

Abstract

The present study investigated the effects of perceived stigma, the relatedness construct of sense of belonging, the coping response withdrawal and group identification on the development of self-stigma. One hundred and fifteen persons with a history of drug dependence recruited from the Society of Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention completed a structured interview for the study. Hierarchical regression analysis and separate mediation tests provided support for the proposed path from perceived stigma to self-stigma through deficits in sense of belonging with respect to family and friends as well as withdrawal. However, group identification with fellow drug rehabilitators was not associated with self-stigma. The results highlighted the importance of sense of belonging in the context of interpersonal relationships in the process of self-stigmatization and identified the need to explore ways of buffering against self-stigma in this population. Directions for future studies were suggested.