



SPOKANE ADDICTION RECOVERY CENTERS

SOUTH 812 WALNUT SPOKANE, WA 99204 Telephone 624-3251

MARK R. BROWNLOW
Administrator
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES
(509) 624-3251
OUTPATIENT SERVICES
(509) 624-5228

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SPARC, located on Spokane's picturesque South Hill has been providing specialized alcohol and drug treatment for women since the late 1970s. Beginning with a ten bed inpatient 90 day recovery house program. In 1979 SPARC began a rather unique approach to treatment by designing an intensive outpatient day treatment program for women and their children. It was my pleasure to serve as Programs Director of SPARC at this time and together with Administrator Norm Hoffman and other talented and very motivated staff, specialized treatment focused toward women of child bearing years was developed. The Women's Day Treatment Program and Children Services opened its doors to women still active with child rearing responsibilities keeping in mind that "fear of losing children" and "provision of child care" were the most significant barriers to treatment as identified from data gathered by the 1978 Washington State Task Force on Women and Alcoholism. Seeking to intervene in the lives of addicted women before their roles as wives and mothers collapsed, SPARC responded to requests from CPS and other continuum of care professionals by providing an intensive outpatient program whereby women could enroll in treatment 5 days/wk 6 hr/day and bring their children with them. The Children Services clinic began basically as a baby sitting service became a licensed DSHS Day Care Center. The development of a program to treat these hidden victims grew from strong philosophical connections concerning their rehabilitative needs.

It was believed that no one escapes unscathed in the alcoholic family unit and that early intervention was needed to interrupt this cycle of sickness by providing children an environment that acknowledged their value and filled their deep need of worthiness. Believing that withdrawal intervention rigid and maladaptive roles of adjustment would be adapted promoting these youngsters into continuous crisis oriented life styles, SPARC staff began providing a structured and stimulating environment where children's health and growth needs could be identified and nurtured focusing upon issues of delayed development and physical/emotional abuse and neglect.

SPARC: Spokane Addiction Recovery Centers.

Nursery and pre-school activities along with Al-A-Tot, Al-A-Teen and Spousal Groups were a part of the weekly routine. Older children with staff shared their inpatient experiences and feelings through therapies utilizing art, drama, play interactions and education. Referral to city wide youth programs that promoted their personal and interpersonal enrichment was also utilized.

Although provision was made for family therapy with involvement of significant others, most women came to treatment without supportive and involved partners. Besides offering the basics of traditional treatment and A.A. involvement the special needs of women often not addressed in co-ed programs became of focal importance. Issues of domestic violence, sexual abuse, victimization, depression, identity crisis, under education and un-employment were identified as problems of central importance in the continuum of care for lasting sobriety. Referral to community wide professional providers was considered essential for chemical dependency in women involves the entire personality and sobriety requires more than mere removal of the drug. Living without mood altering chemicals requires a new way of life. SPARC through the years with its inpatient and outpatient programs has endeavored to assist women to walk in these new directions with ever increasing success and happiness.

Thank you for remembering SPARC at this special time of memories and celebration. It has been a great opportunity for me to work with so many dedicated and capable people who deeply care about seeing women successful and free.

Sincerely;

Marilynne McKell