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WOMEN AND ADDICTION: EMPOWERMENT AND CHANGE THROUGH FAMILY PLANNING

Beth Meyer-Frank*

*Planning to Flourish, USA

Addicted women have a high number of unplanned pregnancies that many times result in their children being removed from their care. Women often enter treatment for their substance abuse in order to stop using substances, so that they can be reunited with their children. Their children are often placed in foster care or with family members. Research shows that a high percentage of foster children from addicted homes also develop addictions when older. Thus, the cycle of addiction continues. My goal is to promote the integration of family planning/contraception in gender-responsive treatment programs for women. Contraception and delaying pregnancies provide women the opportunity to address and receive the necessary treatment for the trauma in their individual lives, and gives them a chance to learn about their addiction and prevent relapse. It allows them to address their medical issues, and social issues involving lack of job skills and housing. Addressing all of these issues is essential in order for women to remain sober and provide adequate, consistent, loving, and appropriate parenting. I will include case examples and cite research as part of my presentation that supports the above content. Also, I am in the early stages of developing a pilot project called Insight, Information, and Recovery in a women's recovery program that offers a solution to this problem and can be easily replicated. As a nurse practitioner, I feel fortunate to have expertise in the areas of OB/GYN, addiction, and psychiatry, all of which are tied so closely to medical sociology and anthropology. My law degree has provided additional knowledge from a different perspective. I have been presenting at local, national, and international conferences, and would very much like to share my work and learn from others at your conference.

Biography

Beth Meyer-Frank, RNP, JD is a dedicated Advocate for the empowerment of women. She recognizes the struggles that women undergo in their quest for physical and mental health, and how their health affects their opportunities, financial security, living situations, and their various roles within the family and society. As a nurse practitioner, she has over 25 years of experience providing high quality healthcare to women in a variety of settings. These settings include community health clinics, women's health settings, addiction treatment centers, and psychiatric and medical weight loss practices. She is recognized as a compassionate, knowledgeable and experienced clinician. As a nurse practitioner, she has provided care to women in both outpatient and residential substance abuse treatment programs. She is a national and international speaker on the topic of women and addiction, with the focus on the empowerment of addicted women through family planning.

beth_meyerfrank@juno.com

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