



# Meeting Patients Where They Are

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# Janian

- Janian Medical Care - Largest provider of psychiatric care to homeless and formerly homeless people in New York City. Janian delivers a matrix of psychiatric and primary medical care services to homeless and formerly homeless individuals. On the streets, in soup kitchens, shelters, housing programs, and in communities throughout the city, we provide person-centered, recovery-oriented psychiatric care that integrates mental health, substance use, and physical health to the most vulnerable New Yorkers.





“I know a man, we’ll call him Mike, who lives outside, let’s say under the Manhattan side of the Brooklyn Bridge. Mike believes he has been sent to New York by Galactic Command to await the arrival of the invading aliens. Mike also thanks me for the coffee I bring when I visit and asks about my kids. I have gotten to know Mike and to some extent he has gotten to know me. I like Mike.

We have offered Mike housing and treatment. He has politely declined. Mike keeps himself warm in the winter and shaded in the summer. He knows where to get clothes, food and a shower. He doesn’t bother any one and has no intention of killing himself. Despite my training and experience, I haven’t convinced Mike to change his life. But if and when he decides to do so I like to think he’ll trust me to help him. When that happens I’d like to tell him that he will be entering a system designed to help him that will offer him state-of-the-art psychiatric support.”

- Van Yu, Director, Janian Medical Care

# Principles of Outreach Psychiatry

- Non-authoritarian, recovery-oriented, person-centered
- Utilized in populations that do not receive treatment through traditional system
  - Alternative is no treatment whatsoever



## Goal to foster engagement

- Barriers to treatment should be minimized
- Frame and boundaries of practice flexibly adjusted



# Street Outreach





# Safe Havens

- Began as a response to pressures that clients reported that kept them out of shelters
- Lower barriers
  - Harm reduction approach
  - No curfews (check in every 3 days minimum)
  - More intensive case management for mental illness/substance
  - Fewer beds per room



# Safe Havens





# Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is a model that combines low-barrier affordable housing, health care, and supportive services to help individuals and families lead more stable lives. PSH typically targets people who are homeless or otherwise unstably housed, experience multiple barriers to housing, and are unable to maintain housing stability without supportive services.

(Source: National Healthcare for the Homeless Council)





# Supportive Housing in NYC



- 47,000 units (more on the way)
- Independent apartments, congregate and scatter-site
- Rent = 1/3 monthly income
- Owned/operated by various nonprofits
- NY/NY I-IV
- Special categories for SMI, substance abuse disorders, veterans, youth aging out of foster care, people with HIV/AIDS, families, etc

# Protective Effects of Supportive Housing



- Efforts to speed housing coupled with case management (O'Connell 2008)
  - Prevents recidivism to homelessness
  - Reduces substance use
  - Improves quality of life
- Housing predicts decreased violent and nonviolent crime (Fischer 2008)

# Permanent Supportive Housing





# Clinical Pearls - your mileage may vary

- Lead with what the client might need **today** (coffee, socks, water bottle, housing)
- Seated or otherwise on the client's level
- Titles don't get you far
- Outreach staff often have a better rapport to get you started
- Use institutional transference and align yourself with the patient
- Harm reduction goes a long way - Never Use Alone hotline, test strips, Narcan, needle exchange, safe smoking supplies, OnPoint!!
- Previous encounters with psych may have been in an ER
- Stay humble
- Stay curious
- The "ideal" medication for their symptoms might not be the one that meets their needs now - recovery oriented, collaborative decisionmaking might steer you towards more symptom-based treatment (Seroquel, trazodone) long before more standard first-line treatments (ex SSRIs)
- LAIs can be crucial tools for unsheltered clients



# Success Stories

- Family
- Camper
- Broadway J
- Russia