

Gender Matters: Creating Trauma-Informed Services for Women

Stephanie S. Covington, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.
Center for Gender and Justice
Institute for Relational Development
La Jolla, CA

Norlien Foundation Symposium
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
October 8, 2014 Plenary

1

© S. Covington, 2014

Women and Addiction

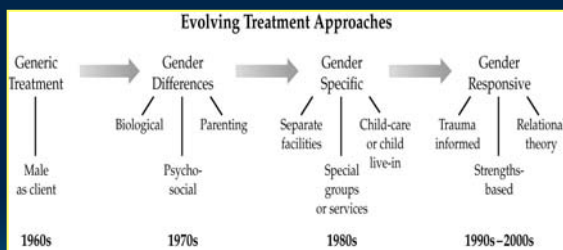
Historical Overview

- Victorian era
- Women's movement
- Cultural perspective
- Today

2

© S. Covington, 2014

Evolving Treatment Approaches



From "Generic to Gender-Responsive Treatment: Changes in Social Policies, Treatment Services, and Outcomes for Women in Substance Abuse Treatment," by C. E. Grella, 2008. Copyright 2008 by Christine E. Grella. In *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, November 2008, (SARC Suppl. 5).

3

© S. Covington, 2014

Gender-Responsive Treatment

- Creating an environment through:
 - site selection
 - staff selection
 - program development
 - content and material
- that reflects an understanding of the realities of the lives of women and girls, and
- addresses and responds to their strengths and challenges.

Source: Covington, S.S., & Bloom, B.E. (2006). Gender-responsive treatment and services in correctional settings. In E. Leeder (Ed.), *Inside and out: Women, prison, and therapy*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth.

© S. Covington, 2014



5

© S. Covington, 2014

Women's Issues: An International Perspective

- **Shame and Stigma**
- **Physical and Sexual Abuse**
- **Relationship Issues**
 - fear of losing children
 - fear of losing a partner
 - needing partner's permission to obtain treatment

6

© S. Covington, 2014

Women's Issues: An International Perspective

- **Treatment Issues**
 - lack of services for women
 - not understanding treatment
 - long waiting lists
 - lack of childcare services
- **Systemic Issues**
 - lack of financial resources
 - lack of clean/sober housing
 - poorly coordinated services

7

© S. Covington, 2014

Violence Against Women

Violence against women is so pervasive that the United Nations has addressed and defined violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”

8

Source: United Nations General Assembly, 1993.

© S. Covington, 2014

Moral Challenges

- 19th century – slavery
- 20th century – totalitarianism
- 21st century – brutality against women and girls

9

Source: NY Times 9/23/09

© S. Covington, 2014

Two Kinds of Suffering

- Natural
- Created

10

© S. Covington, 2014

Traumatic Events

Trauma can take many forms:

- Emotional, sexual or physical abuse
- Neglect
- Abandonment (especially for small children)
- Extremely painful and frightening medical procedures

11

© S. Covington, 2014

Traumatic Events (cont.)

- Catastrophic injuries and illnesses
- Rape or assault
- Muggings
- Domestic violence
- Burglary
- Automobile accidents

12

© S. Covington, 2014

Traumatic Events (cont.)

- Immigration
- Natural disasters (hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, volcanoes)
- Stigmatization
- Terrorism such as 11th September 2001
- Witnessing violence such as a parent harming another parent

13

© S. Covington, 2014

Traumatic Events (cont.)

- The unexpected/violent loss of a loved one (even of a pet)
- Combat/war
- Torture
- Kidnapping
- Victim of trafficking
- Intergenerational (cultural) trauma

14

© S. Covington, 2014

Historical Trauma

- Across generations
- Massive group trauma
- Examples include: Native Americans, African Americans, Holocaust survivors, Māori, First Nations, and others

15

© S. Covington, 2014

Definition of Historical Trauma

...the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding... spanning generations, which emanates from a massive group trauma.

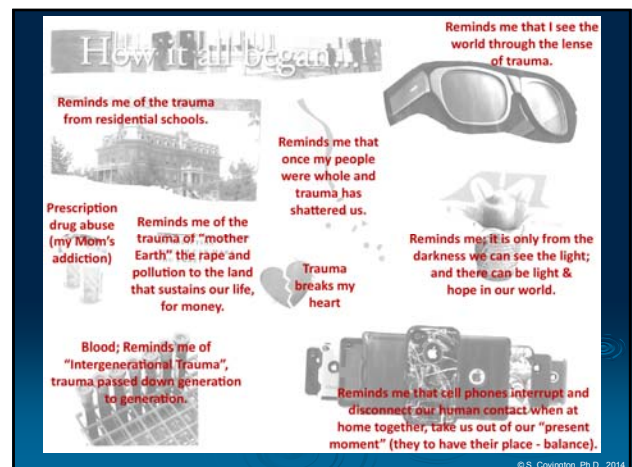
Source: Brave Heart, M.Y.H. (2005). *From intergenerational trauma to intergenerational healing*. Keynote address at the Fifth Annual White Bison Wellbriety Conference, Denver, CO, April 22, 2005.

16

© S. Covington, 2014



© S. Covington, Ph.D., 2014



© S. Covington, Ph.D., 2014

Interpersonal Violence (Intimate Partner Violence – IPV)

Of all these forms of trauma, women are at greater risk of interpersonal abuse than men.

19

© S. Covington, 2014

Trauma



Gender Differences

20

© S. Covington, 2014

Canadian Study (Juvenile Justice)

Sample Size	Ever been raped, or been in danger of being raped.
118 Females	46.90%
235 Males	6.2%

21

Source: S. Brown, Ph.D.

© S. Covington, 2014

Trauma-Informed Services

- Take the trauma into account.
- Avoid triggering trauma reactions.
- Adjust organization so that trauma survivors can access and benefit from services.

22

Source: Harris & Fallot

© S. Covington, 2014

A Culture Shift: Core Values of Trauma-Informed Care



23

© S. Covington, 2014

A Culture Shift: Scope of Change in a Distressed System

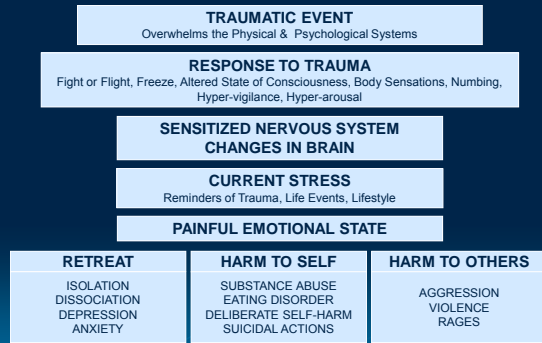
- Involves all aspects of program activities, setting, relationships, and atmosphere (more than implementing new services)
- Involves all groups: administrators, supervisors, direct service staff, support staff, and clients (more than service providers)
- Involves making trauma-informed change into a new routine, a new way of thinking and acting (more than new information)

24

Source: Roger Fallot, Ph.D.

© S. Covington, 2014

Process of Trauma



25 Source: Covington, S., *Beyond Trauma: A Healing Journey for Women*[®]
Healing Trauma: Strategies for Abused Women CD-Rom[®]. © S. Covington, 2014.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

- Collaboration between
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - Kaiser Permanente HMO in California
- Largest study ever
- 17,000 adult members participated

26

© S. Covington, 2014.

ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

Before age 18:

- Recurrent and severe emotional abuse
- Recurrent and severe physical abuse
- Contact sexual abuse
- Emotional neglect
- Physical neglect

27

© S. Covington, 2014.

ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

Growing up in a household with:

- Both biological parents *not* being present
- Your mother being treated violently
- An alcoholic or drug-user
- A mentally ill, chronically depressed, or family member attempting suicide
- A family member being imprisoned

(N = 17,000)

28

© S. Covington, 2014.

ACE Study (Adverse Childhood Experiences)

Results

ACEs still have a profound effect 50 years later, although now transformed from psychosocial experience into organic disease, social malfunction, and mental illness.

- Smoking
- Alcoholism
- Injection of illegal drugs
- Obesity

29 Felitti, V.J.: Origins of Addictive Behavior: Evidence from the ACE Study. 2003
 1:52(8): 547-59. German. PMID: 14619682 (PubMed-indexed for MEDLINE).

© S. Covington, 2014.

Higher ACE Score Chronic Health Conditions

- Heart disease
- Autoimmune diseases
- Lung cancer
- Pulmonary disease
- Liver disease
- Skeletal fractures
- Sexually transmitted infections
- HIV/AIDS

30

© S. Covington, 2014.

ACE Study (continued)

Women 50% more likely than men to have a score of 5 or more.

31

Source: Felitti and Anda, 2010

© S. Covington, 2014

Women in Prison Childhood Traumatic Events Largest Effect-Mental Health

- Psychotropic medication
- Mental health treatment
- Attempted suicide
- Traumatic stress

32

Source: Messina & Grella, 2005

© S. Covington, Ph.D., 2014

Women in Prison Childhood Traumatic Events Largest Effect-Mental Health

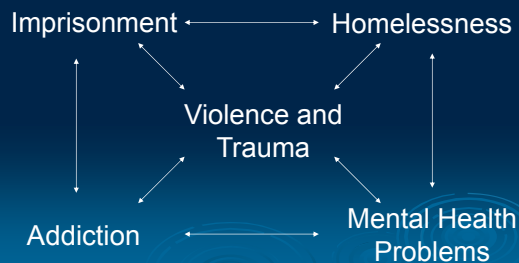
Score of 7 or more "yes" answers
=
980% more risk of having
mental health problems

33

Source: Messina & Grella, 2006

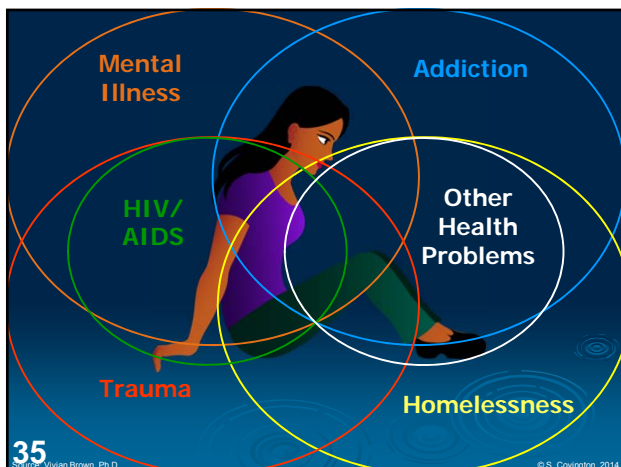
© S. Covington, Ph.D., 2014

Changes in Understanding: The Centrality of Trauma



34

© S. Covington, 2014



35

Source: Vivian Brown, Ph.D.

© S. Covington, 2014

Trauma and Substance Abuse

The women with more experiences of trauma had more severe substance abuse issues.

36

Source: Johnson, Cottler, O'Leary, & Abdallah, 2010

© S. Covington, 2014

Abuse and Substance Use

Abuse within the first five years of life is significantly associated with substance use in girls as young as twelve, through the teen years, and in the early twenties.

37

Source: Lansford, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 2010

© S. Covington, 2014

Substance Use

Women who experience more than one sexual assault are 3.5 times more likely to either start or increase the frequency of their substance use than women with only one assault experience.

38

Source: McFarlane, Malecha, Gist, Watson, Batten, Hall, & Smith, 2005

© S. Covington, 2014

Sexual Abuse and Mental Health

Women who have histories of sexual assault commonly experience multiple factors:

- 65 percent experience PTSD
- 51 percent experience depression
- 82 percent develop anxiety
- 49 percent become dependent on alcohol
- 61 percent use illicit substances
- 44 percent experience thoughts of suicide
- 19 percent attempt suicide

39

Source: Campbell, Dworkin, & Cabral, 2009

© S. Covington, 2014

Women's Integrated Treatment (WIT)

This model is holistic, integrated and based on:

- The gender-responsive definition and guiding principles
- A theoretical foundation
- Interventions/strategies that are multi-dimensional

(Covington, 2007)

40

© S. Covington, 2014

Guiding Principles for Gender-Responsive Services

- Gender
- Environment
- Relationships
- Integrated Services
- Economic & Social Status
- Community

41

© S. Covington, 2014

Guiding Principles

- **Gender:** Acknowledge that gender makes a difference.
- **Environment:** Create an environment based on safety, respect, and dignity.

42

© S. Covington, 2014

Guiding Principles (cont.)

- **Relationships:** Develop policies, practices, and programs that are relational and promote healthy connections to children, family, significant others, and the community.
- **Services:** Address substance abuse, trauma, and mental health issues through comprehensive, integrated, and culturally relevant services.

43

© S. Covington, 2014

Guiding Principles (cont.)

- **Socioeconomic status:** Provide women with opportunities to improve their socioeconomic conditions.
- **Community:** Establish a system of comprehensive and collaborative community services.

(Bloom, Owen, Covington 2003)

44

© S. Covington, 2014

Theoretical Foundation

The theories related to gender and substance abuse (and any other relevant treatment services) that create the framework of thought for program development. This is the knowledge base that creates the foundation upon which the program is developed.

45

© S. Covington, 2014

Treatment Strategies

The approaches used in the program that create the therapeutic process. These are the ways in which theory is operationalized (how theory is applied).

46

© S. Covington, 2014

Helping Women Recover: A Program for Treating Addiction

Theory of Addiction

- Holistic health model
- Chronic neglect of self in favor of something or someone else

Theory of Women's Psychological Development

- Relational-Cultural Theory (Stone Center)

Theory of Trauma

- Three Stage Model (Herman)
- Upward Spiral – A Transformational Model (Covington)

47

© S. Covington, 2014

Treatment Strategies

- Cognitive-behavioral
- Guided imagery
- Relational therapy
- Mindfulness
- Expressive arts
- Mind-body (yoga)

48

© S. Covington, 2014

Gender-responsive Materials (trauma-informed)

- *Women and Addiction:
A Gender-Responsive Approach*
- *Helping Women Recover*
- *Helping Men Recover*
- *Beyond Trauma:
A Healing Journey for Women*
- *Healing Trauma:
Strategies for Abused Women*

49

© S. Covington, 2014

Gender-responsive Materials (trauma-informed)

- *Women in Recovery*
- *A Woman's Way through The Twelve Steps*
- *Voices:
A Program of Self-Discovery and
Empowerment for Girls*
- *Becoming Trauma Informed:
A Training Curriculum for Correctional
Professionals*

50

© S. Covington, 2014

Gender-responsive Materials (trauma-informed)

- *Beyond Violence:
A Prevention Program for Criminal Justice-
Involved Women*
- *Beyond Anger and Violence:
A Program for Women*

51

© S. Covington, 2014

Self-Help Books

- *Leaving the Enchanted Forest:
The Path from Relationship
Addiction to Intimacy (relationships)*
- *Awakening Your Sexuality:
A Guide for Recovering Women
(sexuality)*
- *A Woman's Way through The Twelve
Steps (addiction and recovery)*

52

© S. Covington, 2014

Trauma-specific Materials for Women

- *Beyond Trauma* (Stephanie Covington)
- *Healing Trauma* (Stephanie Covington)
- *TREM* (Maxine Harris)

Trauma-specific Materials for Men

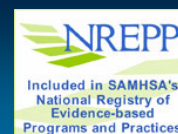
- *Helping Men Recover* (Covington, Griffin & Dauer)
- *M-TREM* (Roger Fallot)

53

© S. Covington, 2014

Evidence-Based

- Researched in
 - Residential treatment
 - Women's prison
 - Drug court
- Listed on NREPP

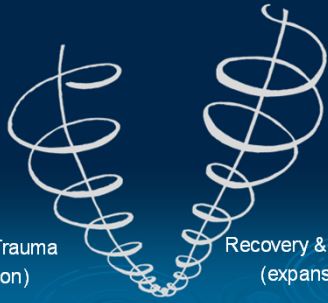


54

© S. Covington, 2014

Upward Spiral

Transformation



Addiction & Trauma
(constriction)

Recovery & Healing
(expansion)

55

© S. Covington, 2014

Women and Girls Healing

Working on multiple levels:

- Individual
- Political
- Spiritual

56

© S. Covington, 2014