



In our own words: 'I am able to use my voice.'

Submitted by Susie

My name is Susie and I joined Venture PROS (Rochester Rehabilitation) in September of 2019. It took me a lot to admit that I needed more help than I was getting, but I'm so thankful every day that I did.

Everyone from the advisors to the office team supported me every step of the way. I think the classes that most benefited me were codependency and assertiveness. I am able to use my voice in ways I have never been able to, speaking up for not only myself but others as well.

I was able to become gainfully employed and then got into management at my previous job. At my new job I have made a lot of headway in the company, becoming the leader of my team within the first year there.



I am working on lessening the stigma that comes with talking about mental health and creating a more open environment. I've even managed to win a few achievement awards! I owe the people at Venture PROS my life.

Editor's Note: *It's incredible to see how you found your voice, excelled in your career, and became a champion for mental health awareness. Your achievements are a testament to your strength and determination. Thank you for sharing your journey with us, Susie!*

Do you or someone you know have a PROS Success Story to share?

Contact the editor, [Stephanie D. Rodriguez](#), for more information on how to be featured in the newsletter!

Disability Rights & Employment Awareness Month (DREAM) Symposium

📅 Oct 3, 2023

🕒 08:00 AM — 05:00 PM

📍 Empire State Plaza Concourse 100 S Mall Arterial
Albany, NY 12242

Save the date for New York State's 2nd Annual DREAM (Disability Rights & Employment Awareness Month) Symposium, on **Tuesday, October 3, 2023**, at the Empire State Plaza Concourse. Capital District businesses and job seekers from New York are encouraged to attend. For details, visit: <https://www.ny.gov/events/disability-rights-employment-awareness-month-dream-symposium>

Continuing the work of National Suicide Prevention Month

Even though September – National Suicide Prevention Month – is wrapping up, the work of saving lives is always of vital importance. Here's what you can do:

- 988 Suicide Crisis and Lifeline has developed five steps to take to support someone who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts.
- Ask someone you are concerned about if they're thinking about suicide. Studies show that asking someone if they are having thoughts of suicide does not increase the likelihood of a completed suicide nor does it increase suicidal thoughts.
- Be there for them. This could be by phone or in person.
- Keep them safe. Reduce access to lethal means for those at risk.
- Help them connect with ongoing support.
- Follow up. Give them a call or visit. Send a text or an email to let them know that you are still present.
- Learn more and find resources at www.BeThe1To.com. Be the one to save a life. You can do something to prevent suicide.



Free Suicide Prevention Resources

Here are some of the best resources for information on suicide warning signs and related information:

- ❖ [American Psychiatric Association Suicide Prevention Site](#)
- ❖ [CDC Suicide Prevention Site](#)
- ❖ [Mayo Clinic Suicide & Suicidal Thoughts Overview](#)

Training Available in Suicide Prevention Training Implementation Evaluation (SP-TIE)

PROS staff are eligible to access the free Suicide Prevention Training Implementation Evaluation (SP-TIE) trainings and tools housed in the [Center for Practice Innovations Learning Management System](#) (CPI-LMS).

SP-TIE has a number of trainings available that reflect SP-TIE's goals of identifying and targeting gaps in suicide prevention expertise by training the Assess, Intervene, and Monitor (AIM-SP) model of suicide-safer care.

All trainings offer a certificate of completion, and the majority offer continuing education credits for New York State social workers, licensed mental health counselors, credentialed alcohol and substance abuse counselors, and medical professionals; psychologist continuing education credits are coming soon.

PROS Redesign Update:

Feedback & Themes from the Participant Workgroup

OMH's Office of Advocacy and Peer Support Services (OAPSS), in partnership with the Rehabilitation Services Unit, facilitated a PROS **Participant** Redesign Workgroup, on how the PROS model can be updated and improved.

Below are key areas discussed and feedback provided by participants:



The PROS Community: Staff and participants together create a community that is a safe environment where participants feel comfortable. Some participants shared that PROS is the *only* place they feel comfortable. While this programmatic community and safety are vital, some participants shared that they are less willing to explore their own community and create natural supports. A key suggestion was for PROS programs to create more groups/classes in the community so that participants can better connect to community resources.

Diversity: Participants expressed a need for more diverse staff and recommended increased diversity/cultural humility training for staff.

PROS Staff: Participants shared that staff turnover and vacancies make it difficult to maintain their enthusiasm and engagement in the program. Participants recommended that the redesign consider concerns related to staff recruitment and retention.

PROS Groups: Some participants reported that their programs have not changed their group/class schedule in quite a while, and they stay in the same groups/classes or end up retaking the same ones. Another common frustration that was shared is the mid-cycle drop off in attendance, along with the need for facilitators to spend a lot of time catching up new or returning participants. Participants recommended that PROS groups should last one hour to account for delays and to properly summarize content and conclude groups.

Learning New Skills: Participants shared their appreciation for the skills that they have learned that they utilize outside of PROS, including establishing healthy boundaries, mindfulness skills, emotional regulation, interpersonal skills, and activities of daily living.

Fiscal Stress Test & Next Steps

Thank you to all the PROS Programs that engaged in the redesign fiscal stress testing! Several programs from across the state shared utilization data with us from the post-PHE period. The data we received is a key piece of information needed to create the new reimbursement model for PROS programs.

Our finance team is using the data to learn more about what PROS utilization looks like in 2023, with an eye on creating rates that align with how PROS works today.

Looking for a Benefits Advisor?

The New York Employment Services System (NYESS) team has put together an interactive map to assist you with finding a Certified Benefits Advisor. A Benefits Advisor can help beneficiaries navigate the world of Social Security benefits (SSI and SSDI) and how working will affect those benefits. They can provide you with information about important work incentives that allow beneficiaries to keep essential Medicaid and/or Medicare benefits while they work. Use this [link](#), type in your location, and select Benefits Advisors to see providers near you!

Resources

2023 OMH Community Feedback Sessions

To guide planning and implementation of the Governor's historic expansion in mental health services, OMH conducted Community Engagement Feedback Sessions throughout the state this spring. More than 1,700 New Yorkers joined us for thoughtful discussions about challenges with our current systems and what our goals are for future success.

Reoccurring themes included:

- Recruitment, retention, and greater diversity of the workforce.
- Transportation for individuals seeking or receiving outpatient care.
- Use of telehealth technology.
- Better communication about outpatient mental health services.
- Greater collaboration among agencies.
- Expanding mental health services for school-aged children
- Establish more Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Programs.
- Safe affordable housing and supportive services.
- Inpatient capacity at hospitals, additional space for long-term stays, residential respite programs, and sub-acute residential facilities.
- Improving commercial insurance reimbursement rates for mental health services.

This input is now helping to implement new programming and develop resources to enhance New York State's mental health system. Above all, the input is helping guide the agency's ongoing work to increase access, eliminate service gaps and promote equity throughout the state. You can find more details on OMH's website:

- [Executive Summary](#)
- [Results of the OMH Community Engagement Feedback Sessions](#)

Back issues of the PROS Newsletter

- PROS Newsletters since 2022 are catalogued at: <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/pros/newsletter.html>
- PROS Newsletters from 2015-2021 are archived at: [Resources – Rehabilitation & Recovery Clearinghouse](#)



Office of
Mental Health

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

Please distribute to all PROS staff.