

# Pilot program demonstrates measureable benefits for people with schizophrenia

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Washington, D.C. – People with schizophrenia report improved functioning after participating in a new, evidence-based clinical program, according to results announced today from a six-month pilot. The program, [Advancing Standards of Care for People with Schizophrenia](#), was spearheaded by the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare (National Council) and administered at 10 community behavioral health organizations across the country. The program significantly improved communication, social interaction and coping skills for persons recovering from schizophrenia.

"Although society's understanding of [schizophrenia](#) has progressed over the decades, we can do more to help people with the illness recover," said Linda Rosenberg, President and CEO of the National Council. "This program promotes practitioner and consumer partnerships. Together they measure progress and reinforce what works. It's a true step forward for people with schizophrenia and the organizations that serve them."

The program revolved around two evidence-based tools: a group curriculum to help adults better understand and self-manage their mental health condition; and a functional assessment tool, which tracks a person's ability to independently carry out everyday tasks. The tools encourage participants to take control of their mental illness, discuss it with others, and monitor progress. Participants said they found this helpful in addressing the misconceptions others may have about them.

According to one 49-year-old treated at Hill Country Mental Health in

Kerrville, Texas, participating in the program gave her confidence to face her diagnosis and fears. "I was frightened, isolated and sometimes in denial about my illness," she said. "After participating in this program, I'm much more confident discussing things openly with my mental health provider and even sharing what I've learned with people around me."

Health care providers that participated in the program said that the measurement tool gave them accurate and reliable data that supported increased transparency and accountability.

"We are all adapting to health care system changes that recognize the value of care over volume of care," said Linda Werlein, CEO of Hill Country Mental Health. "This program provided both an effective curriculum, and a way to demonstrate progress."

Rosenberg also notes that the program's success holds great potential for replication. She emphasizes, "the participating behavioral health centers found the interventions to be effective, easy to administer and results-oriented, and many of them plan to spread the program throughout their organizations."

Christopher, a client at AltaPointe Health Systems in Mobile, Alabama, says the program encouraged him to think about and solve problems in new ways. "I learned valuable life skills, how to stay healthy, manage my anger, and prevent a relapse," he explained.

#### Key Results:

-- The 10 pilot sites started with a total of 5,687 clients in December, 2010.

\* The average age of participants was 45.7 years, many of whom had already been in treatment for years

\* 20 percent of participants scored an "inability to function in all areas" on the pre-interventional functional assessment

\* 50 percent of participants scored "major impairment" in at least five critical areas of functioning in daily activities

-- The average cumulative functional score from all participants rose from an initial 37.76 to 41.07 over the course of six months.

-- Overall, there was a statistically significant gain in three sub-scales: communications, interaction with one's social network, and coping skills.

-- There was an overall attrition rate of 48 percent, consistent with community based treatment protocols.

**More information:** A full list of pilot sites in the Advancing Standards of Care for People with Schizophrenia program and a copy of the outcomes report program can be found at [www.thenationalcouncil.org](http://www.thenationalcouncil.org) .

Provided by Chandler Chicco Agency

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