

From Myth to Meaning: Using Stories in Group Work

by Joan Stockbridge

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AUBURN, Calif., U.S.A. -- Every Wednesday morning for the past four years I've told folktales and myths at New Leaf, a residential program for women in substance abuse recovery. The women are there by court order and they also have open cases with Child Protective Services. As the seven of us sit in the somewhat shabby living room, we can usually hear toddlers and babies in the adjoining kitchen, which doubles as the child care room. Often one or more of the women is sick, suffering from dental problems (a common side effect of methamphetamine use) or medication issues (since many of the women have a dual diagnosis of a mental illness in conjunction with addictive issues) or just the garden variety ailments that crop up when people with young children live in close quarters. Nevertheless, the problems and pains recede as the story is told. The women relax. Their **[SNIP – End of preview.]**