

Treatment plans developed for one person may not always be as effective for another person. Differences in culture and gender are challenges for therapists in that they have to be more sensitive to their clients needs and think outside the box to prevent relapse. One size does not fit all.

There are concerns that exist at the cultural level. Since drug abuse problems are prevalent among those who live in poor and violent neighborhoods, treatment programs have to take this into consideration and make adjustments. Many poor may not have the monetary means to be able to travel to a clinic away from their neighborhoods for treatment, let alone be able to pay for the treatment. This also means that they don't always have the ability to get away from the familiar environment in which they abuse the drugs. This is especially a problem for the homeless. I talked to a young couple a few months ago living on the streets and in shelters. They were in a methadone clinic and were begging for change on Park Ave on the Union Sq./Gramercy border near a CVS. They explained to me that although they were getting treatment, being homeless was a bigger part of the problem because they had a hard time getting away from the pressures that contributed to the use in the first place.

Concerns also exist for differences in gender. Treatment programs designed for men are not always effective for women for various reasons. The primary reasons are that women are physically and psychologically different from men. Also with women where there is a drug disorder there is often another underlying problem such as sexual abuse or even a sexual disorder. It is not uncommon for female drug abusers to be prostitutes or involved in promiscuous situations. A young lady in my building when I lived in Harlem had that problem. Married and away from her husband she abused drugs in her apartment while often having strange men overnight. She was not a prostitute but I knew she was trading sex for drugs. There is also the

concern of having to treat women who are pregnant, already have children or those women who are fearful of seeking treatment because they don't want to be criminally prosecuted. Women would need to be placed in gender sensitive treatment plans where their children can be incorporated in the recovery.