

Women in Drug Treatment Courts: Sexual Assault as the Underlying Trauma



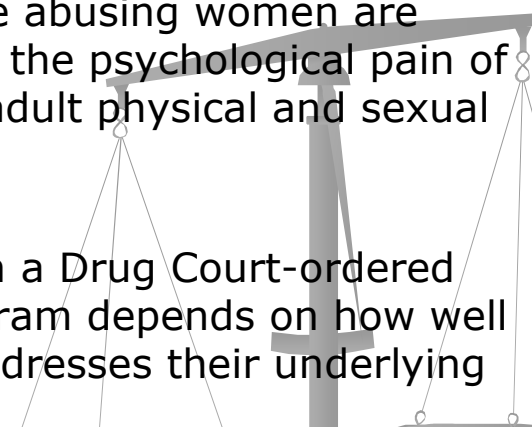
National Judicial Education Program*

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Women, Trauma and Substance Abuse

- Many substance abusing women are self-medicating the psychological pain of childhood and adult physical and sexual abuse
 - Their success in a Drug Court-ordered treatment program depends on how well the program addresses their underlying trauma
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The U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Courts Program Office promulgated these guiding principals:

- Treatment services are comprehensive
- Services should be available to meet the needs of each participant
- Treatment programs or program components are designed to address the particular treatment issues of women and other special populations

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Justice Programs, Drug Courts Program Office, *Defining Drug Courts: The Key Components*, (1997).

Substance Abuse Among Female Sexual Assault Victims

According to a national survey by the National Victim Center and Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center:

- When compared with non-victims of crime, rape victims were:
 - 5.3 times more likely to have used prescription drugs non-medically
 - 6.4 times more likely to have used hard drugs or cocaine
- 31% of all rape victims developed Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
 - Women with PTSD were 3.7 times more likely to have at least two serious drug-related problems

Source: NATIONAL VICTIM CENTER & CRIME VICTIMS RESEARCH AND TREATMENT CENTER, *RAPE IN AMERICA: A REPORT TO THE NATION* (1992).

Substance Abuse Among Female Sexual Assault Victims

- In another study of 102 sexual assault survivors, 44 of them (33%) used prescription drugs post-rape, including sedatives/tranquilizers or antidepressants to self-medicate their psychological distress

Source: Marisa Sturza and Rebecca Campbell, An Exploratory Study of Rape Survivors' Prescription Drug Use as a Means of Coping with Sexual Assault, *PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN QUARTERLY* 29 (2005), at 357.

“For women, chemical addiction frequently represents an effort to self-medicate for depression and other mental impairments, to numb pain, and to make tolerable what is a painful and hopeless life.”

Source: Patricia A. Kassebaum, TAP 23: Substance Abuse Treatment for Women Offenders: Guide to Promising Practices, *CENTER FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT* (2008), at 40.

The Catch-22 of Substance Abuse and Victimization

- Assault may lead to substance use and abuse
- Women struggling with substance abuse may be more vulnerable to assault

Source: Dean G. Kilpatrick, A 2-Year Longitudinal Analysis of the Relationships Between Violent Assault and Substance Abuse in Women, 65 J. of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 834-846 (1997).

The Catch-22 of Substance Abuse and Victimization

- Sexual and physical assault may lead to substance use and abuse
 - Many victims turn to substances to rapidly block out assault-related negative emotions and assault related mental health problems (e.g., PTSD)

Source: Dean G. Kilpatrick, A 2-Year Longitudinal Analysis of the Relationships Between Violent Assault and Substance Abuse in Women, 65 J. of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 834-846 (1997).

The Catch-22 of Substance Abuse and Victimization

- Women struggling with substance abuse may be more vulnerable to assault
 - Impaired ability to detect assailants
 - A lifestyle involving substance abuse may lead to more exposure to assailants
 - Predators may target women with substance abuse problems because they appear more vulnerable
 - Women with substance abuse problems may be more likely to engage in high risk behaviors

Source: Dean G. Kilpatrick, A 2-Year Longitudinal Analysis of the Relationships Between Violent Assault and Substance Abuse in Women, 65 J. of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 834-846 (1997).

Abuse History of Women in Drug Treatment Courts

“Women who come here tend to have more serious addictions than the men, have lost more in their lives and have fewer resources....The women are in worse shape...They have no self-respect, -esteem, or -confidence. They don't believe they can be clean or deserve to be. They feel hopeless.”

Source: Laura D'Angelo, Management Note: Women and Addiction: Challenges for Drug Court Practitioners. 23 JUSTICE SYSTEM JOURNAL 385 (2002), at 389.

Drug Treatment Programs: Obstacles for Female Participants

Many women who enter Drug Courts:

- Are addicted to harder drugs and have been using them for longer periods of time when compared to the addictions of men
- Have an extensive criminal background, usually as a result of illegal activities done to obtain money for drugs (such as prostitution and theft)

Drug Treatment Programs: Obstacles for Female Participants (cont'd)

- Suffer from co-occurring disorders as a result of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse
- Are single mothers, unemployed or financially disadvantaged, lack education, and/or suffer from mental illness

Sources: Patricia A. Kassebaum, TAP 23: Substance Abuse Treatment for Women Offenders: Guide to Promising Practices, CENTER FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT (2008) at 5, 3, and 7; Laura D'Angelo, Management Note: Women and Addiction: Challenges for Drug Court Practitioners. 23 JUSTICE SYSTEM JOURNAL 385 (2002) at 390.

Women, Trauma, and Substance Abuse

“Women are more likely to seek help for the consequences of abuse, i.e. depression and alcoholism, than for the abuse itself.”

Women, Trauma, and Substance Abuse (cont'd)

- Substance abuse treatment programs need to recognize the role trauma plays in addiction in order to simultaneously treat the substance abuse problem and underlying trauma
- Often, a woman's history of sexual abuse does not manifest itself immediately, but instead becomes apparent throughout a course of treatment

Sources: Katharine P. Simmons, Terry Sack, & Geri Miller, Sexual Abuse and Chemical Dependency: Implications for Women in Recovery. 19 WOMEN & THERAPY 17 (October 31, 1996), at 17; Patricia A. Kassebaum, TAP 23: Substance Abuse Treatment for Women Offenders: Guide to Promising Practices, CENTER FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT (2008), at 106.

Women, Trauma, and Substance Abuse

Specialists in women's treatment programs focus on relationships in women's lives as key to recovery.

"The way to help addicted women change, grow, and heal is to create programs and environments in which women can form relationships and mutual connections with others."

Source: Patricia A. Kassebaum, TAP 23: Substance Abuse Treatment for Women Offenders: Guide to Promising Practices, CENTER FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT (2008) at 5, 3, and 7; Laura D'Angelo, Management Note: Women and Addiction: Challenges for Drug Court Practitioners, 23 JUSTICE SYSTEM JOURNAL 385 (2002) at 21.

Women, Trauma, and Substance Abuse

- 12-Step programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, were designed for men and therefore do not take into account the psychological aspects of trauma for women
- The first step of Alcoholics Anonymous calls for the admission of being "powerless" over a substance. Women who have been sexually abused need to gain power and self-confidence
- Women should be treated in all-female settings that promote empowerment

Programming for Women

- On average, 25-27% of participants in 938 U.S. Drug Courts are women
- Of substance abuse treatment facilities across the country, only 32% offer special programs or groups for women
- For any Drug Court ordering treatment for female participants, special treatment options for women should be researched and implemented

Sources: Frequently Asked Questions Series: Information Relevant to Female Participants in Drug Court. BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE DRUG COURT CLEARINGHOUSE (February 10, 2007) at 2; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS): 2007. Data on Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (2008) at 37.

Programming for Women

When treatment programs are specialized for women, they are more likely to succeed and less likely to recidivate.

“When day care, special women’s groups, and other special services are offered, females appear to be graduating at a higher rate than their male counterparts; when those services are absent, however, they appear to fail at a higher rate.”

Source: Frequently Asked Questions Series: Information Relevant to Female Participants in Drug Court. BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE DRUG COURT CLEARINGHOUSE (February 10, 2007) at 2.

What Judges Should Look for in Treatment Programs for Women with Histories of Sexual Abuse



A Drug Court judge should take the time to monitor the treatment programs in the area.



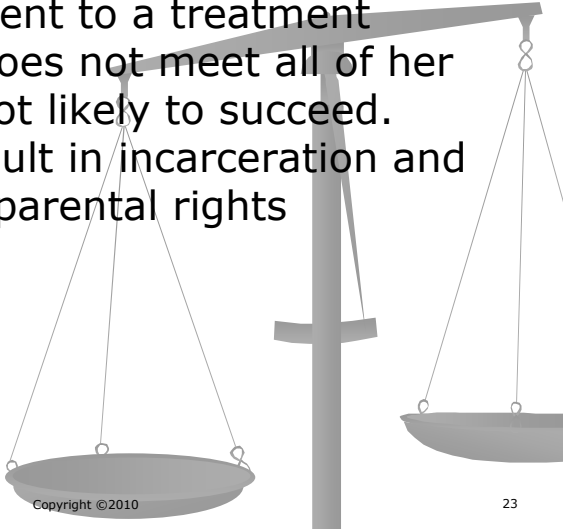
- Visit the treatment provider to find out about specific resources and therapy options available
- Work with the Drug Court Team to evaluate whether or not a program has the resources required by female participants with histories of sexual abuse
- Ensure that there are various treatment options available to allow flexibility

Source: National Institute of Justice, Drug Courts: The Second Decade, U.S. Dept. of Justice (2006) at 16.

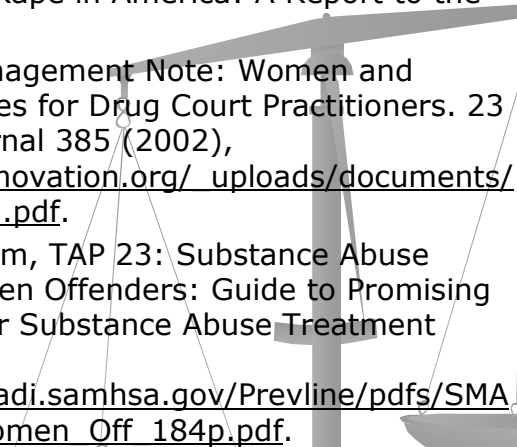
Establish that treatment programs have gender-specific resources, such as:

- Female-only therapy groups and one-on-one counseling opportunities
- Childcare
- Health care
- Job training
- Housing
- Transportation assistance

- Ensure that each woman receives timely placement in a treatment program that best suits her needs
- Separate male and female participants, in court and in therapy

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- If a woman is sent to a treatment program that does not meet all of her needs, she is not likely to succeed. Failure may result in incarceration and the loss of her parental rights

Resources

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1. National Victim Center & Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, Rape in America: A Report to the Nation (1992).
 2. Laura D'Angelo, Management Note: Women and Addiction: Challenges for Drug Court Practitioners. 23 Justice System Journal 385 (2002), <http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/womenandaddiction.pdf>.
 3. Patricia A. Kassebaum, TAP 23: Substance Abuse Treatment for Women Offenders: Guide to Promising Practices, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (2008) at 40, http://download.ncadi.samhsa.gov/Prevline/pdfs/SMA_08-3929/TAP23_Women_Off_184p.pdf.

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4. Frequently Asked Questions Series: Information Relevant to Female Participants in Drug Courts. Bureau of Justice Assistance Drug Court Clearinghouse (February 10, 2007) at 2, <http://www1.spa.american.edu/justice/documents/1967.pdf>.
5. National Institute of Justice, Drug Courts: The Second Decade. United States Department of Justice (June 2006) at 16, <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/211081.pdf>.
6. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS): 2007. Data on Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities. Department of Health and Human Services (2008) at 37, <http://www.dasis.samhsa.gov/07nssats/nssats2k7web.pdf>.

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7. Gwen Marchand, Mark Waller, & Shannon M. Carey, Kalamazoo County Adult Drug Treatment Court Outcome and Cost Evaluation: Final Report. NPC Research (September 2006) at II, <http://www.npcresearch.com/Files/Kalamazoo%20Final%20Report%201006.pdf#25>
8. Michael Rempel et al., The New York State Adult Drug Court Evaluation: Policies, Participants, and Impacts. Center for Court Innovation (2003), http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/drug_court_eval.pdf.

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9. Washington Coalition of Sexual Assault Programs, Interview with Lindsay Palmer, Director of Education, King County Sexual Assault Resource Center. 8 Research and Advocacy Digest 3 (2005), <http://www.wcsap.org/pdf/DigestOct05.pdf>.
10. Katharine P. Simmons, Terry Sack, & Geri Miller, Sexual Abuse and Chemical Dependency: Implications for Women in Recovery. 19 Women & Therapy 17 (1996)
11. *Healing Neen*, an online video resource that illustrates the consequences of untreated trauma through one woman's story: www.healingneen.com

Thank You

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