



## A PLANETREE PERSON-CENTERED CARE CASE STUDY

# How One Urban Psychiatric Hospital Transformed its Reputation by Balancing Superior Clinical Care with a Humanized Healthcare Experience



### AT A GLANCE

- Only private, free-standing, inpatient psychiatric hospital in Manhattan
- Founded in 1959 by the Zirinsky Family
- 133 beds, 400+ staff members
- Affiliated with the NewYork-Presbyterian Regional Hospital Network
- Gold Certified for Excellence in Person-Centered Care in 2019
- Human Rights Campaign Health Equity Index (HEI) 2018 LGBTQ Healthcare Equality Leader

**ONE IN FIVE ADULT AMERICANS EXPERIENCES MENTAL ILLNESS ANNUALLY. YET IT IS INCREASINGLY CHALLENGING FOR THOSE WITH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS TO ACCESS THE TREATMENT THEY NEED. THANKFULLY GRACIE SQUARE HOSPITAL IN NEW YORK CITY IS THRIVING, GROWING AND RESETTING EXPECTATIONS FOR PSYCHIATRIC CARE.**

Despite the prevalence of mental illness around the world, the stigma of seeking help persists. Over time, institutional practices and patterns within healthcare have unfortunately contributed to the dehumanization of individuals struggling with mental illness. At Gracie Square Hospital in New York City, a concerted effort to fight this stigma and deliver compassionate care that honors each patient's personal journey has revitalized this community-based hospital. Today, the entire Gracie Square team is united around a common purpose to provide the highest-quality, state-of-the-art mental health and chemical dependency treatment in a warm, healing environment.

### A Proud Tradition, Threatened.

Person-centered care was not a new concept for Gracie Square Hospital. In fact, this proud tradition dates back to the hospital's earliest days. Its very first patient guide, published in 1959, expressed: *"...everything about the Hospital's program is patient-centered. Every staff conference, every menu prepared, every discussion is all directed to one goal – the patient's peace of mind and recovery in the shortest time."*

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**"As a vital resource to an underserved community, Gracie Square has embarked on a period of revitalization overcoming challenges such as increased regulatory restrictions, necessary infrastructure upgrades and required technological advances to meet contemporary standards of care." — David Wyman, President and CEO**





## GRACE SQUARE HOSPITAL'S STRATEGIES FOR PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL PERSON-CENTERED CARE

- A core team, including a psychiatric provider, primary nurse and social worker, meets with patients daily to assess progress in treatment, safety and individual needs.
- Patients are involved in decision-making. They are treated with dignity, respect and cultural sensitivity.
- Staff are available and responsive, set clear expectations and address patients' requests and concerns professionally and promptly.
- Staff are empowered to do their jobs and recognized for their contributions.

Nonetheless, over the hospital's six decade history, a number of forces challenged that commitment to patient-centered care. As national regulatory bodies assert increasingly stringent safety standards and institutional guidelines, psychiatric hospitals have struggled to balance the need to keep patients and staff safe while maintaining an environment that preserves patients' dignity and privacy. Gracie Square Hospital was not immune to this challenge.

## Revitalization through Recommitment to Person-Centered Care

A partnership with Planetree International proved key to revitalizing the hospital's culture. To be clear, there was no shortage of caring attitudes among staff. Their personal commitment to patients was steadfast. Staff were engaged in a high reliability effort and supportive of implementing best practices. But the Gracie Square team discovered that discrete practices and personal dedication were not, on their own, sufficient to achieve their vision for superior quality behavioral health care. Planetree's Person-Centered Care Certification® Program provided a cohesive methodology for aligning quality, patient experience and staff engagement initiatives into a unified strategy that struck a chord with all stakeholders.

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**“Planetree provided a valid approach that everyone could buy into. It didn't create more work; it just created more synergy.” — Michael Radosta, Chief Nursing and Quality Officer**

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## A Pathway to Partnership

The strategy required deeper levels of partnership. A Patient and Family Advisory Council was launched to enhance the care experience of patients and their loved ones, and to advance post-discharge collaboration. Today, professional governance structures empower frontline staff as integral partners in implementing person-centered best practices, like Care Partners, that enhance individuals' abilities to manage their care and ultimately, lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

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**“Our PFAC was established to promote patient and family centered care through the perspective our patients. We believe that those who are experts at being patients and caregivers should inform us of what is most important.” —Marty Mancuso, EdD, Chief Administrative Officer**

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“Participating in the PFAC gives me the ability to change the lives of others. It is very therapeutic and helps with recovery. I can see the light at the end of the tunnel.”  
— PFAC Member

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#### PERSON-CENTERED CARE OUTCOMES

- Outperforms all national quality benchmarks for NDNQI and HBIPS metrics
- 50% reduction in recidivism from 2017 to 2019
- Staff engagement has significantly increased on the Gallup Engagement survey year after year
- RN satisfaction has outperformed national benchmarks on the NDNQI RN satisfaction survey

#### ACCESS TO NATURE: THINGS ARE LOOKING UP!

Guided by the singular goal of creating the best possible outcomes for patients, the team at Gracie Square didn't let the hospital's urban footprint get in the way of providing patients with access to nature. Inspired by research that access to nature reduces patient agitation and creates a safer environment for all, the sky was the limit (literally) when it came to creating green spaces for patients. Today, a 3,000 square foot roof garden provides opportunities for patients to get fresh air and experience nature, known to be pivotal for healing.

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“When behavioral health patients are approached in a more patient-centric way, the outcomes are clear – less restraint use, less seclusion use, less IM medications. Their engagement level increases.” — **Michael Radosta, Chief Nursing and Quality Officer**

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#### BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS WITH COMPASSION

Perhaps the most formidable barrier to individuals accessing mental health care is the enduring stigma around seeking help. By leading with compassion and empathy, Gracie Square Hospital actively works to combat the fear, shame and silence around mental health and support patients in getting the help they need. For instance, to target the opioid epidemic, the hospital introduced a program to train patients and their families on how to respond to an opioid overdose and administer naloxone spray.

Recognizing that cultural factors influence perceptions of the causes and treatment of mental illness, Gracie Square Hospital's Asian Psychiatry Program encourages patients and their families to work within their own cultural framework to maximize successful treatment outcomes and prevent relapse. Established in the early 1990s, it is the only private hospital-based program that offers inpatient psychiatric services catering to the Asian-American community in the New York Metropolitan area. Familiar surroundings, language and food can make all the difference in a patient's treatment and recovery.

#### What Matters Most: Hope and Healing

Gracie Square Hospital's cultural transformation is palpable and profound for patients. Today, patients in emergency departments in need of inpatient psychiatric care specifically request to be transferred to Gracie Square. Patient experience scores are continuing to improve and patient comments reflect deep gratitude for the humanized care they receive and hope for the future.

#### An Enduring Pursuit of Excellence

Three years after launching its Planetree effort, Gracie Square Hospital earned Gold Certification for Excellence in Person-Centered Care. Staff celebrated at a triumphant Gold Party, but achieving Certification was certainly not the culmination of this exceptional hospital's quality journey. Today, the hospital is actively pursuing the prestigious ANCC Magnet® Recognition, and has found that its Planetree groundwork has created tremendous momentum toward this effort.



#### Be the Person-Centered Change You Want to See

Person-centered care is more than just healthcare best practice — it is the future of wellness. To bring these outcomes to your own healthcare facility, or to learn more about the process of becoming Planetree Person-Centered Care Certified, contact Planetree today.

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