



California Women's Technical Assistance and Training Project  
Central Region Training Event  
Fresno, California \* May 4, 2007

## The Cultural Context of Substance Use in Women

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*This training is provided by the California Women, Children & Families Technical Assistance Project through a contract with the State of California Alcohol & Drug Programs.*

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## Women as a Cultural Group

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## Cultural Context of Women and Substance Abuse

Women start using alcohol and drugs for different reasons. They experience different consequences for their use and have different treatment needs. They relapse for different reasons and have different on-going recovery support needs.

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## Common Characteristics of Women Seeking Treatment

- **Intergenerational addiction**
- **Relationships that encourage use and are unsupportive of treatment**
- **History of trauma and childhood abuse**
- **Co-occurring disorders, PTSD**
- **Lack of intervention strategies or treatment options**
- **Lack of self-esteem and self-efficacy**
- **Environment that encourages alcohol/drug use**
- **Pregnant or caretakers of children**

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## Understanding Cultural Proficiency

It is an approach; it provides tools and help for an increasingly diverse world. It helps us to look at situations in a context and perspective different than our own.

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## Becoming Cultural Proficient

My Job	Cultural Awareness	Proficient
I have to understand what the client is saying.	I have to be sure the client understands what I say.	Language proficiency, approach, tone of voice
I have to make sure the client is learning.	I have to make sure I am teaching the client in a way that she will understand.	Learning styles, relevant examples
I may have to change my client's beliefs, perceptions or attitudes.	I have to know what the client believes, how she perceives things or what the attitudes are.	Cultural knowledge: do I know what she values as a parent, partner, woman?
I may be able to use some of the client's beliefs to help them.	Same as above	Same as above including spiritual beliefs
I have to build trust for the client to let me influence their lives.	I have to know what she values to know how to build trust.	Experience, willingness to ask and a willingness be corrected.

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## Culturally Relevant, Gender Responsive Treatment



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### Culturally Relevant Treatment



- Honors traditions and values
- Acknowledges cultural pain and racism
- Builds appropriate efficacy and support
- Staff, management and Board reflective
- Respects individuals
- Differentiates drug culture from culture itself
- Helps people learn cultural traditions
- Relational

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### Gender Specific Treatment



- **Women Recover in Supportive Relationships**
- **Almost all Women in Treatment have Experienced Substantial Trauma--Either Childhood Abuse/Neglect and/or Sexual Traumatic Experiences -- Trauma should be treated as present rather than the exception**
- **Children are Both an Incentive and a Barrier to Participating in Treatment**
- **Multiple Treatment Studies have Demonstrated that Better Outcomes are Achieved by Women who have all of their Children with them**

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## Gender Responsive Treatment

- Relational
- Strength-based, motivational
- Comprehensive
- Trauma informed
- Addresses the different pathways to use, consequences of use, motivation for treatment, treatment issues and relapse prevention needs

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## Clinical Treatment Services

### FOR WOMEN

- Outreach and engagement
- Continuing care
- Screening
- Pharmacotherapies
- Drug monitoring
- Treatment planning mental health services
- Detoxification
- Medical Care and Services
- Assessment
- Trauma Informed and Trauma-Specific Services
- Case Management
- Substance Abuse Counseling and Education
- Crisis Intervention

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## Clinical Support Services

### FOR WOMEN

- Life skills
- Advocacy
- Primary health care services
- Family programs
- Parenting and child development education
- Housing support
- Education remediation and support
- Employment readiness services
- Linkages with legal system and child welfare systems
- Recovery community support services
- Life skills

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## System Changes are Required

- Collaboration is needed to improve customer services.
- Federal, state and local funding agencies must work together better.
- Neighborhood-based agencies must become better at influencing and obtaining resources from federal, state and local funding agencies.

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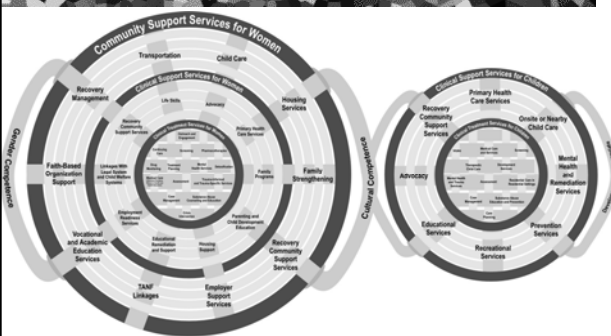
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## CSAT Model of Comprehensive Services for Women & Children



CSAT Women, Youth and Families Task Force (2005). Unpublished draft.

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## Comprehensive Model includes:

- Components
  - Clinical treatment services for women
  - Clinical support services for women
  - Community support services for women
  - Clinical treatment services for children
  - Clinical support services for children
  - Community support services for children
- Cultural Competence, Gender Competence and Developmentally Appropriate

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## Collaborations

Why they're vital for evolving the field

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## Required Ingredients for Collaboration

- Cross-Training and Understanding
- Common Goal
- Communication Mechanisms
- Common Language
- Identification of Common Principles
- Respect and Trust
- Daily Practices
- Evaluation
- Accountability

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## Community-Based Strategies

- PRINCIPLE- COMMUNITY ASSET DEVELOPMENT "build with".
- Service Enriched Housing
- Family Resource Centers
- Neighbor-to-Neighbor approaches
- Faith Community Involvement
- Community Recovery Model
- Agencies role modeling success

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## Community Support Services

- Transportation
- Child care
- Housing services
- Family strengthening
- Recovery community support services
- Employer support services
- TANF linkages
- Vocational and academic education services
- Faith based organization support
- Recovery management

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## Family Treatment the next step in the evolving process

- Services for all family members
- Dynamic, different members come at different times
- Continuum of family involvement to family treatment

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## Child Welfare as Partners

- Family to Family as an Opportunity
- The Village – shared custody model
- Dependency Drug Courts
- Funding – must offer treatment – advocacy need – appropriate level of treatment

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## Community Health Access

- Healthy Families and Medi-Cal
- Black Infant Health Project
- Establishing Medical Homes at Community Clinics
- School based health clinics
- Needle Exchange – homeless health care
- HIV Programs

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## Innovations in Accessing Housing

- Building affordable housing
- Supportive Housing (Corporation for Supportive Housing)
- Housing advocacy
- Sober living (loan fund, CAARR)
- AB 2034
- Home-based Case Management

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## Creating employment opportunities

- Micro-businesses. Portals, Village.
- Strength-based approaches need to value all work, livable wages.
- Specialized programs for felons.
- PRINCE CHARMING IS NOT COMING
- Long-term solutions
- PICs, one-stop shops. San Mateo
- Earned Income Tax Credit.

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Supporting Healthy Living and Self Efficacy

Life Skills:

- Home visiting programs
- Literacy, GED Programs
- Recovery Mentors
- Faith-based Efforts
- Case Management – by who for what – are they trusted
- Foster care – Independent Living Programs

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WHAT DO WE DO  
AND HOW?

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