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(Continued from page 3)

Suggested Approaches:

- ◆ **Deal with practical barriers to attendance.** Surveyed clients in AOD and MH programs were asked how difficult it was for them to attend the services. Only 7% said it was “very” hard to come, but another 35% said it was “moderately” hard. Providing child care services and having services available at locations and times that are convenient for participants will minimize some of these practical barriers to attendance.
- ◆ **Be sure services address immediate needs of the clients.** Some clients have immediate practical issues (e.g. for housing or dealing with legal issues or school issues with their children) that may override their ability to become engaged in services. Some programs have found that using case managers to provide direct assistance to clients in resolving these immediate issues can build trust and connection with the program.
- ◆ **Provide linguistically and culturally relevant services.** Clients are far more likely to engage with staff who speak their language and understand their culture. Counties need to review their provider networks to be sure that they can manage the linguistic and cultural characteristics of their CalWORKs clients.
- ◆ **Conduct aggressive outreach.** Because of an historical shortage of capacity, most AOD/MH/DV programs simply move on to the next person waiting for services when a client stops attending. With the more ample CalWORKs funding, programs can afford the staff time necessary to follow-up with clients who stop coming. Persistent follow-through with clients who fail to attend can be a sign to the CalWORKs’ client of your interest and the importance of continuing with services.
- ◆ **Be patient.** Remember that this is not a population that has a history of seeking out and engaging in services. Also, some of the AOD and MH issues that CalWORKs clients are facing are “chronic” or “relapsing.” It may take a number of attempts at services before they can successfully become engaged in a recovery process.



CalWORKs Project Group

“Overcoming Mental Health, Domestic Violence and Alcohol and Other Drug Barriers to Employment”

Help Connections, Volume 4

August, 2000

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Project Collaborative

- California Institute for Mental Health
- Children and Family Futures
- Family Violence Prevention Fund

Joint CalWORKs Committee

- California Mental Health Directors Association
- County Welfare Directors Association
- County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators Association of California

Visit our web-site for more help with CalWORKs implementation:

www.cimh.org

- ◆ **Q & A (Ask your question – we’ll locate an expert to answer it!)**
- ◆ **Project products and updates**
- ◆ **Hot tips and Help line**
- ◆ **Other resources and information**
- ◆ **Previous editions of “Help Connections”**

The California Institute for Mental Health, Children and Family Futures, Inc. and the Family Violence Prevention Fund are conducting a welfare reform study and technical assistance project. The focus is on identifying and overcoming barriers to employment that are due to mental health, alcohol and other drug, or domestic violence (MH/AOD/DV) issues. Information on the project is available at the California Institute for Mental Health website: www.cimh.org. This is the fourth in a series of “Help Connection” issue papers offering concrete suggestions for social service, employment, mental health, alcohol and other drug and domestic violence programs.

Project staff make periodic site visits to each of six study counties. During these site visits we hear about issues counties are identifying and also about how they are dealing with them. Some of these issues are documented here, as well as some promising approaches to dealing with them successfully. They are not offered as definitive solutions, but as ideas that might be helpful for other counties. **If you have questions or would like to obtain more information about any of these proposed approaches and where they may be operational, please e-mail the CalWORKs Project at CalWORKs@cimh.org.**

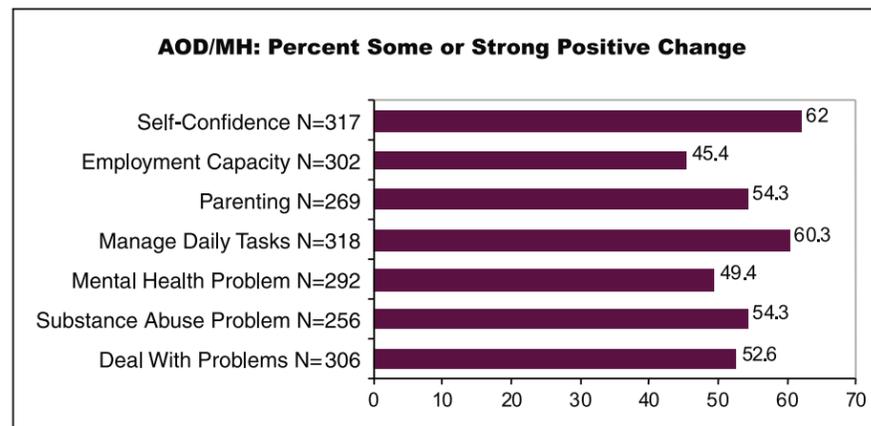
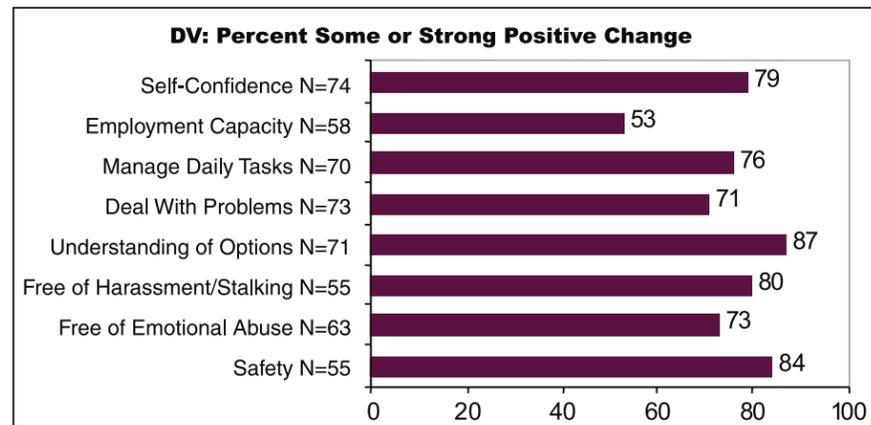
The focus of this issue of “Help Connections” is the reported effectiveness of AOD/MH/DV services. As part of its Six County Case Study, the CalWORKs Project Group conducted surveys of CalWORKs employment counselors, AOD/MH/DV service providers, and CalWORKs participants who were receiving AOD/MH/DV services. The information below comes from those surveys.

Issue 1: AOD/MH/DV Program Staff Report That More Than Half of CalWORKs Clients Served Experienced Positive Change

AOD and MH program staff report that at discharge roughly one-half of the CalWORKs clients they serve show positive change on eight critical dimensions. DV program staff report positive change in roughly three-quarters of the CalWORKs participants they served.

Program staff in 41 programs in four counties (Kern, Los Angeles, Shasta, and Stanislaus) were asked to rate the amount of improvement of 591 CalWORKs participants who had received at least one AOD/MH/DV service. The dimensions that were rated for clients who had received AOD or MH services were as follows: self confidence and a positive attitude about the future; capacity to look for, find, and retain a job; parenting ability; ability to manage daily life tasks; overcoming mental health/emotional problems; overcoming substance abuse problems; and the capacity to deal constructively with major life problems. Program staff in DV programs rated the first four of these along with four dimensions specific to DV: understanding of options; being free of harassment/stalking; being free of emotional abuse; and safety.

The graphs below show the percentage of clients that staff reported had made “strong positive change” or “some positive change” over the course of services. Note that while there is reported positive change in “employment capacity,” it has the lowest ratings of the dimensions for both AOD/MH and DV clients.

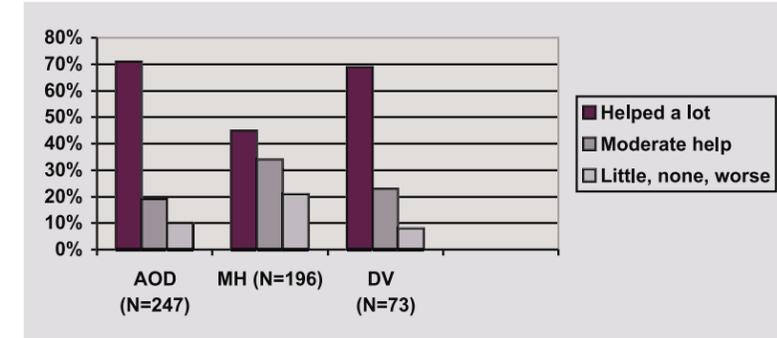


Issue 2: AOD/MH/DV CalWORKs Clients Report That Services Are Helpful

Nearly half of the CalWORKs clients who were currently receiving MH services and roughly 70% of the clients receiving AOD or DV services reported the services “helped a lot.”

A total of 516 clients who were currently receiving services in the 41 AOD/MH/DV programs were asked how much the services had helped them deal with their situation or problem.

Client Ratings of Helpfulness of Services



Issue 3: CalWORKs Staff Report that AOD/MH/DV Services Are Helpful IF They Are Completed

A very high percentage (over two-thirds) of the employment counselors reported that the *completed* AOD/MH/DV services that their CalWORKs clients had received were helpful.

The table below shows the rating of 187 employment counselors of how useful the AOD/MH/DV services were for their CalWORKs clients who had *completed* those services.

EC Ratings of Usefulness of the AOD/MH/DV Services Participants Received, if Services Were Completed

Percent Very, Quite, Somewhat useful:	County A (N=30)	County B (N=83)	County C (N=15)	County D (N=22)	County E (N=37)
AOD	67%	85%	80%	91%	78%
MH	70%	82%	86%	91%	86%
DV	68%	86%	93%	95%	84%

Issue 4: Special Efforts are Needed to Keep CalWORKs Clients Engaged in AOD/MH/DV Services

AOD/MH program staff reported that over 40% of the clients they served had “poor or minimal” participation in the services. They also reported that less than half had left services as a result of meeting their goals. Employment counselors also indicated in their survey comments a high level of frustration with the fact that many of their CalWORKs clients did not complete the AOD/MH/DV services to which they were referred.