



152194

C.1

**FOREVER FREE SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM
AT THE CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN
IN FRONTERA, CALIFORNIA**

Mark R. Kowalewski, Ph.D.
Jean Wellisch, Ph.D.
UCLA Drug Abuse Research Center
1100 Glendon Avenue Suite 763
Los Angeles, CA 90024

March 1994

NCJRS

JAN 5 1995

ACQUISITIONS

152194

**U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice**

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this ~~document~~ material has been granted by
Public Domain/NIJ/OJP

U.S. Department of Justice
to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the ~~copyright~~ owner.

Acknowledgments: Support for this paper was provided by grant 92-IJ-CX-K108, "Criminal Justice Drug Treatment Program for Women Offenders," from the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice.

FOREVER FREE: OVERVIEW AND HISTORY

The California Institute for Women (CIW) in Frontera, California, accommodates women inmates at all custody levels and functions as a reception/processing center for incoming women inmates. The prison opened in 1952 and was designed to house 1,026 women; it currently operates above capacity. Along with its general population, the facility houses women with special needs, such as pregnant women, those needing psychiatric care, and HIV-infected women. Until 1987 it was the only California prison for women felons. In addition to its drug treatment program, CIW provides high school/GED education and two-year college education. It has a prison-based mothers' program and some vocational training.

CIW does not administer the Forever Free program directly, but contracts this service to Mental Health Systems, Inc., of San Diego. Forever Free began May 1, 1991. The program reached its full capacity of 120 inmates in August of 1991 and currently operates at capacity. By the end of 1992, 536 women had entered the program. Participants are housed together during the program but continue their work assignments at the institution. Participation in Forever Free is voluntary, and participants must continue their work assignments and other institutional duties while in the program.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

Forever Free is influenced by a 12-step model of substance abuse treatment. Abuse of alcohol and drugs is defined as a chronic, progressive disease that is often fatal if left untreated. Pharmacotherapeutic treatments, including methadone, are strongly discouraged as simply covering up the underlying psychosocial problems that result in drug abuse. Further, substance abuse is understood as a mechanism through which the abuser has learned to cope with long-term psychological and social stress. Thus, substance abusers need to be taught the skills to more effectively cope with life stress and to deal with painful issues from their past. Substance abuse treatment should help clients gain self-respect and a sense of empowerment over their lives. The person is supported through treatment while the disease is challenged. While the program respects cultural differences, they are not a central focus of the program. In general, despite the ethnic differences of the women served by the program, the issues that emerge in treatment are recovery issues, not cultural issues.

A recent draft of an internal evaluation of the program cites the following goals: 1) provide in-prison treatment with individualized case planning and linkages to community-based aftercare; 2) provide an in-prison program that includes a range of services to meet the psychosocial needs of participants including counseling, group interaction, 12-step programs, educational workshops, relapse prevention training, and transition plans to funnel clients to appropriate community aftercare; and 3) reduce substance abuse among participants.

ADMISSION AND SCREENING

Client Characteristics

A report issued in February of 1992 by the Department of Corrections Office of Substance Abuse Programs describes the client characteristics for Forever Free. The program has included roughly one-third African-Americans, one-third Latinas, and one-third whites. The average age of participants is 32. Roughly three-quarters have dependent children. At any one time about 6% of program participants are pregnant, but other women have recently delivered babies before entering the program. Approximately one-quarter of the women have finished high school and some have completed some college. Five percent of the women sampled for the report stated that they had completed no high school, while 41% completed some high school but did not graduate.

Half the women report heroin as their drug of choice, one-quarter report cocaine. While the 1992 report states that 17% of the women were polydrug users, a 1993 report states that most women in the program were polydrug users. Only about 3% of women report being addicted to alcohol without using other drugs as well.

Drug-related crimes were the reason for commitment to CIW for 35% of the women in the program. Half the women were committed for income-producing crimes such as petty theft or burglary. About half the women were committed from Los Angeles County, with other women coming primarily from San Bernardino, Riverside, and Orange counties, although 17% came from other California counties.

The 1993 report notes that a typical woman in the program has a lengthy history of involvement with the criminal justice system. Most women lack a history of legitimate employment and have engaged in illegal activities to produce income. Further, many women in the program report histories of emotional and physical abuse. The psychosocial background characteristics of this population demonstrate that they are truly disadvantaged. These characteristics, combined with severe drug use histories, make recovery difficult and demonstrate the need for a treatment focus of "habilitation" rather than "rehabilitation."

Screening

Each month 30 inmates complete Forever Free and are paroled, while 30 new inmates begin the program. Recruitment begins with two orientations conducted every week at CIW. Both the program and acceptance criteria are discussed in a half-hour presentation, and one or two participants share experiences they have had in the program. Each interested woman must complete an application for admission, which is submitted to the program's correction counselor for review. There are four main requirements for admission. First, inmates must have between four and six months remaining until their parole date, since Forever Free was designed to serve as a transition to parole for substance abusing women. While the staff believes that women with long-term sentences might also benefit from treatment, the institution only allows women near their parole date to participate. Second, the inmates must have a record of drug and alcohol

abuse. That is, they must have a criminal offense which documents an abuse of alcohol or other drugs. Third, they may not have a record of recent institutional violence. Fourth, they must decline participation in the Mother-Infant and Work Furlough Programs since these would take the inmates away from the institution and not allow them to participate in the program. Pregnant women and women with a dual diagnosis of a mental illness are not automatically screened out of the program. However, schizophrenics and women with mental illness requiring psychotropic medication are screened from the program.

Program counselors administer a drug use history and a psychosocial evaluation at the start of the program to assist in developing the client's treatment plan. The program uses its own assessment instruments (see Appendix A). Standardized instruments have been used in the past, but these were administered for research purposes and not for clinical use. The program coordinator hopes to expand services so that a part-time psychologist and social worker can administer intake assessments and make use of standardized assessment tools. Currently, the program lacks staff with sufficient training to use standardized instruments for evaluation of client's psychosocial needs and addiction severity.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Treatment Plan

Forever Free is a four-to-six month program in which women with substance abuse histories may voluntarily participate before they are released to parole. Participation requires a time commitment of four hours per day, Monday through Friday. Alternate time slots are offered in the morning or evening depending on the women's work schedules. The program includes six main components:

1. *Education.* Participants learn about addiction and the recovery process. Education modules developed by Terence T. Gorski are used.

2. *Relapse prevention group.* A support group where women reflect on how substance abuse has affected their lives helps participants learn to understand personal patterns that may lead to relapse.

3. *Aggression replacement training.* This training helps to improve coping skills. It contains three elements: living skills training, emotional training where participants learn to control emotions such as anger, and moral education where the goal is to raise participants' level of moral reasoning. Kohlberg's theory of moral development is the basis of this element of training.

4. *Women's workshops.* These sessions address issues of particular concern to women in treatment. Topics include communication, assertiveness, self-esteem, problem solving, codependence, parenting, budgeting, and other similar topics.

5. *12-step groups.* Women participate in traditional meetings where the "Big Book" and the 12 Steps are studied and participants share testimonies about recovery. These meetings are

intended to introduce women to 12-step meetings so that they may continue attending after release.

6. *Case management.* Each woman sees her case manager at least once per week. The woman discusses her history in detail with the case manager, and a detailed treatment plan is designed to suit the woman's needs. After the first month, the focus of these meetings shifts to release planning. All women are directed to residential or outpatient treatment after release, but this is voluntary. The program strongly urges women to immediately enter residential treatment if possible.

Program Staff

Forever Free places emphasis on both staff training and life experience with addiction. Several counselors and the program coordinator are recovering substance abusers. The staff includes the coordinator, eight counselors, a relief counselor, and a secretary. A CIW staff person (corrections counselor III) serves as program manager. He ensures that CIW policies are followed, regulates admissions, and monitors the urinalysis program. African-Americans and Latinas are represented on the staff. Apart from the coordinator and manager, all staff are women. There are also three ex-offenders on the staff.

The counselors have a case load of women for individual counseling and also lead the various treatment components discussed above. Staff receive weekly ongoing training on topics related to substance abuse treatment. Staff also attend outside training on pertinent issues. The program manager conducts weekly staff training on institutional rules and procedures. In addition to the paid staff, community volunteers lead the 12-step meetings for inmates in the program.

The program coordinator has a bachelor's degree and over 20 years experience in recovery and in counseling addicted people. Seven of eleven staff are recovering addicts. Some of the staff have bachelor's degrees or have undergone training to get counseling certificates. Four members of the staff are currently taking courses at the bachelor or master level for continued training. While the program coordinator stated that professional training and life experience are both important, he emphasized the fact that many of his staff had personal experience of recovery and many had criminal histories.

Program Compliance

Women participating in the program are not expected to be highly motivated at first. The staff simply asks women to attend all the sessions and "trust the process." Women are not allowed to sleep during classes or make a disruption. If they have three unexcused absences, they are asked to leave the program. Random urine tests are administered to between 5% and 10% of the women per week. Urine tests are also given to women who the staff believe are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. CIW requires that a woman be dismissed for one positive urine test. Other institutional rule violations are also cause for dismissal. These violations include fighting, making threats, homosexual acts, and stealing. Inmates engaged in

these activities are removed from the program and placed in a special unit in seclusion. Inmates are allowed to reenter the program after such disciplinary action on a case-by-case basis. The program coordinator, manager, and the correctional counselor must all agree before a woman may reenter the program.

Program Relations with the Institution

The program coordinator works directly with the program manager who represents the interests of CIW. Both men work together as a team. The program has had a problem in gaining release time from work for participation in Forever Free. Inmates need to have eight hours a day of work to gain the necessary credit to leave the facility. While CIW gives work credit to inmates who participate in educational programs (e.g., GED courses), drug treatment does not qualify for work credit. The program manager has made several proposals to change this policy, but the institution has not cooperated. While the program has a building dedicated to its use in which the inmates are housed, the office space, classroom facilities, and private counseling space are limited. The program also has to link with the medical staff at CIW. Medical and drug treatment staffs have been working toward greater coordination of services. For example, once women begin the process of recovery, they may begin to experience depression or stress. Medical staff might medicate these symptoms, but the program believes that these symptoms are temporary and not unusual in the process of recovery. The program coordinator believes that the medical staff is becoming increasingly cooperative in not prescribing drugs for women who are attempting to recover from addiction. CIW also has a methadone detoxification program for pregnant women addicted to heroin. These women are slowly detoxed and brought down to a very low dosage (6 milligrams) where they are maintained until they deliver their babies. Methadone maintenance is contrary to the philosophy of Forever Free. It is argued that methadone gets in the way of the recovery process since the addict is still dependent on a drug. Further, once pregnant women are detoxed from methadone after delivery, they require a great deal of support. Many women are tempted to go back to heroin use. The detoxification period requires extra drug treatment staff time and resources.

Linkage Into the Community

Forever Free has made linkages with other community treatment programs so that treatment may continue for participants after they are paroled from CIW. Forever Free has contracted with eight residential programs in four counties. All women requesting inpatient treatment are offered a contract bed. Case managers seek beds in non-contract facilities if contract facilities do not meet client needs. They also will obtain beds in facilities outside the four target counties for women paroling to other areas. The 1993 program evaluation found that 90% of women who completed the prison program and spent five or more months in a community residential treatment program successfully completed parole. Entering drug treatment is not a condition of parole for participants, yet case managers strongly encourage community treatment. Treatment possibilities after leaving Forever Free are discussed soon after

women enter the program. Program staff work with parole staff to coordinate the transition. Women need to be transferred to the county where they are being paroled. In some counties, there are limited community treatment options, and it may be more difficult to place women in residential facilities. Other women will not go to residential treatment due to child care constraints or other reasons. In these cases the staff will link the women with outpatient treatment programs. There are approximately 80 outpatient programs that are used for referrals. AA and NA are strongly encouraged. The program will also refer women to a residential program after they leave Forever Free should they feel that outpatient treatment is not adequate for them.

Residential Aftercare Programs

Forever Free contracts with several residential treatment programs so that residential treatment may be provided to any woman who wants treatment. The majority of treatment programs have a 12-Step orientation. One program, Phoenix House, does not use the 12-Steps philosophy as part of its recovery program. We describe three programs that provide contract beds for the Forever free program.

Phoenix House

Women who parole to Orange County are eligible to attend Phoenix House, a therapeutic community. The program began in November 1979 and has an 85-bed adult capacity. There also is an adolescent program in the same facility.

There are three main requirements for admission. Participants must be 18 years of age or older, have completed detoxification if necessary, and have a significant history of drug abuse, with a primary drug of abuse other than alcohol or marijuana. Apart from these requirements, potential clients are screened before admission. No standardized instruments are used for evaluation. The program uses its own screening and assessment tools. Extensive drug use, medical, and criminal histories are taken for each potential client. The program screens for medical conditions that might impede program participation. For example, the program uses "work therapy" in which clients participate in the domestic work necessary to run the program. Thus, a client must be physically fit to do kitchen work or cleaning. Potential clients with a psychiatric problem requiring medication are also screened out. While the staff includes a full-time nurse, there is no physician on staff and dispensing medications becomes problematic. A potential client on medication or under psychiatric care would need to be taken off medication and have a release from a psychiatrist noting that the patient can participate in the program. Phoenix House does not screen for psychological diagnoses that do not require medication or psychiatric supervision. Potential clients with a history of violence are not screened out unless the violence has been severe and may prove to be harmful to staff or other clients. The program will attempt to take anyone who meets these general criteria.

Once admitted to the program, further needs assessment takes place. Through the initial screening and assessment, clients are assigned to a counselor. The goal of treatment is client

Forever Free

resocialization through behavior modification. Phoenix House attempts to deal with social and psychological issues beyond drug abuse, and attempts to work on educational and employment deficits as well as social skills. The client and counselor develop a treatment plan in response to the client's needs and in light of the program goals.

Phoenix House provides GED classes to clients who need them through a program in house (a high school diploma or receipt of a GED is required for graduation from the program). Medical services are provided through the Orange County drug and alcohol services clinic. All clients receive a physical within two weeks of entering the program. However, further medical services are not always available. Counselors attempt to get medical services from the county, but sometimes must rely on the family to help pay for some medical visits. Much of the treatment occurs in groups where both men and women participate and in groups for women only. These groups deal with such issues as parenting and sexuality, as well as attempting to resocialize clients away from drug use. Groups generally are led by Phoenix House staff, but outside providers are brought in to cover special topics on an as needed basis. There are no ongoing service agreements with providers. Clients attend an encounter group three times a week. Both men and women attend these groups and participants confront each other regarding problem areas in each other's lives. Clients also meet and socialize with their counselor's "clan." This group is referred to as a family within the larger family of Phoenix House.

The staff at Phoenix House are all recovering substance abusers, many of whom are program graduates. They are not professionally trained. This is in contrast with the adolescent program, which has a mix of professional staff and non-professional staff in drug recovery. Phoenix House staff are required to attend forty hours of ongoing training per year. Many staff members also go back to school to get drug counseling certification.

The minimum length of treatment is one year, but a client may stay one-and-a-half years. This is followed by a one-year outpatient phase. Clients coming from Forever Free may opt for a six-month residential program if they choose. Clients in the outpatient program begin work before they are released. They also begin a six-month community service project before release and then continue this project while in aftercare. The program must approve where the client lives during the outpatient phase of treatment. Clients do not live alone. They are required to live with another program participant and the living arrangement must be approved by the staff. Occasionally a staff member visits the residence to evaluate the living situation. Participants in this second phase of treatment may not date other program participants or graduates, must not use drugs or alcohol, must not engage in criminal activity, and must sleep alone in their own beds at least four nights per week. Participants attend a group meeting once a week and volunteer at Phoenix house once a month for an eight-hour shift assisting a staff member. After one year participants graduate from the program.

Cedar House

After completing Forever Free, women who parole to San Bernardino County are eligible to enter Cedar House, a residential program with an emphasis on the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Cedar house accepts both men and women and has a 125-bed inpatient capacity.

Forever Free

Women from Forever Free who are nearing the end of the program meet representatives from Cedar House who attend the monthly "graduation" ceremony. Names of women are given to the representative in advance by Forever free case managers.

Clients of Cedar House must be over 18 years of age and have a primary diagnosis of alcohol or substance abuse. Clients may have another dual diagnosis and may take medication for a psychiatric diagnosis as long as they are stable and have a letter from a psychiatrist stating the client is capable of participating in the program. The program does not screen potential clients with medical problems unless they are unable to care for themselves. Pregnant women are accepted into the program, but women may not have their children with them in treatment.

The standard length of inpatient treatment is 60 days; 90- and 180-day programs are also available. Women from Forever Free typically stay for the 90-day, or for the 180-day program, which includes job training at the facility. Once clients have completed inpatient treatment, they may enter outpatient or day treatment programs. These programs, however, are currently not funded by the state for women coming from the Forever Free program.

Length of residential treatment is determined by the client's treatment plan. The plan is developed with the client and a case manager and reviewed by a treatment team. Needs assessment is conducted using an eclectic instrument developed by Cedar House.

Services available for clients at Cedar House include individual counseling, group counseling, couples and family counseling, and parenting classes done in house. Women's group sessions and women's Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held twice per week. Vocational Rehabilitation is available off site. Transportation is provided. Medical care is also provided on site by a full time LVN and by a physician who volunteers his time one day per week. More extensive medical care is available for clients needing hospitalization or tests not available at the on-site clinic.

The treatment staff is primarily composed of former substance abusers in recovery. Some of the staff have received a credential as alcohol and drug treatment counselors, and the goal is to have all treatment staff certified. Currently, staff who are not certified are enrolled in certification programs. In addition, a full-time Licensed Clinical Social Worker is on staff.

The client demographics reflect the population of Forever Free. The program serves about equal numbers of African Americans, Latino/Latinas, and Whites. Over two-thirds have a criminal history and most clients have a poor job history. Clients generally have a low education level.

Impact House

Women paroled to Los Angeles County have the option of entering Impact House, an inpatient facility with a 12-step focus. The facility's liaison person to Forever Free meets with women who have been referred by their counselors and are interested in the program. Screening and assessment occur during this interview. No instrument is used to screen or assess clients. However, women are asked about psychiatric, medical, and drug use histories; their motivation and attitude toward treatment; and family, education, and employment background. Impact House staff also use the psychosocial assessment conducted by Forever Free to assess the needs

of women coming from CIW. Impact House accepts clients who are drug or alcohol dependent. They do not accept women who have a history of psychiatric hospitalization or are medicated for psychiatric problems. Clients with medical problems that would hinder them from participating fully in the treatment program are also screened out. Clients judged not to be sufficiently motivated for treatment are also not admitted to the treatment program.

Forever Free contracts for three beds from Impact House. At any one time, there are approximately 15 women and 65 men. When a woman from Forever Free is accepted into Impact House, staff pick the woman up from the facility on the day of discharge. Once in treatment, they are assigned a counselor who develops a treatment plan with the client. Every two weeks the client's progress is assessed by the staff.

The main focus of the program is to provide a safe and supportive environment for recovery and to teach clients skills for living drug-free through group and individual counseling and through 12-Step meetings. The program also incorporates techniques of confrontation and accountability found in the therapeutic community. Each week clients are required to attend four meetings in the community and two meetings in the facility. Clients are also matched with a sponsor from the community who takes them to a meeting in the community at least one time per week. Treatment staff bring clients to other AA or NA meetings. The treatment program also includes family group therapy. Women's services include a weekly women's support group and a women's workshop focusing on assertiveness and self-esteem training,

The treatment consists of three inpatient phases, and clients may opt for either a three-month or four-to-six month program. The three-month program is designed for clients who are employed, whose addiction career is relatively short, and who do not require extensive employment or rehabilitation counseling or services. The longer program is designed for clients with fewer job skills and lower educational background and with extensive addiction and criminal careers. Clients with more severe addiction histories are linked to a counselor who makes necessary contacts to social services, vocational rehabilitation, or other services as needed and before the client leaves the program. The program does not focus on job training, but encourages clients to work in the facility's wood shop, where furniture is made for use in the facility, or in the mechanic's shop.

The Impact House program includes a fourth phase of aftercare in which clients are helped to make a transition to the community with the help of a counselor and supportive fellowship from AA/NA meetings and aftercare group therapy. Impact House also offers outpatient treatment for clients whose drug or alcohol problem can be treated without inpatient intervention.

All treatment staff are certified as drug and alcohol counselors. A psychologist, a physician, a registered nurse, a pharmacist, a dietician, and a recreational therapist are also on staff. Almost all the staff are recovering addicts or alcoholics, and the many have been Impact House clients.