

# Understanding the Treatment Needs of Women with Alcohol Use Disorder

## Increased Health Risks

Compared to men, women with AUD have increased health risks including: cognitive decline, cancer, liver disease, sexual violence, & mental health issues. <sup>1,2</sup>

## Treatment Gap

Due to unequal access to treatment services, only 15% of women with AUD seek treatment compared to 22% of men. <sup>3</sup>

## Common Barriers

Women face additional challenges due to stigma, lack of AUD screening, limited childcare services, transportation difficulties, mental health issues, lack of women oriented-care, and male-dominant information. Barriers can be exacerbated for those in rural or remote locations.

## Societal Inequality

Racial, gender, and sexual minority women face additional barriers to treatment due to increased stigma and discrimination.

## Treatment Recommendations



### Implement Universal Screening

To identify AUD cases early and decrease stigma about discussing drinking habits.



### Build Client-Clinician Relationships

To improve treatment engagement and retention.



### Provide Education Opportunities

To increase healthcare provider awareness about AUD presentation & treatment in women.



### Consider Pharmacotherapy as an Option

Where appropriate, to allow women to receive treatment at home.



### Offer Accessible Childcare Services

To increase women's participation in treatment programs.



### Develop Community-Specific Approaches

To provide culturally-safe and inclusive care specifically designed for Indigenous clients and minority populations.



### Expand Virtual Practices

To increase treatment accessibility for all women.



### Improve Managed Alcohol Programs

To focus on and better support women's needs.

## References

1. Fama, R., Le Berre, A. P., & Sullivan, E. V. (2020). Alcohol's unique effects on cognition in women: A 2020 (re)view to envision future research and treatment. *Alcohol Research: Current Reviews*, 40(2), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.35946/arc.v40.2.03>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Excessive Alcohol Use is a Risk to Women's Health.
3. McCrady, B. S., Epstein, E. E., & Fokas, K. F. (2019). Treatment interventions for women with alcohol use disorder. *Alcohol Research: Current Reviews*, 40(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.35946/arc.v40.2.08>