

OVERVIEW

Decades of laboratory and clinical research suggest that substance use and misuse can be viewed as operant behavior sensitive to its consequences. Behavioral approaches can prevent and treat misuse of licit and illicit drugs (e.g., alcohol, stimulants, opioids, nicotine) and associated psychosocial problems (e.g., psychiatric comorbidities, unemployment). Several evidence-based, comprehensive interventions have been derived from behavioral principles such as the Community Reinforcement Approach, Reinforcement-based Treatment, and behavior therapies for families and adolescents. Contingency management, under which desirable consequences are provided for objective evidence of drug abstinence, is one of the most effective psychosocial approaches to substance use disorders. Behavioral treatments occur in medical and academic research settings, primary care, community-based specialty care clinics, workplaces, and at the Veteran Affairs Administration in the United States. Technology-based delivery of behavioral treatment is increasing access via computer, the internet, and mobile devices.

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Initial Publication

Cohen, M., Liebson, I. A., & Faillace, L. A. (1971). The role of reinforcement contingencies in chronic alcoholism: An experimental analysis of one case. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 9, 375-379.

Recommended Reading

Godley, S. H., Smith, J. E., Passetti, L. L., & Subramaniam, G. (2014). The adolescent community reinforcement approach (A-CRA) as a model paradigm for the management of adolescents with substance use disorders and co-occurring psychiatric disorders. *Substance Abuse*, 35, 352-363.

Gupta, S. (2015). Contingency management: Why it pays to quit. *Nature*, 522(7557), S57-S59.

Higgins, S. T., Silverman, K., & Heil, S. H. (Eds.). (2008). *Contingency management in substance abuse treatment*. New York: Guilford Press.

Tuten, L. M., Jones, H. E., Schaeffer, C. M., & Stitzer, M. L. (2012). *Reinforcement-based treatment for substance use disorders: A comprehensive behavioral approach*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Additional Resources

- ▶ [Promoting Awareness of Motivational Incentives](#)
- ▶ Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment: A Research-Based Guide —
 - [Contingency Management Interventions/ Motivational Incentives](#)
 - [Community Reinforcement Approach Plus Vouchers](#)
- ▶ [ACT for Addictions: Studies and Publications](#)