

Tale of Two Stories: Staff and Resident Experiences in Crisis Residential Treatment Programs

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Program Description

Crisis residential treatment (CRT) programs provide a critical service to individuals (age 18 and over) experiencing acute mental health crises in a non-hospital setting. CRTs provide structured, intensive services for up to 28 days. Clients may transition to CRTs from outpatient programs to prevent hospitalization or directly from hospitals to continue their crisis stabilization in a short-term residential setting. There has been a growing interest in CRT programs as an alternative to hospitalization since past studies have estimated significant cost savings to the local health care system from the use of CRTs. In addition to the impact of the program, it is important to assess staff experiences. Staff in CRT programs have unique challenges and experiences because the nature of their work requires working with high acuity residents in a 24-hour setting. The purpose of this poster is to highlight the findings related to client and staff experiences at CRT settings.

Methods

Client Stories

- Client (n=347) experiences were collected through intake/discharge surveys that assessed functional information (housing status, employment, etc.) and self-reported symptoms (assessed with the Outcomes Questionnaire). All data is from clients served in 2022.
- These experiences are shared with program staff through monthly performance monitoring reports. These reports are used to assess the relative impact the program is having and to make adjustments to program implementation.

Staff Stories

- Staff (n=22) experiences were collected through an annual organizational health assessment (October 2022) that assessed job satisfaction, engagement, team commitment, connection to mission, and qualitative feedback on work experiences. The response rate was 78%.
- Staff feedback was anonymous and shared in aggregate with program management, who then developed plans for improvements. They shared and received feedback from staff before implementing the plan.

Each set of stories informed program management and allowed for better oversight and understanding.

Results

Client Stories

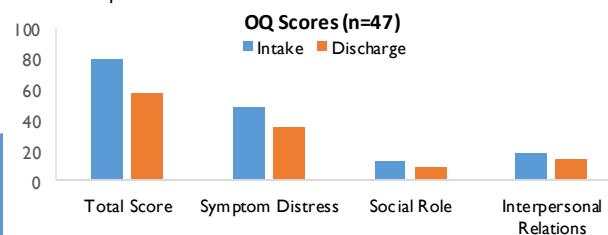
In 2022, 347 individuals were served in CRTs. The median length of stay was 14 days, with 30% staying 22 days or more.

- 83% were referred from hospital emergency departments.
- Nearly 70% said that discrimination had negatively affected their mental health to at least to some extent.
- Over 25% did not have a single person they could contact for support.
- 95% were unemployed and 37% did not have any form of income or financial supports.
- 57% were currently living on the streets.

Race/Ethnicity		Age	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%	18-24	7%
Armenian	0%	25-34	39%
Asian or Pacific Islanders	3%	35-44	24%
Black	26%	45-54	19%
Latino/a/e	27%	55-64	10%
Middle Eastern/N African	1%	65+	1%
White	34%	Gender	
Multiple Races/Ethnicities Indicated	8%	Male	57%
Races/Ethnicities not listed above	1%	Female	43%
		Identity Not Listed/Specified	0%

About 58% of clients successfully completed the program and had a planned discharge where they were referred to a lower level of care and met many of their goals.

- 50% of those without a supportive other were able to identify at least one by discharge.
- 32% of clients with unstable housing were able to obtain permanent housing by discharge.
- Clients improved in their overall mental health functioning from intake to discharge with 76% of clients improving their symptom distress and 51% demonstrating clinically significant improvements.



Staff Stories

In 2022, 22 staff (78% of total employed) provided input about their work experiences in CRT. Staffs consisted of the following positions: Counselors, Intake/Discharge Coordinators, Care Coordinators, Therapists, Clinical Supervisors, Office Support Staff, and Program Managers.

Staff reported largely positive experiences with their work at the CRTs:

- 72% were highly satisfied with their jobs
- 77% valued and were committed to their team
- 91% were highly connected to the agency mission
- However, there were some concerns also expressed by staff:
- 32% were intent on leaving in the next few years
- 18% were experiencing work related stress

Qualitative feedback from staff further illuminated staff experiences at the CRTs.

- Staff derived their satisfaction through providing client care and seeing clients improve and from helping their teammates and contributing to team accomplishments.
- Staff were appreciative of an increase in support from management, recent pay raises, and improvements in security measures/safety.
- Staff noted that staff turnover and having staff shortages are leading to higher intention to leave among staff. They highlighted the need for quicker turnaround in hiring and replacing open positions.

Conclusion

Understanding client and staff experiences can offer valuable information to help continuously improve the CRT program and services offered. Results of preliminary analysis seem to indicate that CRTs are having a positive impact on clients overall, but more data is needed to confirm these findings. As for staff experiences, although they have several challenges and concerns especially related to turnover and work stress, they also report positive experience related to providing care to the clients. These client and staff related findings have been invaluable for program leadership. They have been used to continuously to monitor program implementation and to make improvements related to client care and staff well-being.