

Research Participants Describe Recovery-Oriented Surveys as Beneficial to Recovery from Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders

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Background

- Recovery is no longer thought of as simply the absence of addictive behavior
- Recovery is now defined in terms of the presence of wellbeing (Witkiewitz, 2020; Witkiewitz & Tucker, 2020)
- Researchers now design studies that measure more wellbeing indicators
- This might cause unexpected consequences**
- In a randomized controlled pilot of individuals in early recovery conducted to test a journaling intervention, we were surprised to discover that the control group described that completing surveys was useful and supportive of their recovery from alcohol and other substance use disorders

Definitions

Self-Monitoring

When behavior is observed and recorded in general and with the intention of causing favorable behavior change (Humphreys et al., 2009)

Measurement Reactivity

When behavior is recorded in order to measure it, but the activity of recording causes unintentional behavior change (Barta et al., 2012)

Purpose of This Study

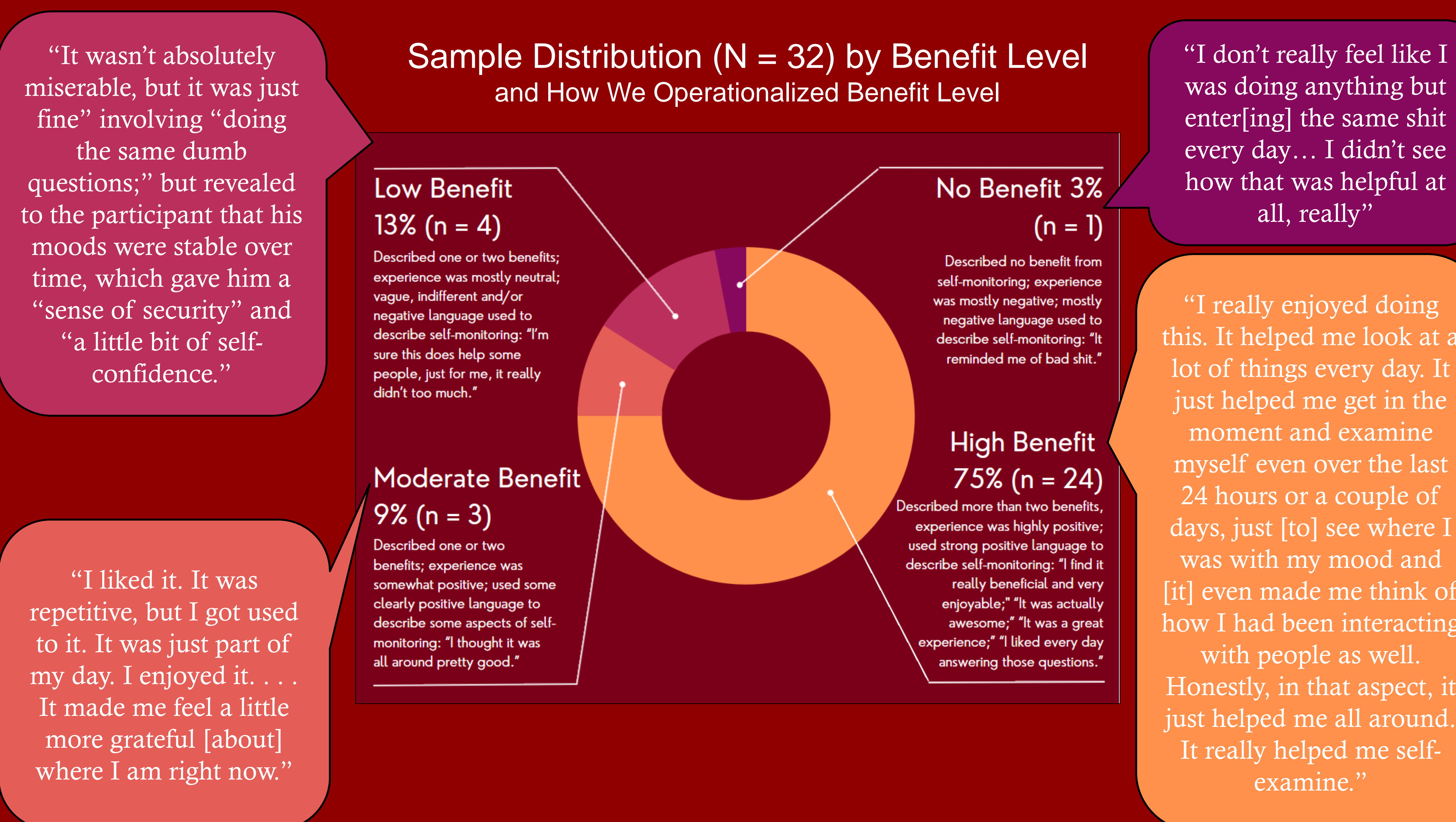
- To determine the extent to which control group members might have benefited from daily surveys
- To determine which instruments were most frequently mentioned by control group members in exit interviews as an indicator of which instruments might have had the most impact

Recovery-oriented surveys can cause measurement reactivity and have potential as an intervention to support recovery from addiction

Research Questions and Results

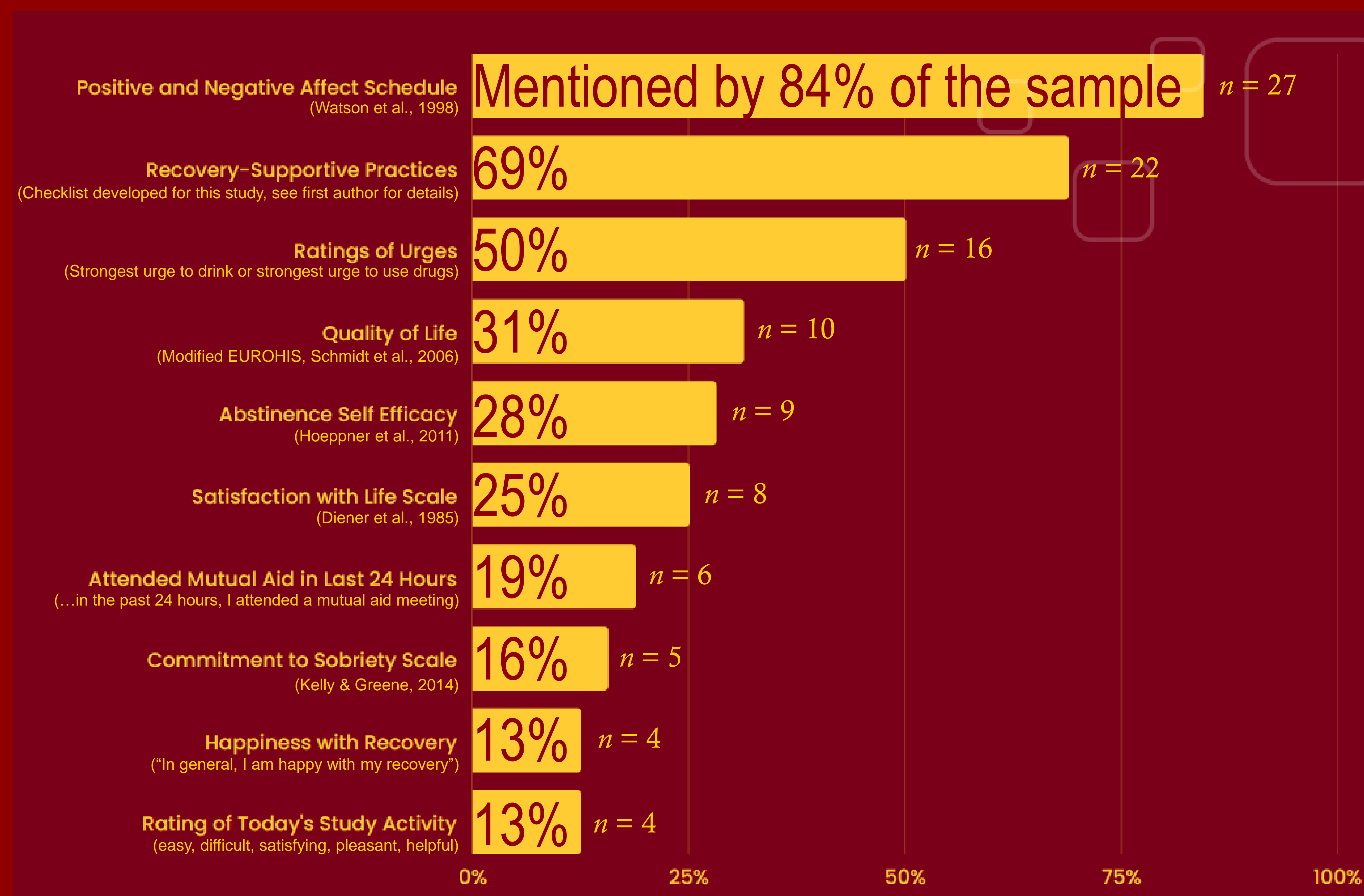
To what extent did control group members benefit from surveys?

To answer this question, we read exit interview transcripts with attention to any mention of benefit from completing surveys, then, drawing on the data, we inductively developed a taxonomy of benefit level (high, moderate, low, and no benefit) before sorting transcripts accordingly



Which survey instruments were most frequently mentioned by control group members in exit interviews?

To answer this research question, we identified references to specific survey instruments in the exit interview transcripts, and determined the percentage of participants who referenced each survey instrument



Methods

- Data for the current study were derived from control group exit interviews from a randomized controlled pilot designed to test a journaling intervention
- The control group completed daily surveys for 30 days to measure a wide range of wellbeing factors in recovery
- Surveys were intended only to determine differences between control and treatment groups
- But the control group reported in exit interviews that they found the surveys to be beneficial, inspiring the current study**

Participants (N = 32)

- Recruited from three substance use disorder treatment centers in the Upper Midwestern US
- 47% female, 3% non-binary, 50% male
- Mean age 40.0 (SD=10.3)
- 66% with past year income <\$15,000
- 47% alcohol was primary addiction
- Racial/ethnic demographics: 84% White, 3% Black or African American, 3% Latine, 3% Native American or Alaskan Native, 3% Asian or Pacific Islander; 3% Multiracial

Discussion & Conclusions

- Most control group members described daily recovery-oriented surveys as beneficial
- The surveys functioned as a self-monitoring mechanism for the control group
- In a separate grounded theory analysis, we discovered that having skills to cope with negative information revealed by the surveys was associated with finding surveys beneficial (Krentzman & Gass, 2023)
- Developers of recovery mobile apps should include assessments of affect, recovery-supportive practices, and urges, as these queries were most frequently mentioned by our sample suggesting that they were most impactful

References

Please contact Amy Krentzman akrentzm@umn.edu for a reference list and for a copy of the daily survey.



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