in the NA community, far richer data could more easily be gathered through "conversations with a purpose" (Burgess, 1984) than through formal interviews. Hence, by the conclusion of the study only a very small proportion of the collected data were from interviews.

Raw data was distilled according to the guidelines of the phenomenological school (Giorgi, 1975; Spiegelberg, 1976). The process included the analysis of all the data obtained, a categorizing of the results, and the synthesis of relevant data into the different categories according to the world view life domains. All significant, normative data, as well as deviating data, were included in the synthesis process. Thus, the following reported data are both typical and comprehensive, and fully represent the categories of world view transformation.

RESULTS

World view change was frequently described and discussed by Israeli NA members inside and outside of meetings. We organize the discussion of these data around the four domains of world view change outlined earlier.

Experience of Self

NA members described their experience of self before they began recovery as grandiose. The expression “I wanted everything big, immediately and more” was an expression heard many times over the course of the study. Feelings of grandiosity were supported by inflated self-concepts to which members assigned the shorthand labels “I deserve” and “I control.” Together they built the experience of what Tiebout (1954) termed “The big ego.” But members also confessed experiencing an inner split and sense of self-negation. Prior to their involvement with NA, their experience of self was suffused with shame, guilt, fear, loneliness, and above all, self-rejection.

During the period of active substance abuse, members oscillated between grandiosity and self-negation. Despite the “bluster” of the grandiose self, NA members described their sense of self as being totally dependent on outer stimuli (e.g., admiration by significant others). A thirty-two-year-old male NA member with two years of clean time offered a story that illustrates this experience (from an interview):

I was trying to get clean. I lived with my girlfriend, totally dependent on her. The tension was unbearable. I saw her collapsing. I had a sense of sorrow—you are a burden, incapable of anything . . . I had nowhere to go. I asked her for money to buy 5 grams of heroin and went down to NA meeting . . . Back at home, later, I met her family. Everyone turned on me. I wanted to give them an impression of myself, to show them I am not a dummy, I am not afraid, I can easily cut someone with a knife, I can kill, I am something, I have worth, I can . . . Eventually, I made a mess there. Anyway, they told me to leave her, without the money. I went out with my belongings, after a long period of living together, dreams, hopes . . . I cried hysterically . . .

The self is experienced differently as the member goes through world view transformation. Members describe fighting their “big ego” and claim to experience a growing humility. Many NA members commented that “My ego is my real enemy.” NA supports this transformation by emphasizing the limits of the self, particularly powerlessness over addiction. Although accepting NA’s tenet that the self has limited control initially causes anxiety, it also reduces feelings of shame and guilt surrounding past drug use. At the same time, NA members must accept that they have some degree of control of their lives, otherwise hope and responsibility for the future would be difficult to attain. As a whole, world view transformation in the domain of self could be characterized as a diminution of the inner struggle between the two extremes of “big I” and “I worth nothing,” and a corresponding lessening of the external struggle between “I” and “the world.” Members express this serene experience of self through the popular saying which is written on the walls and rehearsed regularly in members’ talks: “release, let go!”

Whereas members’ sense of self was heavily dependent on the behavior of others prior to recovery, during recovery NA members reported that they experienced growing liberation from outer stimuli. Thus, the recovering self is more independent, even though this independence is paradoxically based on the recognition of the limitation of the self. A thirty-one-year-old male NA member, over three months clean, described world view change in the domain of self as follows (from an interview):

The program shed light on my life. I was an insane man. I used to go here and there in the streets like a mad man. In NA my thinking changed. I don’t perceive myself to be special any more, but equal to anyone else. I accept myself, my home . . . I feel quiet inside as I have never felt before. Even the way I walk has changed, nowadays I walk calmly. I want to do what is really me. To help, to give to others this is me being real.

In a meeting devoted to the topic of humbleness, the idea was clearly described by several members. One man shared that:

I found that my ballooned ego is the source of my troubles, of my addiction . . . It led me to judge others, to relate to them by external criteria. Here, in the program, the anonymity helps to build a different relationship we treat each other as we are with no comparisons. It helps the humbleness.

Another man stated in this meeting that:

I must accept myself as I am. If I don’t, if I want to impress someone, then I fake, and I know it. Humbleness is to be honest with myself, not to fake. Even being quiet here, as if resulting out of humbleness, may be a pretending and pride!

Universal Order/God

Twelve-Step organizations do not have any religious affiliation, but do maintain that spiritual growth is at the heart of the recovery process. One of the key factors in 12-Step recovery is acceptance of a “Higher Power” that is greater than the individual members themselves. Different NA members, in different stages of recovery, maintained various definitions of a Higher Power. Newer members often construed their Higher Power in concrete terms such as the NA fellowship, a sponsor, their home group, or the 12 Steps. For example, one member stated in a meeting that he had found his greater power in NA’s popular sayings and the slogans written on the walls, since they best carried the message of recovery into his everyday life, and assisted his struggle against his former impulses.

For those members who advanced in the process of internalizing the AA/NA world view, faith in God as the ultimate power usually emerged. For example, one member was initially hostile to talk of God by his peers (from a meeting): “Everything I say you answer me with ‘God.’ I am tired of hearing ‘God.’ I need help.” Then, after a couple of months in NA he stated in a meeting: “For me, you are the Higher Power who can help me.” Eventually, after one year of drug-free membership he observed (from his anniversary meeting): “Today, for me, everything is God. There was no recovery for me without God—a loving God.”

World view transformation in the domain of Universal Order/God involved some potential tensions between the Christian-influenced spirituality of American 12-Step organizations and the Jewish upbringing of many Israeli members. Virtually all of the NA members encountered in the present study were Jewish (about 80 to 90% were Sephardic). Although most Israeli NA members had not had any strong religious beliefs prior to their involvement with NA, many members observed some Jewish Orthodox traditions even during their period of active substance abuse. For example, in a private conversation two participants stated that even prior to their NA membership they refrained from smoking cigarettes on the Sabbath because they were afraid to violate the religious traditions of their families of origin.

One difference between the Jewish religious traditions with which most members studied here were raised and NA’s world view concerns the degree of social pressure considered appropriate to support spiritual traditions. A known Jewish proverb in Hebrew, freely translated, states that “All people of Israel are guarantor one for every other” when it comes to observing religious traditions. Some NA members felt that this expectation led to social pressure concerning religious-like activities, which contrasted sharply with NA’s emphasis on volunta-

rism and personal responsibility for deciding to work the NA program, including its spiritual aspects.

Another potential conflict in this domain for Israeli NA members related to NA's portrayal of God as non-punishing and unconditionally loving. Most of the Israeli NA members studied here had been raised with a conception of God that emphasized God as loving, but also punishing (e.g., “. . . I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me . . .”, Exodus 20, 5-6). To make a theological analogy, most of the NA members studied here have been taught to conceive of God in the terms of The Hebrew Scriptures (aka The Old Testament of the Bible), whereas the 12-Step organization they were joining conceived of God more in terms more similar to those presented in the New Testament of the Bible.

Additional potential tension for NA members in Israel concerned whether to kneel during prayer. When speaking at meetings, Israeli NA members often suggested that members kneel during prayer, even though this is not prescribed in NA literature nor practiced in the groups. The opposition of Judaism to kneeling during the history of inquisition is well known. However, most NA members in Israel do kneel during prayer. Several members shared in meetings that they were initially opposed to kneeling, but ultimately decided that their opposition was rooted in their self-centeredness and hence antithetical to recovery. One member told his NA group that he initially objected to kneeling (meeting observation). His sponsor's pragmatic advice was to put his slippers deep under his bed before going to sleep and upon waking, and during that to say his prayer. After some period of such “artificial kneeling,” he began to kneel voluntarily.

Given the above, did accepting NA's world view in this domain somehow compromise members' connection to Judaism? Interestingly, individuals observing 12-Step groups in the United States have suggested that there can be a synergistic relationship between Jewish teachings and traditions and involvement in the AA and NA (Masters, 1989; Olitzki & Copans, 1991). In contrast, the Israeli NA members studied here perceived little relationship between Judaism and accepting NA's spiritual outlook. The awakening of spiritual faith through NA did not lead most Israeli members into active religious life or observation of Jewish religious laws. As one member put it, Israeli NA members were “. . . taking the road spiritually, not religiously-spiritually; morally, not religiously-morally” (taken from a recorded tape of a 3-year drug-free anniversary meeting).

Observations made by the primary researcher at a 1994 meeting group of U.S. JACS (Jewish Alcoholics, Chemically Dependent Persons and Significant Others) members and Israeli NA members illustrate this point. The JACS members wished to connect the 12-Step program with the Jewish experience, and found minimal interest from the Israeli side. Living in Israel, the NA members did not feel the need that the JACS members did to “build a bridge to Judaism,” indeed they did not even consider their Jewish identity as having an essential relationship to their recovery from addiction. This may be why Israeli NA members were able to adopt those aspects of NA’s world view that were different than the religious teachings with which they were raised without feeling that their “Jewishness” was somehow compromised.

Relationships with Others

In telling stories about their pre-NA social relationships, members emphasized themes of isolation, manipulation, and struggle. Specific reactions to others varied as function of whether members were currently under the influence of drugs, and whether they were currently feeling grandiose or self-negating. During periods of grandiosity (often coincident with drug use), members tended to view other people as mere objects from which to gain gratification. During periods of guilt and self-rejection, members tended to view others as the source of their negative emotional experience. Thus, relationships with others were tended to lack intimacy and to be marked with resentment, fear, and shame. As a thirty-six-year-old male NA member with eighteen months of clean time described it (from an interview):

I felt shame—disgrace from my friends, myself. The drug is isolating. Because of it I stayed alone—away from my parents, from my brothers, from everything.

For almost all members studied here, one of the earliest marked changes in world view was in the domain of social relationships. The warm atmosphere of NA meetings facilitated this change. Newcomers typically encountered warm acceptance and permissiveness that, as one member described it in an interview, “strikes you like electricity.” In the words of another member, who was forty-two years old and had just completed his first month of abstinence from drugs (from an interview):

Each one wants to help the other, with no stake. You listen to others, you take out what you have. You feel at home . . . Sharing the pain with everyone, not alone. In NA you feel that everyone is with you. When you speak—everyone

understands. Even with my wife there is no understanding. The friends—that is the thing!

After being exposed to the NA program, successful members begin to change the way they think about and behave in relation to others. This change in the relationship domain of their world view is often paralleled by changes in the Universal Order/God domain described earlier. For many members the group and their relationships with their peers are their actual understanding of the Higher Power. For some members, as was described above, this understanding is only a milestone in the development of faith in God. But there are those who maintain this understanding. For example, one man, around one year clean, stated in a meeting:

I had problems with the second step (“We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity”). Ego problems. How comes a power greater than myself? But then, gradually, my logic raised this datum—what ego am I talking about? Here I am, a miserable man, going astray in dark dens, looking for drugs—what ego is it? For me, giving up my ego is for the group, the friends. The Higher Power is the group and the friends. I have here good friends, which I never had before, so why should I do drugs? Now, when I surrender to the higher power, to the group, to the togetherness, I feel much better than ever.

Formal and informal NA gatherings serve as a social laboratory in which members develop a more positive world view in which individuals can relate in a complementary manner (Bateson, 1971). AA members in the United States report experiencing a similar transformation (Humphreys & Kaskutas, 1995). Israeli NA members reported that their new view of relationships supported personal responsibility, mutual acceptance, and trust. Many NA members in Israel felt that the organization had offered them their first experience of positive relationships. An example of the behavioral and emotional changes that attend view transformation in the relationship domain was provided by an NA member who initially lied to her group about continued drug use (from a meeting):

Even though I relapsed, I kept on announcing clean periods, and getting the medals . . . I did not care what others thought about me, but my conscience was torturing me. Now, when I open up here I feel the relief.

When this member admitted lying to her NA group, group members reacted with acceptance and forgiveness. In the context of NA’s viewpoint on relationships, the fact that this member betrayed the group’s trust was considered her own private problem, rather than the group’s. Another member (denoted “D”)

told a similar story in his one-year drug-free anniversary. For nine months D announced his clean period, even though he was using drugs. Once D and a friend used drugs and went to a meeting together afterwards. The astonished friend witnessed D announce a clean period and receive a medal, even though it was obvious to everyone that D was on drugs. The friend commented during D's later, genuine, drug-free anniversary meeting: "I almost thought that I may be wrong, because I was stoned. But I knew that it was D's problem not mine!" D himself shared in the meeting that the group's acceptance had moved him internally:

I realized that I was cheating myself only. I tried to be clean for others, that is why I was lying, but in vain. Your acceptance showed me that I can be clean only for the sake of myself, and it is only my own problem.

Newcomers to NA play a particularly important role in the learning of new ways of thinking about and behaving in relationships. Because newcomers tend to have severe problems, they present more experienced members with an opportunity for unconditional giving. In helping newcomers and teaching them the NA world view on relationships, NA members further internalize that world view themselves. This "helper therapy" principle (Riessman, 1965) is explicitly endorsed in the NA slogan "we can only keep what we have by giving it away." This is why NA members often state that newcomers are the most important members at meetings.

In NA's world view, recovery is not over when a member learns how to relate to other members in a successful fashion. After practicing new ways of relating within NA, members carry the same pattern of relationships into their social contexts, e.g., their families. A forty-nine-year-old woman, ten months clean, stated in the interview that:

The connections in NA are much more authentic. It is more difficult because I have nowhere to run away from them. They raise question marks in front of me. I learn while doing. I carry the same message into my working place, as well as into my relationship with my daughter.

The Problem

The problem explicitly addressed by NA is of course drug dependence. NA views drug dependence as a disease with physical, mental, and spiritual components. This disease is manifested in an inability to control substance consumption and in other destructive activities toward self and others. NA members studied here often referred to their disease as to an internal being that "talked" to

them and influenced their behavior. For example, one member stated in a meeting that:

Today I got a proof that my disease is in progress. I was at my working place, and suddenly I felt an urge to leave. It was the disease, talking to me. Instead of objecting to it, of using the program's tools, I went home.

Thus described, the disease has its own life, will, and intentions. Its basic motivation is to destroy the member spiritually, mentally, and physically. NA maintains that the disease cannot be mastered through personal will power, hence members need support from their peers and God. In a meeting, one member described this experience:

This morning the car went by itself. I don't know how . . . I did not want to use, but the car, as though by itself, turned right and arrived at the drug sellers'. Well, fortunately I caught myself, met some clean friends, and did not use.

The disease concept in the NA world view (which is also a central part of AA's philosophy) is neither a scientific description nor an excuse for but rather a solution to the problem. Accepting the concept of substance abuse as a disease lessens self-condemnation over past behavior. For example, one member shared in a meeting that a heavy burden of guilt dropped from his shoulders when he heard that he had an "addiction disease." Israeli NA members showed little interest in the accuracy of the disease concept, but referred to its pragmatic value for describing their situation well and driving them into recovery.

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted within the NA organization in Israel, and hence cannot support broad conclusions about how world view transformation occurs in non-U.S. 12-Step groups. However, it is nevertheless striking that members of the NA community studied here tended to describe world view transformation in a fashion similar to AA members in the United States. Not only did Israeli NA members go through world view change in the four domains developed from analysis on American 12-Step substance abuse groups, but the content of the change was remarkably similar. In both cases, change in the domain of self-involved decreasing grandiosity and increasing humility, change in the domain of Universal Order/God resulted in a deeper sense of spirituality and acceptance of a loving Higher Power, change in the domain of close relationship produced a transformation from antagonistic to a complementary point of view,

and change in the domain of the problem involved accepting substance-dependence as an incurable disease that cannot be resolved through individual will power.

A variety of explanations can be offered for the similarity of world view transformation between those Israeli NA members studied here and those AA members in the United States studied by other researchers. In absolute terms, Israel and the United States are, of course, very different cultures. However, this does not, in our opinion, limit the plausibility of the parallels noted here because they were based only on substance dependent individuals within each nation. Substance dependence may have features that transcend cultural differences (Adrian, 1996), such that drug users in one culture could feel at home in a “foreign” addiction self-help program because it was developed by others who have lived in a subculture of drug dependence. This would explain why drug dependent individuals in Israel appeared to have few difficulties in adopting the world view of a recovery program founded in the United States (Ronel, 1997).

At the same time, it must be remembered that NA and AA members represent a subset of all substance-dependents in Israel and the United States. The present analysis cannot detect whether the proportions of 12-Step members among substance-dependents is similar across the two cultures. Hence, the similarities in world view transformation evident here may be due to NA in Israel drawing only that small fraction of the drug-using population which is comfortable with and willing to internalize a self-help program developed in the United States.

A third potential explanation for the similarity of the 12-Step change process across cultures is that the two populations are not initially similar at all, but that the 12-Step program changes the construction of substance abuse-related experience until it appears more similar cross-culturally than it actually is. Cain (1991) has shown that over time, American AA members construct and reconstruct their narrative of alcoholism until it more closely matches the prototypical AA story of recovery. The same process was found to occur in Israeli NA groups as well (Ronel, 1993), and it may have produced the endpoint similarity seen here.

To turn to methodological implications of this study, the findings support the utility of the four-domain world view transformation framework (Kennedy & Humphreys, 1994). The framework is a descriptive heuristic rather than a formal theory with hypotheses, but it does seem to serve as a useful way to organize understanding about a phenomenon. Previously, it has been demonstrated to be useful for this purpose in American 12-Step and non-12-Step groups that address a variety of problems. This initial effort to evaluate it cross-culturally fur-

ther supports its utility, at least in Israel. It remains for future studies to determine if the four domains adequately capture world view transformation in cultures and organizations where the process has yet to be examined.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Elena Klaw, Ernest Katz, and Elaina Kyrouz made helpful comments on earlier versions of this article.

REFERENCES

- Adrian, M. (1996). Substance use and multiculturalism. *Substance Use and Misuse*, 31 (11 & 12), 1459-1501.
- Alcoholics Anonymous (1976). *Alcoholics anonymous (3rd Edition)*. New York: Author.
- Antze, P. (1979). Role of ideologies in peer psychotherapy groups. In M. A. Lieberman & L. D. Borman (Eds.), *Self-help groups for coping with crises: Origins, members, processes, and impact* (pp. 272-304). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bateso, G. (1971). The cybernetics of 'self': A theory of alcoholism. *Psychiatry*, 34, 1-18.
- Borkman, T., & Schubert, M. (1994). Participatory action research as a strategy for studying self-help groups internationally. In F. Lavoie, T. Borkman, & B. Gidron (Eds.), *Self-help and mutual aid groups: International and multicultural perspectives*. New York: The Haworth Press.
- Burgess, R. G. (1984). *In the field: An introduction to field research*. London: George, Allen & Unwin.
- Cain, C. (1991). Personal stories, identity acquisition and self-understanding in Alcoholics Anonymous. *Ethos*, 19, 210-253.
- Dorr, D., Bonner, W. J., & Ayres, R. P. (1983). Love and the addicted physician. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 22 (2), 92-97.
- Evered, R., & Meryl, R. L. (1981). Alternative perspectives in the organizational sciences: 'Inquiry from the inside' and 'inquiry from the outside.' *Academy of Management Review*, 6 (3): 385-395.
- Gidron, B., & Chesler, M. (1994). Universal and particular attributes of self-help: A framework for international and intranational analysis. In F. Lavoie, T. Borkman, & B. Gidron (Eds.), *Self-help and mutual aid groups: International and multicultural perspectives*. New York: The Haworth Press.
- Giorgi, A. (1975). Convergence and divergence of qualitative and quantitative methods in psychology. In A. Giorgi, C. Fischer, & E. Murray (Eds.), *Phenomenological Psychology (Vol. II)* (pp. 72-79). Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press.
- Humphreys, K., & Kaskutas, L. A. (1995). World views of Alcoholics Anonymous, Women for Sobriety, and Adult Children of Alcoholics/Al Anon mutual help groups. *Addiction Research*, 3 (3), 231-243.

Humphreys, K. (1996). World view change in adult children of Alcoholics/Al-Anon self-help groups: Reconstructing the alcoholic family. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, 46, 255-263.

Kennedy, M. (1994). *Ideology and transformation in committed members of a mental health mutual help group*. Doctoral dissertation, Department of Education, University of Illinois.

Kennedy, M., & Humphreys, K. (1994). Understanding worldview transformation in members of mutual help groups. *Prevention in Human Services*, 11, 181-198.

Kurtz, E. (1982). Why A.A. works. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 43 (1), 38-80.

Mäkelä, K. (1991). Social and cultural preconditions of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and factors associated with the strength of AA. *British Journal of Addiction*, 86, 1405-1413.

Mäkelä, K., Arminen, I., Bloomfield, K., Eisenbach-Stangl, I., Helmersson Bergmark, K., Kurube, N., Mariolini, N., Ólafsdóttir, H., Peterson, J. H., Phillips, M., Rehm, J., Room, R., Rosenqvist, P., Rosovsky, H., Stenius, K., Swiatkiewitz, G., Woronowicz, B., & Zielinski, A. (1996). *Alcoholics Anonymous as a mutual help movement: A study in eight societies*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Master, L. (1989). Jewish experiences of Alcoholics Anonymous. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 59 (2), 183-199.

Maxwell, M. A. (1984). *The Alcoholics Anonymous experience*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Narcotics Anonymous (1988). *Narcotics Anonymous*. Van Nuys, CA: Author.

Olitzki, K. M., & Copans, S. A. (1991). *Twelve Jewish steps to recovery*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing.

Peyrot, M. (1985). Narcotics Anonymous: Its history, structure, and approach. *International Journal of the Addictions*, 20 (10), 1509-1522.

Riessman, F. (1965). The 'Helper Therapy' principle. *Social Work*, 10, 27-32.

Ronel, N. (1993). *Narcotics Anonymous in Israel: Self help processes and religious faith among drug addicts*. Doctoral dissertation. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University (in Hebrew, English summary).

Ronel, N. (1997). The university of self-help program of American origin: Narcotics Anonymous in Israel. *Social Work in Health Care*, 25 (3).

Spiegelberg, H. (1976). *The phenomenological movement (Vol. II)*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, ch. XIV.

Sutro, L. D. (1989). Alcoholics Anonymous in a Mexican Peasant-Indian Village. *Human Organization*, 48 (2), 180-186.

Terry, C. (1996). *Drug addiction, criminality and Narcotics Anonymous: Thoughts toward a new way of thinking*. Paper presented at Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences conference, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Tiebout, H. M. (1954). The ego factors in surrender in alcoholism. *Quarterly Journal for Studies on Alcohol*, 15, 610-621.

Triandis, H. (1987). Some major dimensions of cultural variations in cross-populations. In P. Pedersen (Ed.), *Handbook of cross-cultural counseling and therapy*. New York: Praeger.

Tunnell, G. B. (1977). Three dimensions of naturalness: An expanded definition of field research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 84 (3): 426-437.

Direct reprint requests to:

Natti Ronel, Ph.D.
Bob Shapell School of Social Work
Tel Aviv University
Ramat Aviv
P.O.B. 39040
Tel-Aviv, 69978 Israel
e-mail: nattir@post.tau.ac.il