



Part 2: Gaudenzia's Program is Giving Individuals a New Outlook

The following article is a spotlight on a recovery-oriented cognitive therapy (CT-R) program at **Gaudenzia's** New Outlooks Residential Therapeutic Facility for Adults. Individuals come to this program from extended acute units, such as Norristown State Hospital and prison. This is often their first experience in the community after long periods of time in institutions. Individuals within this program are most often diagnosed with schizophrenia or other thought disorders and have been in treatment for most of their adult lives. Some individuals at New Outlooks are able to access this quality of treatment as a direct result of the 2015 class action **ACLU lawsuit** that helped individuals get access to adequate treatment in order to restore competency.

A CT-R program puts individuals' interests and aspirations front and center. Team members work with individuals to pursue meaningful action in life, overcoming obstacles along the way. CT-R is aimed at activating the adaptive mode: interactions with individuals designed to enhance connection, access interests and skills, energize and activate cognitive resources. CT-R also engages the individual's aspirations and helps them to take "positive action" towards these aspirations. These efforts help to overcome their negative beliefs about themselves, the world, and others that have been formed by their life experiences.

CT-R interventions help the individual to come to more helpful beliefs about themselves, the world and others so that they can achieve their goals and aspirations. This is the second newsletter highlighting the CT-R program at Gaudenzia's New Outlooks program. Those interviewed here include staff members as well as a member receiving CT-R services. These staff include Colleen Dougherty (Clinical Supervisor), Joy Martin (Division Director), and Kulsum Holland (Mental Health Technician). Terry* is the member receiving services.

*Pseudonym

EPIC: What's one goal or dream you're working towards and excited about? How do you feel the staff at New Outlooks is helping you to get there?

Terry: Working on my anger issue is my goal. The staff gives me my medication and talks to me to help me with my anger. I also want to get out of here and do better in the community. The staff talks to me and helps me out.



Kulsum and Terry at New Outlooks.

EPIC: What's an example of how New Outlooks has changed daily programming and community outings with CT-R?

Colleen: The members did an amazing job with transitioning from smoking. We had four [cigarettes] a day and weaned off one cigarette at a time. We had a set schedule and stopped smoking as of January 1, 2019. Just looking at [cigarettes] in stores was something they looked forward to. They associated the corner store with cigarettes. We know going to the corner store is triggering and they're going to buy cigarettes. So, we mixed it up and changed the language. We don't do "take-aways" we do "changing-habits." We asked if they

EPIC: What improvements have you seen in your members that comes from CT-R programming?

Colleen: A lot of the members come from different places like Norristown, prison, etc., and we meet them where they are. We have a couple of quiet people and more often than not, people don't try to engage quiet people but we do. We ask them to rate how they feel and they always say something like, "8 and calm." One of the members Kulsum works with will respond when engaged and when he has a conversation with people they're like, "He talks?" Everyone is important here. Making sure that everyone gets a turn and they respect each other. They look out for each other. Everybody is here for a reason and everybody is equally important.

Kulsum: Look at Terry. She looks out for everybody. She is the chief.

Colleen: They each have ranks. They are member-elected. We have a chief, expediter, a shingle, and a maintenance and suggestion box reader. They have a suggestion box and on Fridays the suggestion box reader gets to read the suggestions. That comes from Gaudenzia's therapeutic community model. It aligns well with CT-R.

Joy: Terry is a good example because the program focuses on people's strengths. They do a good job with tailoring the program with what people want to do. Terry having the role of chief fits her personality so well and it empowers her and gives her a purpose here and it motivates her to want to do more and motivates her to want to be in that leader role and get out of here and stay in that role. It also brings out her nurturing role.

EPIC: What about CT-R is helpful to your members in this setting as compared to other evidence-based treatments and practices?

Joy: It allows for flexibility and creativity. Because like we said it is a structured program but CT-R allows for creativity. Just in the clubs. You can create any club you want. The staff members ask the members what club they want and they say it. We have a music, gardening club, beauty club and so on.

Colleen: We usually have gender-specific groups but not the beauty club because the guys want to do it. At first they said they

wanted to go to Dunkin Donuts or Subway because we know that at Dunkin Donuts you can get two cookies for a \$1. We just tried to switch up the language and, at first, they would ask if they could go to the corner store but we said, "Let's think out of the box." And it's finally starting to transfer.

Kulsum: On Fridays, we order pizza and they look forward to it.

Colleen: And there are consequences, too. The members are responsible for coming to group. If a member is in bed for two days, we remind them that they have to participate in group and attend two groups to order pizza. We have one member right now literally being motivated by peanut butter and potato bread. That is his motivation and we make sure we have that. Morning meetings, the members set their goals. One of the members says his goal is to attend more groups and we remind him of that.



Living space at New Outlooks.

EPIC: Where have you lived before and what treatments have you received?

Terry: I was incarcerated before coming to New Outlooks. When you're in prison, you're locked down. Here, you have freedom. You can go to the store, take walks, and go out. You don't have that in jail.

EPIC: What's your favorite part of CT-R?

Colleen: I think seeing something come full circle is my favorite part. For example, what you [staff] do is minimal. When you start the conversation in group, you have all the sensory items on the table and you have a group topic. You phase out of the group because the members are providing for each other; they're each telling a story. The other day, our topic was healthy relationships. We

didn't want to but then they change their minds. All those sensory things are really therapeutic. We have smells, essential oils, and a pot with steam. They all love it. And it makes them feel good. You know when you feel good. A lot of our folks need help on activities of daily living (ADL). Rather than talking at them, you do it with them. One of our members gets her hair done, she smiles and feels good and has a totally different facial expression and then you can go in her room and help her clean.

Kulsum: We also had GED classes and we have two folks going.

do it simply. We do gardening or music and they just start talking.

Kulsum: Our members just need motivation and confidence. It's so important and I see such a big improvement in this program since CT-R.

EPIC: Who is your favorite staff member and why?

Terry: Ms. Colleen because she gets the job done! I talk to her and feel comfortable with her.

Special Thanks

Special thanks to Terry, Colleen, Kulsum and Joy for sharing their experiences of success with CT-R. Click [here](#) to learn more information about Gaudenzia.

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