Alcohol Literacy Challenge™

Expectancy Theory & Practice

Training Seminar

Peter DeBenedittis, Ph.D.
• The ALC is not about the treatment effect of drugs that interrupt established neural networks, but is instead a tool designed to preempt having those networks built in the first place.

• Remember how William described being trigger by his environment. Environmental cues are at the heart of the ALC.
“Alcohol Expectancies”

are your beliefs about alcohol

Find out yours by answering this question:

How do you think people feel after a few drinks?
Alcohol Expectancies

- Exist Before a Person Begins Drinking
- Predict How Old a Person is When He or She Begins Drinking
- Distinguish Light Drinking Children From Heavy Drinking Children
- Mitigate the Influence of Other Factors such as Family History, Drinking History, or Belief in the Negative Consequences of Drinking
It's the thinking, not the drinking!

- Palov trained a dog to salivate after 23 attempts.
- Average American teen is exposed to a half million alcohol ads.
- Setting is important. Early experiments with placebo drinks done in classrooms did not work.

You can get all the positive effects of drinking without alcohol.
Medical Placebos

- Cure between 30% and 70% of all illnesses
- Purple Dye cured 70% of patients with worts
- 100% cure of Anxiety and Depression when patients were taking a sugar pill
- Placebos are getting stronger
Yellow pills make the most effect antidepressants, like pharmaceutical sams.

**Why**
By Steve S

*More is better,* scientists say. Placebos taken four times a day deliver greater relief than those taken twice daily.

Clever names can add a placebo boost to the physiological punch in real drugs. *Viagra* implies both vitality and an unstoppable Niagara of sexy.

The color green reduces anxiety, add the pill.

**Branding matters.** Placebos stamped or packaged with widely recognized trademarks are more effective than “generic” placebos.
Sensory Transmission Model of Experience

- Physical Stimuli
- Reality
- You
Sensory Mastery Model of Experience

In Honor of Protagoras
“Man is the Master of Experience”
Physically, your eye has a blind spot.
2000 Bits

Reality

Senses

Memory

Imagination

Your Miraculous Brain

No Difference

Four Billion Bits of Information each Second
This is why the question “How do you think people feel after a few drinks?” is important to challenging expectancies. It determines the mental constructs built around alcohol.
Influences on Beliefs: Traditional Sociology

- You
- Family
- Church
- School
- Media
Influences on Beliefs: Media Scholars

- You
- Media
- Church
- School
- Family
Remember, the environment alcohol marketing creates results in a half million repetitions of neural pathways being stimulated with messages about drinking.
Research Validating Challenging Expectancies as a Prevention Strategy

- Expectancies correlates with drinking (Goldman & Dunn 1996)
- Appear in children before they are drinking (Goldman & Dunn 1998)
- Change in a direction that encourages drinking when approaching adolescence (Goldman & Dunn 2000)
- Predicts drinking prospectively for as much as nine years (Newcomb 1988, Stacy 1991)
- When measured with treatment predicts post treatment outcome (Conners 1993)
- Expectancy changes parallel changes in drinking behavior (Sher 1996)
- Expectancy manipulation results in increase or decrease in drinking (Darkes & Goldman 1993 & 98, Dunn 2000, Stein 2000)
- Expectancies rather than chemical effects appear responsible for some behavior changes when drinking (Martin & Sayette 1993)
Alcohol Memory Map

Arousal/Sedation Dimension

Positive/Negative Dimension

Hyper
Cool
Talkative
Active
Carefree
Funny
Less Nervous
Outgoing
Fun
Happy
Relaxed
Smart
Quiet

Sick
Stupid
Crazy
Forgetful
Dizzy
Sleepy
Slow
Scared

Sick
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NIAAA Endorses Challenging Expectancies

- An extensive construct validation network has evolved that supports expectancies as an important influence on drinking (Goldman 1999)

Challenging Alcohol Expectancies are 1 of 3 Programs Recommended by NIAAA for alcohol prevention on College Campus

Reduced Drinking still found after a 10 year follow-up!
Classroom Based Interventions

• Reduced Positive Expectancies for 4th Graders
  (Cruz & Dunn 2003)

• Reduced Drinking and Positive Expectancies for High School students
  (Cruz 2005 & Sivasithamparam 2011)

• Reduced drinking for College students
  (Sivasithamparam, Hall & Dunn 2008 & Schreiner, Fried, Sivasithamparam & Dunn 2009)

• Also found effective in large classroom lectures given in only 30 minutes
  (Fried, Sivasithamparam, Schreiner, Boucher, Dunn & Hall 2010)
Reviewed in June 2012

- 3.3 Quality of Research
- 3.5 Readiness for Dissemination
  (out of 4 points)

Outcomes

- Reduction in expectancies of positive social and arousing effects of alcohol.
- Increase in expectancies of negative sedating and antisocial effects of alcohol
- Reduced instances of drinking
- Reduced amounts consumed when drinking
- Lower overall .BAC levels when drinking
- Fewer instances of binge drinking
Visit medialiteracy.net/alc-support to view this slideshow & learn more.

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Please view individual Alcohol Literacy Challenge™ lessons videos for more information regarding presentation of each lesson.

Please refer to the ALC Implementation Manual for a summary of expectancy theory research and answers to FAQs.