



David Genna, Peer Counselor

## Respect *by David Genna, Peer Counselor-BHS*

“R-E-S-P-E-C-T” was a popular song recorded by Otis Redding in 1965 and by Aretha Franklin in 1967. Over the years it became a powerful anthem for many people and various causes.

Respect is acknowledging and expressing positive feelings of esteem and regard for the actual qualities of someone’s total personhood. Despite differences or similarities of cultural, religious, traditional, medical, intellectual and political beliefs, respect behooves us to engage in specific actions and conduct representative of that esteem.

Whether it is between colleagues to peers, peers to colleagues, colleagues to colleagues or peers to peers, respect is essential for effective communication. It helps us practice continual recovery.

Lack or loss of respect happens often in life and has many negative effects. Everyday there are many chances and choices to make positive differences that change its effect. Our population is hurting and having a hard time recovering. Add substance abuse to this situation and our population needs special help. Respecting them can help turn disabilities into abilities. It can keep the hospital a place of hope and healing.

## Sensory Modulation Therapy Quality Assurance Study

*Katy Goldstein, Sofia Huang, Karen Tu, Occupational Therapy Students, SUNY Downstate*

Sensory modulation refers to the mental organization of and neurological responsiveness to sensory stimuli presented in everyday life. Sensory modulation is an integral component of human functioning and is a dynamic process. Sensory modulation is the ability to regulate how much the various simultaneously occurring sensory stimuli will affect the individual.

This process occurs automatically in healthy individuals. For someone who is experiencing a mental health crisis, the process of mentally organizing and responding to various sensory stimuli may be disordered. This may be due to the acute nature of the psychiatric symptoms or because life circumstances have never permitted the person to learn effective sensory modulation strategies. Imagine that a healthy person has just experienced a very stressful day. When they arrive home that night, they might make themselves a hot cup of peppermint tea, take a warm bath with lavender scented bath oil and listen to classical music. By the time they get out of the bath and are getting ready for bed, they begin to feel as if the stresses of the day have vanished. A different person who has experienced a stressful day might listen to

heavy metal music and go for a strenuous run.

They were both practicing effective sensory modulation strategies that were uniquely beneficial to them. Different individuals will have different sensory preferences based on how they process sensory information.

### **How is Sensory Modulation Therapy practiced?**

Sensory modulation is an automatic process in a well population, but is often a disordered process in people with mental illness. Sensory Modulation therapy operates from an educational and skill building model. The therapy is used to help individuals who have not previously developed their own strategies for regulating sensory stimuli to calm, soothe or energize themselves when they are experiencing unwelcome sensations.

Sensory Modulation therapy can occur in an individual or a group setting. The focus of our study was on the group structure. Sensory Modulation groups are structured to give recipients the opportunity to

discover how their sensory experiences and preferences affect their mood and resulting behavior. Sensory modulation materials include items such as scented oils, cd player, nature sound machine, weighted blankets, foot massager, aromatherapy machine, tension rings, bean bags, weighted vests, and slider rockers. The assumption is that by providing the opportunity to explore various sensory modulation materials, recipients will identify their

**“A successful intervention includes successful carryover of strategies into everyday life”**

moods before and after the session. The recipients will learn strategies for regulating unwanted sensory input to help relieve or

reduce stress, anxiety, agitation and other negative mental states. The strategies they learn in group sensory exploration will allow them to gain self-control on the unit and may allow them to identify strategies they can use in their daily lives post discharge.

The goal of the group is to allow the individual to demonstrate the ability to assess their own feeling states and connect how certain feelings or sensory stimuli might



L-R Authors Karen Tu, Katy Goldstein, Sofia Huang

affect their behavior. One of the key aspects in regulating behavior is the ability to stop and identify how one is feeling at the moment. Proponents of sensory modulation therapy hypothesize that once a correct acknowledgement has been made, the individual may then be able to link their current feeling with the behavior. By learning how to identify methods for altering or improving their feeling states, then they can learn how to better cope with fluctuations in mood and apply it during the session and after discharge.

#### ***What happens during a Sensory Modulation group?***

Although there are variations in how each individual group is run, the following describes a typical Sensory Modulation group. A safe, calming environment is specifically arranged. A small room is set up with a variety of different sensory equipment. Lights are dimmed and soft music is played in the background. The group leader asks the clients how they are feeling on a mood scale and the clients are encouraged to keep track of their current mood. The group leader then begins a discussion about how sensory input can affect our mood. Group norms are introduced such as respect, and use of a soft speaking voice during the session. The group leader introduces available sensory modulation equipment to the

clients, providing education on how the equipment is used and encouraging group members to try out the materials to see if they could potentially help them produce a calming effect. For example, various scented oils are introduced with descriptions of which ones are thought to promote relaxation or alertness. At the end of the group, client's moods are reassessed using the mood scale and scores are compared pre- and post-intervention. Changes in scores give recipients concrete information about the session's effectiveness. The group leader then leads a discussion on how to access the materials on the unit and how to find and use similar materials after discharge. Finally, clients will be asked to consider using these methods learned in group to help them regulate their mood.

#### ***Findings of the Quality Assurance Study***

Four people were interviewed, including two creative arts therapists, one peer counselor, and one occupational therapy student. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and emergent themes were identified.

The belief in the efficacy of Sensory Modulation therapy as an effective treatment tool was unanimously positive. Each interviewee expressed that they personally believed in the efficacy of the therapy based on the positive changes they had observed in clients' affect and behavior immediately after attending a sensory group. The participants remarked that while the therapy was effec-

tive, they had several suggestions for improvement.

A successful intervention includes successful carryover of strategies into everyday life. To promote carryover of strategies after discharge, clients can be informed on where to buy the items that they preferred to use to self-regulate. Better communication between the shifts can help maintain the continuity of treatment, which can lead to a more successful outcome in clients. Regular training sessions and orientations were preferred by the participants to ensure that the staff are clinically competent in the therapy.

Access to materials outside of group was considered important as "...crises don't just happen during therapeutic rehabilitation". Funding and access to budget are vital components to sustaining the program. "How can you continue to run a group or keep a program or service if it's not funded? Things are going to get dirty or compromised or broken, and you need a budget to keep that going. You need to sustain the program." The findings indicate that Sensory Modulation Therapy is perceived to be an effective treatment modality by hospital staff. Implementing the previously mentioned improvements could potentially make the program even more effective.

***About the authors:*** We are Occupational Therapy students who previously completed a clinical internship at the inpatient behavioral health unit at Kings County Hospital Center. Our internship consisted of observation and conducting our own sensory modulation groups. The fieldwork lasted for 9 weeks, every Wednesday from February through April of 2012. We later conducted a quality assurance study on the Sensory Modulation Program in collaboration with our faculty advisor Suzanne White, MA, OT/R/L and KCBHC Director of Therapeutic Rehabilitation, Carlos Rodriguez-Perez, RDT, BDT, LCAT.

## **Breakthrough: Reducing LOS IN AIP**

Recently our Behavioral Health service has joined efforts with all other HHC facilities to focus intensively on reducing the length of stay. Dr. Ananthamoorthy and Ms. Paradiso attended an integrated RIE to identify how this could be achieved using Breakthrough. ***We are looking to achieve reduced length of stay in alignment with Phase 2 of the Medicaid redesign initiative, December 2013*** which will have a huge financial impact. With this in mind, we need to redesign our processes. This includes reducing our overall adult psychiatry inpatient average length of stay while delivering better care to our community with best outcomes, improving utilization and increasing our revenue to remain a viable service to our community. We look forward to sharing our success in this endeavor with you!



## National Doctors' Day

March 30th marked the annual observance of National Doctor's Day. This opportunity to raise awareness and say thanks to the physicians in our lives is also a great opportunity to reflect upon their hard work

and dedication in our community. Congratulations to all of our doctors. Every day, doctors research, diagnose and treat disease, and promote good health for their patients. We're grateful for their knowledge, and their dedication to helping others.



Delivering Quality & Innovation in patient care

Often described as an art and a science, Nursing is a profession that embraces dedicated people with varied interests, strengths and passions because

of the many opportunities the profession offers. Nurses work in emergency rooms, school based clinics, and homeless shelters, to name a few. They have many roles – from staff nurse to educator to nurse practitioner and nurse researcher – and serve all over. Over the last 25 years, the demands of the

profession evolved as technology and the needs of patients have evolved, but what remains unchanged is the commitment that nurses have to stand up for their patients. Take a moment to be proud of what they do, the community they serve and the difference they make in the lives of others.

Social Work Month 2013



Social Work Month March 2013 marked the start of the annual celebration of one of the nation's largest professions. March is National Professional Social Work Month and this year's theme, "Weaving Threads of Resilience and Advocacy," emphasizes the value of using personal strengths and self-advocacy to manage serious life challenges. "Social workers strive every day to help millions of people function better in their environments," says NASW CEO Elizabeth J. Clark, PhD, ACSW, MPH. "They also work to change environments that may limit individuals, families. "For more than 100 years, the social work profession has made the psychosocial well-being of the most vulnerable its top priority because everyone deserves to dream bigger." says NASW President Jeane Anastas, PhD, LMSW. Recognized as a top growth profession, social work directly addresses the increased demand for health

care navigation, mental health services, family caregiving, child development, and veterans' assistance. There are currently more than 650,000 professionally trained social workers in the United States, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts job growth to 800,000 by the year 2020. From 1931 Nobel Peace Prize recipient Jane Addams to 1994 Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient Dorothy I. Height, Social Work Pioneers® have been instrumental in advancing civil rights and human rights policies in America. Today, social work professionals continue to influence and improve services in hospitals, schools, businesses, military branches, government, and thousands of non-profit and community organizations across the country.



On June 10th and 11th sixty members of the Behavioral Health Service, representing all disciplines participated in an a Person Centered Treatment planning training led by Diane Grieder, Neal Adams and Chacku Mathai. Neal Adams and Diane Grieder are leading experts in the field of Person Centered Treatment and authors of one of the leading books in the subject matter. Chacku

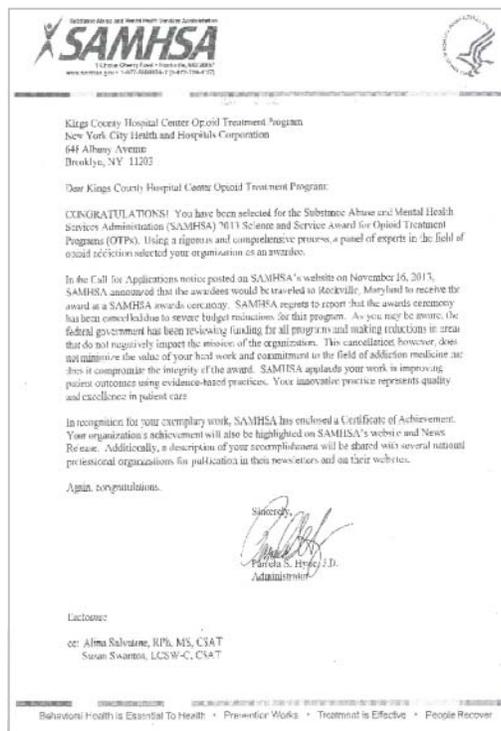
Mathai is the Associate Executive Director of NYAPRS, and a leading expert in the consumer community.

During these two days they engaged the participants in an extensive exploration of the concepts behind Person Centered Treatment planning and the steps to develop a treatment plan that engages the recipients with their team in their recovery process. This is just the beginning of an extensive train the trainer program that aims to move our treatment planning skills to the next level of excellence. The feedback from the participants has been very positive and we all look



**To Dr. Richard Storch:** I would like to recognize Dr. Richard Storch, R4W. Dr. Storch's attention, kindness and care of his patient, my son, have put the family at some ease in dealing with the ongoing struggles of his diagnosis, Bipolar. The despair of this disease has changed and taken a toll on our family. Dr. Storch's professionalism, companion and explanation of the illness provided us with confidence that in some ways my son can live a normal healthy life. Dr. Storch did not only address the psychological characteristics, concerns and tenacity for the illness, but he provided information on the psychosocial phase, aftercare and resources. My family would like to thank Dr. Storch and his team for their dedication to the patients and supporting the families. They too are the cornerstone and are severely impacted by this illness.

Mrs. NK



## BHS Announcements:

STARTING JUNE 20, 2013:

Weight Watchers  
At Work Meetings  
\$156 12-Week Session  
Thursdays 1:00—1:45 p.m.

**CONTACT:**

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## BEHAVIORAL HEALTH 2013 SPIRIT DINNER CRUISE

Come Sail Along For Another Fun Filled Evening of Relaxation, Great Views, Good Food, Company & Plenty of Dancing

Thursday  
August 15, 2013  
7pm-10pm  
\$80.00 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE BY  
JULY 15, 2013**

Please arrive 1/2 hour early  
Ship leaves at 7pm sharp

In celebration of our 4<sup>th</sup> year, everyone is asked to wear all white

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