In our own words:
Peer support and PROS

*Submitted by **FL**, from Central Nassau Guidance and Counseling Services PROS*

I was mandated to start attending PROS seven years ago and had a long history of hospitalizations. With the help of medication, sobriety, my family, and having my treatment team available for support and guidance, I was able to stabilize.

I started volunteering and then looking for employment; I would go to the computer room at PROS and apply to jobs, and I found a part-time job that way. The PROS Director eventually referred me to a position in the agency, and I was hired.

I worked in multiple departments and then started working as a Peer Specialist for HCBS. I helped the HCBS clients with their goals, like managing their mental health, socialization, and eating healthy.

When I met with them in the field, I would research coping skills, socialization skills, and healthy recipes to help them. During the pandemic, the clients were struggling, and I would mostly support them with their anxiety; listen and process with them.

My client, who now receives the new CORE service, is struggling with housing so I am referring him for case management services; and my other client with health problems, I've been helping her manage her doctor appointments.

I still meet with staff from PROS while working full-time. My primary counselor is so supportive and helps me with any challenges with my employment; he always checks in with me about my physical health, self-care, and making sure I take time to myself.

I meet with my prescriber every month, and she's made some medication adjustments. And the RN is wonderful and has helped with prior authorizations for meds.

Everyone at PROS has been great, and I also have so much family support; they've been there for me through all of my troubles. I am thankful now that I have accomplished many of my goals and I am work-

Success stories from PROS
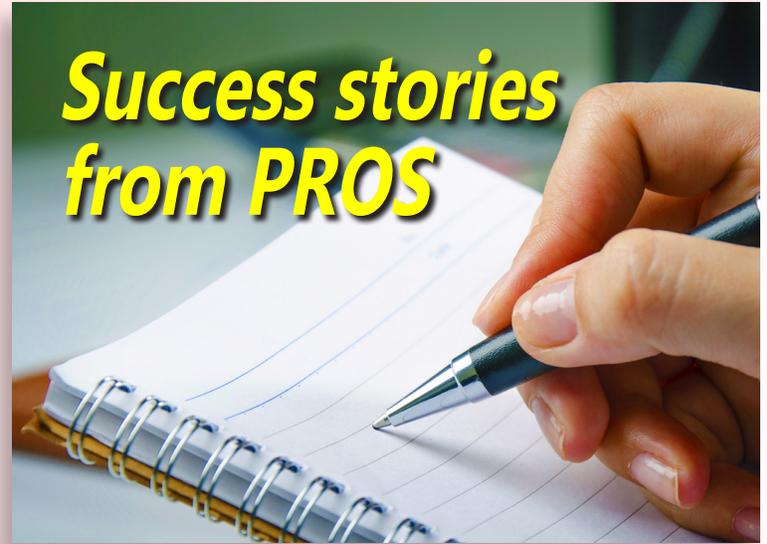
ing with HCBS/CORE clients to help them accomplish their goals.

Editor's Note: *FL, thank you for sharing your remarkable journey! You seem to have found a career path through using your challenges and personal experience in PROS to now offer support and inspiration to others on their own journeys to recovery.*

PROS staff:
Your opinion matters to OMH

The experience and perspective of PROS staff is invaluable when considering ways to modernize and improve program operations.

All PROS staff are asked to complete a brief survey to inform OMH's efforts to redesign PROS. Each of you has a unique insight into where this program model could help meet the needs to those we serve more effectively and/or efficiently. OMH wants to hear your perspective; when you receive the survey, please return as soon as possible.

OMH is also organizing a PROS Redesign Workgroup consisting of practitioners, clinicians, managers, and administrators from each region. An application will be sent out along with the survey, and we encourage those that are interested to apply!

Operating during a workforce shortage
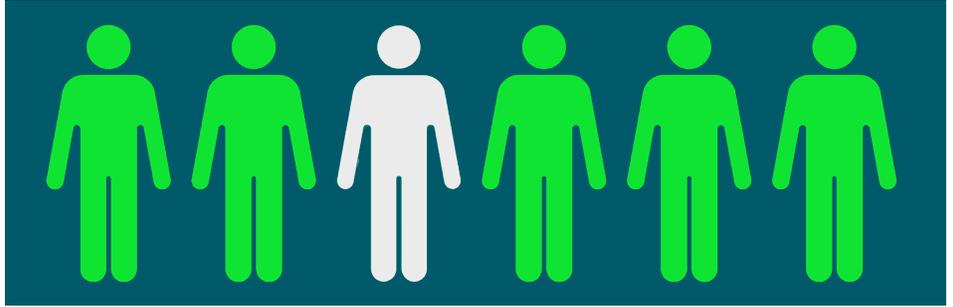
Operating efficiently is beneficial in terms of reducing stress, maintaining revenue, and improving outcomes. It is also helpful under challenging circumstances such as managing with fewer staff while actively recruiting. It's a tricky juggling situation, and just like with juggling, it takes some coordination and practice.

Below are some of the strategies that programs in the Hudson River region shared with each other on how they manage when short staffed due to illness, vacations, or vacancies:

- Have a coverage plan for your group/ class schedule so that whenever possible the staff can reschedule their day rather than the participants. Consider whether some 1:1 sessions might be rescheduled to allow for group coverage.

- When running short-staffed for more than a few days, think about who else in your agency may be available to step in and provide coverage. Perhaps there is a therapist or administrator who has prior group work experience who could be tapped for group coverage. Perhaps there is a peer available with a talent such as knitting or drawing, or music, who may be willing to create a recovery-oriented activity for those whose class was cancelled.

- If and when groups must be cancelled, offer impacted participants the chance to participate in another group or activity that relates to their goals.

- This is a time when all the preparation that goes into to developing a curriculum in advance will be most appreciated, as the "substitute facilitator" can hopefully open the lesson plan and keep the PROS class on topic. If a curriculum is not available, remember that you may find resources quickly on the NYAPRS PROS Clearinghouse curricula section.

When you do hire new staff that you need to get up to speed, have them check out the PROS Essential section of the Clearinghouse section found at www.nyaprs.org. Resources found there, such as PROS 101 – Rehabilitation & Recovery Clearinghouse can help provide a quick overview to orient new staff.

Thinking ahead to plan for the "unexpected" can help a program run as smoothly as possible.

CORE Services and PROS

On February 17, 2022, New York State's Office of Mental Health (OMH) and Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS) facilitated a webinar that introduced CORE Services for ACT, PROS, CCBHCs, Outpatient Clinics, and Housing/Residential providers.

In this webinar, participants learned:

- What CORE is and who is eligible for CORE.

- Where CORE fits within the larger behavioral health system.

- How CORE Services can be integrated with more traditional services as a wrap-around intervention to meet each individual's comprehensive needs.

- How programs can partner with local CORE providers and the referral process.

Eligible PROS participants may benefit from enrolling in the Empowerment/Peer Support through CORE. Learn more: the webinar resources are now available here.

OMH guidance on FPHE

In October 2021, OMH issued guidance to help providers understand the relationship between the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) and the current program and billing flexibilities that have been extended throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you haven't yet, please take a moment to familiarize yourself with the Federal Public Health Emergency (FPHE) Guidance.

OMH will continue to allow flexibilities for billing and documentation requirements as outlined in OMH-issued guidance for the duration of the FPHE; on the date this guidance ends, unless otherwise specified by OMH on or after that date through formal regulatory waivers, the flexibilities afforded providers regarding billing and documentation will be discontinued.

An introduction to PSYCKES for programs and participants

Did you know that your agency can pull reports to help you determine your program's strengths as well as identify opportunities for improvement?

The **Psychiatric Services and Clinical Knowledge Enhancement System** (PSYCKES), is a free online application that securely shares information from Medicaid billing data and other state health databases for NYS Medicaid enrollees. It is worth your time to look through PSYCKES to see all it can offer. Some of the helpful reports available in PSYCKES include:

- **Clinical Summary:** Individual client's medical and behavioral health data from the past 5 years, including diagnoses, medications, inpatient and outpatient services, alerts, quality flags, and more. Helps to inform assessment, care planning, and care coordination.

- **Recipient Search Reports:** Flexible population health report filters used to identify a specific group of clients, such as clients eligible for Health Home Plus, High Need/High Risk populations, or clients with specific diagnosis, services, or medications

- **My QI Report & Statewide Reports**: Current program-level performance on over 85 quality measures; filter for specific program types (e.g., PROS), compare performance with region and statewide rates, and drill down to an actionable list of flagged clients.

PSYCKES can also increase empowerment, activation, and health literacy among PROS clients. **My Collaborative Health Outcomes Information System** (MyCHOIS) is the client-facing version of
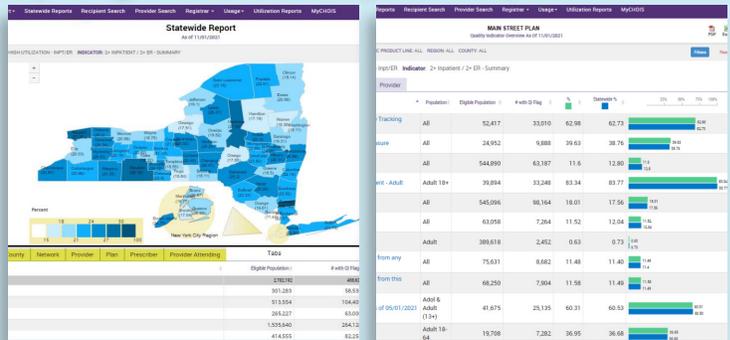
PSYCKES and offers clients a secure way to login and view their data. MyCHOIS also provides access to a Learning Center with a variety of educational and recovery tools. For more information, please check out the new MyCHOIS training materials for clients and providers:

- Training webinar on MyCHOIS Access for "My Treatment Data."

- How-To User Guides for Providers on Creating Client Accounts and for Clients to Request an Account and Login to MyCHOIS.

Interested in how PSYCKES can be utilized for your program? Please visit the PSYCKES website at www.psyckes.org, which includes training materials, live and recorded training webinars, and short how-to videos.

If you have any questions, contact the PSYCKES-Help team at PSYCKES-Help@omh.ny.gov. The Center for Practice Innovations learning community also has PSYCKES training modules available.

Staff training to deliver IR services

PROS Clarification #13 has been replaced with an updated memo describing staff training requirements for IR – FPE and IR – IDDT.

This memo can be found here https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/pros/guidance/.

PROS staff who deliver these IR services will be required to take the new training, as described in the memo.

See the item at right about CPI Training for details on how to access this training.

Center for Practice Innovations PROS updates

CPI has a **NEW** PROS section on their website. From the Center for Practice Innovations (CPI), log into their learning community system, go to the "browse for training" box, then look in the right-side margin for "PROS," where you will find trainings specific for PROS staff, including:

- The 3 **new** Family Psychoeducation training modules (approx. 1.5 hours to complete).
- IDDT – 9 training modules (approx. 3 hours to complete).
- SSDS archived training webinar (approx. 1.5 hours).
- WSM Refresher.

BROWSE FOR TRAINING

Additionally, CPI now has a new curriculum available - NYC Tobacco Cessation Training and Technical Assistance Center (NYC TCTTAC): **Policy and Environmental Changes to Address Tobacco**. Implementing treatment for tobacco use is critical to improving the health of the people you work with; denormalize the use of tobacco and increase the demand for tobacco treatment services.

Click here to register for both archived webinars - viewing both is required to earn 1 hour of continuing education (CASAC, CME, Psychology, LMHC, and Social Work credits are available).

Brightening up your space while making it Engaging!

As programs welcome more participants back to in-person services, it's a great time to re-evaluate and refresh your site. The décor of your space makes a world of difference.

Stark walls appear more like a medical setting, while artwork can make the space feel welcoming. The content can also be **interactive**. For example: **Unity House of Troy's PROS on Broadway** uses bulletin boards to engage participants on several topics.

In addition to offering one dedicated board with space to write memorial notes regarding a participant who passed on, they offer the boards shown here. Let creativity inspire your décor as you refresh your space for spring!

Want to try designing your own interactive bulletin boards? You can find colorful resources from OMH materials on the OMH Office of Diversity and Inclusion Resource page.

Resources

The **Work Incentive Network** was formed to increase access to information on Social Security's work incentive programs. You can find a **SSA Disability Benefits Specialist**: WIN - Liaisons (ssa.gov)

5 Tips to Prevent or Alleviate Burnout (psychiatrictimes.com) for those in the medical - or caregiving - professions. (8 min. video)

PROS Curriculum Clearinghouse

Resources from the PROS Curriculum Clearinghouse are once again available online at: https://pros.nyaprs.org/. Some of these curricula have been developed by NYAPRS and many have been generously shared by PROS programs. We encourage all programs to continue submitting curricula, along with lesson plans, that you have found successful in engaging your participants. To request a curriculum or to submit a new one, or request an inventory list of curricula, please contact **Ruth Colon-Wagner** at: ruthcw@nyaprs.org. Watch for a redesigned NYAPRS website coming later this year.

NEW YORK STATE | **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.