FRN Research Report April 2012: Treatment Outcomes for Women at The Canyon

Background

The Canyon Treatment Center treats substance abuse disorders along with mental health issues in Malibu, Calif. The combination of addiction and mental health therapy is proven to be highly effective for recovery. The Canyon, part of Foundations Recovery Network, also specializes in a wide range of unique therapies, including equine and adventure therapies, while also offering traditional trauma and group therapies.

Women who struggle with past traumas, such as physical or sexual abuse, are more likely to abuse drugs or alcohol. As many as 80 percent of women who seek addiction treatment have experienced past abuse (Cohen & Hien, 2006). Women who need help with psychological problems and physical addictions benefit from the combination of therapies offered at The Canyon.

The Canyon Treatment Center Programs

The Canyon offers a variety of programs on a beautiful 240-acre campus. Staff members understand the importance of privacy as an integral part of recovery and the center offers completely discreet recovery. Individuality is also important at the center. As each person arrives, a therapist creates a treatment program that is reviewed weekly to ensure that it meets the patient’s needs. As part of the process, each patient’s personal therapist works with the medical and therapeutic team as the plan evolves. Individuals are encouraged to maintain an active role in recovery.

Primary treatment programs offered at the center are as follows:

• Alcohol treatment and rehabilitation
• Drug treatment and rehabilitation
• Detoxification and stabilization
• Co-occurring disorders treatment

The Canyon also provides the following services:

• Medical and psychiatric care
• Individual therapy
• Group therapy, gender-specific or combined
• Family therapy
• Art therapy
• Challenge and adventure therapy
• Dialectical Behavior Therapy
• Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing
• Spirituality groups
• Food and mood groups
• Anger management groups
• Health boundaries groups
• Trauma/recovery groups
• Equine therapy
• Community and in-house 12-Step meetings

Substance Abuse Among Women

While men abuse substances at a higher rate than women, women are more likely to abuse drugs due to mental health concerns. For individuals 18 and older, 12.2 percent of men and 5.8 women percent of women reported drug dependence or abuse, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

Substance Abuse Among Pregnant Women

The 2010 survey also revealed that drug and alcohol abuse rates among pregnant women are lower than in women who are not pregnant; 4.4 percent of pregnant women (age 15 to 44) used drugs, compared to 10.9 percent of women who were not pregnant. For alcohol use, the overall percentages were higher; 10.8 percent of women in the age group reported casual to heavy use of alcohol, compared to 54.7 percent of women who were not pregnant.

Drug Abuse and Women Who Experienced Trauma

Women who experienced past trauma can especially benefit from the therapeutic options available at The Canyon. The center offers expert guidance to help women cope with disturbing experiences and overcome mental health conditions, such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Research has shown that a majority of women with a Dual Diagnosis of PTSD and a substance abuse disorder were abused as children. Women in this group are more likely to experience trauma as adults (Cohen & Hien, 2006).

A 2006 study of women diagnosed with PTSD and substance abuse disorders compared treatment outcomes for two groups of women: one group chose treatment while the other group did not receive treatment. Women in the treatment group actively sought Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, a therapy that offers a step-by-step goal-setting process to change behaviors and perceptions about unhealthy emotions. At the end of a three-month period, women in the treatment group showed improvement in PTSD symptoms as well as alcohol usage. There was also a trend toward lower drug usage (Cohen & Hien, 2006).

Gender Differences in Addiction

New research focuses on how men and women respond differently to addiction treatment. Meditation is one coping technique that may be more effective for women than men (Moeller, 2012).
While traditional research has not focused on the impact gender has on addiction, Moeller has noted key differences, particularly with cocaine use.

Female cocaine users are more likely to use cocaine when prompted by stress (Moeller, 2012). The difference may be explained by differences in brain chemistry and ovarian hormones. While more men abuse substances than women, many studies show women tend to have more clinical problems associated with drug and alcohol use.

The Canyon’s Treatment Philosophy

The Canyon offers treatment for co-occurring conditions that addresses drug or alcohol addiction and mental health issues as part of one program. Since it is common for women with suffering from addiction to have mental health concerns, this is an effective approach that takes into account underlying issues.

Our Findings: Treatment Outcomes for Women at The Canyon

This study examines data for female patients treated at The Canyon in Malibu, Calif.

All of the women were part of the residential program at The Canyon. Study participants had a minimum 30-day residential stay in order to manage any addiction and improve mental health. In addition, all respondents reported an addiction during the 30 days prior to admission. Substances covered in this paper include alcohol, cocaine, opiates (excluding heroin and methadone), sedatives and cannabis (marijuana).

Patients at The Canyon were followed from their initial visit through one year. The data, collected from 2008 to 2012, found that a majority of female patients who reported addiction avoided using drugs or alcohol after one year.

Our Findings: Outcomes for One Year Post-Treatment

The Canyon specializes in customized treatment plans that address patients’ physical, emotional and mental well-being. One year after an initial evaluation at The Canyon, female patients who reported problems with drinking alcohol reported the most improvement. During the 30 days prior to the year-end evaluation, the average use of alcohol reported by patients fell. Ninety-six percent of women reported that they did not drink to intoxication during that period (compared to 48 percent initially), while 72 percent (compared to 27.1 percent) reported they did not drink alcohol at all.

Women using sedatives and opiates saw the next best level of improvement at the year’s end; 96 percent reported abstaining from sedatives, while 100 percent reported abstaining from opiates.
Our Findings: Mental Health Outcomes
Patients in this study also responded to questionnaires on their mental health status. Women who work to overcome negative feelings associated with trauma and stress can have the most success in recovery.

During the survey period, patients at The Canyon saw the most improvement with serious depression. At the initial evaluation, 80 percent of women reported problems with depression, while the percentage fell to 35 percent after one year. Two other areas also showed nearly the same rate of improvement: understanding and concentration as well as serious anxiety or tension. Problems with understanding and concentration were experienced by 64 percent of women initially and that rate fell to around 28 percent at one year. Meanwhile, anxiety and tension rates started at 92 percent and dropped to 54 percent.
Conclusion

There is an undeniable connection between past trauma and substance abuse disorders among women. While fewer women than men report addiction, women can be more vulnerable when they have an addiction. Stress, for example, can be a more intense trigger for women. Finding healthy and effective ways to talk about and overcome traumatic experiences is essential for women battling an addiction. The Canyon offers treatment that addresses the stressors in a woman’s life and gives her techniques to make healthy choices every day.

Women battling addiction benefit from the emotional, physical and spiritual support offered by caring individuals. At The Canyon, staff members tailor treatment programs to encourage patients on their own path to recovery. The center’s commitment to addressing mental health concerns along with addiction ensures that patients receive personalized treatment.

Patient participation in our research gives us the opportunity to help all addicted individuals find greater happiness and success. If you would like to speak with a recovery professional today or if you would like to learn more about our research methods and programs, please visit us online at http://www.foundationsrecoverynetwork.com or call us directly at 877-714-1318.
References


