



WOMEN IN RECOVERY: MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGE

The state of Oklahoma leads the country in the number of women incarcerated, with more than double the national average. The impact goes well beyond the women themselves as they have nearly 7,000 children among them. Sadly, statistics show the children of incarcerated parents are more likely to become incarcerated themselves, creating a viscous cycle. Adding an additional level of complexity, nearly two-thirds of imprisoned women in the U.S. suffer from mental health disorders including addiction.¹ Mimi Tarrasch, Senior Executive Director of Women in Recovery, needed a way to help these women successfully transition back to their families and communities getting them back on their feet and out of the justice system.

“We keep finding new ways to use A-CHESS,” said Tarrasch. “We’re now doing dual generational work to create a connection between moms and their children to prevent the cycle of incarceration among families.”

SOLUTION

WIR integrated the CONNECTIONS app as an integral part of its intensive treatment and recovery program. The app, which is made available to each program participant, provides condition-specific content and resources 24/7, giving them the tools they need to succeed when and where they need them. The app enables participants to access education and inspirational materials, communicate with other WIR participants and graduates, and send alerts to their support team when they’re in need of immediate help. Caregivers are able to monitor each women’s progress, post helpful sayings, engage them through secure messaging, and much more.

IMPACT

Before A-CHESS, WIR had to depend on phone calls as the primary method of engaging women in the program. This presented a problem since there was limited staff to do individual outreach, and phone numbers often changed. Now that they have access to A-CHESS, engagement is easier for both the caregivers and the program participants. The WIR program has 140 current participants and 350 graduates.

SOURCE

¹ <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2017/06/22/the-mental-health-crisis-facing-women-in-prison>

Women In Recovery (WIR) is part of Family & Children’s Services (FCS), a leading provider of behavioral health care and family services for people of all ages in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and surrounding communities. As part of FCS, WIR works closely with the criminal justice system and community partners throughout the area to provide supervision, substance abuse and mental health treatment, as well as education, workforce readiness training, and family reunification services.

WIR chose the A-CHESS (Addiction Comprehensive Health Enhancement Support System) platform from CHESS Health to provide its program participants with the resources they need to support their recovery and minimize the risk of incarceration.

Tarrasch attributes the A-CHESS app for much of WIR’s success, which includes:

- Proactive engagement to reduce relapse
- Supportive, engaged network of peers and caregivers
- Quick implementation and elimination of self-development costs
- Data aggregation to measure program success and apply for grants
- Enabled participation in “pay-for-success” contracts to assist ongoing program funding
- Facilitated continuing care program for after-program engagement

“ We had spent 4 years trying to develop an app ourselves. Once we found A-CHESS, integration into our program was fast and we were quickly achieving results.

Mimi Tarrasch
Senior Executive Director
Women in Recovery