

Sobriety Shop

Regina Sewell, PhD, LMHC, CP

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As a counselor working with substance abusing clients, have you ever wished you had some exercises you could use to enliven your groups? Have you ever struggled to find engaging ways to help your clients explore the qualities that drive their addictive behaviors or identify desirable qualities that will help them stay sober? If so, Sobriety Shop may be the tool you've been looking for!

Sobriety Shop is an action oriented structure that can be helpful to group leaders in a variety of ways. In Sobriety Shop, we ask clients to identify the character traits and qualities like denial, dishonesty, and resentment that pose a risk to their sobriety and determine how much of the quality they are willing to give up in order to gain desirable qualities like serenity, peace, confidence, courage, self-compassion, and the ability to let go of anger. Exploring how the less than optimal qualities have served them in the past, helps clients be honest with themselves about the role these qualities have played in their lives. Because clients often find many of these qualities essential to their survival, a client's willingness to give them up is an indicator of their motivation for recovery.

Sobriety Shop is engaging because it goes beyond a simple pencil and paper exploration. Sobriety Shop requires clients to actively "barter" the qualities that make them likely to relapse or keep them from getting sober in the first place for qualities that will support their recovery. Sobriety Shop encourages clients to explore their qualities in action. For example, as "Shop Keeper," a group leader might invite a client to have a conversation with their guilt or show the group what their low self-esteem feels like as a way to help them see the role this quality has played in their desire to drink or use substances in the past.

Sobriety shop also helps clients develop new sober skills. After helping clients understand how their negative qualities led to their substance use, the next step in Sobriety Shop is to help the client find a more desirable quality that will help them stay sober. Once they have chosen that quality, they get a chance to practice using that quality in their life.

Sobriety Shop is helpful for both group leaders and clients. Taking on the role of Shopkeeper gives group leaders a chance to have fun in their role and provides a way to bring the evidence based cognitive and behavioral interventions to life. For clients, Sobriety Shop is helpful because it gives them the chance to experience their issues and struggles experientially. They get a felt sense of the price they pay for holding on to negative qualities. And they get to practice new behaviors that will help them get and stay sober in the safe setting of the group.

If you'd like to learn how to do this in action, we're offering a training soon. For more information, check out: <https://www.hvpi.net/sobriety-shop-action-methods-for-addiction-treatment/>