Women Only: Could this be the secret?

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Is it true that Men are from Mars & Women are from Venus?

Author John Gray’s Book suggests that there are clear differences between men and women

- Communication styles
- Emotional needs
- Chapter 5 “Speaking Different Languages”
- Chapter 7 “Women are Like Waves”
Gender Specific Differences for Alcohol and Drug Use

- Cocaine Study
  - Men use without any predisposition to mood
  - Women use when depressed
- Tobacco Study
  - Men smoke to ease aggression
  - Women smoke to regulate mood & suppress appetite
- Physical & Sexual Abuse
  - Research reports that childhood sexual abuse is more prevalent amongst women substance abusers than males
  - Women with substance use disorders are at greater risk of violence than Males
Gender Specific Differences for Alcohol and Drug Use cont'

- Age of onset of drug use is later for women
- Women are more likely to self-medicate using medications that are used for mental health issues
- Women who seek drug treatment are less likely to have a high school diploma or be employed
- Women are more likely to have other health problems
- Suicide attempts
Gender with relation to treatment

- Different experiences of physical/sexual trauma
  - Interpretation
  - Guilt
- Families where substance use was a factor
- Issues with body image and self-esteem
  - Started at adolescence
- Unwilling to report drug use because of social expectations
  - Pregnant women don’t use
  - Woman are suppose to be caregivers/providers
Gender with relation to treatment cont’

- Women only treatment provides a unique experience for women to share openly
  - Share without judgment
  - Safer & more comfortable
  - Willing to discuss highly sensitive personal issues
- Women face different barriers to treatment
  - childcare, financial sufficiency
  - social isolation
  - lack of support and dilemmas with parenting
- Relationship issues with men
  - Domestic violence
  - Co-dependency
- Gender imbalance
  - More men in TX than woman
Women Only Groups

- Women can have common discussions
  - Giving birth; substance use while pregnant
  - Single mother parenting
- There is a level of trust amongst gender that is developed
  - Building healthy friendships
  - Phone list
  - Personal discussions (Parenting, Hormonal issues, etc.)
- Reduction in substance use based on familiarity and comfort level
  - Peer Motivation
  - “Each women’s journey becomes another woman’s hope”
Women Only Groups cont’

- Discussions on feelings and emotions
- Less fixation on body image and self esteem
- Less distraction with male counterparts
- Willingness to lead and confidence in leadership roles.
- The freedom to have fun
Having Fun
Relationships Matter

- Relationships with primary Counselors/Clinicians and other treatment staff shape treatment for women
- Case Management and a working relationship with a separate professional outside of the counseling arena
- A diverse staff of professionals that represent what the women are seeking
When Children are involved

- Desire for women to heal for the family
- Childcare services
- Focus on keeping my children with me
- Parenting classes and other parenting services
  - Mindful Parenting; Temperament Training & In-Home Parenting
The Children
Clinician’s Must…

- Compassion and empathy
- Trust and Safety
- Constancy
- Provide positive direction
- Familiar with additional resources
- Help client interpret life experiences
What Clinicians should know

- Clinicians must be aware of women sensitive issues
  - Abortion, Women Related Cancers, Overall Health related issues

- Clinicians must be aware of transference issues
  - clinicians past relationships with women
  - expectations of clients and trust factors

- A one stop approach may not work for women
  - Individualized treatment plan
  - Many layers
  - Versatile clinician
What Clinicians should know cont’

● Ability to provide a framework
  – Treatment readiness
  – Progress & Goals
  – Follow up

● Intensive treatment services
  – Provide Structure
  – Outpatient, Inpatient

● In-depth services
  – Grief
  – PTSD & Postpartum Depression

● Meet the client where they are without expectations of where they should be
Approaches in working with women

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Individual Counseling
- Weekly sessions on Women’s Health related issues
- Trauma Groups
- Mindful Parenting/Temperance
- Contingency Management
  - 5/5
  - Incentives
- Mental Health Counseling
- Relapse Prevention Modules
- Motivational Interviewing
Motivational Interviewing our Fav!

- **Pre-contemplation**
  - A person that is not seeing a need for a lifestyle or behavior change

- **Contemplation**
  - A person is considering making a change but has not decided yet

- **Preparation**
  - A person has decided to make changes and is considering how to make them

- **Action**
  - A person is actively doing something to change

- **Maintenance**
  - A person is working to maintain the change or new lifestyle, possibly with some temptations to return to the former behavior or small lapses
The W.A.N.T.S....

- Wisdom; Acceptance; Nurturing; Taught; Strength
- Counselor relationship
- Support and motivation
- Focus of the entire family
- Non-Authoritative Relationship
- Childcare
- Lunch & Snacks
This is the Secret

- Providing more Women Centered Treatment
  - Getting more women in TX
  - Reuniting families
  - Breaking the cycle
  - Providing opportunities for women to heal
“To keep our faces toward change and behave like free spirits in the presence of fate is strength undefeatable.”

Helen Keller
Scenarios
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- Addressing the Gender-specific service needs of women with substance use disorders webinar 2018