



**Guiding Drug Courts
Towards Equity by
Utilizing Gender-
Responsive Treatment
and a Split-Gender
Court Model**

HELLO!

Deanna England, LICDC-CS, LPCC

She/Her

Clinical Manager of Treatment
Services at Oriana House, Inc.

You can find me at

DeannaEngland@orianahouse.org

Tessa Smith, RDH, BS

She/Her

Research & Grants Administrator at
Oriana House, Inc.

You can find me at

TessaLSmith@orianahouse.org

Objectives

- ❑ Understand the differences in experience between men and women in adult drug courts
- ❑ Gain knowledge of how a combination of gender-responsive treatment and a split-gender court model can address these differences
- ❑ Explore qualitative evidence of how two Ohio adult drug courts have improved client relations by creating gender specific dockets



*Men and Women in Drug Courts
and Treatment Settings*
How are they different?

Men in the CJ System

- ❑ More violent crimes
- ❑ Disproportionately men of color, especially Black men
- ❑ Extensive arrest and conviction
 - Starts younger
 - Longer convictions
- ❑ Uses multiple drugs (more likely for fatal OD)

Women in the CJ System

- Offenses related to drugs, economic survival
- Disproportionately women of color
- Family involvement in CJ
- Survivors of abuse
- Co-occurring dx
- Primary caregivers
- Limited work history

Men in Treatment

- ❑ Longer use history
- ❑ Shame/guilt
 - ❑ Drinking is seen as “macho”
- ❑ More alcohol than drugs
- ❑ Trauma likely to come after development of SUD
- ❑ Use drugs for self-gratification
- ❑ Less likely to see treatment, less likely to complete
- ❑ More high risk behaviors (e.g., needle sharing)

Women in Treatment

- ❑ Shorter, more extreme use hx
- ❑ More motivated by relational concerns
- ❑ More drugs than alcohol
- ❑ Complex, severe trauma and abuse
 - ❑ History starts prior to SUD
- ❑ Co-dependency (more likely to relapse if partner does)
- ❑ Use drugs to cope

Qualitative Research

Urban Court

- 16 Women
- 16 Men
- Interviews
- Female Judge

Exploring the perspective of the client who experienced both the mixed-gender court and the split-gender court

Rural Court

- 17 Women
- 9 Men
- Interviews
- Male Judge

Similar research question but also looking to see if results are generalizable

Differences

Women

Judged by peers

Shy

Worried about the Judges
reaction

Trust

Men

Worried about peers reactions

Penalized

Hard to open up

“

...you kind of develop your own relationship with the judge... So it becomes more individualized. They get to know you, even better over time you get to know them. So like the more you know somebody the way easier it is to talk to them.

“

Building a rapport with the judges. You know, getting a little more personal than just being in front of them with consequences.

Gender-Responsive Treatment

What is Gender Responsive Tx?

- Acknowledges gender makes a difference
- Create an environment of safety, respect, and dignity
- Promotes healthy connections (children, family, SO's, community)
- Integrates SU, trauma, MH treatment
- Provides ways to improve SES
- Establish system w/ court & probation w/ comprehensive and collaborative services

**RESEARCH
CONFIRMS
GENDER-
RESPONSIVE
TREATMENT IS
MOST
EFFECTIVE**

“

I think it's enhanced by separating the genders. Because if you had a woman who was in Phase 4 and you got a gentleman who's in Phase 1, he's going to be more interested in dating her than the words that are actually coming out of her mouth.



The females can open up a lot more because they don't have to worry about the males judging.

I feel that women are more apt to speak truthfully when there aren't a bunch of guys staring at them.

Needs of Men

- ❑ Recognize externalizing behaviors
- ❑ More likely to relapse at “happy connecting” occasions
- ❑ Work on issues of anger, power/control, emotions, impulse control, healthy relationships and sexuality
- ❑ High degree of trust needed to share “weakness”
- ❑ Overcome need to feel self-sufficient and accept help
- ❑ Do best with “goal directed” behavior

Needs of Women

- Recognize internalizing behaviors
- Connection, not separation
- More likely to relapse due to interpersonal loss
- Safe, consistent, and supportive setting
- Take care not to re-traumatize
- Assistance w/ economic and family barriers (transportation, childcare)
- Integrated MH, SUD, and trauma responsive treatment

“

...In my past, I've been victimized by men. It's just easier to talk to women.”

Gender Responsive Court Rooms
And Split Dockets

Split Gender Courts

- ❑ Acknowledges their gender and the role it plays in recovery
- ❑ Creates an environment of safety, respect and dignity
- ❑ Establishes community with peers and the court's team
- ❑ Provides empowerment in recovery

So is there a downside?

- ❑ Not learning from the opposite gender's experiences
- ❑ Losing support from the opposite gender
- ❑ Missing out on how the opposite gender is doing



For myself I learn from others, their lows and their accomplishments. I feel like in recovery were all one, so I don't only relate to a woman's story.

“

*Maybe it could kind of take away from
a different perspective of what's going
on with somebody else.*

Research

Men

Not distracted by women

Court is shorter

Easier to open up

Judge is more relaxed

Women

Easier to open up

Share things they wouldn't
share in front of men

Court is shorter

Not distracted by men

Judge has more time

Building bonds with women

Not being 'checked out'

“

...I feel more comfortable now because I don't feel like I'm being judged.

...I feel more comfortable ... because I get nervous in front of the guys and I don't feel like I have constant eyes on me.

“

Say there's a pretty girl in the back and you just relapsed, it'd be very embarrassing if you had a crush on the girl... Then you relapse and everyone's like 'oh, man, he just went down!' and everyone's pointing, laughing at you. It's completely different now that it's just your dudes, your friends, your fellow men.

“

*“Yeah, it’s so much more comfortable.
Everybody opens up more, and just to see that in
everybody else makes me want to open up more
too.”*

The research behind it all

- ❑ NADCP Best Practice V – Substance Use Disorder Treatment
 - ❑ Recognizes that gender plays a role in treatment services
 - ❑ NDCI's Quality Improvement for Drug Courts
- ❑ What Works? – The 10 Key Components of Drug Court: Research-Based Best Practices

Questions?

Deanna: DeannaEngland@orianahouse.org

Tessa: TessaLSmith@orianahouse.org