

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Women and Children's Trauma and Gender (WC-TAG) Agencies Project

Developing a Trauma-informed and Gender-responsive System of Care

A trauma-informed, gender-responsive initiative supported by the hope & grace initiative and The Connecticut Women's Consortium.

Issued By: The Connecticut Women's Consortium

Issued: May 1, 2018

Overview: The hope & grace fund wishes to support programs using both innovative and proven tools that are gender-responsive and tailored to the unique mental health needs of women. Gender responsiveness acknowledges that effective programs and policies to support the needs of girls and boys/women and men must take into account gender differences.

Eligibility: The Connecticut Women's Consortium (CWC) would provide training and technical assistance on trauma-informed, gender-responsive systems change to four agencies with mental health or co-occurring programs serving women or women and children. Using the principles to transform culture, policies, procedures, staff, and space we aim to improve outcomes for women's seeking service as well as educating staff.

***Please note that agencies that were part of a previous DMHAS-sponsored Trauma-Informed and Gender Responsive Practice Improvement Collaborative or Criminal Justice Trauma and Gender Initiative are not eligible to respond to this Request for Qualifications (RFQ).**

Project Period: 18 months: May 1, 2018 through October 31, 2019
(formal training/consultation period)

Informational Call-In: Agencies may participate in an optional call-in to ask questions prior to the submission of their response to this RFQ on:

May 14, 2pm

Call-in Number: (712) 451 0635 and Participant Passcode: 419473

If you have difficulty accessing the teleconference, please call: (203) 909-6888, ext. 26

Application Response Deadline: May 23, 2018; 4:00pm

If you have questions about this RFQ,
please contact Sheila Kinscherf at CWC at 203 909 6888 ext. 26 or
skinscherf@womensconsortium.org

Background

Sponsored by the hope & grace initiative, CWC has committed to further promote a recovery-oriented system of behavioral health care that is trauma-informed and gender-responsive for adults in Connecticut. Over the past several years, the CWC has worked in implementing a comprehensive statewide initiative designed to assist mental health and addiction services in becoming trauma-informed and gender-responsive. In the spirit of this commitment to quality services for those who have been exposed to traumatic stress, CWC is pleased to offer training and on-going consultation to agencies.

Definition of Terms

Trauma-informed

We view system change as a cultural shift within an organization. The culture of a trauma-informed agency incorporates knowledge about trauma, its prevalence, impact, and the complex paths to recovery and healing, into every aspect of the programs contacts, activities, relationships, and physical settings. This culture is built on the five core values: safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment.

Trauma-specific

Trauma-specific interventions are evidence-based trauma treatment models, such as Seeking Safety, Trauma Recovery and Empowerment (TREM, M-TREM), Beyond Trauma, Healing Trauma: A Brief Intervention for Women, Exploring Trauma: A Brief Intervention for Men, and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR).

Gender-responsive

We view a gender-responsive culture as inherently trauma-informed, acknowledging the role of gender in the traumatic experience(s) of an individual as well as in the recovery and healing, and assist agencies with creating an environment through site selection, staff selection, program development, content, and material that reflects an understanding of the realities of women and men's lives. These services intentionally use research and knowledge of female and male socialization to affect and guide all aspects of program and system design, processes, and services.

The goal of this initiative is to help agencies enhance their services for women and children with mental health problems, and/or co-occurring disorders including those dealing with the long and short-term effects of psychological trauma. Training and consultation will have several foci:

- 1) To develop policies, procedures, programs, and services that support a trauma-informed, gender-responsive approach to services;
- 2) To provide, at a minimum, introductory training on "Understanding Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care in a Gender-Responsive Environment" and "The Importance of Staff Care";
- 3) To provide on-going consultation and technical assistance in order to implement agency-wide culture change.

II. Participating Organizations

The training and consultation offered through this initiative will be provided to up to four (4) organizations. Eligible organizations are described on page one.

III. Faculty

Stephanie S. Covington, Ph.D., LCSW Dr. Stephanie S. Covington is a nationally recognized clinician, author, organizational consultant, and lecturer. She is a pioneer in the field of women's issues, addiction, and recovery. She has developed an innovative, gender-responsive, and trauma-informed approach to the treatment needs of women and girls that results in effective services in public, private, and institutional settings.

Her presentations, staff-development seminars, and technical assistance focus on systems change and the development of caring, compassionate, and empowering therapeutic environments. They provide professionals an opportunity to learn new skills for dealing with personal, institutional, and societal changes and are always in demand, both nationally and internationally. Dr. Covington has written several well-known gender-responsive curricula and is based in La Jolla, California, where she is the co-director of both the Institute for Relational Development and the Center for Gender and Justice.

Eileen M. Russo, MA, is a licensed addiction counselor, a certified clinical supervisor, and a certified co-occurring disorders professional who has worked in the addiction and mental health field for the past 32 years. Ms. Russo is an Associate Professor for the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Counselor program with Gateway Community College and for the past 12 years has served as a trainer/consultant with the CT Women's Consortium for the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' Trauma Initiative.

In addition to teaching and training, she has specialized in treating co-occurring PTSD in mental health and substance abuse populations and has assisted agencies with developing trauma-informed mental health/substance abuse treatment programs across the state for men, women, and children. Ms. Russo has co-authored articles on the integration of trauma-specific services into substance abuse treatment and is co-author of *Healing Trauma: A Brief Intervention for Women*, by Stephanie Covington. She is the principal consultant for the implementation of *Healing Trauma* in York Correctional Institute and treatment programs in Connecticut.

Ms. Russo is also an adjunct faculty member at the University of Bridgeport. Sometimes criticized for being too idealistic, she has managed to maintain her passion for her work and the belief that the best possible and most ethical treatment, care, and support is what everyone deserves.

Steve Bistran, M.A. worked within the psychology series for the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services for many years, initially at Fairfield Hills Hospital and later with the Torrington branch of the Western Connecticut Mental Health Network where he became Assistant Director. He has taught part-time at both public and private colleges and universities on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Currently in addition to being a member of the editorial board of the CT Women's Consortium newsletter, "Trauma Matters," he is a member of the Western Connecticut based Smoking Cessation Supports Initiative which promotes and advocates for tobacco cessation efforts.

Colette Anderson, MSW, LCSW Leading the CWC since 2012, Colette Anderson, MSW, LCSW, is the Executive Director of the Connecticut Women's Consortium. During her tenure, training has increased exponentially and she has overseen and expanded many projects at the Consortium.

Colette co-chairs the Trauma and Gender Practice Improvement Collaborative for the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. Her expertise is in trauma-informed systems change and she spearheads multiple groups and initiatives across the state to promote trauma-informed, gender-responsive care. She also trains and presents on a number of topics including: trauma, gender, staff care, and healing arts for diverse audiences and agencies.

Colette has spent many years working in behavioral health. Prior to working at the CWC, she worked at Connecticut Valley Hospital, Connecticut Mental Health Center, and was the Chief Executive Officer at the Western Connecticut Mental Health Network. She has a Master's of Social Work degree from the University of Connecticut. In October 2016, Colette was awarded the National Association of Social Workers – Connecticut Chapter Social Worker of the Year Award.

Kathleen Callahan, BS in Computer Engineering, is the Trauma and Gender Coordinator at the Connecticut Women's Consortium. Transitioning from a career in software, she is currently enrolled in Southern Connecticut State University's MSW Co-occurring Disorders program. Kathleen is a certified SBIRT trainer.

IV. Structure and Content of the Program

As part of this initiative CWC will provide the selected agencies with the following:

- Each selected site will be assigned an “Implementation Advisor” from the faculty to guide the implementation process, including, but not limited to attendance at agency WC-TAG Steering Committee meetings, assistance with preparation of written implementation plan, review and interpretation of survey data to inform implementation process, and preparation of report-out day summaries;
- Advanced planning or pre-training meetings with the selected agencies’ planning committees in order to prepare for upcoming activities, clarify expectations, etc.;
- Two (2) “kick-off” training days on the organizational aspects of delivering gender-responsive, trauma-informed services. This training will include preliminary discussion of program changes involving both clinical and administrative activities;
- On-site “walk-throughs” conducted by individuals with lived experience;
- Two (2) on-site consultation visits by consultants at approximately 4 months and 16 months including completion of a Trauma and Gender fidelity review/scale and feedback report after each site visit;
- On-site training of all staff (including direct care staff, administration and support staff) in two training modules: 1) Understanding Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care in a Gender-Responsive Environment and 2) The Importance of Staff Care. These trainings will utilize a train-the-trainer approach for integration into internal processes and organizational stability. Continuing education contact hours will be provided for training social workers, marriage and family therapists, licensed professional counselors, substance abuse counselors, and mental health counselors;
- Ongoing consultation from CWC project staff and subject matters experts:
 - Monthly learning collaborative meeting with agency representatives, clarifying
 - expectations, preparing for upcoming activities, sharing resources, and reporting on progress;
 - Technical assistance with initiating and guiding WC-TAG steering committee meetings as needed;
 - Technical assistance in staff and client survey evaluation
 - Technical assistance in the development of implementation plans; and
 - Technical assistance and/or brief training of supervisory staff in supervisory competencies;
- Consultation provided at the Celebration/Transition Day at 18 months.

V. Required Organizational Commitment

As part of the initiative, agencies will be expected to provide the following:

- Assemble and implement an agency Trauma and Gender Steering Committee that includes a senior leader (CEO/ED or Clinical Director), supervisory staff, direct care staff, support staff and consumer representatives. The Committee is expected to meet at least monthly initially and quarterly thereafter and participate in conference calls and on-site consultations.
- An agency project manager or “trauma-gender champion” should be selected to coordinate activities around this initiative. This person should have adequate release time from regular duties to fulfill the responsibilities of the initiative and the power/authority to implement change.
- Participation in the monthly learning collaborative meeting with all four (4) agency representatives.
- Identify and implement a mechanism for consumer involvement specific to this initiative. This may include participation on the agency’s Trauma/Gender Steering Committee, use of surveys, focus groups or other methods to gauge the gender-responsiveness of the services, as well as the level of trauma-informed care (i.e., safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, and empowerment of the organization). Applications that incorporate incentives for consumers, such as stipends or other forms of encouragement, will be given additional consideration.
- If groups are offered, agencies will provide trauma groups that consider the potential differing needs of LGBTQ clients.
- Plan for organizational internal/external marketing efforts. How will enthusiasm for the project be communicated? How will all staff be informed of the project? How will consumers and the community be informed of the project?
- The agency CEO/ED and Trauma and Gender Steering Committee members as well as other selected staff must be able to attend the initial two (2) day “kick-off” training on June 27-28, 2018 and Celebration/Transition Day at 18 months.
- Agency steering committee will complete a structured Self-Assessment/Fidelity Scale and develop an Implementation Plan as part of the initiative;
- Agency will work with the faculty to develop policies and procedures around gender-responsive, trauma informed services including policies and procedures that include how the agency screens and assesses the impact of trauma on clients and how trauma recovery planning, treatment and/or referral are provided.

- Agency needs to be able to provide release time to appropriate direct service and supervisory staff to attend training that will be delivered on-site; and
- Agency should anticipate that implementation plans will be reviewed every regularly by the steering committee and consultants in order to determine need for additional technical assistance.

VI. Location of Trainings

Trainings and site visits will take place at each selected agency. The “kick-off” and Celebration/Transition days will be held in Hamden, at The Connecticut Women’s Consortium and other locations if needed.

How to Respond to this RFQ

Please provide a letter from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Executive Director (ED) with a statement of commitment to the Initiative. Attach to this letter a document not to exceed five (5) pages in length (single spaced) that addresses each of the items below:

1. **Identifying Information:** Name and address of agency, CEO/Executive Director, and contact person if other, with phone, fax, and email.
2. **Organizational Overview:** Provide a brief, one paragraph overview of your organization, including years in operation, mission/vision, organizational structure, range of services, number of staff, and number of clients served annually. Please attach a copy of your agency’s organizational chart.
3. **Implementation Leader:** Provide the name of a single individual who will be identified as the “implementation leader”. The implementation leader ideally should have line authority over programs or a major and relevant institutional role.
4. **Organizational Readiness:** Describe the readiness or capacity of your organization to participate and benefit from a new initiative. Identify any potential barriers to effective participation or successful implementation. Barriers might include, but are not limited to, an anticipated merger, significant staff turnover, an inability to provide release time for staff to attend training, CEO not able to attend all required events.
5. **Other Initiatives:** Identify any other major staff development initiatives at your agency that would take place concurrently with this project and whether these would compete with or complement this initiative.
6. **Current Trauma-Informed and Gender-Responsive Status:** Describe any training or in-services your staff has already attended regarding trauma-informed, trauma-specific and/or gender-responsive services. Describe any existing gender-responsive, trauma services including screening, assessment and gender- and/or trauma-specific groups.

7. **Implementation Approach and Ensuring Adherence:** Describe how your agency will implement this initiative and ensure adherence to the trauma and gender model being trained; describe your experience with other initiatives and your efforts to sustain them within the organization. What kinds of internal marketing strategies will your agency use to promote and sustain the activities?
8. **Inclusion of Persons in Recovery:** Describe the mechanisms you would use to ensure individuals with lived experience are an integral part of participating on the agency's Trauma and Gender Steering Committee, and leading, planning and implementing this initiative at your agency.
9. **Benefit of Participation:** Describe your interest in establishing a trauma-informed and gender-responsive environment in your agency; how will this initiative be helpful to your organization.
10. Please feel free to provide other pertinent information.

Submission Requirements

1. All required information for this application must be submitted electronically to:

Sheila Kinscherf: skinscherf@womensconsortium.org

Agencies shall receive an electronic confirmation of all submissions within 24 business hours. Agencies should contact Sheila Kinscherf skinscherf@womensconsortium.org or (203) 909 6888 ext. 26 if a confirmation is not received. Only those agencies that receive an electronic confirmation are considered during the review process.

2. The deadline for agencies to submit their electronic response to the application is Wednesday May 23, 2018, no later than 4:30 p.m. Local Time. The subject line of the email should state **“WC-TAG RFQ Response”**.

Summary of Key Dates

Application Release Date:	May 7, 2018
Informational Call:	May 14 at 2pm
Deadline for Application Responses:	May 23, 2018
Agencies Selected/Notified:	May 30, 2018
2-Day “Kick-Off” Event:	June 27-28, 2018
Peer Walk-Throughs:	TBD
Trauma 101/Staff Care training at Each Site:	TBD
Site Consultation Visits:	TBD
Agency Workgroup Meetings:	Monthly
Cohort Consultation Meetings:	Monthly
Celebration/Transition Day:	TBD

