

Crawford House Update

by Martha Dwyer, M.A.

On March 3rd, 2000 Crawford House became a tobacco-free facility. Now seven months later, staff and clients report that things are going very well.

Crawford House began planning for becoming tobacco-free a year before its targeted quit date. To prepare for the changes ahead, key people at the House met to discuss long-term goals and the best means to achieve them successfully. A Tobacco-Free Committee was created that included the Executive Director, the Program Director, and two clinical staff members. Chaired by Martha Dwyer, the committee convened regularly and provided opportunities to discuss the plans with the House staff. The Board of Directors gave their approval and support, and so began the task of changing the House's culture of acceptance of tobacco use to one where tobacco is regarded as a drug of addiction. Crawford House began the process of teaching staff and clients that tobacco use not only brings illness and disability to the tobacco user, but also interferes with and encumbers the recovery process for the women at Crawford House.


In preparation for the transition to becoming tobacco-free, Crawford House began integrating tobacco treatment into its clinical program. At that time, approximately 90% of the residents were active smokers. All clients were screened and assessed for tobacco use. Residents and staff received specific education about tobacco and nicotine dependence, which was then incorporated into existing groups. On an optional basis, tobacco dependence was included in client treatment plans. Smoking breaks were phased out and residents developed alternative coping strategies. As March 3rd drew near, feelings of fear, anger and apprehension were voiced. However, the transition was made with minimal problems, which staff attribute to the careful planning and preparation done beforehand.

On the night of Thursday, March 2nd, the residents smoked their last cigarettes and participated in a ceremony celebrating their new tobacco-free status. A full-day relapse prevention workshop was held the following day, culminating in the creation of a "Together We Can Do It" banner modeled after Addressing Tobacco's Show of Hands. To minimize the discomfort of the tran-

sition, all residents stayed home that weekend with resident-planned activities of fun and togetherness. Many of the women admitted that it was not as bad as they had anticipated and that, in fact, the bond among them was strengthened as they met the challenge of addressing their tobacco dependence together.







It is notable that as more programs come to address tobacco in treatment, there are actually fewer women coming to Crawford House actively smoking. This does not necessarily, however, reflect the motivation or intent of the women to address their nicotine dependence. This abstinence is often predicated on the tobacco-free policy of the referring program. Intervention at the House is based on the Stages of Change Model (developed by Prochaska & DiClemente). A resident is assessed regarding her attitudes about quitting and staying quit, and strategies are then developed with the goal of moving her along the Stage of Change continuum. The nicotine patch is offered to women entering treatment actively using tobacco if an assessment indicates there is a risk of significant physical withdrawal when abstinent.

The House holds a weekly Nicotine Group that focuses on the physiological, psychological and social aspects of tobacco use, how nicotine dependence fits into the disease of addiction, the targeting of women by the tobacco industry, as well as special issues around women and tobacco. Educational materials and assignments are given in a non-judgmental manner to assist residents in understanding the role tobacco plays in their lives (health, financial, integrity) as well as in the process of their recovery from chemical dependency. The women are provided positive feedback for their work on this issue both as a House and in individual sessions. Shortly before program completion, a client is given assignments to reinforce work to date and to help her move forward in her recovery from tobacco dependence.

Crawford House is a 14-bed halfway house in Skillman, NJ for women recovering from drug and alcohol dependency. Founded in 1978, Crawford House is committed to providing state of the art treatment and support to women aged 16+ as they re-enter the workforce and society drug-, alcohol-, and tobacco-free. For more information on Crawford House, contact (908) 874-5153. 



Some Tobacco Facts from the World Conference on Tobacco or Health

-  Globally, 5.3 trillion cigarettes were consumed in 1997. A third of all cigarette exports are never legally imported.
-  Even with their shorter life spans, smokers have higher health care costs than non-smokers.
-  In the US, 86% of teens smoke the most heavily advertised brands — Marlboro, Camel, and Newport; brands which are only 30% of the adult market.
-  Tobacco currently kills 4 million people a year worldwide. Half of these deaths occur in economically-productive middle age.
-  In a country with a per capita GDP of \$20,000, smoking prevention costs \$20 to \$40 per year of life gained. Lung cancer treatment costs \$18,000 per year of life gained.
-  Every day, more than 80,000 young people around the world become addicted to tobacco products.