



## In our own words: 'I can change for the better.'

*Submitted by N.N.*

Kadimah PROS gives me the faith and hope of moving forward, not because of my condition but despite my condition. I enjoy Morning Mindfulness (Engagement) to jumpstart the day. It redirects my thoughts with focus and calms me through meditation and discussion facilitated by my Peer Counselor. She shares her positive experiences with relaxation through her candidness and smile.

I found helpful Breaking Bad (Habits) (Intensive Relapse Prevention) helps identify certain habits that I need to personally address through informative hand-outs and talk in order to be instrumental in the workplace. This group builds my confidence that I can change for the better! I discovered that age-old habits are getting in my way of my employment goal. They are not serving me well.

The employment groups such as Getting Started Now (IRGA), Acing the Interview (BLST), Addressing Barriers to Employment (IRGA), and Jumpstart to Working (IRGA), all of which are run by the Employment Specialist, are ideal for me, reinforcing the importance of respect, honesty and loyalty toward employers and fellow employees.



I received excellent preparation for interviews; provided with the common questions asked and concise but supportive answers highlighting my professional qualifications.

My continued experience at Kadimah PROS has been a blessing and truly impactful. The program director, staff, peer specialist, interns, and participants are insightful and caring. I'm thankful to each person there who's added dimension. Kadimah provides me structure, helping me define and believe in hope.

I AM POSSIBLE...Kadimah continuously promotes that the future is bright!

**Editor's Note:** *N.N., thank you for sharing your transformative journey at Kadimah PROS. Wishing you continued success and empowerment on your journey!*

## 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!



## PROS Redesign Update

Thank you to everyone who provided stakeholder feedback over the past two years and to the 24 PROS programs that provided fiscal data! The data we received was crucial to moving forward with updating the proposed reimbursement methodology. Keep an eye on this space in the Spring 2024 *PROS Newsletter* for all the latest updates.

## New Year's Resolutions and Honoring Holiday Traditions in PROS

“Happy Holidays!” is ringing in the air this winter season. But what holidays do your PROS participants celebrate? There are more than 17 holidays celebrated worldwide during the winter season.

New Year's Resolutions are also a common tradition this time of year, where people resolve to make a positive change they would like to see in their life. Several PROS programs shared with us how they incorporate the holiday season and New Year's resolutions in their program. We hope their traditions and creativity will inspire you!

A majority of PROS wrote that they incorporate New Year's resolutions into PROS groups during the Holiday season:

- ❖ **Horizon PROS** does a countdown at noon on New Year's Eve, in which participants celebrate and discuss their New Year's resolutions.
- ❖ **Kadimah PROS** runs group called “Going for the Goal” that uses New Year's resolutions to set SMART goals.
- ❖ **Roads to Recovery PROS** runs groups to process what the New Year means to participants. The focus is on setting “intentions” for the year rather than “resolutions.” These intentions are then used to re-focus on PROS goals, identifying “stage of change,” developing plans for progress, and talking about how to implement these plans.
- ❖ **St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center PROS** offers groups focused on goal setting and wellness skill building. These classes start with the new semester around December 18 with discussion of resolutions and how they can be both healthy and unhealthy, depending on how you state them.
- ❖ A few programs shared that holidays can be difficult for some participants and additional

additional support is provided at this time of year:

- ❖ **Ellis Hospital PROS** offers a “Coping with the Holidays” group during November and December to allow participants a safe space to discuss any difficulties that arise with the upcoming season.
- ❖ **The PROSperity Program of Cayuga County** are currently running a group called “Handling the Holidays.” Participants discuss the upcoming holidays and what they struggle with the most. Then they work together to develop coping skills.



All PROS Programs wrote that they decorate for at least one holiday with some programs decorating year-round for holidays!

- ❖ **The PROSpect Place** celebrates Chinese New Year, Dragon Boat Festival, Mid-Autumn Festival, Thanksgiving, and Christmas! They decorate group rooms inspired by the occasion and share holiday-themed food and meals.
- ❖ **Stepping Stones PROS** participants help to make holiday décor such as wreaths and snowflakes to be hung around the program. Each December an annual holiday celebration is held – the program provides snacks and small gifts (such as hats and gloves, journals, and calendars) for all program participants. Many participants, especially those without family or significant relationships, say they look forward to this celebration each year.

Now is a wonderful time to talk to PROS participants about what holidays they celebrate and how. By being respectful and taking an interest in others' traditions we can make PROS programs a welcoming and welcoming space for **all** this time of year.

## Find Qualified Peer Specialists

OMH is very excited to share the creation of a **new job board to help mental health organizations find and recruit qualified peer specialists!**

If your PROS program is looking to add a Certified Peer, please consider listing the position with the National Association of Peer Support's job board.

[You can create a free account here.](https://www.peersupportworks.org/jobs)

(You may want to share this resource with your agency's human resources department.) <https://www.peersupportworks.org/jobs>.



## Tips for Staying Healthy this Winter

With winter upon us, PROS programs are busy making plans to keep participants and staff safe from respiratory illnesses. Being closer to other people increases your chances of catching various colds and viruses.

**Dr. Flávio Casoy MD, OMH's Medical Director of Adult Community Services and Managed Care** shared his recommendations on how to stay healthy this season:

- ❖ There are still around 70 to 100 deaths and around 1,300 hospitalizations per week from COVID around New York State. **Everyone six months or older should get the new COVID vaccine formulation.** Whether you have already been vaccinated or not, getting the vaccine now will dramatically reduce your risk of being hospitalized or dying from COVID. Talk to your pharmacy, a healthcare professional, or look for an appointment on the vaccine finder website: <https://www.vaccines.gov/search/>.
- ❖ Everyone six months or older should get a seasonal influenza (flu) vaccine. These are widely available in pharmacies and doctor offices.
- ❖ Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a respiratory illness similar to influenza or COVID that hospitalizes many older individuals and very young children every year. For the first time ever, there is now a vaccine that can reduce the risk of infection and severity of illness. **Everyone over 60 years or older should talk to their doctor about getting the RSV vaccine.** Also, there is a RSV vaccine for infants and very young children; parents or pregnant individuals expecting to deliver during RSV season should ask their doctor about these right away.
- ❖ Frequent handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and use of alcohol gel (hand sanitizer).
- ❖ Encourage people to stay home if they think they have a cold or any other potentially infectious disease.

## Rehabilitation and Recovery Academy 2023

### 'Empowering Lives: Cultivating Change, Connection & Collaboration'

The Alliance for Rights and Recovery (formerly NYAPRS) hosted the annual Rehabilitation and Recovery Academy November 8 and 9, in collaboration with the Center for Practice Innovations, and The Coalition for Behavioral Health. PROS, CORE, and other rehabilitation providers from across the state gathered in person at the Desmond Hotel.



A highlight of this year's conference was the keynote address, "Why You Do What You Do: Reflections from a Man Whose Life You Saved," by **David Woods Bartley, TEDx Speaker**. Mr. Bartley shared his inspirational journey from mental "hellness" to mental wellness, discussing his experiences with suicide, male sexual trauma, and mental illness. To hear more about his inspiring story, check out his [TEDx Talk](#). Be sure to check out the updated [Alliance for Rights and Recovery website](#) for more information about speakers and copies of presentation slides.

Thank you for joining us in person and we look forward to seeing you all next year!



## Resources



- ❖ **The New York Psychiatric Rehabilitation Training Academy (NYPRTA) is now enrolling its second training cohort, slated to begin in January 2024!**

OMH strongly recommends training enrollment for any staff delivering rehabilitation services. Our partners at the [Alliance for Rights and Recovery \(formerly NYAPRS\)](#) have applied feedback received from the first cohort to deliver an improved learner experience and to improve the applicability of the content to practice.

Staff who complete the full Training Academy will be eligible for scholarships to cover the cost of the Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP) exam. [Click here to enroll!](#)\*

*\*Enrollment will close in December and the new training cohort begins in January 2024.*

- ❖ **NYESS YouTube Channel**

NYESS has created a training resource library on their YouTube channel! They plan to add trainings on Benefits and Financial Management and Ticket-to-Work in the future. Please check out these resources available now:

- Activity Training - [NYESS Activities - YouTube](#)
- Benefits 101 - [NYESS Benefits 101 - YouTube](#)
- SSDI Benefits - [NYESS SSDI Benefits - YouTube](#)
- SSI Benefits - [NYESS SSI Benefits - YouTube](#)

- ❖ **The New York Peer Specialist Certification verification tool is now live** on the New York Peer Specialist Certification Board website! Employers and applicants can now verify that an individual's New York Peer Specialist Certification (NYCPS) certification is active simply by searching via the applicant's name.

Please use this link to be redirected to the NYPSCB website and once there, click on the "verification tool" icon to search: [www.nypsc.org](http://www.nypsc.org).

- ❖ **YPA Credential Verification Tool:** <https://ftnys1.gtdsystems.com/youthpower>

Please note this database only contains current, credentialed YPAs. Expired or non-credentialed YPAs will not be shown. For questions, please contact our office at (518) 432-0333 ext. 18 or [YPAcredential@ftnys.org](mailto:YPAcredential@ftnys.org).

For more information on OMH-funded resources for **Peer Support Services Inclusion and the Advancement of the Peer Workforce** visit their websites below!

- <https://peertac.org/>
- <https://www.peersupportworks.org/NY/>

## 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](#)



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.**