

## CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW



### WHAT IS TOUGH AS A MOTHER?

**Tough as a Mother** is a new public awareness campaign, launching in May 2020, to help connect Colorado mothers with dependent children to substance use treatment providers in their communities. The campaign will rely on a mix of strategies, including partner engagement, community outreach, and traditional and digital media advertising and marketing, to reach mothers who are struggling with alcohol or other drugs.

### WHO IS BEHIND TOUGH AS A MOTHER?

**Tough as a Mother** is a collaborative initiative launched and funded by Signal Behavioral Health Network, the Colorado Office of Behavioral Health and other managed service organizations across the state including AspenPointe, Mental Health Partners and West Slope Casa. It relies on partners like you to help disseminate information to mothers in your communities.

### WHO IS TOUGH AS A MOTHER TRYING TO REACH?

**Tough as a Mother** is focused on reaching mothers with dependent children across Colorado who are struggling with substance use disorder. While the circumstances of the mothers we are trying to engage may differ from community to community, many will fit within the following demographic and substance use profiles:

- Age: Early to mid-30s
- Race: Primarily White and Latina
- Mother to dependent children in a range of ages
- Postpartum women
- Low-income: Unemployed or low-wage earner (less than \$50k/year)
- Low education level: High school or below
- Recipient of Medicaid & other public assistance
- Separated, never married or divorced
- Primarily uses alcohol, methamphetamine and opiates - oftentimes together
- Likely is experiencing a co-occurring, untreated mental health disorders

### WHY IS TOUGH AS A MOTHER NEEDED?

Although there are efforts in Colorado and nationally to engage pregnant mothers in substance use treatment, there has been little direct outreach done to mothers with dependent children. Because of societal stigma and perceptions of mothers with substance use disorder, this priority population has been difficult to reach and oftentimes reluctant to seek treatment.

**Questions about the Tough as a Mother campaign? Please contact:**

Signal Behavioral Health Network • [outreach@signalbhn.org](mailto:outreach@signalbhn.org)

**Tough as a Mother is a statewide initiative of:** Signal Behavioral Health Network, AspenPointe, Mental Health Partners and West Slope Casa



**COLORADO**  
Office of Behavioral Health  
Department of Human Services

### WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THIS CAMPAIGN?

In addition to connecting mothers to substance use treatment services, **Tough as a Mother** aims to:

- Speak to the emotional feelings that drive addiction rather than the substances themselves.
- Lead with the admission that motherhood is difficult, and that substance use is often a coping mechanism for stress.
- Acknowledge that while motherhood can be overwhelming and challenging, mothers need to be inspired to prioritize themselves so they can be stronger for their children.
- Encourage mothers to be honest about the issues they are struggling with that may be driving their substance use.
- Reduce the fear of stigma that mothers feel related to seeking treatment and encourage them to prioritize their health over their concern about other people's perception of them.
- Dispel myths and misconceptions that exist about legal ramifications and child custody.

### CAMPAIGN BRAND & KEY MESSAGES

Substance use disorder in mothers is complex and often caused, or made worse, by social and psychological factors, including mental health disorders, stress and unhealthy relationships. Also, mothers who use alcohol and illicit drugs often have great feelings of shame and guilt, low levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy, and often are devalued by other women and men. These feelings make it difficult for mothers to seek help or feel that they deserve to be helped.

#### **Tough as a Mother's tone is:**

- Empathetic
- Compassionate
- Empowering & Strengths-based
- Hopeful
- Honest, straight-forward

#### **Tough as a Mother's tone is not:**

- Judgmental
- Accusatory
- Demeaning or fear-based
- Threatening

### Topline Messaging Hierarchy

- **Campaign Name:** Tough as a Mother
- **Campaign Tagline:** Stronger than addiction
- **Topline Message:** Being a mom is tough—but so are you. If you're using alcohol or other drugs to cope with stress, you're not alone. Support is available so you can be the strongest mom possible.

### Key Messages

- Being a mom is tough—but so are you. If you're using alcohol or other drugs to cope with stress, you're not alone. Support is available so you can be the strongest mom possible.
- It's ok to admit you're struggling. Get connected to more information and treatment provider locations near you: visit [www.toughasamother.org](http://www.toughasamother.org); call (844) 493-TALK (8255); or text TALK to 8255.
- Reaching out for help does not mean you will lose your children. If you are getting treatment, you are trying to make a better life for you and your family. The treatment providers we recommend are not part of the court or child welfare systems. They want to strengthen your family together and will work alongside you during your recovery.