

The sustainability of non-12-step alcohol online support groups: views from group users

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Online support groups for people with health issues are important digital sources of information for their users, and this includes alcohol online support groups (AOSGs) which provide help to problem drinkers. It is vital that these groups are sustainable as otherwise their usefulness and contribution to patient self-care and wellbeing is limited. This paper uses data from semi-structured interviews with twenty-five users of online support groups for people who do not follow the 12-step programme for recovery of Alcoholics Anonymous. It explores why they chose and stayed with their groups, and their perspectives on sustainability. The findings suggest that the general approach of the group to recovery and its social dynamics are especially important. It provides a useful contribution to the literature in offering a rare insight into the voices of users of non-12-step groups.

Keywords

alcohol, information seeking, online support groups, sustainability

1. Introduction

Research has shown that online support groups for health conditions are important sources of information for their users [1-2]. This is true of alcohol online support groups (AOSGs) seeking to help people to recover from problem drinking, which remains a major problem in Western society with high costs for the individual, their family and society in general [3-4]. There are currently many such groups available online providing support and information, particularly experiential information drawn from the day-to-day experience of living with problem drinking, such as, for example, tips and tools for managing situations where the person will be under pressure to drink.

It is very important that these groups are available as they form helpful options for people that cannot, or do not want to, go face-to-face meetings such as those provided by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). This can include, for example, people living in rural areas, those with mobility issues, those whose home or work circumstances mean they cannot attend meetings, those who prefer an online format or who are particularly concerned with remaining anonymous. The groups can also act as valuable supplements to face-to-face support group meetings or to alcohol treatment within specialist services. Sustainability is important in the sense of members remaining with a group for reasonable periods of time, so that they build a sense of community and familiarity, with consequent attachment to the group and willingness to participate [5]. As the forums rely on member contributions to exist in the first place and to provide the benefits that users approach them for, such as information, support and experiential knowledge [6], sustainable membership is essential to them.

This paper will begin by briefly defining sustainability and exploring research previously undertaken on it in relation to online support groups, focusing on AOSGs. It will then go on to explore the factors affecting the sustainability of a significant and under-researched sub-group of AOSGs: those that do not follow the 12-step programme for recovery of AA. This paper will take a novel approach in providing an insight into users' own views of sustainability.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Online Social Communities' Sustainability

The sustainability of a social group has been defined by Ridings & Wasko as the ability to “continue to provide valuable resources to its members” [5, p. 97]. In terms of online support groups, it does not simply indicate that the group remains a presence on the Internet, but that it stays active and can provide meaningful benefits to its users over time. As Lin (2007) stated, this means attracting members who are willing to give their time and energy, and to participate actively to create the information exchanges, discussion and emotional support that form reasons for themselves and others to join and stay in the group.

Much has been written about the factors that can influence the sustainability of online virtual communities, including the size of the group and its level of activity, its usability, design features and rules and regulations [6-8]. Research has shown that size offers a difficult paradox: online communities need active, knowledgeable members to produce benefits. However, having too many members and too much activity may mean people do not feel able to post, or understand how to use a group. Too much activity can be seen as confusing and be off-putting or difficult to manage [6]. Ridings & Wasko [5], however, asserted that what is important is the way that individual members cope with the large amounts of information, rather than the size of the group in itself. In a rare longitudinal study, they examined the structural and social dynamics of one health online support group over a five-year period [5]. They identified member strategies for coping with changes to groups arguing that the strategies affected the nature of the group and the attraction and retention of members. They also identified the importance of social support for member retention.

Kim & Mrotek [9] looked at sustainability through content analysis of health websites and ninety-five online support groups, exploring different factors identified in previous literature. For the groups this included: amount of site traffic, topic breadth and depth, currency of the information, search facilities, moderation, functionality, navigability, accessibility, privacy and the appearance of the site. They argued that many sites were inadequate in these features in practice. Lin examined the impact of online and offline features on sustainability in a survey of 165 users of online communities, producing a model for understanding the determinants of sustainability. She found that when members perceived the communities as both useful and easy to use they had a stronger sense of belonging to it. This feeling of belonging was a key factor in sustainability as it “significantly affect[ed] members’ intention to use the virtual community” [7 p131]. Interestingly, she also found that offline activities reinforced a sense of belonging to the community and hence aided its sustainability. Ren et al looked at theories of group attachment, using common identity theory and common bond theory to explore the effect of design and management decisions on the nature of individuals’ attachment to their group, and therefore to the way they participated in these. Looking at the common phenomenon of ‘core group members’, often known as the ‘critical mass’ - a small group who contribute much of the content - they found pros and cons with them: they are “useful in sustaining communities but may inhibit growth if they are too dominant.” [6 p398]

2.2 Alcohol Online Support Groups and Sustainability

The oldest, largest and most widespread support group for problem drinkers is Alcoholics Anonymous, with more than two million members and over 125,000 groups globally [10], plus an online presence. The factors supporting AA's longevity (it was established in 1935) have received research attention, mainly in the form of studies of how it engages and retains members. The reasons for AA's success are many and complex, including, for example, its size and spread (and therefore level of availability), the fact that it is free, the way it is structured as an organisation [11] and the adoption of its recovery programme by many alcohol treatment services, which may mandate attendance at AA meetings. It holds a clear ideology which forms an all-encompassing way of life, providing an explanation of the self and of problem drinking, and this is presented in the ‘Big Book’ of AA [12]. This describes the 12 steps of its recovery programme and the 12 traditions setting out how individual groups should be run. This ideology has also been seen as contributing to encouraging ongoing membership and therefore group sustainability [13-16]. Becoming a member of AA entails a redefinition of oneself and the past, a new way of viewing the world, an acceptance of difference from outsiders at least in relation to drinking alcohol and a long-term commitment to certain actions e.g., attending group meetings,

sharing experience and helping other alcoholics. Galanter [15] described the importance of the adoption of these views for affiliation and continued membership and Fiorentine & Hillhouse noted that:

the acceptance of Twelve-Step ideology, particularly strong agreement with the need for frequent, lifelong attendance at Twelve-Step meetings, and the need to surrender to a “higher power” are significant predictors of weekly or more frequent attendance at Twelve-Step meetings [16 p367]

A ‘non-12-step group’ is one that does not follow the 12-step programme for recovery and the general AA philosophy and belief system. It takes a very different approach to recovery, which might include endorsing a programme for moderate drinking or the use of medication to support recovery, or no particular approach at all. No change of views on life or the self is required, and tolerance and being non-judgemental is usually promoted, as is the freedom to set one’s own goals. As a result, non-12-step groups are not united by an all-encompassing shared belief system in the way that AA members are. However, in rejecting AA on the grounds of dislike of its belief system, they are in effect making a statement about their own approach and philosophy. Therefore, it might be expected that the beliefs of non-12-step groups, perhaps beyond the simple fact of ‘not being AA’, can also be a factor in attracting and retaining members.

Factors affecting the sustainability of non-12-step AOSGs have received relatively limited attention in the research literature, as Sotskova et al pointed out:

much less is known about the potential mechanisms of secular PSGs [peer support groups], what features of these groups attract members, and what factors are associated with satisfaction with and active participation in the group [17 p138]

Some studies of the groups in their face-to-face format have touched on factors encouraging sustainability, and noted the importance of the group’s overall approach; for example, Falconer found that, within the group LifeRing [18], freedom to make their own beliefs was a factor in keeping members with the group. Kaskutas [19] found that individuals liked the philosophy of Women for Sobriety including its freedom to disagree with what it proposed and Coulson [20] in work on AOSGs, found that dislike of the AA “ethos or principles” was a primary reason for people to join online non-12-step groups.

2.3 Summary of Literature Review

There is a substantial body of research discussing many different factors that contribute to the sustainability of online virtual communities. One sub-group of these communities is alcohol online support groups. Whilst reasons for individuals remaining with AA have been explored, there appears to be less research focusing on non-12-step groups, despite the fact that there are a wide range of such groups that form important options for problem drinkers. This paper will begin to address this gap. The research questions it addresses are therefore:

RQ1: Why do users of non-12-step AOSGs join their group?

RQ2: What sustains the participation of users of non-12-step AOSGs?

The study draws on views from users of five different non-12-step groups. It is important to acknowledge that each group has individual features that keep members with them and that this is not explored here. Instead the focus is on identifying common factors that occur across the five groups within this sample.

3. Methods

This qualitative study involved semi-structured interviews with 25 members of five non-12-step AOSGs, which varied in location, size and beliefs about problem drinking (Table 1). Disparate groups were chosen so that factors present in the majority of them could be identified: the study was qualitative and was designed to generate theory rather than generalisations. The groups that were

selected met the following inclusion criteria: they were aimed at adults aged 18+ with alcohol problems, written in English, offered discussion forums and followed an approach other than the 12-step one. After ethical approval was obtained from the University of Sheffield, the moderators and administrators were approached for permission to publicise the study and request interviewees via their forums. Interviewees gave written informed consent and had opportunities to ask questions before the interviews which were mainly carried out over Skype or by phone. One individual was interviewed in person and another by email, at their request. The interviews lasted between 60 and 114 minutes and took place between October 2017 - February 2018. Following transcription, the data were coded in NVivo 11, using Braun and Clark's method of thematic analysis [21]. Re-coding was undertaken using Brooks and King's template analysis [22] to allow for more in-depth exploration of key themes. Interviewees' names and any identifying details have been changed in order to maintain anonymity.

Table 1 The interview groups

Name	Brief description*	Approach to recovery endorsed in information pages	Moderated?	Number of interviewees
Group A	*Medium size AOSG, based in the UK	Psychological therapy	Y	1
Group B	*Small AOSG, based in the USA	Medication based treatment	Y	4
Group C	*Small AOSG, based in the USA	Own harm reduction programme	N	2
Group D	*Medium size AOSG, based in the USA	Own moderate drinking programme	Y	6
Group E	*Large AOSG, based in the UK	No specific programme, promotes abstinence	Y	12

* Small = <5,000 members; medium = > 10,000 members; large = > 50,000 members.

4. Findings

Users were attracted to their group for a variety of reasons, and remained with them sometimes for the same reasons and sometimes because of different factors. Information regarding this is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 Reasons for joining and staying with group

Factor	Important at joining group (relevant interviewee)	Important in remaining with group (relevant interviewee)
Overarching approach to problem drinking / treatment recommended e.g., not 12-step, secular not spiritual in approach, allowing individuals to choose their own goals Liking the treatment recommended	Group A (Anna) Group B (Ben, Cathy, Julie, Marianne) Group C (Bethany) Group D (Bridget, Christine, Dawn, Jackie, Joe, Paul) Group E (Ariana, Isabelle, Joanne, Robert, Theresa)	Group B (Cathy, Julie) Group C (Alan, Bethany) Group E (Cleo, Isabelle, Yvonne)
Social dynamics e.g., finding others like them (identification), sharing personal experiences, making friends	Group A (Anna) Group B (Julie) Group E (Cara, Erin, Grace, Isabelle, Megan, Robert, Tina, Yvonne)	Group A (Anna) Group B (Ben, Cathy, Julie, Marianne) Group D (Alan) Group D (Christine, Dawn, Jackie, Joe, Paul) Group E (Cara, Cleo, Grace, Isabelle, Joanne, Megan, Paul Tina, Yvonne)

Group values / norms e.g., supportiveness, confidentiality, being non-judgmental and not didactic	Group A (Anna) Group B (Julie) Group D (Christine, Joe) Group E (Cleo, Grace, Megan, Robert, Yvonne (F))	Group B (Cathy, Marianne) Group C (Bethany) Group D (Bridget, Christine, Dawn, Joe) Group E (Cleo, Joanne, Theresa, Tina, Yvonne)
Size and functionality e.g., interactive options, availability	Group D (Jackie, Joe) Group E (Cleo, Grace, Joanne, Megan)	Group B (Marianne) Group C (Alan, Bethany) Group E (Cara, Erin, Grace, Isabelle, Megan, Tina, Theresa, Yvonne (F))
Information quality and range	Group A (Anna), Group B (Ben, Cathy) Group E (Erin, Megan, Robert, Tina, Yvonne)	Group A (Anna) Group B (Ben, Cathy) Group E (Erin, Megan, Robert, Tina, Yvonne)
The only group available or the first one found	Group C (Bethany) Group D (Dawn, Jackie) Group E (Megan, Theresa, Yvonne)	
Motivating, encouraging		Group A (Anna) Group B (Ben, Cathy, Julie) Group D (Christine, Dawn, Joe, Paul) Group E (Ariana, Cara)

4.1 Approaches to Problem Drinking and Values

It can be seen from Table 2 that the groups' approaches to problem drinking were important in attracting users, this being the most frequently given reason for their initial choice. However, it is important to note that this was at the level of the group's general approach, not at the level of their detailed sets of beliefs. Many members stated that they were drawn to the group as it was not AA, did not follow the 12-step approach and allowed for freedom of ideas about the nature of problem drinking and its treatment. For example, Joe and Christine (both Group D) commented on being attracted by the fact that their groups were secular, rather than being religious or spiritual in approach. Contrasting Group E with AA, Ariana, for example, stated:

what I truly like about [Group E] is that it offers that same support but without any particular requirements of belief (Ariana, Group E)

This implied the importance to her of freedom to develop her own ideas rather than taking on a standard philosophy. Whilst the groups all expressed ideas about the nature of, and recommended treatment for, problem drinking on their information pages, they did not insist on members following these interpretations. In practice, they were open to users holding different beliefs/interpretations. Users of Group B were somewhat different in that members chose and kept to this group because of the particular treatment it endorsed: however, whilst the group encouraged conformity to the treatment protocol, it did not insist on adoption of any particular way of life or interpretation of problem drinking, nor did it place problem drinking at the core of the person, as does AA.

When it came to remaining with the groups, beliefs were cited much less often. This suggests that, over time, group beliefs became less important to members which implies that they may be less important in sustaining membership. However, there is some evidence to the contrary. For example, Robert described how, over time, his dissatisfaction with the approaches of two other groups he had previously been a member of, led to conflict with other members which caused him to leave those groups. He left the first as it followed a hard-line 12-step approach that demanded compliance with the 'Big Book' of AA:

generally it was people who were die-hard or down the line 12 steppers, would accept no alternatives...if it was outside the Big Book, you were jumped on (Robert, Group E)

Questioning these views led to harassment and online bullying which was not addressed by the moderators. He left his second group as it moved towards a 12-step approach:

But again, there was an AA influence creeping into that and eventually the moderator changed to, again, a fellowship member and that got quite unpleasant again (Robert, Group E)

It is interesting to note the repetition of "again", suggesting that to him this felt like a repetitive pattern. He then went on to set up his own group, expressly different to AA. Jackie described how approaches to treatment were a feature affecting sustainability, specifically when they changed over time:

we've had people quit over the fact that there are so many active abstainers and I think that's kind of interesting, but they'll say like "This is becoming more of an abstinence board than a moderation board", yes. So that, that happens. (Jackie, Group D)

The group's values remained consistently important over time in the sense that the ones most frequently mentioned as influencing both joining and staying with the group were the same: supportiveness, compassion, being non-judgemental and not didactic. However, the specific individuals mentioning this changed: only four of the 12 who said that a value was a reason for staying with their group had also said that this was important to them at the beginning. It would be useful to explore this finding in further research.

4.2 Social Dynamics

Social dynamics in the sense of finding others like themselves and sharing experiences were important in attracting interviewees (Table 2), but even more important in retaining them, this being the chief reason given for staying with a group. Identification remained important throughout, with many commenting on the power from the outset of finding others like them who understood their troubles from the inside, having experienced these themselves. What appeared to change was that, with time, the element of being friends and feeling like a community came in and kept people with their groups. The following are typical:

I think about these people, I wonder how they are, now I realise "Oh I haven't checked in with them in three weeks, I need to let them know I'm alive", you know, so I feel a sort of, a sort of social responsibility, there's a relationship there, right...you develop relationships and it's a community. (Christine, Group D)

there are other threads that I feel particularly close to, that, you know I, I would post on them just because I kind of know the people quite well now, some of whom I've met in person (Anna, Group A)

Members followed different usage patterns over time: there were individuals who just lurked and read without posting; people who joined and posted once or twice (perhaps whilst drunk or very hungover) and then left; short-term members who joined, participated, achieved their goals and then left; people who came and went, sometimes for months at a time; and the long-term users. This last group formed an important part of the 'critical mass' or core group of members, and it was noted in the literature review that the presence of this is important for group sustainability (Section 2.1). Discussing the social dynamics of the group, some interviewees commented on issues of commitment and membership over time. Bethany (Group C), for example, criticised fellow members for taking help but not giving it "there is maybe a handful of us that hang out", whilst the rest move on once they are either "fixed" or have come to believe the group is not helping them. Interestingly, echoing Ridings' [5] work, Bethany described how the functional element of having no moderator in this group impacted on the social dynamics. She noted that the 'critical mass' members were effectively pushed into acting as moderators and trouble-shooters, expected by others to deal with problems. This constrained what she felt able to say in the forums. Alan, from the same group, also noted that there was a core group:

[there is] a lot of activity [in the forums], but the number of eyeballs that are on there are low considering this is a website. It's the same group of people that interact and exchange ideas by and large (Alan, Group C)

Jackie (Group D) also commented on the impact on sustainability and quality of the lack of 'old-timers' or a core group of long-term, experienced members. According to her this leads to "a lot of people who aren't moderating very well giving advice to other people who aren't moderating very well." The presence of a core group was also noted by Dawn (Group D) and Megan & Tina (Group E). Several interviewees' comments showed that they themselves were effectively members of this group, interested in 'paying forward' the help they had received by giving it to newcomers in their turn:

Lin [7] noted that offline activity was an important factor in contributing to a sense of belonging and community, important in maintaining sustainability, a finding that the present study endorses. Dawn, for example, contrasted her life in the alcohol forum with membership of a previous group where she had felt more "known", meaning that people understood her. She put this down to having met with the previous group in person:

only after we had met in person did I feel like, [pause] I felt much more known after we had met in person in that group. (Dawn, Group D)

This group eventually formed a splinter group, moving away from the original site. Isabelle (Group E) described how she did not post until she had been to an offline meetup with group members.

4.3 Group Size

The size of the 'critical mass' will be important for sustainability, but so also is the overall size of the group. A large group can be off-putting and unmanageable. Discussing the choice of individual threads to join, Ariana noted that one popular one was confusing to her, putting this in terms similar to that of joining a large social event in the offline world:

when I've gone in there I've kind of just gotten confused by how many people and names and they all know each and stuff so [laughs] I just, I don't go in there anymore...it's almost like walking into a room that's very, very crowded and people know each other and you don't know anybody. (Ariana, Group E)

Tina (Group E) speaking of the same thread indicated that it was "bewildering" to her and also costly in terms of requiring "a huge commitment of time" because of its size. This led her to avoid using it: the cost of using that thread outweighed the benefit as Butler puts it [8]. Erin (Group E) implied that a large size made for less interesting threads as there was less input into each thread; she felt that Group E had spread itself too thinly. However, a group that was too small or inactive could also be off-putting to people:

I've looked in there a couple of times but it looks like it's very slow meaning not many people post (Ariana, Group E)

Little activity meant that there were fewer resources to use, many resources being the positive side of a larger group. Individuals dealt with the problem of large size partly by finding a smaller area of the group that they liked and felt at home in. This might be a sub-group of friends or a 'home thread' i.e., a thread to which they routinely returned when going online and where they were likely to get to know other users well. Thirteen of the twenty-five people who were interviewed had regular threads, and this was the commonest way of using the forums, rather than browsing or searching for specific topics. In some cases, groups of individuals formed splinter groups, perhaps moving away from the site (and it could be speculated that this would affect the group's social dynamics as well as its size). Theresa (Group E) described finding and staying with a core group of about 12 women on her site, only exploring more widely after that sub-group came to an end. Joanne said of her home thread:

it's the same old group all the time and these are the people that I will be meeting. So it's sort of--, [pause] it becomes a community and that's very supportive. (Group E)

Both Alan (Group C) and Tina (Group E) talked about there being key areas within the forums where people generally tended to congregate:

the general section is where people reside by and large (Alan, Group C)

4.4 Group Functionality

In terms of functionality, a few interviewees talked about the usability of their group; for example, Cara (Group E) avoided the forums as she found them “unwieldy”, Tina (Group E) found it difficult to know when to use the blogs and when to use the forums, and Christine found forums difficult to use on mobile phones and so confined herself at the time of interview to using the listserv:

it's really easy to check in on an email list, right? Now to log into a forum...for writing these [mobile phones] are, as you may know, these are not so fun (Christine, Group D)

This last point may have important implications for the future of discussion forums given the increasing trend of using mobile phones for internet functions. Marianne described how Group C was better designed than her preceding group which was “rickety” in nature. She and a group of others migrated from the latter to Group B together, and she implied that they may have been drawn to B by its ease of use, resulting from better design.

they keep developing and making it more, [pause] easier to use... It just has, it has a slicker look I guess, and feel to it. It's like easier. (Marianne, Group B)

From her point of view, however, the social dynamics were the important factor in the decision to move groups: when asked why she moved she replied “because everybody was sort of migrating...and I just kind of migrated with them”.

A range of other functional aspects were mentioned including availability of the group 24 hours per day, which was seen as important at both stages of usage by several people. The specific functions provided, such as chat rooms and information pages, was cited by Jackie (Group D) as an initial draw and Tina (Group E) when talking about why she stayed with the group. The remaining aspects were only mentioned at one stage and by one or two people. These included the quality of the moderation which was mentioned as a reason for staying by Erin and Theresa of Group E and the fact that there were no limits on post length, a reason why Megan stayed (Group E).

4.5 Information Quality

The people mentioning information as important at the start remained largely the same as those who stayed with their group because of it. There did appear to be a pattern of using the information pages on the site more at the beginning of members' time there, as this was when they had most unanswered questions (e.g., Anna (Group A), Ben & Julie (Group B), Christine, Jackie & Dawn (Group D) and Isabelle (Group E)). As they were satisfied with the answers to their questions, information pages and information given in the forums became less important:

I have [read the information pages] from time to time, I think particularly at times when I was struggling, probably more so in the first couple of years that I was on [Group A], cos now I don't really struggle, or very rarely struggle. So I, I tend not to look at them as much as I used to. (Anna, Group A)

In terms of information, individuals specifically mentioned liking the ability to share information (Cathy, Group B), its relevance (Erin, Group E) and the fact that the information on the site was good quality (Robert, Group E). Information was particularly important in Group B as it formed a rare source of knowledge about the treatment it supported. For some in this group it was seen as a part of the treatment itself. The ability to find practical, useful information and advice about handling specific, difficult situations was highlighted by many members, as was the fact that they could obtain information about others' experiences.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this paper was to explore users' own perspectives on the issues of attraction to groups and reasons for remaining with them. It has shown firstly that the overall group approach to problem drinking was very important in attracting users, but not at the level of detailed belief sets about problem drinking and its treatment. Interviewees did not feel compelled to adopt a particular philosophy or programme of recovery, something that distinguished non-12-step groups from AA. While interviewees said that the approach became less important over time, changes in it could still cause major disagreements within forums and lead to established individuals leaving.

Secondly social dynamics were shown to be the most important factor for sustaining membership. The concept of 'critical mass' or the core group of (often longer-term) users who created most of the posts was discussed and its importance identified. Finding other members like themselves who had shared their experience remained important at the start and in retaining members, but the element of friendship and of feeling part of a community appeared more important over time, as relationships were forged. This might tentatively suggest, to use Ren et al's approach [6], a move from finding a common identity with the group members generally to finding common bonds with individuals in the group:

Common identity theory makes predictions about the causes and consequences of people's attachment to the group as a whole. Common bond theory makes predictions about the causes and consequences of people's attachment to individual group members. [6 p377]

It would be useful for further research to explore this, both in relation to alcohol groups and groups supporting other conditions. The paper also supports Lin's claim [7] that offline activities play a role in creating a feeling of belonging. Altruism and reciprocity, as suggested by Otto & Simon [23], also seemed to have a role to play in user retention, as interviewees had often moved from receiving help to giving it. This was seen as the main purpose of staying with a group by some (e.g., Alan, Group C; Ben, Group B).

The trade-off between the advantages and disadvantages of size was discussed as something that ensured many resources, but could also alienate and confuse members. It was shown that a frequent way of dealing with this was to create a home space within the forums or with a group of other people, who might then form a splinter group and leave the forums. Other factors explored were ease of use, group values and the information provided, with the last a steadily important factor to a group of individuals.

Overall, this study confirms that there are many factors that contributed to attracting members to groups and keeping them there, but it also suggests that the general approach and social dynamics may be especially important. It provides a useful contribution to the literature in offering a rare insight into the voices of users of non-12-step groups and their opinions as to why they join and stay with groups. Further research is needed to examine whether these findings are more widely typical, particularly of users of addiction groups that do not require their members to adopt their own beliefs.

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