

**Marin Services for Women Featured Exclusively in  
United Nations Report on Substance Abuse Treatment for Women**

--- MSW Only Gender-Responsive Chemical Dependency Recovery Center  
in the Nation Chosen to be Published ---

GREENBRAE, CA (FEB. 15, 2005) -- Marin Services for Women, a chemical dependency recovery facility offering a full continuum of programs for women and their families in Marin, was the only gender-responsive treatment service provider in the nation to be included in a recent report titled "Substance Abuse Treatment and Care for Women: Case Studies and Lessons Learned," commissioned by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Marin Services for Women is highlighted as one of the case studies worldwide that illustrates how structured treatment services can be made responsive to women.

In the report's fifth chapter, titled "Treatment Services for Substance Abuse That Are Responsive to Gender," MSW's programs, services and outcomes are featured along with case studies of programs from Australia, Brazil, Kenya, Sweden, Austria, Canada, the Czech Republic, India and Panama. The chapter identifies MSW's empowerment-based, trauma-specific approach to working with clients and their families. The report on MSW concludes: "To establish and maintain stable recovery, women need to feel safe enough to allow themselves to hope for a life free from addiction. The experience at MSW validates research indicating the superior efficacy of women-only programs, staffed by women."

MSW Executive Director Ann Harrison states, "We are honored to be showcased in a report that has such internationally significant implications for women and chemical dependency recovery providers worldwide. The report lends further credibility to what chemical dependency experts conclude, as well as what we experience with our own clients: that women have a higher success rate with gender-responsive substance abuse treatment. We hope that reports such as this continue to engender additional research into and funding for the psychological, social and cultural dimensions of substance abuse specific to women all over the world."

The report was initiated in response to the Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction and the measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem, adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session. Acknowledging in the preface that "much less is known about the prevalence and patterns of women's substance use and their treatment needs," the goal of the report is to raise awareness about these needs and to provide tools,

suggestions and practical examples for overcoming access barriers, engaging women in treatment and providing treatment that is responsive to the specific needs of women. A panel of international experts, including leading women's chemical dependency specialist Stephanie Covington of the United States, provided insight and feedback to the publication's development.

In its executive summary, the report states, "Women encounter significant systemic, structural, social, cultural and personal barriers in accessing substance abuse treatment. In most countries of the world, women are underrepresented in positions of power that influence awareness of gender differences, policy development and resource allocation. There is limited information about women with substance use problems and lack of appropriate evidence based on low-cost treatment models for women." With the highest completion rate of all chemical dependency recovery programs in Marin County,\* MSW's charter is to eliminate these barriers so that women of all socioeconomic backgrounds in Marin may be treated. For example, women typically do not seek treatment due to lack of childcare; MSW enables women to live with their children up to five years of age in the center. In its on-site child development center, MSW staff assess children for trauma issues, developmental difficulties, and drug and alcohol effects and are referred to community resources as appropriate.

The UN report also points to the prominence of physical and sexual abuse among substance-abusing women: an astounding ninety percent have been sexually abused at least once in their lifetime, while fifty percent have been physically abused at least once. Accordingly, MSW's philosophy embraces one of safety, support and nurturance that encourages trust and bonding among clients. MSW's therapeutic modalities address histories of abuse, as well as family relationships and concurrent disorders such as depression, anxiety and eating disorders.

Marin Services for Women is committed to advancing community health by providing chemical dependency recovery services for women and their families. MSW's philosophy links recovery from addiction with relational, social and economic empowerment. The agency is dedicated to meeting the community's need to understand the nature, treatment and prevention of chemical dependency.

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