

From Juan Navarro, Executive Director
Los Angeles Centers for Alcohol and Drug Abuse

WOMEN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

On the heels of the third national Women's March last month, maybe it's time to include women's behavioral health disparities in the conversation. Statistics on women, mental illness, substance use disorders, and related problems are sobering:

- Women are 40% more likely than men to develop mental illness
- Rates of eating disorders are 2-3 times higher in women than men
- Over 50% of women living with mental illness have suffered abuse
- Women are twice as likely as men to suffer PTSD
- Women are 2-3 times more likely to attempt suicide (although men die from suicide 4 times more often)
- Young women are twice as likely as young men to report alcohol as their substance of choice
- Women are less likely than men to seek behavioral health treatment, and more likely to face gender-specific treatment barriers to treatment when they do



- The rate of opioid deaths among women ages 30-64 have increased 492% since 1999
- Women who smoke are twice as likely as men to have heart attacks, experience faster lung deterioration, and they higher risk of pulmonary disease and lung cancer

So, where do we start? I believe "think globally, act locally" is a good place. Research shows twice as many women as men are referred to treatment from community agencies. For women, referral sources most often include welfare and health care providers (whereas 40% of men are referred by the criminal justice system). Women at risk for behavioral health problems are right here in our backyard, and we need to step up our advocacy game. Please identify a comprehensive, evidence-based risk assessment tool and deliver it to girls and women when they access any kind of social or healthcare service. L.A. CADA is proud to act as your women's treatment referral resource – call us at (562) 906-2676.

Clients Corner: TINA L.

"My name is Tina and all I can say is I wish I found the program sooner -- I lost my two girls in my addiction. I loved them, I wanted to be their mom, but I just couldn't stay clean. They called it child neglect and put them in two different foster homes. At that point, I lost everything that ever meant something to me. I became worse than ever, drowning out my depression with booze, pot, pills -- anything I could get my hands on. When I ended up pregnant again, I can't say it was by accident. But there I was. On the same path of drugs, parties, hanging with losers. It was only a matter of time before history was (going) to repeat itself. When the doctor told me about L.A. CADA's treatment for pregnant women, I thought, maybe this is a way. Maybe I can change. And the program really helped me do it. Today, I'm clean, sober, and learning how to be a good mom to my new little boy. I have hope someday I can get my girls back and we can be a family again. Without this program, I'd still be out there."

COMING UP... **NEW**

Professional Training Series • 4 CEUs:

LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

"The Low Down on HIV, HCV & STI's"

Charles McWells, Principal Investigator/
Project Director of Project 90, L.A. CADA

February 22, 2019 • 12:30pm–4:30pm

L.A. CADA Training Center
5861 Cherry Ave., Long Beach, CA 90805

"Sexual Diversity and PrEP"

John-Carlos Fabian

Project Manager, START In-Custody Treatment
L.A. County Men's Central Jail, L.A. CADA

March 29, 2019 • 12:30pm–4:30pm

L.A. CADA Wellness Center
11015 Bloomfield Ave., Santa Fe Springs, CA
90670

To register, go to <http://www.lacada.com>

THE EVIDENCE IS IN: Gender-Specific Treatment

Men and women have different pathways to substance use and mental health disorders, and the genders experience addiction and treatment differently. This is determined not only by biological and genetic differences, but by culturally defined roles, such as how people view themselves. Matching behavioral health treatment to the gender-based needs of our clients is not optional -- as service providers we owe women and men treatment that works.

For women, evidence-based, gender-responsive treatment addresses their role as caregivers, healthcare concerns unique to women, social/personal relationships, past abuse and trauma, as well as culture, sexism, racism, and poverty. Gender-specific care also provides the services needed by women, including family and child-related services, comprehensive case management, mental health services, and disability services. Above all, gender-specific treatment is a safe place that promotes trust via trauma-informed, culturally competent, and strength-based interventions. All staff are continuously trained and monitored in the delivery of trauma-informed care and women's treatment practices. At L.A. CADA, we use the excellent Seeking Safety curriculum to address co-occurring trauma and substance use disorders, as well as the Helping Women Recover model focusing on self, relationship, sexuality, and spirituality. Read about women's gender-specific treatment: [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)