



In our own words: ‘PROS helped me flip the script’

-Submitted by Lyne

Greetings, my name is **Lyne**! I’m proud to say that PROS saved my life.

PROS redefined my life, in my own words, starting with the letter P. For me, **P stands for Provision**. PROS helped me to make provisions towards my recovery in learning coping skills, which includes classes such as “Changing Your Thoughts,” “Coping with Everyday Stressors,” and “Coping with Change.”

Secondly, they’ve taught us how to connect with ourselves, in mind, body and soul in classes such as “Mindfulness and Me,” “Understanding Diagnoses,” and “PTSD and Me.” Last but not least, I’ve learned effective communication skills, which allow my voice to be heard in classes such as “Assert Yourself,” “Peer Support Group,” and “Women’s Support Group.”

The letter **R for me is Resilience**. PROS helped me to build resilience to stand against the odds, to fight against the judgement, bias, stigma, challenges, and my own pain and disappointments from my past.

Moving on to the letter **O, for me, is Overcomer**. To overcome is to have strength and will. Strength is the endurance to succeed, which, in turn, increases self-empowerment, confidence and accountability, and it builds character, integrity, and stability.

This brings me to the letter **S, for Success**. PROS has helped me to become successful. I have been going to the Ellis Mental Health Clinic for fourteen years and have attended Ellis PROS for five years. Both programs have taught me to have love, patience, and grace in giving myself the opportunity to be better, stronger and the best me that I can be.

I am proud to say that I am now a Peer Counselor, employed by Ellis, working in the Living Room, which is an adult crisis diversion



program. I also work in the Family Room, which is the adolescent crisis diversion program. I have also begun co-facilitating classes for PROS.

I can truly say I was once defined by my trauma, depression, anxiety, grief, loss, stress, abuse, self-hate, and isolation. I was challenged by troubles with family, society, finances, and physical health. PROS helped me flip the script and allowed me to center my focus on myself, my faith in God, and gave me the hope to believe in myself and the determination to achieve my goals in every avenue in my life.

In conclusion, I want to thank and appreciate all of the PROS staff, my coworkers, my treatment team, and the entire PROS community for their patience, love, care, understanding, and being a listening ear, in the good times and bad. We have learned from each other by embracing, encouraging, and lifting each other up. That’s power! That’s strength! That’s victory at its finest. I am not defined by my past; I am made from it. My past is my lesson, my present is my strength, and my future is my destiny. This is my story in my own words.

Editors Note: Thank you so much, Lyne! Your PROS acronym really showed how PROS has been personalized to help you in life. The mental health community is lucky to have you as a Peer Counselor!

Do you or someone you know have a PROS Success Story to share? Contact the PROS Newsletter Editor, [Shokri Enbawe](#), for more information on how to be featured in the newsletter!

Gardening groups in PROS

Now that summer is here there are so many ways for PROS staff and participants to go outside and enjoy the warm weather while also skill building! Several years ago, when I was working in a PROS Program one of the most popular groups I ran was called “The Green Thumb” (CRS – Community Living Exploration). This was a group that connected participants to a local urban community garden, giving participants the opportunity to be outdoors, engaged in physical activity, discover their local community, and build social skills with each other and members of the community.

The connection to the community garden had other positive impacts too! Often times, it encouraged participants to eat healthier by consuming the variety of fresh fruits and vegetables that they took a part in growing. Produce grown by participants was also used in a health cooking class at the program.

Gardening has been proven to reduce stress, depression, and anxiety (Odeh, et al.). The idea of using the therapeutic environment of a garden has been around since the 19th century and is known as horticultural therapy. Horticultural therapy is identified as being able to improve memory, cognitive abilities, task initiation, language skills, and socialization.

Depending on the skill and training of the practitioner, gardening groups can be designed to address a variety of mental health barriers through different PROS Services. Gardening may be used as a medium to facilitate psychosocial rehabilitation groups like Coping Skills Training or Basic Living Skills Training. From my travels to different PROS programs throughout the state, I have seen many different programs adopt a gardening group, even if it was simply planting in buckets on a patio when they did not have the space to do more!



A reminder about Heat Safety this summer



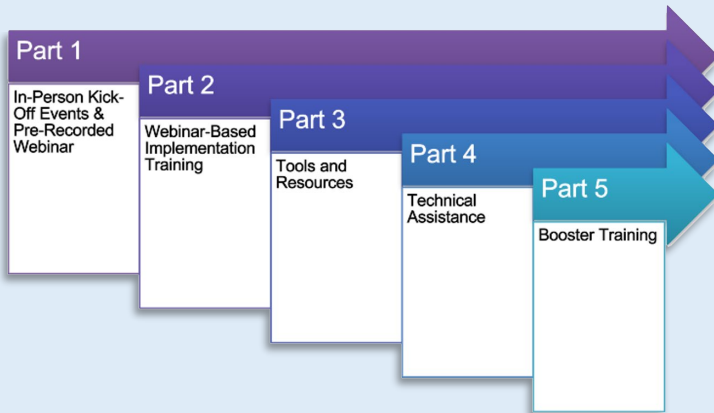
Hot summer temperatures have been associated with an increase in heat-related symptoms and even deaths. Pattern and trend reviews of OMH incident reports have confirmed these findings.

Individuals receiving antipsychotic medications are at particular risk of heat stroke and neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS) during periods of extreme heat, which is more likely in poorly ventilated rooms. Older adults are at increased risk. In addition to monitoring individuals at risk, **prevention** is paramount.

These conditions can best be prevented by:

- heightened attention to the state of hydration of program participants, particularly those at high risk (those on antipsychotic medications, older adults, and those with poor fluid intake);
- helping high risk participants remain in cooler areas;
- monitoring participants for temperature elevations;
- avoiding direct exposure to sunlight or minimizing exposure;
- wearing protective clothing and using sunscreen;
- minimizing anticholinergic medications which may interfere with sweating, e.g., treating extrapyramidal symptoms (EPS) with amantadine or other agents approved for the treatment of EPS instead of anticholinergics such as benztropine or trihexyphenidyl.

PROS Redesign Implementation Training Plan



Keep an eye on the PROS Listserv and MCATC website for a series of live and pre-recorded webinars (see part 2):

- Introduction to PROS Redesign: An Overview for Program Leadership and Staff.
- New Program Design and Operations.
- CRS Redesigned.
- Changes to the Clinical Treatment Component.
- Changes to the IR and ORS Components.
- PROS Billing for Providers.
- PROS Billing for MCOs.
- Documentation Overview.
- The Individualized Recovery Plan.

PROS Redesign In-Person Kickoff Regional Events

The Office of Mental Health recently finished up their travels to Rochester, Albany, and NYC kick-off the PROS Redesign Implementation Training series. These presentations covered a variety of material such as the themes and areas of focus for the new model, changes to components and services, new PROS staffing requirements, and the new reimbursement model.

OMH will provide at least 90 days' notice to PROS programs as soon as an implementation date has been set. Check the listserv and the [MCTAC PROS Special Initiatives](#) page for updates!

Brown Eyes

A poetry submission by a PROS participant

*Born with beautiful Brown Eyes,
Raised with so much love and innocence,
Deeply adored by his mom and dad,
Soon after Brown Eyes life turned horrific and so sad,
Family, friends and false "Holy Men" said follow us down the middle path
Lied to and feeling alone and used,
Brown Eyes life became full of abuse.
Not knowing what to do Brown Eyes looked for anything to chase the demons away,
As time carried on things got darker and worse,
It got to the point that Brown Eyes felt lost and cursed.
Thoughts began overwhelming his mind and somehow they needed to be quelled,
Brown Eyes felt if his life didn't change his final resting place could be hell.
He wanted to bring hell on earth to the "Holy Men" and catch all the others by surprise,
Then to look deeply into the whites of their eyes.*



*Brown Eyes wanted to make them suffer and feel what he still dreams about,
Thoughts flooded his mind making him feel sinking to their level wasn't right or needed,
Brown Eyes left the "Holy Men" and the others to their own thoughts,
Its never right to do wrong to do right finally sunk in
Brown Eyes finally realized he didn't need to hurt them to win.
Pushing forward, finally becoming the man his beloved Father always believed
Brown Eyes felt he finally made his Father proud,
It was a long trip but the ride was worth it
Brown Eyes knows his journey isn't done,
It sure feels good to win one.*

CAIRS Reporting Compliance: What is it?

CAIRS reporting includes entering admissions, six-month follow-ups, and discharges in a timely manner. Through the COVID-19 disaster emergency period, several programs fell behind in their CAIRS reporting, resulting in programs entering “mass discharges” (5+ discharges entered in a single day). It is important to discharge individuals in a timely manner to prevent any issues with their access to other important behavioral health services.

As we head into PROS Redesign, it is even more critical for programs to ensure compliance with CAIRS reporting timeframes, as your program’s CAIRS census or roster will be used to establish staffing requirements for your program.

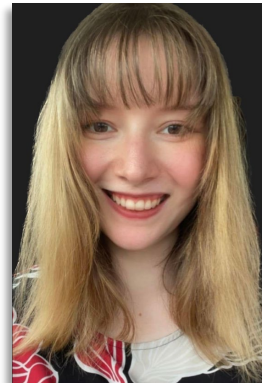
In order to identify any late follow-up reports in CAIRS, please follow these steps: **Log into CAIRS > Start Up > Notes > Under PROS Records Pending Action > Click PROS Follow-ups Due.** This will generate a report of follow ups due for your program.

For more information on trouble-shooting CAIRS concerns or issues, please refer to the [PROS Database Resources](#) page.

Note from the Editor...



Stephanie Rodriguez (right) has transitioned to working primarily on CORE Services but will remain our in-house CAIRS expert. **Shokri Enbawe** (left) has stepped in as the new editor of the PROS Newsletter. Shokri has been a member of the Rehabilitation and Treatment Team since November 2021 and is currently the PROS Redesign Project Manager as well as the Central Office Regional Liaison for Central New York, Western New York, and Hudson River Region PROS programs. Congratulations to both on their new roles!



Resources

With PROS Redesign coming up soon, make sure to sign up for the [PROS listserv](#) to get all announcement for upcoming trainings.

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 and Recovery Clearinghouse](#).

Don't forget to check out the PROS curricula that is also available on the [Clearinghouse website](#).



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.