



PROS NEWSLETTER

A Resource For All Personalized Recovery Oriented Services Staff

In our own words:

Nick R: 'I now have hope that I will live a happier life.'

I have lived the majority of my life with anxiety and depression. I have had low self-esteem, little confidence, and a habit of being constantly critical of myself. Since I was 12 years old, I have tried therapy and medications. I was doing the same thing year after year, expecting a different result.

Last February, I had my first panic attack ever and was having thoughts about how I might get into my car one day and drive off a bridge. What stopped me was that I had two beautiful children and a wife who needed me.

My Dad committed suicide when I was 23, and I learned over the years there were a lot of great moments in life that he missed. I didn't want to miss any of those great moments and, more importantly, I didn't want my family to live those wonderful moments without their Father/Husband/Brother/Uncle/Cousin. It was time to do something different.

Learning skills through PROS

I asked a social worker what else was out in the community that could help me. She showed me a flyer for PROS. I was instantly curious and I went as soon as I could to an orientation. I knew that this was a program that would help me work on the skills I needed to live a happier life. There was one catch, I would have to quit my job so I could attend classes during the day. It was a really tough decision because I had a financial responsibility to my family. However, it was more important that I get healthy, and build the skills to stay healthy. Then, I would be able to find a new job. I quit my job and attended PROS classes every day.

At PROS, I was learning skills in communication, assertiveness, self-advocacy, distress tolerance, and resiliency. I learned about Dialectical Behavior Therapy and

Success stories from PROS

Mindfulness, PTSD, Anxiety and Depression, dealing with loss and an endless list of coping skills that would help me. The three things that made the program successful for me were the peer support, working on my recovery daily, and the supportive and knowledgeable staff.

Talking with people who shared in my experiences and who were understanding allowed me to open up and learn about myself and others. Working on my recovery every day allowed me to see growth, and to learn from my setbacks.

Collaborating with co-workers

When I got a new job, I was motivated to implement the skills I had learned. I was teamed with a coworker who was struggling to meet the expectations of supervisors. Within one month of working with her, building a relationship, collaborating and sharing our knowledge and ideas, our supervisor told me that she had made a full turnaround and they were excited about the growth she had made. This was a full turnaround for me too! In the past, the challenge of working with co-workers had always caused me a lot of anxiety and depression.

Despite my success, going back to work meant that I could not attend PROS because classes are only offered during the day. I did not have the same peer interactions on a daily basis, and I didn't put as much time into focusing on my recovery.

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Serving older adults in PROS

“Changing the lens” on what recovery looks like for someone in their later years may take some stretching beyond what staff typical envision. PROS is designed to help people channel their time and energy in ways that are meaningful to them as they develop connections to their community.

For senior participants, this may be focusing on developing roles through volunteering, babysitting grandchildren, or learning to try new things to improve self-care by taking on a hobby or exercise routines.

A matter of perspective

“Recovery is recovery. It doesn’t matter much if a person is young or old. Just change the details and look through the lens of the older person,” points out Robert Franco, Senior Vice President for the Service Program for Older Adults, Inc. PROS (SPOP) in New York City. SPOP PROS was licensed in 2013 as the only PROS program exclusively serving adults age 55 and older. They serve approximately 70 senior PROS participants.

What do older adults at SPOP identify as their goals? Most identify social connectivity, productivity, housing, health, or learning. In other words, the same as any other age group.

PROS has unique capabilities to offer integrated health services for older adults. Diabetes education, exploring the benefits of exercise to avoid fall hazards, nutritional concerns as you age, and more may be valuable topics to include in wellness services. Further, PROS can bill for the provision of Cognitive Remediation services, which are popular among older adults, and benefits their cognition. A program must request OMH approval to offer Cognitive Remediation services as an optional PROS service. Contact your Field Office to learn how.

Connecting with community

At SPOP, social connectivity is the predominant life role goal identified by this demographic; 60 to 65% identify this as a primary life role goal. PROS services, such as Community Living Exploration, can be helpful to assist participants to connect with the community at large. Family Psycho-Education may be beneficial when someone wants to reconnect with a child or sibling after their mental illness has strained family relationships.

Classes that develop skills on how to establish new friendships or romantic relationships based on a healthier perspective and lifestyle are valuable. Your program is a gateway to participants of any age to find personal satisfaction and strengthen their participation in their local community through various life role goals.

Nick R: ‘I now have hope...’

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I started experiencing the powerful symptoms of anxiety and depression again. Instead of letting it get the best of me again, I quickly reminded myself that I had to continue to do what was working.

Now, I use what I have learned and apply it while experiencing the stresses of life. I continue to meet with one of the PROS practitioners once a week for ORS. I am using the support from my psychiatrist, therapist, family, friends, coworkers, peers, and the wonderful staff at PROS. I have started taking Academy of Peer Services courses online. I am also working on my Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP). I am learning more every single day about the community movement for mental health recovery. I now have hope that I will live a happier life as I work towards achieving my goals and dreams.

Editor’s Note: This powerful story of determination to overcome barriers was submitted by Nick R. from Unity House of Cayuga County PROS. We wish him continued strength as he reaches for his dreams!

NYAPRS Recovery and Rehabilitation Academy highlights

In November, NYAPRS, in collaboration with the Coalition for Behavioral Health, Inc., the Center for Practice Innovations, and OMH, held a successful two-day Rehabilitation and Recovery Academy for PROS and HCBS providers. Kudos to those PROS program who sent their staff!

Eric C. Arauz kicked off the conference with a powerful keynote that touched on the importance of providing trauma informed care by sharing his own personal journey through the system. His story moved many attendees deeply, and they were thrilled to be given a copy of his award winning book, *An American Resurrection: My Pilgrimage from Child Abuse and Mental Illness to Salvation*.

Breakout sessions offered some expert guidance on providing quality supported education, improving employment outcomes through collaboration, and creating a positive rehabilitation culture, and much more. The Foundations of Recovery Practice track was very popular.

Amanda Saake from the Center for Rehabilitation and Recovery presented a breakout session that demonstrated clearly how PROS programs can move beyond lecture formatted classes and get participants actively involved in skills development. Margy Meath, a clinical assistant professor and consultant, facilitated a lively discussion about the relationship between good staff supervision and improved client outcomes. When supervision moves beyond talking about the client caseload to effectively supporting your staff then it can help staff grow, which in turn creates a parallel improvement in relationships with clients.

Through many excellent workshops, Social Workers, CPRP, and CRC staff could earn needed CEU credit hours. Thank you to all who put together the Academy, and those who attended. If your agency missed it, then plan ahead and mark your calendars to attend in November 2018!



Collective

Recovery • Rehabilitation • Rights



Off-site PROS services

As a rehabilitation model, PROS focuses on helping individuals achieve desired life role goals through skill development and learning to utilize community resources and supports.

PROS is a flexible program and regulations allow services to be delivered off-site, because we all learn best in the most natural setting possible. PROS programs are able to transport or meet participants in the community to deliver services one-on-one or in groups in locations such as laundromats, grocery stores, or banks.

While off-site service provision is sometimes an operational challenge, direct teaching of skills in the community is worth the investment of staff time in the community.

We strongly encourage your program to develop a plan to offer services in the community, especially as we frequently hear that more participants are interested in receiving services off-site.

It is likely that implementing a plan to assist PROS participants learn and practice skills in the most ideal setting will lead to goal achievement for the individuals in your program.

Please note: PROS programs are now allowed to provide Structured Skill Development in the community (guidance forthcoming).



Resources

NEW ~ CAIRS Request for Access Simplified

As of November 29, 2017 the process to gain access to CAIRS has changed. We hope that you are realizing the benefits of granting new users access to CAIRS via SMS electronic submission.

The new process:

- Program Directors provide staff with the “**CAIRS Access Form,**” which is found under the **HELP** tab in CAIRS and replaces the paper RFA form.
- Your agency’s designated Information Security Manager will enter the user’s information to OMH Security online via SMS, which begins the RSA token-assignment process.
- When the process is complete, the new user will receive an email from OMH Security which will include the user’s token and log in instructions. This process typically takes two to five business days.

CAUTION! CAIRS users should review their account. **It is very important that users only be granted access to the program unit(s) where they work.** The CAIRS Access Form asks for the **program name and unit code** to be specified in order to limit staff’s access to their scope of work. **Without specification of a unit code, it is assumed your agency is assigning additional access, which may allow a user to see client data that they should not have access to see,** which could be a HIPAA violation.

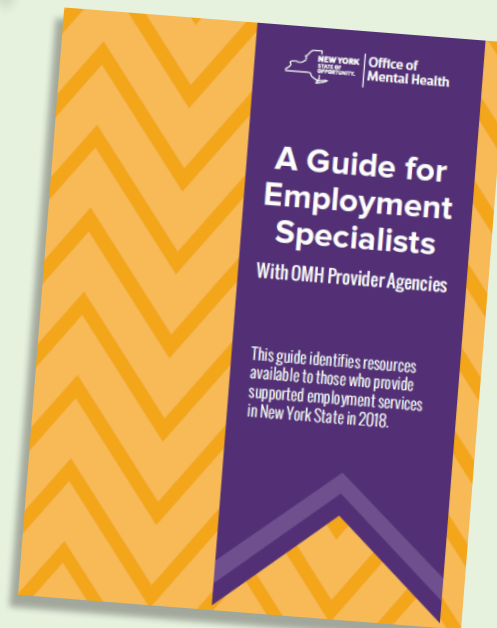
We strongly recommend that PROS Program Directors work closely with your agency’s Information Security Manager to ensure proper compliance; if you find someone has been granted unnecessary access, please ask your security manager to remove it via SMS.

Journal discusses parenting with a mental illness

Check out this issue brief from the *Journal of Parent & Family Mental Health*: “**Enhancing Family Communication in Families Where a Parent has a Mental Illness,**” from the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health Research Center of Excellence. You can read it at: <http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/parentandfamily/vol2/iss3/1/>.

New!

OMH Guide for Employment Specialists



The Office of Mental Health is pleased to announce the availability of a new resource designed to assist Employment Specialists to help those we serve find satisfying employment.

The guide promotes a culture that is reflective of the fact that employment can be powerful part of a person’s recovery.

A Guide for Employment Specialists with OMH Provider Agencies is posted as a pdf, with live links for convenient access to a broad array of supported employment tools.

To read the guide, visit the NYESS website: <http://www.nyess.ny.gov/docs/2018-omh-guide-for-employment-specialists.pdf>.



Office of
Mental Health

This newsletter is written by the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services and Care Coordination at the New York State Office of Mental Health.

Please distribute to all PROS staff.