

## U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

### Office on Women's Health (OWH)

#### IMPACT OF TRAUMA

The Office on Women's Health provides national leadership and coordination to improve the health of women and girls through policy, education and model programs. The vision of OWH is for all women and girls to achieve the best possible health. To that end, the goals of OWH are to: inform and advance policies; educate the public; educate professionals; and support model programs. OWH leads the HHS Steering Committee on Violence Against Women and is an HHS representative to the White House Council on Women and Girls; the White House Working Group on the Intersection of HIV/AIDS, Violence Against Women and Girls and Gender-related Health Disparities; and the Office of the Vice President's Working Group on Violence Against Women. Statistics on the prevalence of trauma in the lives of women and girls, information about the impact of trauma on health status, and sources for information on women, trauma and health can be found in the first Federal Partners Report on Women and Trauma <http://nicic.gov/Library/025082>.

#### How a Trauma-Informed Approach Can Make a Difference

OWH in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) was established in 1991 to improve the health of American women by advancing and coordinating a comprehensive women's health agenda throughout HHS. OWH also works with numerous government agencies, non-profit organizations, consumer groups, and associations of health care professionals. During the early 1990's, OWH focused on developing women's health as a specialized issue for government action and attention. With women's health now firmly rooted in the national health landscape, OWH is focusing on women's health priorities to meet the sweeping demographic trends of the next century and to focus on the millions of underserved women in America.

#### Major Accomplishments 2010-2013

In 2010, in collaboration with ACF, OWH launched Project Connect: A Coordinated Public Health Initiative to Prevent Domestic and Sexual Violence. In 2012, the program expanded into six new states and five new sites that serve Native Americans/Alaskan Natives and Asian Pacific Islanders.



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More than 1,500 health providers in eight states and two tribes were trained.

In 2012 OWH and OVW led the HHS Steering Committee on Violence Against Women in convening an event addressing sexual violence on campus in recognition of sexual assault awareness month.

In 2012, OWH convened the second National Conference on HIV and Violence Against Women, a pre-event for CDC's National HIV Prevention Conference. More than 300 service providers participated from the fields of domestic violence, sexual assault, and HIV/AIDS.

OWH, with support from SAMHSA, is conducting a webinar series on trauma-informed services for women and girls and trauma-informed services. More than 21,000 individuals have participated to date.

OWH is implementing a national training initiative for community-based organizations from diverse sectors on the impact of trauma, the role of gender in the trauma experience, and strategies to provide trauma-informed programs and services.

More than 35 presentations on how trauma-informed approaches can improve patient care have been given across HHS Region V, reaching more than 2,200 service providers.

OWH and SAMHSA are co-chairing the planning for a region-wide event in 2013 to advance the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, a Report of the U.S. Surgeon General and the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention.

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### New Directions and Collaborations

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Through 2014, OWH will continue developing a best practices model and recommendations for gender-specific services for women re-entering the community after release from incarceration.

Recognizing the importance of oral health, the role of the dental team in screening for domestic and intimate partner violence (DV/IPV), and ensuring that screening is trauma-informed is a priority for Region I, and a webinar is planned on the topic. In 2011, they began collecting information on dental teaching institutions incorporating DV/IPV education and awareness in the undergraduate curriculum. In conjunction with CCWH, OWH has developed resources for health care providers on screening, counseling, and referring victims of IPV. New private health plans must cover recommended women's preventive services, including domestic violence screening and counseling, with no cost-sharing.

OWH is the focal point for several HHS-wide initiatives on DV and human trafficking. Wallet-sized safety cards have also been created to give to patients or put in healthcare settings to help prevent DV/IPV.

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### Additional Resources

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