

Vision

A society in which the wellbeing of women and families is paramount, resulting in their equity, empowerment, and prosperity.

Mission

Develop, conduct, and disseminate collaborative outreach, education, intervention, and research projects of importance to diverse groups.

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COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

**Southwest Institute
for Research on Women**

**August 2017
SIROW
HIGHLIGHTS**

Weathering the Storm: The ANCHOR Project's Efforts to Support Mental Health and Wellness

The ANCHOR Project (Accessible Network for Coordinated Housing, Opportunities, and Resilience) provides supportive services for LGBTQ+ young adults experiencing homelessness and housing instability. ANCHOR is a collaboration between SIROW, CODAC Health Recovery & Wellness Inc., and Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation (SAAF).

In addition to housing needs, many of ANCHOR's 149 participants face significant mental health challenges. At initial intake sessions, 81% of participants reported experiencing serious depression, and 90% reported serious anxiety or tension in the past 30 days. Among those 90%, 22% experienced depression and 32% experienced anxiety every day during the past 30 days.

ANCHOR supports mental health and wellness in several ways. One way ANCHOR offers this support is by referring participants to SIROW's partner agency CODAC, in particular to their Living Out Loud LGBTQIA Health and Wellness Center, for therapy, case management and other psychological care.

At ANCHOR, program staff are also available during drop-in "Empower Hours" three days a week to assist participants with goal setting and emotional support. Additionally, ANCHOR offers weekly support groups that address mental health from multiple angles. ANCHOR's trauma support group, Building Understanding of Yourself (BUOY), uses the Seeking Safety evidence-based curriculum to teach participants skills for coping safely with trauma, substance abuse, and life challenges.

Additionally, ANCHOR's ART Lab group offers a creative outlet for self-expression and healing using a variety of art processes and materials. Many of the pieces created during this group are displayed throughout the ANCHOR community space. These artistic endeavors continued through the summer with several writing workshops held in July, culminating in an Open Mic Night and the development of an ANCHOR zine during August and



Artwork created by participants during ANCHOR's ART Lab support group.

Goals

- Engage in collaborative feminist research on topics pertinent to the lives of girls, women, and families;
- Develop and conduct outreach, education, service, research, and trainings with regard to mental and physical health, sexuality, legal matters, education, workforce, equity, diversity, and other issues;
- Address social inequalities and group-based disparities;
- Examine and support women's contribution to literature, the arts, and Southwest heritage;
- Advocate for women and families by linking researchers with community organizations and policy makers;
- Identify, illuminate, and disseminate research on girls, women, families, and gender differences.



September. The ANCHOR zine will contain poetry, art, advice, and resources from participants and staff.

ANCHOR participants cite these services as contributing to their well-being and stability over time. In addition, at 6 months after the initial intake assessment, the number of participants who experienced serious anxiety or tension in the past 30 days decreased by 6%. At 12 months post-intake assessment, 68% of participants reported their quality of life as good or very good, an 11% increase from intake.

Many contributing factors may have led to these positive preliminary outcomes. Participants shared that ANCHOR's strengths include the time staff invest in participants, and the genuine care and hospitality that the program offers. ANCHOR strives to empower participants to harness resources, take action, persevere, and take pride in themselves as they are.

SIROW was awarded funding for ANCHOR in 2014 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The three-year grant concludes this September 2017. Grants such as this have enabled SIROW and community collaborators to serve the LGBTQ community for over a decade. SIROW looks forward to new projects that will continue the mission of supporting homeless LGBTQ young adults.

Please contact Claudia Powell at claudiap@email.arizona.edu for more information.

The Hermanas Project: Promoting Social Inclusion and Well-being of Chronically Homeless Women

The *Hermanas* project builds on the established, ongoing partnership between Sister José Women's Center (SJWC) and the Southwest Institute for Research on Women. SJWC is a nonprofit organization serving chronically homeless women, providing daytime drop-in services and overnight shelter in winter and summer months.



Finding a lack of gender-specific data on the experiences and needs of women experiencing chronic homelessness, SJWC and SIROW have secured funding from the UA College of Management and the Women's Foundation of Southern Arizona—Unidas to initiate a Community Needs Assessment.

This partnership's current goals are to: (1) Increase community knowledge and resilience of women in Tucson, Arizona through a community needs assessment and interpretation of findings focused on the elimination of structural, physical and social barriers; (2) Inform about the complexity of the experiences, needs and strengths of women by developing a gender-informed White Paper that includes narrative views and can become a community-wide resource; and (3) Develop an action plan to expand SJWC services and establish a women's space to organize programming in the intent of creating a forum for social inclusion and development of skills through project-based activities. *Hermanas* is in the process of addressing the first two goals, and is set to begin a pilot for goal three in the future. Future plans are to secure funding to expand the current work and establish a novel program of social justice for chronically homeless women.

Please contact Rosi Andrade at rosia@email.arizona.edu for more information.