

COURT DRUG DIVERSION INITIATIVES CONFERENCE

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**Biyani Diversionary Program for Dually Diagnosed
Women Offenders:
Overview of Program and a Summary of Formative
Evaluation Findings**

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Biyani Diversionary Program

- Established by NSW DCS as part of Community Offender Services in March 2004
- Designed for women offenders with a mental health disorder or mild intellectual disability and co-existing alcohol & drug problem, as an alternative to a custodial sentence.
- 12 weeks in duration
- Maximum capacity of 5 women

Biyani - Program Aims

- To divert dually diagnosed women from a custodial sentence
- To provide accommodation and support to stabilise mental health and drug and alcohol issues
- To assist women to gain entry to therapeutic communities and / or establish links with community support services for independent community living.
- Case management and case planning underpin the program

Biyani - Eligibility Criteria

- Female offenders who are at a Correctional Centre on remand at pre-sentence stage or who have breached their parole and are to be released to serve the balance of parole (with a minimum of three months remaining on their parole order).
- have a non-acute mental health disorder or mild intellectual disability
- have a history of substance dependency
- are detoxified
- are willing to commit to rehabilitation or participate in other relevant community programs.
- are able to provide informed consent
- Women are *not eligible* for the program if they:
 - have a history of violence
 - are currently at risk of suicide
 - are actively self-harming.

Biyani – Program Design

- **Internal Programs**

- living skills development – budgeting, cooking, cleaning, shopping, personal hygiene
- house meetings
- relaxation and fitness
- leisure
- case plan activities

- **External programs**

- drug and alcohol counselling
- N.A & A.A
- Langton Centre 7 day morning therapy program
- Medical and mental health appointments



Biyani – Drug Screening

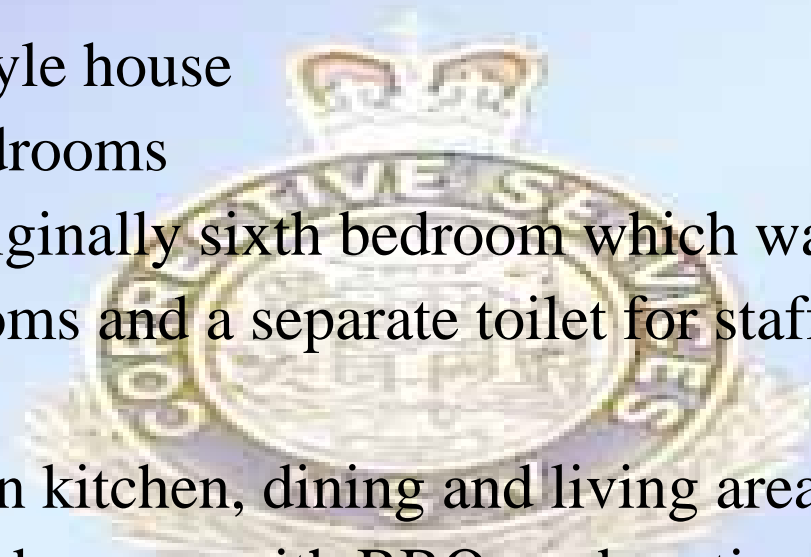
- The use of drugs or alcohol (other than prescribed medication or cigarettes) is prohibited.
- Drug screening is used at the discretion of staff for case management purposes
- Women who are found to use drugs are counselled.
- Women who use drugs may be revoked in the following circumstances:
 - *continual use with not apparent intention or effort to cease*
 - *drug use interferes with any resident's ability to participate in the program*
 - *where drug taking behaviour puts other residents at risk of relapse*

Biyani - Human Resources

- Manager
- 7 permanent Transitional Centre Workers
- Pool of casual Transitional Centre Workers
- 1 Administration Officer (25 hours per week)
- team has a broad range of experience in working in AOD, mental health and disability services.
- team has varying tertiary qualifications: psychology, nursing, social work, Aboriginal health, rehabilitation science and social welfare.
- Staff rostered 24 hours per day, 7 days per week

Biyani – Physical Resources

- domestic style house
- 5 single bedrooms
- 1 office (originally sixth bedroom which was converted)
- two bathrooms and a separate toilet for staff
- laundry
- an open plan kitchen, dining and living area
- outdoor garden area with BBQ and seating
- lacks a meeting room / group work space



Biyani – Financial Resources

- \$886,000 allocated in 2004/2005 budget
- \$865,000 allocated in 2005/2006 budget



Formative Evaluation - Aims

- To determine Biyani's effectiveness in diverting dually diagnosed women offenders from custody and assisting them to access rehabilitative services with the long term goal of achieving and maintaining independent living and reducing rates of recidivism.
- To determine whether changes are required to current policies and procedures to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Biyani in meeting the needs of women in the criminal justice system.

Formative Evaluation – Data Collection

- Biyani Case file reviews,
- Interviews with 14 previous and current Biyani Participants,
- Interviews with 4 key Departmental staff,
- Interviews with 2 external service providers, and
- Interviews with 9 Biyani staff members.

Formative Evaluation - Findings

- 65 referrals were received between January 2004 and September 2005.
- 34 of the 65 referrals accepted
- 8 (27.6%) of the 34 were women of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background
- Program length ranged from less than 1 month to in excess of 6 months
- Average age of participants was 34 years
- Over 40% were homeless
- Over 80% were mothers

Findings Cont.

- All women diagnosed with Substance Abuse
- The most common primary co-occurring disorders:
 - schizophrenia (37.9%)
 - depression (34.5%)
 - post traumatic stress disorder (13.8%)
- In addition to substance abuse and a primary co-occurring disorder, 21 women experienced additional co-occurring disorders, most commonly a personality disorder (57.1%).
- Women linked with an average of 5 community based services (ranged from 0 to 9)

Evaluation Recommendations

- Establish an interagency steering committee
- Introduce appropriate pre and post measures of functioning
- Develop a marketing and advertising strategy to increase awareness of the program both within the Department and externally.
- Review eligibility criteria
- Review assessment tool
- Consideration a dedicated assessment officer position
- Develop a case management policy and associated procedures manual
- Review policies and procedures guiding assessment processes.

Evaluation Recommendations – Cont.

- Introduce phases or stages to the program
- Develop a structured daily program
- Introduce rehabilitative programs targeting criminogenic need
- Coordinate regular meetings with key community based service providers to allow exchange of information, problem solving, treatment prioritising
- Develop inter-agency agreements (such as Memoranda of Understanding) with community based service providers outlining the services or cooperation to be provided to women housed at Biyani
- Review program length with a view to increasing it
- Update and review all policy and procedural documents to ensure consistency in program operations
- Investigate and alternate location with more therapeutic surrounds and a stronger network of local service providers

Evaluation Recommendations – Cont.

- Undertake a skills audit to determine staff and management training needs.
- The provision of clinical supervision be prioritised
- That formal debriefing opportunities be coordinated for all staff.
- Undertake a review of current rostering practices.
- Establish a schedule for staff meetings and case review meetings
- Undertake a review of position descriptions for transitional workers, particularly regarding prerequisite qualifications and work experience.
- Undertake succession planning to reduce staff vacancies.

Evaluation Recommendations – Cont.

- Develop a dedicated Throughcare officer position to provide post discharge follow up to residents in the community.
- Undertake further evaluation of the program be undertaken after recommendations included herewith are implemented.
- That the Department of Corrective Services lobby the state government for an integrated treatment approach to sufferers of co-occurring disorders.

Biyani

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