

California Women's Mental Health Policy Council

Position Statement: Housing

Housing is the most central part of a woman's place in the community. Lack of housing, and inadequate housing, are often accompanied with other conditions: loss of children and family, worsening health conditions, vulnerability to trauma and abuse, worsening of mental health or substance abuse problems. And, treatment can be accompanied by provision of substitute housing services. The design of these housing services can powerfully affect the course of treatment and its success.

How can "housing" support the multiple societal roles of women?

If housing is to be accessible to women and girls it must first and foremost be a safe environment, free of threats or harassment for themselves and their children. To support the multiple societal roles of women, affordable housing must be available for every family, and housing services, including residential services associated with treatment, must be able to meet women in the context of their lives. A variety of housing services must be available:

- Communities should provide assistance to homeless women to find stable, safe housing.
- Housing alternatives must be available for women facing domestic violence.
- The female consumer (adult or adolescent) should be able to live with her children or dependent adult for whom she may be providing care.
- Housing services must include supportive services regarding parenting, substance abuse recovery programs, and trauma recovery programs.
- Housing, or residential treatment, should be as close to her family of origin as possible.
- Housing services should provide access to vocational training services and education.
- Housing services should provide access to medical services, including family planning services.