

Substance Addiction and Sexual Assault Survivors

Victims of rape are 13.4 times more likely to develop two or more alcohol related problems and 26 times more likely to have two or more serious drug abuse-related problems. (Kilpatrick and Aciemo (2003) "Mental Health Needs of Crime Victims: Epidemiology and Outcomes", *Journal of Traumatic Stress*).

In a study of male survivors sexually abused as children, over 80% had a history of substance abuse, 50% had suicidal thoughts, 23% attempted suicide, and almost 70% received psychological treatment. (Lisak, David, (1994) "The Psychological Impact of Sexual Abuse: Content Analysis of Interviews with Male Survivors." *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 7(4): 525-548).

75% of women in treatment programs for drug and alcohol abuse report having been sexually abused. (Najavits, L.M., Weiss, R.D., and Shaw, S.R. (1997) "The Link Between Substance Abuse and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Women: A Research Review." *American Journal on Addictions*, 6: 273-283).

In a study of 100 adult patients with polytoxic drug abuse, 70% of the female and 56% of the male drug abusers had been sexually abused prior to the age of sixteen. (Mueser, K.T., Rosenberg, S.D., Goodman, L.A., & Trumbetta, S.L. (2002) "Trauma, PTSD, and the Course of Severe Mental Illness: An Interactive Model," *Schizophrenia Research*, 53: 1-2 and 123-143).

Nearly 90% of women with alcohol dependency were sexually abused as children or suffered severe violence at the hands of a parent. (Switzer, G.E., Dew, M.A., Thompson, K., Goycoolea, J.M., Derricott, T., & Mullins, S.D. (1999) "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Service Utilization Among Urban Mental Health Center Clients," *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 12 (1), 25-39).

Teenagers with alcohol and drug problems are 6 to 12 times more likely to have a history of being physically abused and 18 to 21 times more likely to have been sexually abused than those without alcohol and drug problems. (Clark, H.W., McClanahan, T.M., Sees, K.L., "Cultural Aspects of Adolescent Addiction and Treatment," (Spring 1997) *Valparaíso University Law Review*, Volume 31:2).

From a sample of 100 male and female subjects receiving treatment for substance abuse, more than a third was diagnosed with some form of a dissociative disorder stemming from childhood sexual or physical abuse. (Ross, C.A., Kronson, J., Koensgen, S., Barkman, K., Clark, P. and Rockman, G. (1992) "Dissociation Comorbidity in 100 Chemically Dependent Patients," *Hospital and Community Psychiatry*, 43:8, 840-842).

Without trauma-informed intervention, there can exist a circular self-perpetuating cycle involving PTSD and substance abuse, where trauma leads to the development of PTSD symptoms, triggering the use of alcohol and drugs to cope..., resulting in higher likelihood of subsequent traumatic events and retraumatization,... triggering heightened substance use and so on. (Najavits, L.M., et al. (1998) "Cocaine Dependence With and Without PTSD in the NIDA Cocaine Collaborative Study," *American Journal of Psychiatry*).