

Women's Services Practice Improvement Collaborative

In October 2004, DMHAS launched a three-year initiative, the Women's Services Practice Improvement Collaborative (WSPIC), to enhance the behavioral health service system for women in a way that is trauma-informed, gender-specific, and that promotes self-determination.

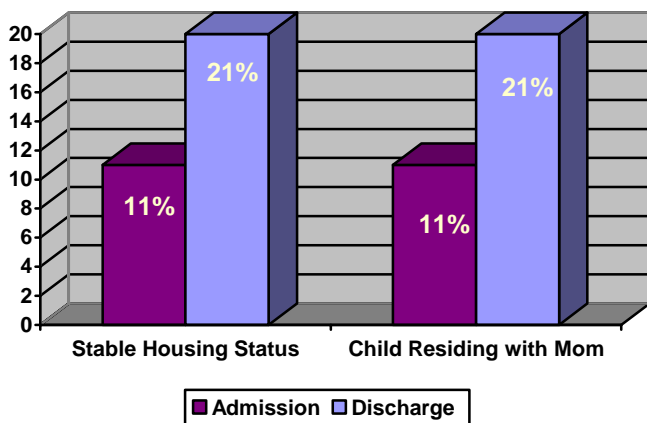


A 2004 study from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) showed that *women with histories of psychiatric disorders, substance use disorders, and violence (trauma) have improved results when treatment addresses all three issues. Findings also revealed that women who actively participate in their own treatment report better "recovery" outcomes than those who do not.*

The goal of WSPIC is to improve treatment outcomes and the quality of services for women receiving substance abuse treatment in Connecticut through participation in a recovery-oriented treatment system of care that incorporates best practices in gender-responsive and trauma-informed programming.

DMHAS and other key stakeholders developed strategies to improve programs for women and to measure whether these changes were successful. Retreats involving national experts were held with 17 women's specialty program providers and resulted in the development of Gender-Responsive Treatment Guidelines; Gender-Responsive Guidelines Self-Assessment Tool; and Outcomes Tool and Research Methodology.

Improvements Following Treatment and Coordinated Community Case Management



After receiving residential treatment with coordinated discharge planning and community-based case management, nearly twice as many women had stable housing. Significantly more women had their child residing with them.

WSPIC Highlights

- **535 women admitted** to women's specialty residential programs October 2004 through December 2006.
- **78%** of women eligible for case management services were *served by Women's Recovery Specialists*.
- **Best practice guidelines** distributed to all Women's Specialized Residential Programs.
- Women's specialized residential **programs across CT collaborated** to improve the quality of services.
- **Ongoing data collection** helps to understand the needs of women and the effectiveness of clinical and case management interventions.