

Launch of the Women's AOD Services Network Gender Responsive Model of Care

22 November 2016

Dr Jo Mitchell, Executive Director, Centre for Population Health, NSW Ministry of Health launched the Women's AOD Network Gender Responsive Model of Care yesterday, the 21 November 2016, highlighting best practice approaches to working with women with AOD use issues.

This notice provides an overview of the NADA Women's AOD Services Network and their recently developed Gender Responsive Model of Care — the rationale for its development and recommendations for its use.

Background

Established in January 2013, the Women's Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Services Network was formed to improve services available to NSW women with substance use issues.

In the 2015-2016 year 5466 women accessed support for AOD use issues in NSW, this amounts to 38% of closed treatment episodes for that periodⁱ. Evidence suggests that these women are most likely to overcome their addictions when treated in gender responsive waysⁱⁱ.

Network members are representatives of women's only specialist non government services in NSW that provide services to substance using women, including those providing services to pregnant women and women with children. Associate members of the network comprise other individuals and services who share an interest in the network aims, which are to:

- Strengthen relationships between network members and other key stakeholders
- Respond to opportunities where collaboration adds value to the network
- Share learnings and promote best practice in assisting women with substance use issues.

To achieve these aims network members (see below) meet regularly to share information and knowledge, to work on joint initiatives and to support advocacy to strengthen and improve services provided to women with AOD issues.

Membership

There are 11 full network members comprising specialist AOD services providers and women's services which provide AOD treatment or support.

- Detour House Inc.
- Dianella Cottage, The Lyndon Community
- Guthrie House
- Jarrah House, Women's Alcohol and Drug Advisory Centre
- Kamira
- Kathleen York House, Alcohol and Drug Foundation NSW
- Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre Inc.
- Phoebe House Inc.
- Sydney Women's Counselling Centre
- WHOS, New Beginnings
- Women and Girls Emergency Centre (WAGEC)

These members reflect the diversity of non government service types available to substance using women (including to pregnant women and those with children). They include:

- residential treatment programs providing intensive support

- general counselling and case management services
- structured day centre/programs and treatment services
- after-care and transitional programs.

The network have worked together with NADA to promote a better understanding of the importance, diversity and validity of women's only service provision for those with AOD use issues. One strategy to meet this aim has been to work together to identify a model of care which bridges all full network members.

Model of Care

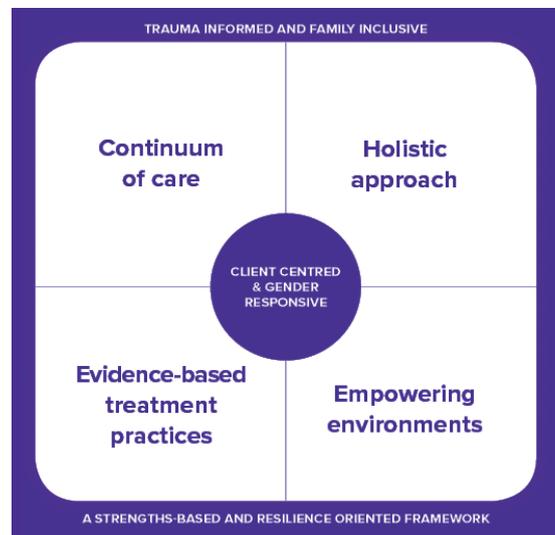
In 2016 the Women's AOD Services Network researched and developed a collective model of care to inform individual network member models of care and to provide a comprehensive description of the nature and approach of the specialist women's AOD services provided in NSW.

The model of care (illustrated here) includes:

- At its core, client centred and gender responsive practice
- The theoretical framework of trauma informed, family inclusive, strength based and resilience orientated practice that provide the foundations for the range of comprehensive services provided.
- Comprehensive services which deliver a holistic approach, empowering environments, evidence based treatment practices and a continuum of care.

The model has been developed with funding support from the NSW Ministry of Health.

For a full description of all elements of the model refer to the [NADA, 2016, Women's AOD Services Network Gender Responsive Model of Care](#).



Recommendation

It is proposed here that the Women's AOD Services Network Gender Responsive Model of Care not only informs individual network member models of care, the development of their service specific client journeys and data collection strategies, but that it also provides an overarching picture of best practice in working with women in the AOD sector. It is our hope that all services working with women with AOD use issues adopt this model as standard practice.

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Brief prepared by the NADA Women's AOD Services Network, a voice for NSW women affected by alcohol and other drug use. The Women's Network is supported by NADA's Women's AOD Services Development Program funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.

ⁱ Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services Minimum Data Set Data (N/MDS) from closed treatment episodes in NSW for the period of 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016 (accessed 16.11.2016)

ⁱⁱ Network of Alcohol and other Drugs Agencies (NADA). 2016 *NADA Practice Resource: Working with Women Engaged in Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment* (2nd ed). Sydney: NADA.