

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

Workshop 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 addicted women 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 Substance Abuse* (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 both in prisons and in community- based programs. The workshop also covers the strengths and limitations of Twelve Step programs for women and includes materials from Dr. Covington's book *A Woman 's Way through the Twelve Steps* and its companion workbook.

Workshop Topics

- Differences in treatment of male and female addicts and in their recovery processes
- Relationship between female addiction and female incarceration and supervision
- Developmental treatment model and continuum of care of addicted women
- Adapting the treatment model for use with different populations
- Strengths and limitations of Twelve Step programs for women

Workshop 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 treatment techniques
- Explore the strengths and limitations of Twelve Step programs for women