

In our own words: 'Reaching my goal using tele-health and in-person services'

Submitted by TT, Best Self's Abbott Corners PROS, Erie County

I started PROS in January of 2020. I joined PROS because I was having problems with my anger, depression, and anxiety.

I needed more than one-on-one counseling. I wanted more group work and socialization. My goal was to gain employment. Through PROS, I was able to accomplish that goal.

The groups in-person and online helped me prepare for the interview; what to wear, not to fidget with accessories, focusing on the interviewer and the questions they were asking me. I learned to make sure I was giving them short and concise answers that were on topic. They gave me coping skills to use to manage the anxiety of sitting down in a real job interview. I can also continue to use those skills on the job and in my everyday life.

I attended positive thinking groups and it helped me focus on the possibilities instead of the negative self-fulfilling prophecies. I learned to change my thinking to concentrate on all the good that can happen and put my energy into those thoughts instead of my negative thoughts.

My Leadership group showed me how to be a leader and take on responsibilities. I have learned how to work as a team with co-workers, bosses, friends, and family. My Job Skills Group helped me with my resume and interview skills.

I continue to apply the skills I learned for interviewing while working. I learned how to dress for an interview



how to effectively communicate with my interviewer and answer as best I could, and how to act professional in the interview and after. I found it helpful to do mock interviews with my peers to practice.

I took a Goal Setting group. It helped me learn how to set myself up for success by starting with smaller goals. When I achieve small goals I feel good and more motivated to keep setting bigger goals. Having the group online has been very helpful in filling some gaps while I am home. I am able to take more classes than what's offered in person and they're flexible with my schedule. I want to continue to use telehealth services. They help out a lot and I am comfortable using them.

I felt really good when I got hired. I was proud of myself and excited to say I achieved my goal. I was sad when it didn't work out but I kept going to my job skills groups and meeting with the IPS counselor. I kept pushing and have an interview with Tops next week!

Editor's Note: Thank you TT for describing how someone can effectively engage in PROS using both telehealth and in-person supports. Your determination and effort are admirable and will help you in any job!

PRIDE in PROS



Pride Month, which just concluded last week, is celebrated each June because it is when the Stonewall Riots took place back in 1969. It is an opportunity for the LGBTQ+ community to peacefully protest and raise political awareness of current issues facing the community. Pride month is also an opportunity to assess where your agency is in terms of being welcoming and inclusive of diversity. It important to recognize that every person has a "SOGIE." SOGIE means "Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression," which can more accurately capture the essence of an individual than referring to their sex assigned at birth and gender stereotypes. While our nation has grown more aware of diversity in the 50+ years since the Stonewall Riots, it is still also true that too often the LGBTQ+ community faces discrimination and stigma, as well as consequences of internalized stigma.

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PROS staff survey results

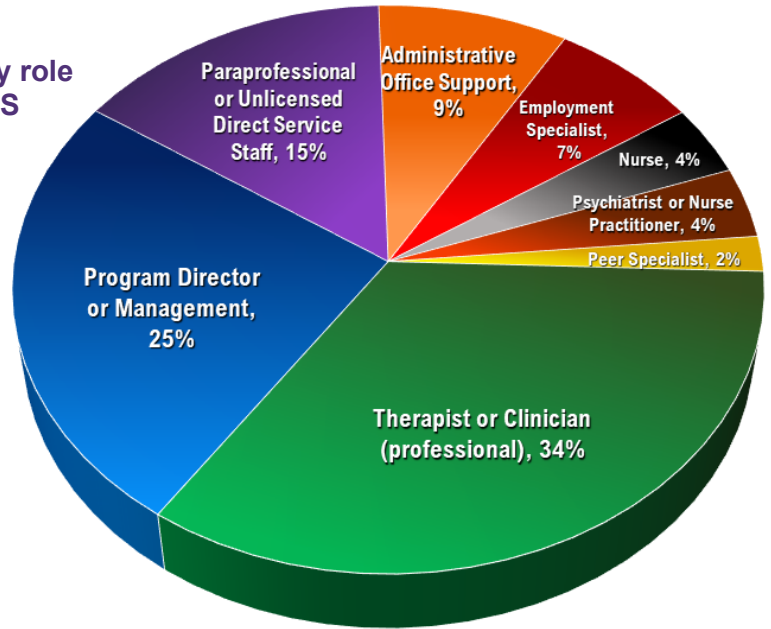
The Rehabilitation Services Unit at the Office of Mental Health wants to thank everyone who took the time to participate in the PROS Staff Survey from this spring. The feedback that you provided will go a long way in helping with PROS Redesign. The survey was distributed to **768** staff who work in a PROS program, and **480** responses were recorded (**62.5%**). A total of **180** comments were submitted as part of the survey.

78% of respondents were from a PROS with clinic and **22%** were from a PROS without clinic.

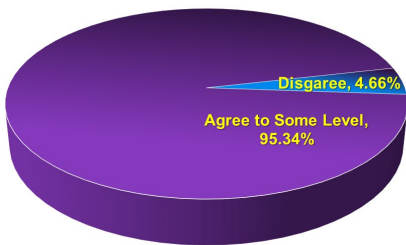
We were excited to see that **96%** of respondents agree to some degree that they do a great job engaging participants at PROS. This is great to see coming from the PROS staff as engagement is paramount in successful recovery outcomes for the individuals engaged in PROS services!

Another key area we noticed is that PROS programs allow participants to quickly access the care that they need.

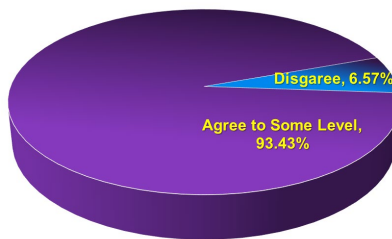
Primary role in PROS



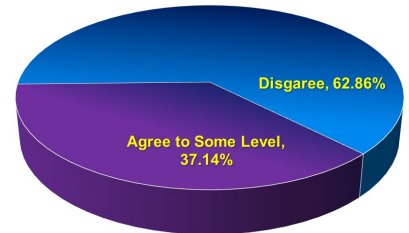
“My PROS program provides comprehensive services to ensure the participants’ physical health and wellness is addressed.”



“The PROS model supports employment.”



“PROS billing is easy to understand.”



Other topics from survey results

Documentation – Overall results indicated mixed responses where staff agreed that PROS documentation allows for accurately tracking the progress made, however, many comments highlighted dissatisfaction with the monthly progress note.

Telehealth – Overall results indicated mixed responses. Staff identified that their programs provide quality services, but only **67%** agreed or strongly agreed that PROS services can be effectively delivered via telehealth. Respondents replied with comments around telehealth that were mixed, with some staff highlighting the benefits and flexibility of having telehealth as an option, while others expressed concern that telehealth may not offer the full benefit of participation in a PROS program. The survey was a great opportunity for PROS staff that are in the field to provide feedback on the way the model currently operates. The information gathered will continue to be very useful throughout the redesign and modernization process. If you have any additional feedback, please feel free to contact our PROS Redesign Project Manager [Shokri Enbawe](#).

The Rehabilitation Services Unit and Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) are working on different avenues for PROS participant feedback and engagement in the redesign and modernization process. Additional information is forthcoming! In the meantime, if participants in your program might be interested in talking to OMH about their ideas for redesign, please reach out to our PROS Redesign Project Manager, [Shokri Enbawe](#), to schedule a focus group.

Job-seeking includes exploring work**PLACE** fitness



What makes a business a good place to work for any given individual? Beyond the basics of job tasks, location and salary, there are other factors that help create and improve job satisfaction. For individuals who are considering re-entering the workforce, it can be helpful to have open discussions with an employment specialist about the nuances of workplace culture.

Determining their personal preference of a quiet, solitary work area, or the hustle of a busy job site, or something in between can help people narrow their job search. An individual may like a job that has specific routines or may prefer to have more novelty in their day, so finding the right balance can impact their job satisfaction.

The unspoken socialization expectations may impact how comfortable someone feels in a particular job. For example, an individual may like the comradery of eating together in a break room or strongly prefer to have a time away from their coworkers during lunch. Some coworkers are very chatty and like to share details about their life outside of work, while others prefer to “leave work at work and home at home” and while neither is “correct,” finding a good fit is important. Knowing that ORS supports can be accessed for assistance navigating the worksite culture may help someone give a position a try.

Talking it through and giving thought to personal preferences can help a person know what kind of questions to ask in an interview to make an informed decision about whether to try a particular job. Job seeking is about selecting a job you want as well as being the right candidate.

Creating a comfortable program site

Many PROS programs are seeing more and more people on-site in recent months. As we think about a return to a “new normal,” now might be a good time to think about how you can make your program space as inviting as possible. Beyond ensuring the walls are decorated and bulletin boards have fresh information posted, there are other small touches that may add warmth and comfort.

Well-tended plants can bring energy and hope to an otherwise drab area; participants may want to volunteer to take on the care of the plants and do research as to what type of plants will thrive best under your conditions. A few programs have successfully added vegetable and flower gardens to their outdoor space, with participants working together to tend the gardens. There is a program in NYC that had a pet turtle thriving in an aquarium located in the main social area.

Another program has a goldfish that brings a bright spot to their program. Meanwhile, a Hudson Valley provider has subscribed to a mindfulness and medication app that offers relaxing music and imagery in their community room.

Another aspect to consider is the lighting. Florescent or LED lights can cause discomfort for some individuals, so a softer lighting source or dimmers in areas of your program may help them feel more comfortable. Periodically, you might listen closely to note if there are squeaking fans, or doors that bang abruptly in a breeze; small repairs may reduce sensory discomfort for sensitive individuals.

What other ideas can your PROS participants offer to making PROS even more comfortable? Share for a future article! (Submit via pros@omh.ny.gov).

ALERT! CAIRS and Microsoft Edge

All CAIRS users on Windows 10 or lower will notice that as of June 2022, Internet Explorer has been decommissioned. **Microsoft Edge will be the new browser used to log into CAIRS.** It contains a feature called **IE Mode**, which allows older applications like CAIRS to continue to work properly. (Detailed instructions with screenshots were emailed from the PROS mailbox to all agencies on May 9.)

There are two ways to turn on “IE Mode” in Edge:

1. Manually by selecting the *IE Mode Setup* - Click on the 3 dots in the upper right-hand corner and in the menu click *Reload in Internet Explorer Mode*.

Please note that when you change the settings on your browser to confirm Internet Explorer Mode, **this setting will only be saved for 30 days.** You will need to go through these steps again each month.

2. Updating the agency’s *Enterprise Mode Site List* per the agency’s IT department. (Preferred solution where possible.)

Note: This process will remain in place until a larger CAIRS modernization project is completed, at which time any browser will become functional.

Questions or concerns related to CAIRS access should be directed to the ITS Help Desk at: healthhelp@its.ny.gov, or 518-474-5554 Option #2.



LGBTQ+ youth seriously contemplate suicide at almost three times the rate of their heterosexual peers and almost five times as likely to have attempted suicide.

In a national study of transgender adults, 40% reported having made a suicide attempt, most when they were young.

We can each play an important role in preventing suicide among LGBTQ+ youth by better understanding root causes of this significant health disparity.

Rejection, harassment, victimization, and discrimination are implicated in elevated suicide risk among this population. LGBTQ+ cultural competence and sensitivity are crucial for professionals working with young people and their families.

- Here are some resources:
<https://www.preventsuicideny.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/talking-about-suicide-and-lgbt-populations-2nd-edition.pdf>
- <https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/lgbtqia/>

Myth buster: Mid-month discharges

Programs often celebrate when someone meets their goal and is ready for discharge! During the discharge planning process, you may need to help the individual find a new prescriber to ensure continuity of medications as part of their discharge plan.

As a person-centered program, PROS encourages individuals to take their next steps at their own pace, even in the middle of a calendar month. Regardless of the PROS billing cycle, **it is always correct to use the actual last date of service delivery as the discharge date in CAIRS.** When this happens, you can have your billing department enter the date of service on the claim as the individual's actual last date of service instead of the last day of the month. This holds true even if a program does a client roster "clean up".

If you use any other date, for example the last day of the month, you may unintentionally prevent the next provider from being reimbursed.



Resources No-cost staff training resources

For new PROS staff

- Regional **New Staff Orientation** opportunities are periodically available through NYAPRS' **Training Collective** (see below).
- To acclimate new PROS staff, check out the broad overview of PROS philosophy and structure in the **PROS Essentials** section of the **PROS Clearinghouse** found [here](#). (Located in the lower area of the right-side margin).
- The [Center for Practice Innovations](#) offers free trainings through their online **CPI FIT modules**; **some are required for PROS staff**. CPI offers ongoing support for your employment specialist through monthly IPS conference calls/webinars, where creative ideas on job development and problem solving are shared statewide.

Continuing Education units (CEUs) for your professional staff are available to your staff at no charge through either of these organizations:

- For team building and more in-depth training on a broad array of topics, from ethics to better documentation, the **NYAPRS Training Collective** offers on-site or virtual staff trainings. View the full catalog [here](#).
- The **Coalition for Behavioral Health** is also available to provide PROS staff trainings – in person in the NYC area or via Zoom statewide. They offer technical assistance and staff development; to learn more, you need to go through their Learning Management System: [Training Updates — The Coalition for Behavioral Health](#).



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.