The Mental Health Partial Hospital Program at Aurora Psychiatric Hospital and Aurora Sheboygan Medical Center: Measuring Clinical Outcomes

The Partial Hospital Program-Adult Mental Health Services programming is based on the concept that people can and do recover from mental illness. The journey of recovery is one of healing and transformation which enables a person with mental health difficulties to live a meaningful life in a community of their choice while striving to meet their full potential. One goal is to assist people to reduce or stabilize their symptoms so that they can better manage their illness and move forward in their lives.

The programming is designed to help people with the specific issues and difficulties affecting their lives. People in the program may be transitioning from an inpatient hospitalization or may be referred from outpatient treatment. The program provides the structure, support and education necessary for people to overcome their behavioral health issues, including anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, thought disorders as well as co-occurring conditions.

The Partial Hospitalization Program provides intensive treatment five or six days per week, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Programming uses cognitive-behavioral therapy to assist people to develop better coping strategies, improve management of symptoms, and promote healthy living skills. This comprehensive approach to patient care includes group education and therapy, individual and family therapy, psychiatric evaluation, and medication management. The multidisciplinary team includes psychiatrists, nurses, psychotherapists, and case managers.

The Partial Hospital Program utilizes medical, psychological and social interventions to meet each individual’s treatment goals. These goals include maintaining safety, stabilizing behavioral health symptoms, and providing education related to the illness and its management. People are given the methods to identify early warning signs of potential relapse and are assisted to develop relapse prevention and self-care skills.

Many of the people in the Partial Hospital Program have significant symptoms of depression and anxiety which interferes with their ability to work, attend school, care for others, and care for themselves. A common goal for many people is to reduce their symptoms of depression and anxiety so that they can better function on a day to day basis. As part of the initial assessment all patients are asked to complete two brief questionnaires, which are then re-administered when the patient is being discharged from the program to their next level of care.
The Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) is a nine item tool that assesses symptoms of depression and the severity of each symptom. Each item is scored from 0 to 3, and the Total score can range from 0 to 27. The Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (GAD-7) measures seven symptoms of anxiety and the severity of each symptom. Each item is scored from 0 to 3, and the Total score can range from 0 to 21. For both questionnaires the Total symptom score can be rated as none or minimal, mild, moderate, or severe.

For the PHQ-9, patients in the Partial Hospital Program at Aurora Psychiatric Hospital had an average score of 18.11 on admission, which is in the moderate to severe range of depression. At discharge patients had an average PHQ-9 score of 8.95, which is in the mild range of depression. Patients in the Partial Hospital Program at Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical center had an average score of 18.95 on admission, which is in the moderate to severe range of depression. At discharge these patients had an average score of 7.6, which is in the mild range of depression. As can be seen, the outcomes were very similar in both programs, and patients were appropriately started in more intensive treatment given their symptom severity and were discharged at the appropriate time to the next level of care, based on their symptom severity.

For the GAD-7, patient in the Partial Hospital Program at Aurora Psychiatric Hospital had an average score of 14.56 at admission, which is at the low end of the severe range of anxiety symptoms. At discharge patients had an average score of 7.65, which is in the mild range of anxiety symptoms. Patients in the Partial Hospital Program at Aurora Sheboygan Memorial Medical center had an average score of 15.43 on admission, which is in the severe range of anxiety. At discharge these patients had an average score of 6.36, which is in the mild range of anxiety. Once again the outcomes were very similar for both programs, and patients were appropriately started in more intensive treatment given their symptom severity and were discharged at the appropriate time to the next level of care, based on their symptom severity.

Both programs are shown to result in a significant decrease in symptoms of depression and anxiety for patients, who on average started with moderate to severe symptoms and who reported mild symptoms at discharge to the next level of care. The Partial Hospital Program is considered to be a very effective treatment modality for patients with significant symptoms of depression and anxiety. Patients can be referred to Partial Hospital programming by contacting the Central Scheduling department at 414-773-4312.