

# Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)

## What it is

Assertive Community Treatment, or ACT, is a way of delivering a full range of services to people who have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness and who have needs that have not been well met by more traditional approaches. With ACT, a relatively small group of people receive services and supports from a team of mental health professionals. ACT's goal is to give persons served adequate community care and to help them have a life that isn't dominated by their mental illness.

- ACT is a team of staff who help people figure out what support they need to recover from the effects of their illness. The ACT Team helps people build community supports made up of people who can be counted on when they are needed.
- The ACT Team will be your guide as you recover. Recovery is a journey built on your choices about things that are meaningful to you and are based on your strengths.
- The ACT Team will help you build a Person Centered Plan based on what you tell them your needs and desires are for a better life.
- The ACT Team provides overall support.

## Who it's designed for

ACT services are for people who have experienced emotional problems that require frequent contact. Often these problems keep a person from seeking and getting needed community services on their own. For example, persons with emotional problems may need support and help for maintaining safe and



adequate housing, employment, medical needs, money problems, personal care needs, problem solving.

## How it works

The ACT Team consists of psychiatrists, nurses, mental health professionals, employment specialists, substance use specialists and peer supports who join together to give a small number of people ongoing, individualized care for as long as they need it.

Persons served receive ACT services in their homes, where they work, and in other settings in the community where problems and stresses arise and where they need support and skills.

ACT provides assistance with activities of daily living, housing, family life, employment, benefits, managing finances, health care, medications, co-occurring disorders integrated treatment (substance use), and counseling.

SERVING PEOPLE IN CRAWFORD, GRAND TRAVERSE, LEELANAU, MISSAUKEE, ROSCOMMON AND WEXFORD COUNTIES.

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Houghton Lake, MI 48629  
(989) 366-8550

Rather than seeing persons served only a few times a month, ACT team members with different types of expertise contact those served as often as necessary. ACT team members do not have individual caseloads. Instead, the team shares responsibility for people in the program. Each person gets to know multiple members of the team. If a member goes on vacation, gets sick, or leaves the program, those served know the other team members.

ACT team members work closely with those served to develop plans to help them reach their goals. Every day, ACT teams review each person's progress in reaching those goals. If a person's needs change or a plan isn't working, the team responds immediately. Careful attention is possible because the team works with only a small number of people – about 10 people for each team member.

ACT has no preset limit on how long persons served receive services. Over time, team members may have less contact with those served, but still remain available for support if needed. Persons served are never discharged from ACT programs because they are “noncompliant.”

ACT help and support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, if needed. Someone is always available to handle emergencies.

### **How will the ACT Team support your recovery?**

- They will help you decide what changes you want to make in your life and how to make the changes.
- They will review your Person Centered Plan with you to see how well it is working. Changes may be made at that time.
- They will help you learn about your illness, so you know what is happening and how it affects your life.
- They will help you with ideas for coping with your illness. For example, ways to deal with stress and anxiety.
- They will give you worksheets with information or actual homework assignments.
- They will help you arrange what you need for recovery.

- They will treat you with respect and dignity and support you in carrying out your plan.
- They will meet with you as often as needed, even daily.

### **Results/Benefits**

The ACT Team provides support to figure out what you want for your life now and in the future and help you find the community resources you need to make that happen. The ACT Team is also able to provide all of your mental health service needs, including nursing care and individual or group therapies.

Research has shown that compared with other treatments, ACT results in a greater reduction in both medical and psychiatric hospitalizations, a higher level of housing stability, and an improved quality of life for those individuals with severe and persistent mental illness who experience the most stubborn and problematic symptoms resulting in the greatest impairment. The majority of studies found that individuals served by ACT and their families in this situation were more satisfied with ACT than with other types of intervention.

### **ACT Guiding Principles**

- Team Approach
- Community Based
- Person Centered
- Assertive Outreach
- Flexible Services Delivery
- 24/7 Crisis Availability
- Includes Natural Supports
- Recovery is the Goal

### **A.C.T., Don't React**

