**COMING HOME TO MY SELF: LONG-TERM SOBRIETY IN ALCOHOLIC WOMEN b**y Wanda Jane O’Gorman Jewell, 2008

This research used the qualitative approach of grounded theory to explore women’s subjective experience of long-term alcoholism recovery. Addiction, particularly alcoholism, is an epidemic. Although there are many studies on alcoholism and treatment, there is little done on long-term recovery, and no studies on the subjective experience of alcoholic women in long-term sobriety. This study addresses that gap in the literature. How do women alcoholics with twenty or more years sobriety understand their ability to attain and maintain sobriety? Specifically, what are the internal processes that accompanied and allowed these women to attain and maintain sobriety? This study found three major themes that dynamically describe what the women experience. Surrender, belonging, and identity are found to be interrelated elements of recovery. Surrender is to a greater power, to what is, to being human, to vulnerability, and to needing others. Belonging is being connected to others, the group, and oneself. Identity changes over time and multiple aspects of identity emerge and evolve. The elements of surrender, belonging, and identity are seen to be closely interrelated, and they emerge, grow, develop, and evolve within this interrelationship. Each element was discussed separately with the understanding that they exist together in a dynamic relatedness. A process of recovery has been identified through the synthesis of the discussion of elements.