Weku: Trauma-Informed Residential Treatment for Pregnant and Post-Partum Women in Portland, OR

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Weku was a program for pregnant and post-partum women in residential substance abuse treatment implemented at Portland Network of Linktona NI in Portland, Oregon. Weku was designed to be a comprehensive, dual-diagnosis residential treatment that is trauma-informed, culturally-specific, and gender-specific, due to the high level of trauma exposure among women in substance abuse treatment, with estimates as high as 99%. Women in residential treatment for six months with up to two of their children (0-18 years), then transition to the community with continued outpatient treatment.

**Trauma-Informed Services for Women**
- Trauma-informed services using the RICH (Respect, Information, Connection and Hope) model (Saakvitne, 2009)
- Individual and group substance abuse counseling
- Individual and group mental health counseling, including trauma-specific groups using the Trauma Recovery Empowerment Model (TREM, Falleti & Norris, 2002)
- Family Therapy, Couples Group and Parent Training
- Peer Mentors
- Pre-Natal/Post-partum case management
- Employment/Education Services
- Transitional and Permanent Housing Resources
- Pro-social family activities
- On-site Nurse, Pediatric and Adult Psychiatrist
- Advocacy with Corrections and Child Welfare agencies
- Services for children, significant others, family members

Women served 117 women and their families January 2007 to February 2010. Findings presented here are from 83 women whose baseline and 6-months post-baseline data was gathered.

**General Demographics at Baseline (n=117)**
- Age range 20-41 years, average age 28 years
- 43% African American, 45% Caucasian, 9% Native American, 3% Asian, 3% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (more than one race could be selected); 16% Hispanic/Latina (primarily Mexican descent)
- 38% were pregnant at baseline; 97% had at least one child and of those, 89% had 1 to 4 children
- 33% had a high school diploma or GED
- 65% were never married; 75% had a partner at intake
- 75% were satisfied with their current relationship status
- 94% were not employed or attending school; 86% did not have a valid driver’s license

**30 Days Before Entering Treatment (n=117)**
- 81% were housed, of which 34% lived in their own house or apartment and 39% lived in someone else’s home
- 76% had used drugs at least once
- 52% had experienced alcohol or drug-related health, behavioral or social consequences
- 24% reported having been arrested

**Characteristics of the Women Enrolled in Weku**

**Qualitative Findings from the Weku Women**
- 84% of the Weku women were satisfied or very satisfied with the program, with an average rating of 3.28 on a 4-point scale (1 = “Very Dissatisfied” to 4 = “Very Satisfied”).
- 79% of the Weku women attributed positive changes in their life, sobriety or relationships to Weku with an average rating of 4.07 on a 5-point scale (1 = “Not at All” to 5 = “A Lot”).
- When asked what had helped them to maintain and grow related to their recovery, the Weku women most frequently mentioned being able to remain connected to their children (31%).
- The women reported that the most positive aspects of Weku program were the family activities and services (33%), being able to interact or be in treatment with their children (13%) and support their whole family received (8%).

When I knew I could see my husband weekly, I stayed ... and I know if I hadn’t been able to see my kids or have them here I wouldn’t have stayed.

-Weku participant

The women gave high ratings to key Weku service characteristics on a 5-point scale (1 = “Not at All Agree” to 5 = “Agree A Lot”):
- My substance abuse treatment has been targeted to meet where I am in my recovery (mean=3.99)
- Weku services meet my cultural needs (mean=3.73)
- Weku services are designed to meet needs related to any trauma I may have experienced in my life (mean=3.56)

-Weku participant

Women’s Substance Use Reduced Significantly
- 83% of the Weku women had not used alcohol or illegal drugs in the past 30 days at 6-months post-baseline as compared to 7% at baseline (p<.001).
- The average number of days the women used alcohol in the past 30 days decreased significantly from baseline to 6 months (p<.03).
- The average number of days the women used illegal drugs in the past 30 days decreased significantly from baseline to 6 months (p<.002).

Women’s Severity of Addiction Reduced Significantly
- Weku women significantly reduced their overall addiction severity (p<.001), as measured by the Addiction Severity Index (ASI; McLellan et al., 1985). Six of the seven subscales also showed a statistically significant reduction in severity (p<.05 - p<.001).
- Employment was the area in which the women continued to experience the greatest negative impact of their addiction.

Weku helped my relationship because my SO started getting services and I got the support that they want to see us together and see us as a family.

-Weku participant