

Women in the Criminal Justice System: Approaches to the Treatment of Our Most Invisible Population

Overview

Historically, treatment, research, and recovery have been based on men's lives and have typically neglected the very real differences in women's experience. Statistics indicate that among women there is a high correlation between addiction and both incarceration and parole/probation violations. Yet within the criminal justice system, the issues and needs of women with addictive disorders are largely invisible, and a comprehensive continuum of care is absent for this population.

This workshop uses a developmental, relational model of treatment to discuss the multiple issues in women's recovery using Dr. Covington's guide *Helping Women Recover: A Program for Treating Addiction* (special edition for the criminal justice system). Three theoretical perspectives — addiction, trauma, and women's psychological development — are integrated in a model that is based on the concept of a woman's journey. The model can be adapted for use in prisons, jails and in community-based programs.

Topics

- Profile of women in criminal justice settings
- Differences between women and men in the system
- Discuss the connection between substance use disorders and trauma
- Guiding principles for gender-responsive services
- Becoming trauma-informed
- Describe the process of trauma and typical responses
- ACE study
- Specific interactive therapeutic strategies
- Discuss results of NIDA-funded research

Objectives

- Increase participant's awareness of the lives of women in the criminal justice system
- Discuss a comprehensive and integrated treatment model
(Theory of Addiction, Theory of Trauma, and Theory of Women's Psychological Development)
- Examine the four issues that recovering women find challenging and that are major triggers to relapse
(self, relationships, sexuality, and spirituality)
- Demonstrate therapeutic techniques and strategies