

Special Services for Women in Substance Abuse Treatment

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2007 WASTAR Women's Conference
Lake Tahoe, NV
September 17 & 18, 2007



Special services for women in substance abuse treatment

Women Centered Programming

Delivery of services and treatment that reduce females' barriers to entering substance abuse treatment and/or address their specific substance abuse treatment needs

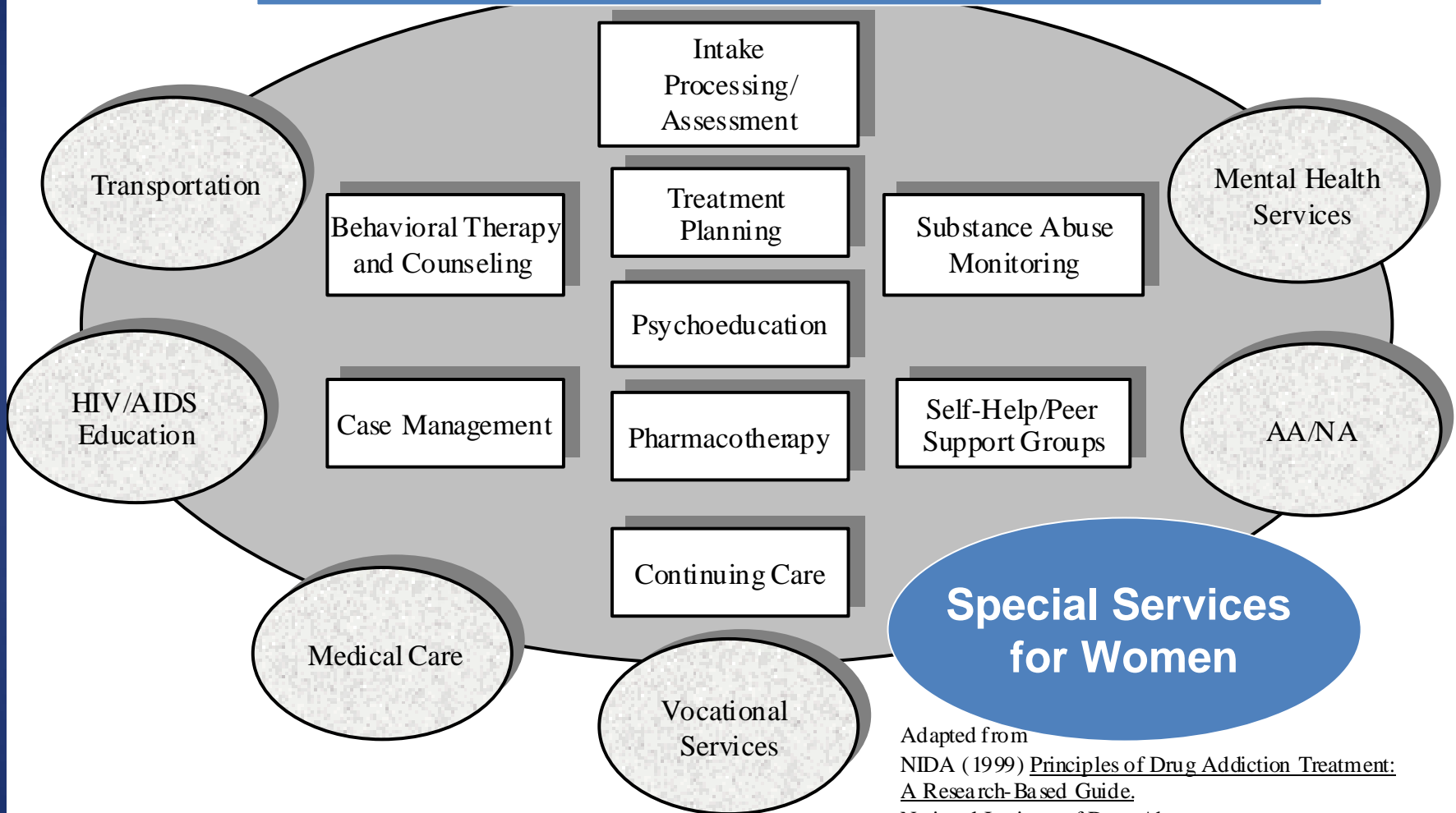
Learning objectives

- List at least three barriers to treatment for women with substance use disorders
- Describe characteristics of female substance abuse treatment clients that differ from those of male substance abuse treatment clients.
- Discuss how these differences may influence the delivery of services to women with substance use disorders
- Identify at least two types of services offered onsite at treatment programs which can enhance retention for women with substance use disorders

Outline

- Models of addiction treatment
- Barriers to treatment and gender differences
- Definition: Special services for women
- Services and outcome: Literature
- Availability of these services: The ADDS study
- Services and retention: The ADDS study

A Model of Addiction Treatment



Adapted from
NIDA (1999) Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment: A Research-Based Guide.
National Institute of Drug Abuse,
National Institute of Health, Rockville, MD.

Making the case for special services for women

- Barriers among females who seek treatment
- Gender differences

Barriers among females who seek treatment



- Programs that do not accept pregnant women
- Responsibility for children, coupled with little access to child care services,
- Fear of losing custody of their children
- Social stigma, labeling, and guilt
- Women identified as substance abusers may also have difficulty maintaining eligibility for entitlement programs

Gender differences

- Women in treatment are more likely to be responsible for the care of children, to have more children living in their homes, and to be more concerned about issues related to children
- Female substance abuse treatment clients have lower educational attainment and rates of employment
- Women substance abusers are at increased risk for psychological problems
- Female appear to be more vulnerable than males to the physiological effects of substance use.

Special services for women in substance abuse treatment

Delivery of services and treatment that reduce females' barriers to entering substance abuse treatment and/or address their specific substance abuse treatment needs

- Ancillary Services
- Services intended to address the specific needs of females,
- Women-only treatment environments

Special services for women

- **Ancillary services**

intended to increase female clients' access to substance abuse treatment, such as child care or transportation services;

- **Services intended to address the specific needs of females**

ie. prenatal and well-baby care, psychosocial education focusing on issues relevant to women or parenting, HIV prevention and risk reduction that targets women, and mental health services that address a woman's history of abuse and trauma

- **Programs and services provided for women only**

creating a unique treatment environment that is more focused on women's issues than are mixed-gender services.

Effectiveness of substance abuse treatment programming for women: Literature review

- Studies published between 1980 and 2000
 - 7 randomized studies
 - 30 nonrandomized studies
- Substance abuse treatment programming for women improved treatment outcomes for women, including
 - Decreased substance use
 - Increased self-esteem
 - Improved perinatal/birth outcomes
 - Decreased job loss
 - Reduction of injecting risk behaviors

Secondary analysis of Alcohol and Drug Services Study (ADSS) data

- Data collection 1996 – 1999
 - Telephone interviews with substance abuse treatment facility directors (n=2,395)
 - Client treatment record abstraction during site visits (n=4,689 adults aged 18 or older)
- Measures included client characteristics, treatment service type, facility characteristics (women-only, offering child care services/prenatal care services, special programs for women/pregnant women)
- Calculated prevalence of substance abuse treatment programming for women
- Weighted estimates

Availability of substance abuse treatment programming for women

Facility Characteristic	Percentage
Women-only facilities	5.9
Child care services	13.3
Prenatal care services	11.9
Special programs for women	37.4
Special programs for pregnant women	19.3

Retention in substance abuse treatment

- Outcome measures
 - Completion of planned substance abuse treatment
 - Length of stay in treatment
- Compared female to male clients
- Compared female clients at facilities with substance abuse treatment programming for women (women-only facilities, facilities offering child care services) to those at facilities without such programming
- Descriptive analyses: Percentages of clients completing treatment, mean length of stay (in days)
- Multivariate analyses: Logistic regression predicting treatment completion, Cox's proportional hazard regression predicting length of stay
- Weighted estimates

Results: Gender differences

- The rate of treatment completion was lower for women than for men in residential (60% women vs. 68% men) or outpatient nonmethadone facilities (46% women vs. 53% men).
- Women averaged shorter stays in residential treatment than men (34 days women vs. 61 days men), but length of stay was similar among women and men in other types of care.
- Differences did not persist after controlling for other client and facility characteristics.

Results: Substance abuse treatment programming for women

- Receiving treatment at women-only facilities or at facilities offering child care services was not associated with **completion of planned treatment**, after controlling for client and facility characteristics.
- Women who received treatment at women-only facilities (HR=0.34; 95% CI=0.13, 0.89) or facilities offering child care services (HR=0.51; 95% CI=0.36, 0.73) **stayed in treatment** longer than women who received treatment in mixed-gender facilities or facilities not offering child care services, after controlling for client and facility characteristics.

Summary

- Substance abuse treatment programming for women is beneficial for women and their children.
- Availability of such programming appears to be limited.
- Women-only facilities and child care services were associated with increased length of stay (but not treatment completion) among women.

Questions for you

- What are the barriers to treatment for women you serve?
- What services do you offer? What programs have you developed?
- Where are the gaps in service delivery for women with substance use disorders?

