

# Research on Criminal Justice Involved Women and Substance Abuse-What We Know Now

## **WE KNOW THAT**

Women abuse substances at different rates, and for different motivations than men.

## **WE KNOW THAT**

Women use different substances and for different reasons than men.

## **WE KNOW THAT**

Women respond differently to treatment than men, particularly to programs designed initially for men.

## **WE KNOW THAT**

Gender responsiveness requires programs specifically geared to meet the needs of women, who experience substance abuse differently than men on many levels.

## **WE KNOW THAT**

These programs must also be culturally sensitive  
Intersection of gender expectations within culture are important to consider when adapting treatment program to different populations.

## **WE KNOW THAT**

Programs must take into account family and children.

## **WE KNOW THAT**

There are many risk factors and co-occurring disorders (e.g., a history of traumatic exposure) and consequences (interference with parenting) of substance abuse that are unique for women, giving rise to special treatment needs of substance-abusing women with children.

## **WE KNOW THAT**

Service barriers exist for women differently than for men. Substance abusing mothers also experience unique barriers to receiving the services they need to recover, such as absence of child care and lack of gender-specific treatment in their communities.

## **Women and Substance Abuse-The Basics**

Women's substance abuse is different

- Addiction occurs more rapidly for women
- Frequently involves more than one mood-altering substance
- Produces serious medical consequences over a briefer period of time
- Women are more likely to have co-morbid psychiatric disorders
- Women are more likely to be victims of violence, physical abuse, domestic violence and rape