

Lella Still

Eastern State Hospital's (ESH) Work Learning Program (WLP) is part of an academic-practice partnership between the University of Kentucky, UK HealthCare, UK College of Nursing, UK College of Social Work, and Eastern State Hospital.

The purpose of the WLP is to advance education, enhance staff development, support research, and improve patient outcomes. The program provides evidence-based support to full-time employees admitted to the Work Learning Program including a study room, paid study time, peer tutoring, and bonding activities.

Capstone Project Proposal

Enhancing caring contacts for inpatient discharges from a State inpatient psychiatric hospital to a community mental health center (CMHC- New Vista)

ISSUE: Inpatients with mental illnesses face challenges in transitional care from inpatient to community mental health settings. Evidence suggests that the first days and weeks post-discharge are very critical for patients discharged from an inpatient psychiatric facility due to increased risks of negative health and social outcomes. Approximately 40% of people with serious mental illnesses (SMIs) fail to attend their outpatient appointments in community mental health settings the first 30 days post-discharge. Thus, it is critical for mental health providers (MHPs) to bridge the gaps in patient care transitions from inpatient to outpatient settings to address the risks of suicide and other negative health and social outcomes in this vulnerable population.

PURPOSE AND AIM: To roll out a pilot program to enhance transitional care from inpatient to outpatient mental health settings through phone/ caring contacts.

PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS:

- Contact based interventions:** including use of telephones, letters, face-to-face and videos have been shown to improve transitional care. A study by Bauer, Okon, Meermann, & Kordy, 2012 found use of SMS messaging to significantly reduce readmission and improve treatment utilization among patients with eating disorders. Other studies have found early or repeated phone contacts to reduce risks of suicide including repeated attempts post discharge.
- Education Based Interventions:** to enhance patient self-management skills and social support. Evidence suggests that education based interventions improve knowledge about psychiatric condition post discharge and treatment adherence. However, educational interventions have mostly had significant influence on knowledge and behavioral outcomes rather than service-level outcomes such as readmission rates (Tyler et al., 2019).
- Combined Interventions:** including patient education, warm patient handoffs and follow-up calls by MHPs decreased missed appointments the first four months post discharge among patients from low-income clinics. Additionally, patient engagement as active participants in care also improved their treatment adherence.



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