Women & Substance Abuse

Why

• is it critical to look at the specific situation of women and substance abuse because women are more likely to be drug abusers (from three to ten times more likely as compared with women who weren’t raped). Cycles like this can be devastating for women and their loved ones, especially if there is no type of therapeutic intervention.

• is important to focus on when looking at substance abuse because women face specific challenges that an individual can face as a result of their gender. In this issue we look at women and substance abuse (for specific information on girls and women; see Volume 3, Issue 3). Identifying and addressing some of the issues faced by women substance abusers can lead to better treatment and prevention strategies for everyone.

• There are specific dangers for women who use or abuse drugs. Negative physical effects such as organ damage can occur. The system damage (e.g., cognitive dysfunction) occur more quickly in women once they start using than in men. The effects of substance abuse in women also tend to exhibit themselves in more of a psychiatric form, with examples being depression, sleep disturbance or anxiety. On top of this, women also experience higher rates of co-occurring disorders, where an individual experiences substance abuse and mental illness at the same time. While women are less likely than men to develop a substance abuse problem, when the problem does present itself, the effects on women tend to be more severe and lade with greater health and social consequences.

• Women experiencing intimate partner violence are two to four times more likely to have substance abuse problems than other women. This can lead to a self-perpetuating cycle in some women. When a woman experiences intimate partner violence, they are more likely to self-medicate with substances, which then in turn make them more vulnerable to intimate partner violence. Another example of a violent cycle women can experience when abusing drugs is rape. Women who abuse drugs are more likely to be raped, and women who are raped are more likely to be drug abusers.

• is a major health problem. In 2007, 15 million women used illicit drugs in America. (National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University)

Women Under the Influence

This comprehensive and accessible book documents the physical and emotional effects of substance abuse in girls and women, explores the role of the advertising and entertainment industries in popularizing various substances of abuse, and discusses the way America responds to this enormous health problem. Covering a broad range of substances, such as alcohol, prescription and illicit drugs—the book addresses the unique reasons that girls and women can experience when abusing drugs.

Predatory Drugs

Brochure

This pamphlet takes an in depth look at two predatory drugs; Girls and Rohypnol. Called predatory drugs because their use is to “knock out” victims so they can’t fight back or often remember the crime, these drugs are used by predators who may rob or sexually assault their victims. This pamphlet explains what these drugs work and provides information on how we can protect ourselves and watch out for our friends.

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**Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii presents**

**Girl Power 2007**

In partnership with Sassy Magazine

Over 500 girls and women celebrated Girl Power on October 20, 2007, at the Hawai‘i Convention Center. Lima-girl set the tone for a day filled with sisterhood and aloha.

A special mahalo to all the organizations and volunteers that shared resources about HIV/AIDS awareness, drug prevention, relationship safety, local culture, goal-setting, and healthy living. Thank you for investing in females and making a difference.

Girl Power is the gift we give to ourselves and the gift we give to our community. For more info on programs for girls, contact Melissa-Kim Tom at 945-3228 ext 40.

**BIG dream**

Marcie Ushara Herring, or Auntie Marcie as she is known to teens, launched her book “Swim With Your Current: A Girls Guide To Riding The Waves Of Life.”

This first-of-its-kind book is inspired by local girls in the islands and is featured in Sassy Magazine’s read it section: The ideal interactive workbook to help young females discover their inner “mermaid,” ride the waves of life and discover the beauty within themselves. A HOT local best-seller.

For more info about talking-story with the author or to order your copy of the book contact Double Talk Publishing at 681-6501.

**Na 'Iokeh Mananana**

Award winner Paula Faga-Young shares strength and courage from her CD “Ali‘ikoi” and shared her personal story about faith and perseverance.

**my space**

Grace Intelligence premiered the original play “My Body, My Space,” which follows a 16 year old local Filipino girl as she deals with meeting guys on myspace, her own sexuality and the issues she inherited from her mother and traditional grandmother. The play explores the relationships between mothers and daughters—addressing topics that many local, Asian and Pacific Islander families dare not talk about but influences who we are as women. Mahalo to Playwright Grace Caligtan, Director Karen Locsi, and the cast and crew for an outstanding production. For more info on the play or workshops contact Grace at graceintelligence@gmail.com.

**Q: What’s your BIG dream?**

“My big dream is to become a fashion designer for big bodied girls like me and for them to feel be-you-ti-ful like me.”

—Natasha, age 15

**Q: How are you be-you-ti-ful?**

“Just to be myself and believe that I’m unique when I don’t feel like it sometimes.”

—Juliana, age 15

**ADD/Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist Training**

Hilo, March 2007

Contact Ralph Marsh, 808-692-7540, for more information

** DUI Road to Recovery**

1130 North Nimitz Highway, Suite A259

Prevention Resource Center

Preventative Drug-Free Hawaii Coalition

For information on trainings approved by the State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division: (808) 692-7506 http://www.state.hi.us/health/

**Na Hoku Hanohano Award winner Paula Fuga**

sang soulful songs inspiring strength and courage from her CD “Lilikoi” and shared her personal story about faith and perseverance.

**Web Links**

www.ourbodiesourselves.org

Our Bodies Ourselves (OBOS), also known as the Boston Women’s Health Book Collective (BWHBC), is a nonprofit, public interest women’s health education, advocacy, and consulting organization. OBOS provides clear, truthful information about health, sexuality and reproduction from a feminist and consumer perspective.

www.womenssportsfoundation.org

“When our girls and young women are active in sports they can learn useful skills like teamwork and leadership and build the self-confidence they need to succeed in life.” The mission at the Women’s Sports Foundation is simple: to advance the lives of girls and women through sport and physical activity.

www.hscadv.org

The Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) is a private, not-for-profit organization. As a statewide coalition of domestic violence programs, their mission is to ensure the safety and protection of women in intimate relationships by coordinating domestic violence prevention and intervention services, affecting public policy, and establishing coordinated and consistent procedures and actions by the civil and criminal justice systems in Hawaii.

**Drug-Free Hawai‘i Awareness Month**

February 2008

February is a time to increase awareness and take action against substance abuse. We encourage you, families, schools and communities to join together in activities to promote healthy, drug-free lifestyles.

**8th Annual Backyard Jam**

Join us for great music, great food, and great fun! This free event is an opportunity to learn about community organizations and share a fun day in the park with your family.

Kapi‘olani Park Bandstand

February 24, 12 - 5pm

**ADAD**

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