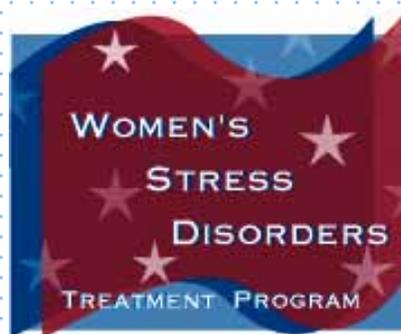


Alcohol and Drug Facts for Women

◆————◆
***Help when there might
be a problem...***

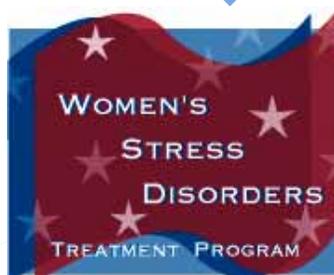


Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program

William S. Middleton VA Hospital
2500 Overlook Terrace
Madison, WI 53705
608-280-7084

Facts for Women:

Women are more vulnerable to alcohol related organ damage than men. This includes brain damage, liver disease, heart disease, and high blood pressure, malnutrition, anemia, heavy menstrual flow, irregular cycles, and premenstrual pain, premature menopause, osteoporosis, diabetes and circulation problems.

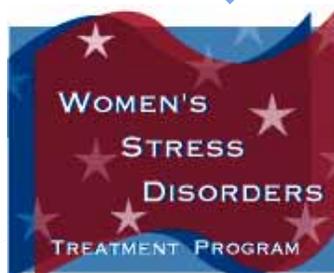


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Facts for Women:

- ◆ **Women develop alcohol-induced liver damage in a shorter time period than men even if they consume less alcohol.**
- ◆ **Among heavy drinkers, women develop heart disease at the same rate as men do, despite the fact that women use alcohol 60% less than men over their lifetime.**

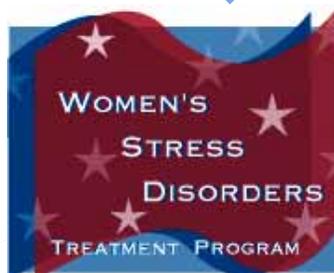


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Facts for Women:

- ◆ Studies have shown a link between moderate and heavy alcohol consumption and breast cancer.
- ◆ College women who drink are more likely to be the victims of sexual abuse. High school girls who drink are more likely to be the victims of dating violence.

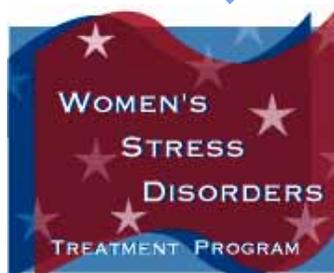


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Facts for Women:

- ◆ Women are less likely to drive after drinking, but they also have a higher risk of dying in a crash.
- ◆ Women are more likely than men to use a combination of alcohol and prescription drugs.

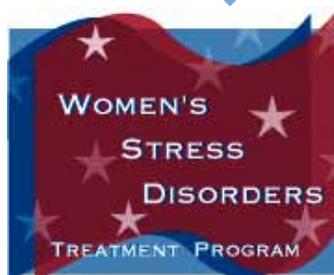


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Facts for Women:

- ◆ Women may begin to abuse alcohol and drugs following depression, to relax, and feel more adequate, to lose weight, to decrease stress, and to help in sleep.
- ◆ Poor self-esteem is a major issue for women who develop problems with drugs and alcohol.

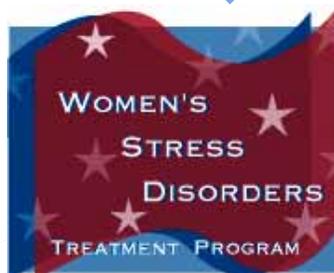


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Facts for Women:

- ◆ A history of physical or sexual abuse is common when one or both partners are using alcohol and drugs.
- ◆ Dependence on prescription drugs is a major health problem for women. Primarily, these are tranquilizers such as Valium, Xanax, and Klonopin, and painkillers containing codeine, morphine, or other opiates, and stimulants such as Ritalin and Dexedrine.

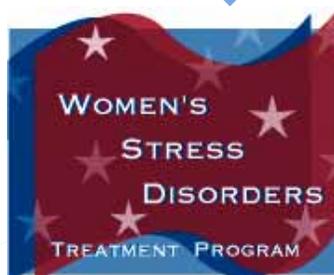


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Facts for Women:

Substance abuse is at epidemic levels for American women age 60 or older. They are more susceptible to addiction because tolerance levels decrease. Some studies indicate older women get addicted faster by using “small” amounts more than any other age group.

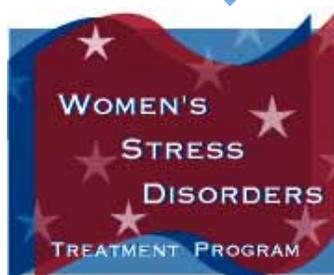


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Facts for Women:

Prenatal alcohol exposure is the single most preventable cause of retardation in children. Use of marijuana during pregnancy produces infants with low birth weight, health problems, and developmental delays.

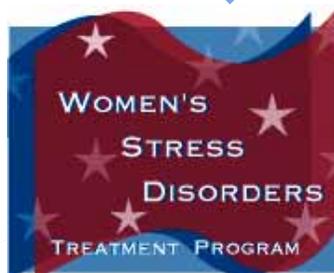


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Facts for Women:

- ◆ Immune system damage results in probable higher risks for AIDS and infections, many of them life threatening.
- ◆ Some women take prescriptions for anxiety, muscle spasms, etc. which are intended for short term use. If taken for longer periods, physical dependence can develop with an increased tolerance which requires increased amounts to be taken.

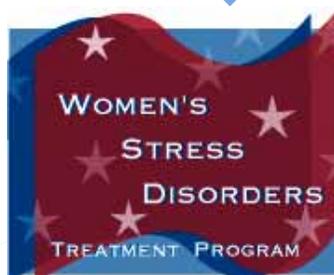


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Facts for Women:

Recent surveys show drinking is most common for women ages 26-34. Binge drinking (4 or more drinks) is most common for ages 18-25. Binge drinking is more common among Caucasian women, but African American women drink more heavily.

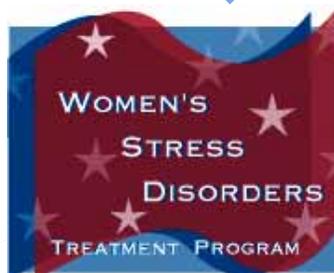


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Facts for Women:

- ◆ In inner cities, 30% of pregnant women use cocaine. The drug produces abnormalities in behavior and serious developmental problems in infants and children.
- ◆ 28-35% of child abuse occurs when a parent has been drinking.

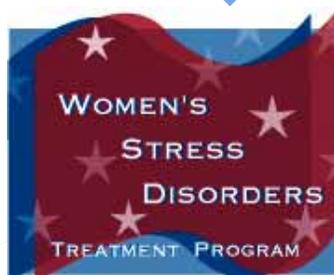


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Facts for Women:

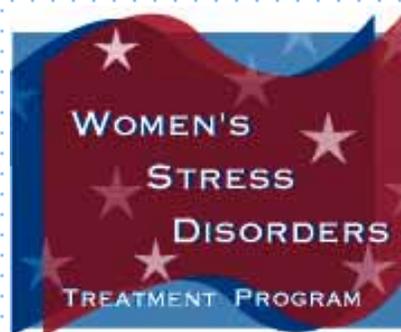
Women who drink heavily die an average of 15 years earlier than non-drinking women.



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How Can I Help Myself?



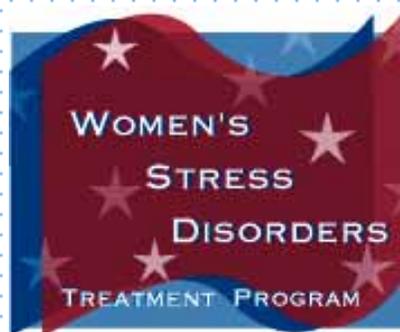
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First, ask yourself...

Do I have a problem?

If this is confusing to you there are others who can help you sort this out in an objective way. Contact your primary care physician, mental health professional, social worker or other medical staff about services in your community.



Women's Stress Disorders Treatment Program

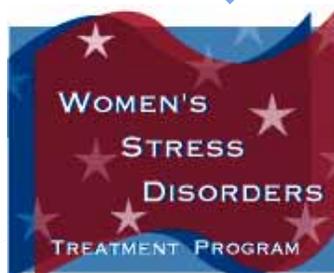
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**Not only do we listen,
we hear what you
have to say.**

**Your call is confidential. Consider your call
a starting point for a new direction.
Remember you have choices in life
regardless of your problems.**

**You may want to speak with a counselor by
phone to help determine if there is a
substance abuse problem that needs
attention.**

**Call our consultation service
608-280-7073**

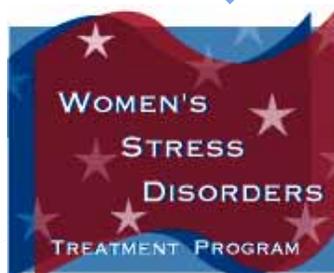


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Women's Treatment Issues are Different Than Men's...

- ◆ Women face significant barriers to treatment for their substance abuse problems such as childcare problems, the stigma of being perceived as “weak”, denial on the woman’s part, or on the family’s part.
- ◆ Treatment programs for women sometimes offer childcare, parenting classes and therapy for children of abusers in addition to addressing emotional and psychological issues, self-esteem, depression, and family problems.

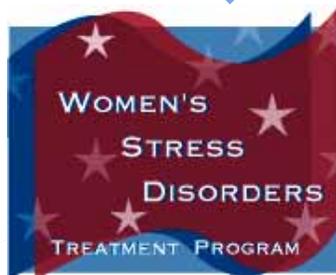


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Women for Sobriety (WFS)

WFS is a well known alternative to Alcoholics Anonymous. It was founded in 1976 and is based on the belief that women require different recovery programs than those for men. The “New Life” WFS program encourages independence, self-reliance, and leaving the past behind. Their web site is www.womenforsobriety.org

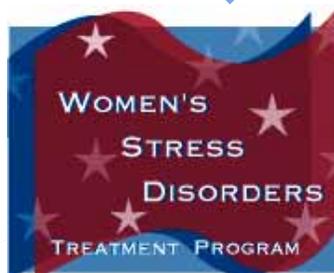


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Other Resources

The National Women's Health Resource Center is another handy resource. The web site is www.healthywomen.org Many topics are discussed at this source including the use of substances.



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