Daoust, J.-P., Renaud, M., Bruyère, B., Lemieux, V., Fleury, G., & Najavits, L.M. (2012). Posttraumatic stress disorder and substance use disorder: Evaluation of the effectiveness of a specialized clinic for French-Canadians based in a teaching hospital.

[Abstract only; for further information contact jpdaoust@uottawa.ca]

This research focuses on co-occurring posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance use disorder (SUD), a common and clinically-important comorbidity. The primary goal was a preliminary evaluation of the French-language version of Seeking Safety (SS) treatment for PTSD/SUD, conducted with French-Canadians at the Montfort Hospital (Ottawa, Canada). Eighteen outpatient participants (male and female) diagnosed with current PTSD and SUD were included in the study. They had experienced primarily physical, sexual, and/or childhood trauma; almost half of the sample had been inpatient for psychiatric or SUD problems prior; and about 22% had been in prison in their lifetime. Their primary substances were alcohol, opiates, cannabis, and/or cocaine. They were offered 28 sessions of group SS therapy, and completed pre- and post-testing on a variety of measures. Results indicated that they, on average, attended 72.1% of the sessions and were able to justify their absences for good cause in 43.6% of cases. Results address two questions: satisfaction/implementation and outcomes. Satisfaction ratings indicated that SS was very appropriate for this population, based on alliance ratings (both patient and clinician) and SS satisfaction ratings. Implementation showed strong fidelity to SS by the two study clinicians. Outcomes showed significant improvements on PTSD: specifically the PTSD Checklist, criterion D (large effect size); the Trauma Symptom Checklist 40, total score, dissociation, sexual abuse trauma index (all large effect sizes). We also found significant improvements in substance use on both the Michigan Alcohol Screening Test and the Drug Abuse Screening Test (both large effect sizes); and in functioning on the Basis-32 daily role functioning (large effect size). We did not find significant increases in coping, self-esteem nor life satisfaction; however, all of the means on those variables moved in the direction of improvement. This study suggests that the “Seeking Safety” program is effective in treating specific co-occurring PTSD and SUD, for a highly impaired clinical French-Canadian population.