

# ADDRESSING GBV:

A Key Element in Gender-Sensitive Addiction Treatment Programs





Odyssey House Louisiana (OHL) is a non-profit behavioral health care provider with an emphasis on addiction treatment. OHL's encompassing system of care includes prevention, detox, treatment, behavioral and medical healthcare, life-skills, housing, and case management. Across all of its program, OHL provides services to approximately 1,500 individuals per month.

# PROGRAMS



## MEDICALLY SUPPORTED DETOX

Appropriate for people who have chronically abused many types of substances, especially opiate pain pills, prescribed anxiety and muscle relaxing medications, alcohol, and heroin.



## RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT

An (approximately) 28-day program that intensively focuses on the most basic aspects of drug rehab treatment, such as abstinence from drug abuse, life skills building, and recovery tools.



## IOP WITH HOUSING

After completion of the 28-day program, clients are able to reside in a safe and sober living environment while developing life skills that enable them to gain employment and a strong support system.



## PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

FQHC offers general adult healthcare, behavioral health services with counseling, medication management, STD screening and treatment, HIV testing, supportive services and more.



## HOUSING & CASE MANAGEMENT

Focuses on moving individuals into stable, secure housing, and keeping these individuals housed and engaged in case management. Includes Permanent Supportive Housing and Sober Living.



## OUTREACH & PREVENTION

- Mobile Health Unit
- Community events & HIV Testing
- Naloxone trainings
- Online radio station
- Podcasts
- Harm Reduction



# VIOLENCE/TRAUMA & SUBSTANCE USE



## CO-OCCURRING ISSUES

Violence and substance use are intimately linked and often occur simultaneously. However, while they are intertwined, it is a complicated relation where one does not always precede the other. Regardless of which issue is present first, drug use and acts of violence only exacerbate each other's effects.



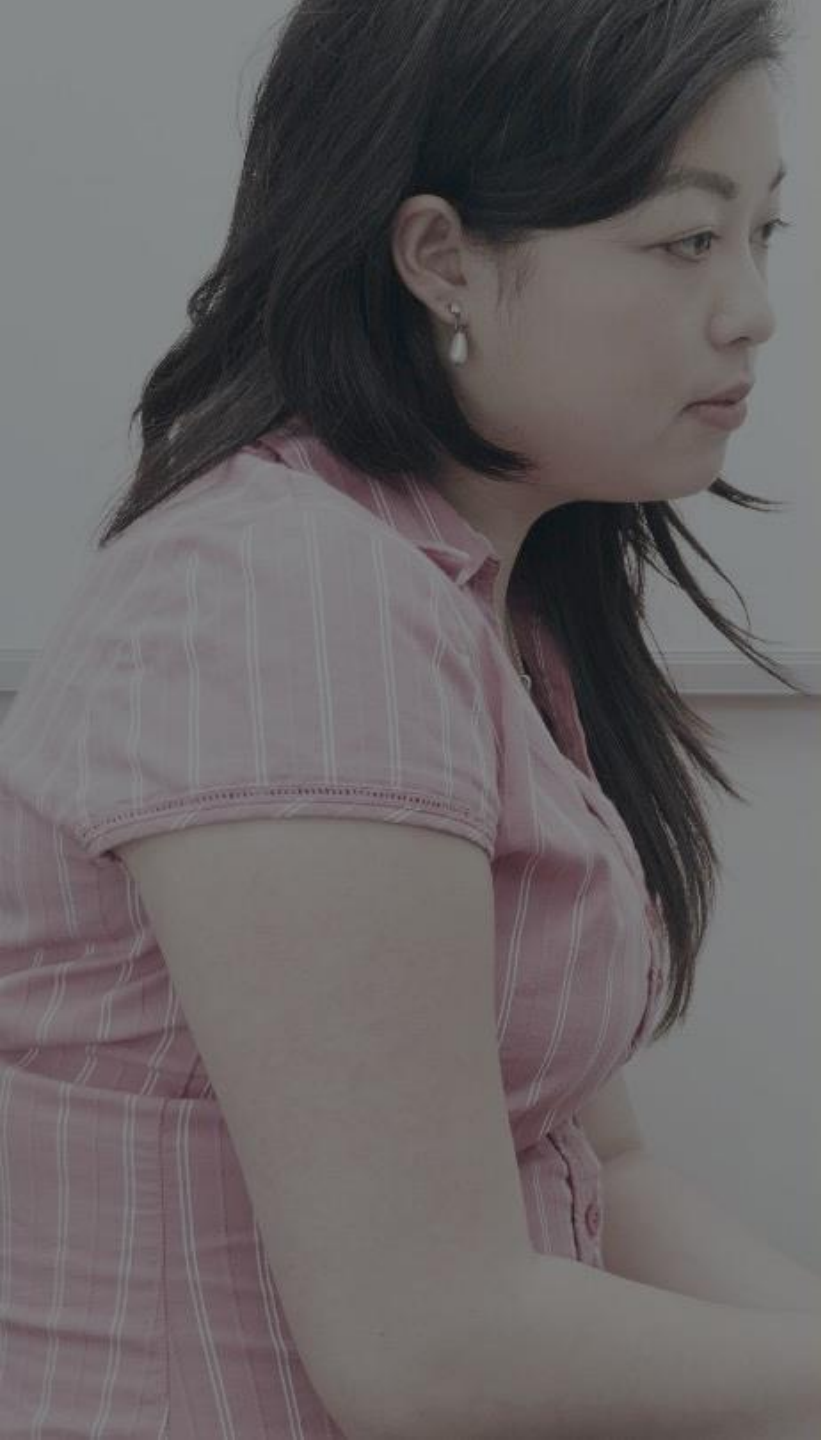
## INTERSECTION OF SERVICES

Services addresses these issues often operate in silos. The intersecting public health problems of violence and substance use should be taken into consideration in services and patient care protocols.



## MINORITY DISPARITIES

Racial and ethnic minorities experience these issues at significantly higher rates than non-minorities, exacerbated by high rates of poverty, lower education rates and housing instability. These all also contribute to increased risk factors for other issues, such as HIV/AIDS.



To address these issues,  
OHL applied for and was  
awarded a

**Substance Abuse and  
Mental Health  
Administration**

(SAMHSA) grant:

**Targeted Capacity  
Expansion (TCE)-HIV**





Odyssey House Minority Empowerment Group for Addiction

# GOALS:



Expand and enhance outreach and trauma-informed outpatient substance use treatment services to racial/ethnic minority women (e.g. African American, Hispanic/Latino, or other minority groups) who are high-risk substance abusers



Provide HIV testing; provide outpatient substance abuse treatment; provide case management and access to wraparound services, including primary healthcare, HIV/AIDS case management, housing support, and employment services



Implement trauma-informed, evidence-based interventions





Built into OHL's Intensive Outpatient with Long-Term Housing Program, participants were dually enrolled in OHL's treatment program and gender-sensitive groups were added to weekly therapy schedules.

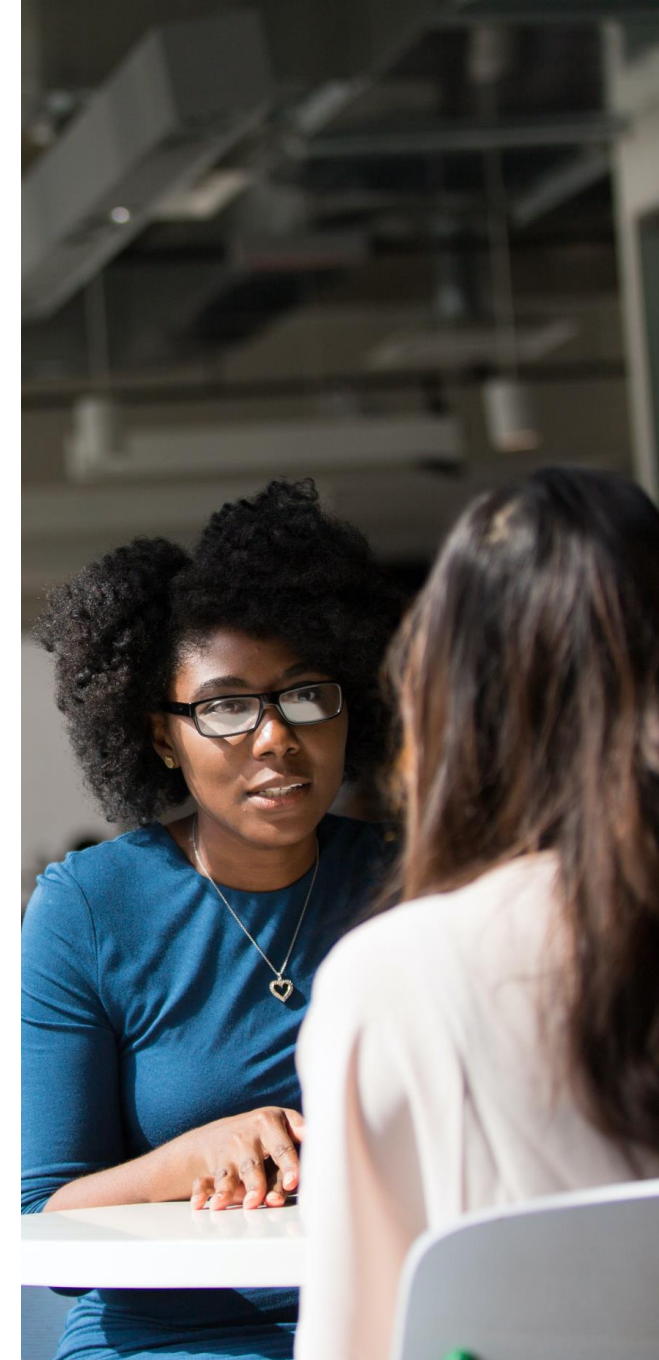


Participants were connected to group therapy, an individual counselor and a case manager.



Working collaboratively, the counselor, case manager and client would specify goals and objectives, as well as specific services, referrals, or resources each participant would receive, including:

- the development of life skills necessary to navigate the surrounding environment;
- access community resources such as banks, employment agencies, government offices, and recreational and educational organizations;
- pursuit of educational and occupational opportunities;
- obtaining housing, managing finances, and accessing public assistance.



# GENDER SENSITIVE CURRICULUMS



**SISTA**



**Seeking Safety**



**A Woman's Path  
to Recovery**



**Economic  
Success**



**Helping Women  
Recover**



# SISTA

## SISTERS INFORMING SISTERS ON TOPICS ABOUT AIDS

- Peer-led, skill-building intervention project with overall goal to reduce sexual risk behavior by heterosexually-active African American women at highest risk for HIV.
- 5 sessions include discussions of self-esteem, relationships, and sexual health:
  - Ethnic/Gender Pride
  - HIV/AIDS Education
  - Assertiveness Skills Training
  - Behavioral Self-Management
  - Coping Skills



# SEEKING SAFETY

- Developed specifically for co-occurring PTSD and substance abuse.
- Focuses on coping skills and addresses trauma in the present, unlike most treatment approaches that focus on the past.
- Most urgent clinical need is to establish safety—to work toward discontinuing substance use, letting go of dangerous relationships, and gaining control over extreme symptoms such as dissociation and self-harm.
- Example of Topics: Asking for help; Boundaries; Healthy Relationships; Taking good care of yourself; Coping with triggers; Compassion; Healing



# A WOMAN'S PATH TO RECOVERY

- Clinician-led program for women with substance use, uses *A Woman's Addiction Workbook*
- Gender-based approach to help women recover from addictions of all types (substances as well as behavioral addictions)
- Divided into two main sections:
  - Exploration*- Helps women look at their lives in relation to gender and addiction issues. Provides background information on the relationship between gender and addiction, differences between women and men in addiction and recovery, historical barriers to treatment faced by women, and subgroups of women at risk for addiction.
  - Healing*- Guides women through methods of recovery in relationships, beliefs, actions, and feelings



# ECONOMIC SUCCESS

- Assists women, who often have a history of economic dependence on abusive partners, in gaining the skills to effectively manage money issues and draw associations between their past substance use and current economic situation.
- Educational curriculum designed to assist women in (1) examining how money management is related to the recovery process, (2) developing effective money management skills and (3) identifying and planning educational, vocational, and job training opportunities and objectives.





# HELPING WOMEN RECOVER

- Evidence-based program integrates theories of women's psychological development, trauma, and addiction to meet the needs of women with addictive disorders.
- Four modules address the areas that women in treatment identify as triggers for relapse: self, relationships, sexuality and spirituality. Discussions focus on the issues of self-esteem, sexism, family of origin, relationships, domestic violence, and trauma.



# RESULTS:

The program was so successful that OHL was re-granted a new award after the original 3-year award sunset



2013-2016: 110 Participants Served  
2016-2019: 125 Participants Served



Although the SAMHSA funding sunset, OHL continued to incorporate its gender-sensitive programming into its treatment programs



In 2019, SAMHSA funded OHL for a 5-year, male-centered version of the OHMEGA program, specifically geared towards minority men with substance use disorders who are high risk for HIV



**LET'S  
LEARN  
MORE**





# MOVING FORWARD:



## NEED FOR FUNDING & SERVICES



OHMEGA was a time-sensitive grant. Even with extensions, there was always an end date to services.



While OHL can incorporate some of the curriculums, we cannot do it at the full extent that the funded program allowed.



There are MANY more services that can improve a woman's path to recovery and healing from violence, including **Women with Dependent Children Programs**, but these are woefully underfunded and largely unavailable.



# INCREASING RISK

During quarantine due to the COVID-19, home risks became a very dangerous place for victims of violence.

Additionally, there is a marked increase in reported substance use and alcohol consumption due to the many stressors of the pandemic.

We expect to see impacts from this to last well after at-home restrictions loosen.

# SUMMARY



Women are impacted by violence and substance use, and the way these issues co-occur in different ways than men.

These unique impacts should be addressed in safe, like-peer environments to most fully address the underlying issues and identify a path forward in recovery.



HELP

Gender-based curriculums can be extremely helpful to helping women understand how systemic issues have contributed to their substance use and other at-risk behavior and are integral to confronting and resolving past traumas.



Funding and support for gender-specific services, especially integrated into substance use disorder treatment, is extremely limited.

A step past curriculum-only, Women with Dependent Children programs are severely lacking and could have tremendous impacts for both women and their children.