

San Francisco Women and Girls

Gender Responsive and Culturally Competent Behavioral Health Services for Women, Girls, and Families

Mission Statement:

San Francisco Women and Girls (SFWG) aims to improve the mental health of women, children, and families in San Francisco through assessment of the current system and advocacy for changes that support a gender appropriate and culturally competent approach to the provision of behavioral health services for all.

Three Main Goals:

1. Assess current state of services and identify needs for quality gender appropriate and culturally competent behavioral health services in San Francisco for women, girls, and families.
2. Explore best practices in gender appropriate and culturally competent behavioral health services at a city, county, state, and national level.
3. Increase access to quality gender appropriate and culturally competent behavioral health services in San Francisco for women, girls, and families.

Definition of Gender Responsive and Culturally Competent Services:

Gender Responsive and Culturally Competent Behavioral Health Services is the umbrella term used to describe behavioral health services that both consider and meet the unique needs of women, men, girls, boys, transgender people, and families from all different cultures. Providers are encouraged to consider the complex interactions between biological, social, psychosocial, family, language, and cultural factors when serving each individual. These services may or may not include gender and/or cultural specific services, where services are targeted to only one gender or culture. A neutral approach, where the same services are provided to everyone without regard for gender and culture, neglects the crucial impact of gender and culture on client needs.

All health services should be both gender appropriate and culturally competent. An assessment or treatment plan should consider an individual's unique gender needs alongside his or her cultural and language needs. Clinicians should feel comfortable assessing for these needs. To provide the most comprehensive, holistic treatment, providers should encourage their staff to seek training on gender topics, culture, language, and ethnicity topics, and their interconnections. San Francisco's Department of Health Community Programs (and specifically Community Behavioral Health Services) will continue to bring varied training opportunities for gender, diversity, and cultural awareness to its providers.

Any questions? Contact Sarah Accomazzo sarah@mhbsf.org or 415-255-3740.
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