



"Leader in Research-Based Practices"



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THAILAND ADOPTS MATRIX MODEL

By Jeanne Obert and Michael McCann

The logos are everywhere. Topped by outstretched arms and waving hands are the words, "Volunteers needed - Matrix Thailand." And volunteering they are. Nurses, doctors, psychologists and thousands of others are donating their services to staff 4,440 Matrix style programs throughout Thailand. They have taken on the methamphetamine epidemic that is threatening their country.

The movement started in the year 2000. The Government of Thailand decided in that year to initiate policies to deal with the rapid rise in Amphetamine-type Stimulant (ATS) abuse that was occurring in their country. The primary goal was to reduce demand for stimulants by providing treatment for as many people as possible in as short a time as possible. Traditional drug treatment in Thailand was designed for the treatment of opiate abuse. The residential and methadone programs that had been successful with heroin abusers were not proving useful or effective for this new population of users. There were many young people who lived at home and needed treatment available to them in their communities. It was decided that the goal should be to provide effective outpatient treatment located as close to people's homes as possible, thereby maximizing the opportunities for treating as many people as possible.

With financial assistance provided by the U.S. State Department, twelve treatment sites in Thailand began the training process by sending clinical personnel to Los Angeles for an intensive two-week hands-on training at Matrix Institute. Subsequently, medical and clinical staff

from twelve additional psychiatric hospitals were also trained. It was then determined that the initial twenty-four provincial and district clinics and hospitals trained in the Matrix Model would become core training centers for personnel from other clinics and hospitals agreeing to provide these services. This implementation plan has now resulted in 4,444 sites throughout Thailand supported by the Ministry with an eventual goal of establishing 7,000 drug dependence treatment clinics at the district and sub-district levels.

While we, in the US, are concerned about the speed of implementation and the careful cultural adaptation of the treatment model, the Thais are more concerned about countering the rapid rise in the use of ATS. The speed with which the programs have been able to recruit volunteers to deliver the services, to train those volunteers, and to begin recruitment of this most-difficult-to-engage population of stimulant users, is very impressive. They have adopted and adapted the treatment model in very creative and impressive ways. They report that the Motivational Enhancement style of delivery and the simple explanations of changing brain chemistry lend themselves to the widespread acceptance of Matrix in Thailand.

We were recently privileged to visit some of the sites where the model has been implemented in clinical settings by the Department of Medical Services and adapted to community and school-based programs for youth by the Department of Mental Health.

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TCE PROGRAM AWARD TOUCHES LIVES

By Albert Hasson

The Matrix Institute Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) was recently awarded a Targeted Capacity Expansion grant for substance abuse treatment and HIV/AIDS services (TCE/HIV) from the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT). This five-year grant, the second awarded to the Matrix OTP, will fund treatment for 300 new patients over 5 years and provide enhanced services to an additional 300 people. According to Michael McCann, who wrote the highly competitive grant, "Many of the patients in treatment at the Institute are medically compromised as a result of their drug use and lifestyle. Additionally, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, septicemia, endocarditis and abscesses, continue to impact these patients. These conditions would be significantly more detrimental had these individuals not been afforded this lifesaving opportunity."

Four patients treated through the TCE/HIV project were awarded certificates and pins at our first annual awards ceremony recognizing their outstanding achievements over the previous year of treatment and inducted into the "300 Club." The "300 Club" award is presented to those patients who attend all required group therapy sessions, medication visits, and providing drug free urines for a full year. The achievements of these patients and the others are remarkable. Both the staff and the awardees were filled with pride during this memorable event.

Congratulations to Michael McCann, Sarah Webster, Dan George, the Matrix staff and patients participating in this exciting project.

Many thanks to Diane Keaton for her mention in the recent *T.V. Guide* of Matrix and the assistance she got from our patients in preparation for her role in the Lifetime movie, "On Thin Ice." This will be covered in our next issue - Winter 2004.

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Piah Fan is a village in northern Thailand amidst the rice paddies about 20 miles outside of Khonkaen. It is a world away from the bustling night markets and riverfront restaurants of Bangkok and a couple of worlds away from Southern California. On the morning of August 17 the entire village gathered with teachers, children, and counselors to greet Jeanne Obert, Walter Ling, and Mickey McCann and to describe their drug prevention and treatment programs.

A series of speakers from the community thanked us for providing them the materials to help keep the children of their village drug free. At the end of the meeting the three of us were asked to stand, and we were approached by three village women who tied handmade sashes around our waists in a symbolic gesture joining us with the people of Piah Fan. We were very touched by the experience.

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MATRIX INSTITUTE, THE PACIFIC SOUTHWEST ADDICTION TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER CENTER AND UCLA ISAP ESTABLISH TRAINING VENTURE

By Leana Gadbois-Sills and Richard Rawson, Ph.D.

Training health care professionals about substance abuse disorders has become a major focus for both Matrix Institute, The Pacific Southwest Addiction Technology Transfer Center (PSATTC) and the UCLA Integrated Substance Abuse Programs (ISAP). For years Matrix and UCLA organizations have invested time and money to establish high quality, pertinent, up-to-date presentations on various aspects of drugs and alcohol, effective treatments, research advancements and drug abuse trends. Matrix and UCLA ISAP have established themselves as leaders in substance abuse training both nationally and internationally.

A collaborative team from Matrix and UCLA is developing a series of annual training programs, which will consist of four regional training events and one large event in the Greater Los Angeles Area. The expert presenters will be staff from Matrix, UCLA ISAP, as well as other local and national experts.

These trainings will be extremely useful for a broad audience. Personnel from substance abuse treatment, mental health organizations, social service agency staff, and professionals in the criminal justice field will find information of interest and relevance. The presentations will present material based upon the most current scientific evidence, with an emphasis on making the knowledge useful for practical application in the “real world.” Development of these trainings continues to ensure the quality of education you have come to expect from UCLA and Matrix Institute.

For more information or to be added to the mailing list for these trainings, call Leana M. Gadbois-Sills at (310) 207-4322 x-272 or email at lsills@matrixinstitute.org.

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As has happened before in our Matrix-Thailand collaborations, we were amazed and moved at the far-reaching impact of the work we began almost 20 years ago at the Matrix clinics in Southern California.

Later the same day, we visited a temple where recovering methamphetamine users receive Matrix Model treatment. These young patients lived at the temple, and then later were taken in by local families as they continued in outpatient treatment. We met with a group of patients at the temple who shared their recovery experience with us and we later met with one of the “foster parents,”

a man who worked in the rice paddies and who generously opened his home to one of these patients for the good of the community.

The Thai treatment data shows a rather impressive report of initial treatment outcomes involving 716 patients; over 50% were completing treatment with mean length of stay of 10.9 weeks. In the last 30 days of treatment 44.6% of the patients were drug-free and 80% of the last urinalyses were drug-free. Whether they are staying true to the model or not, these dedicated people are doing something right.

MATRIX NEWS

- * The **Matrix Narcotic Treatment Program**, located on Washington Boulevard in Los Angeles, is happy to introduce several new staff members: Angela Willis, Counselor; Stephen Rogers, Counselor; Rita Wilson, Counselor; Shirley Hawkins-Boulden, Counselor. These additions to staff will help serve the forty plus patients we have admitted since the closure of King Drew NTP clinic.
- * Our **Rancho Cucamonga** office has its fingers in more pies than does Betty Crocker! In addition to maintaining a private sector, treatment is available to probation, parole, proposition 36, and Drug Court, as well as county funded programs (Medi-cal, Calworks, CPS, and adolescents from 14-18 years old), with a sliding scale for fee rates. What makes the 'dessert' that Rancho serves so sweet is how the employees are more than counselors who show up to perform a job. Rancho staff is a family providing a service in the community while still maintaining the efficacy, integrity, and reputation that has come to be expected at the Matrix Institute.
- * Trainings have been abundant at the **San Fernando Valley** (Tarzana) site. Ahndrea recently returned from Canada lecturing on methamphetamine addiction and the Matrix Model. Tiffany has been speaking locally on the Matrix Model. Proposition 36 is a success with Robert and Adrian at the helm. Janette continues to hold down the fort with Ahndrea and Tiffany in the private program.
- * The **Orange County** office is doing great under the leadership of Caroline Hamner and has increased patient numbers in all programs: private, Prop 36, and research. The methamphetamine study is now underway and the research staff is pleased with the current status.
- * The **West LA** Matrix adolescent program is expanding and currently offers an on-site 12-Step meeting for teens, adolescent and parent education sessions, and a social support meeting each week. Bi-weekly family sessions are provided to assist the parents and siblings of the adolescent clients during the recovery process. Outreach efforts this fall and winter include conducting classes at local high schools to increase awareness of the behavioral problems associated with substance use.

EXECUTIVE CORNER By Jeanne Obert

Halloween is past, Thanksgiving is approaching and the holidays are coming fast. While most of us look forward to this time of the year, it is frequently a difficult period for people in early recovery. There are many factors that contribute to this reality. This is traditionally a family-oriented time and many people who are recently drug and alcohol free have yet to make peace with affected family members. People who have drug and alcohol problems with co-occurring depressive disorders may find this time of year particularly depressing. Those who do participate in the festivities often find themselves faced with situations where drinking, at least, is part of the celebration ritual. On top of all these difficulties people participating in treatment - especially in structured outpatient programs - often find that the very essence of their program - the protective, essential routine of their meetings is disrupted. The disruption occurs in scheduled sessions and in the absence of people who form their primary support systems. The critical focus on abstinence gets lost. Small wonder that so many people relapse during this difficult time of the year.

People whose job is helping those who are in recovery have an obligation to help minimize these obstacles in whatever ways they can. Maintaining scheduled sessions whenever possible, providing extra individual attention, discussing ways to deal with stress and with triggering situations are a few of the ways we can try to help. It takes an extra effort on the part of those in recovery, and those helping them, to make sure the holidays are joyous and bountiful. May you and those you care about have a safe and sober holiday season.