

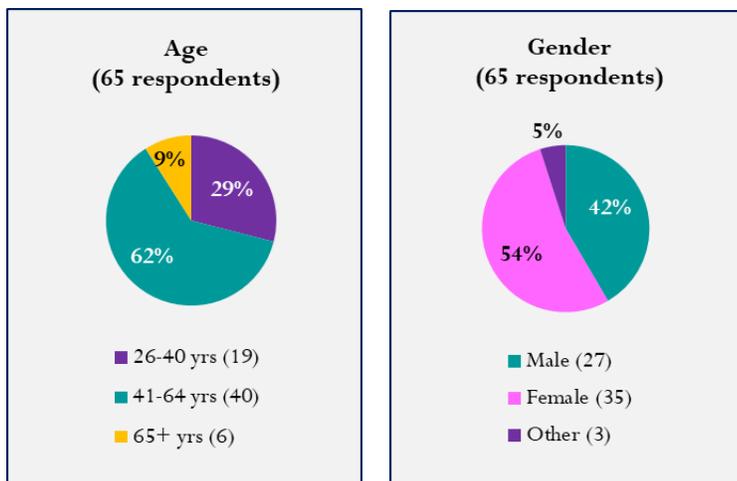
2020/21 BUCKS COUNTY ADULT RECOVERY SURVEY Community Report

From August through November 2020, Voice & Vision, Inc. conducted interviews with 65 randomly selected adult HealthChoices members who had received at least one behavioral health treatment in a 6-month period in 2020. Due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home order, the C/FST was prevented from interviewing individuals receiving treatment at substance use treatment providers this year.

This study and follow-up recommendations were developed in collaboration with the Bucks County Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Programs, Magellan Behavioral Health, and the Bucks County Drug & Alcohol Commission, Inc. The purpose of this project was to explore the experiences of adult HealthChoices members in regards to the key issues of **recovery, access, service delivery, treatment, outcomes, and overall satisfaction** and to track progress toward change over time as a result of Behavioral Health initiatives.

This brief summary of the data is provided to assist Bucks County agencies and Magellan Behavioral Health in incorporating recovery principles more fully into all aspects of behavioral health treatment services for adults. We thank all who made this project possible, especially the individuals who took time to share their experiences with us. A detailed report is available by request.

Demographics:



RECOMMENDATIONS

Access

- **Encourage** providers to continue to explore plausible solutions to access issues reported by individuals in recovery.
- **Share** with providers how stigma people experience from various sources may prevent them from accessing the treatment they need. Encourage practices that help reduce stigma through normalizing mental health and SUD concerns.

Services Delivery/Treatment

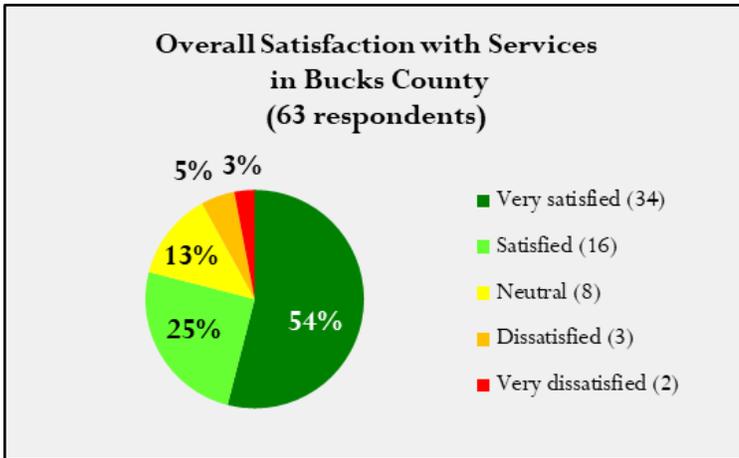
- **Educate** providers and individuals on the value of effective care coordination. Promote the use of signed releases so providers can speak to one another and empower individuals to follow up with providers to ensure coordination of care is taking place.
- **Educate** providers about the importance of asking about and addressing trauma concerns.
- **Promote** the importance of providers talking with people about substance use and its detrimental effects and helping them get connected to treatment/recovery resources as needed.

Recovery

- **Ensure** that employment/education goals are part of a person's treatment plan when applicable.
- **Urge** providers to connect with an individual's family and/or friends to offer educational resources designed to provide a deeper understanding of mental health and/or substance use to reduce stigma.

Outcomes and Satisfaction

We asked individuals several questions about outcomes they experienced as a result of treatment they had received—gauging things like quality of life as a result of services received, what was better or worse in their lives, and coping skills used to prevent crisis and avoid hospitalizations. People also shared about their level of satisfaction with services overall.



People (79%) indicated they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with Mental Health and/or Substance Use treatment services they received in Bucks County.

There was a **16% decrease in overall satisfaction** as compared to 2019/20 data.

People (71%) said their quality of life was better since receiving treatment — a 21% decrease over 2019/20.

Of the 44 people who reported their life was “much better” or “a little better” since receiving treatment, **75% or more shared the top following ways their life had improved:**

- ❖ Symptoms reduced (93%)
- ❖ Managing daily life (86%)
- ❖ More positive outlook (75%)

Top strategies people indicated using during stressful times to avoid relapse, crisis situations, or to avoid hospitalizations included: **Contact Family and Friends (84%)**, Music and Art (67%), Physical Exercise (58%).



Access

Individuals were asked about their experiences with accessing services, treatment, and other needs. This included asking about the ways in which stigma prevented people from getting the treatment they needed, and how things were going with telehealth.

Access continued...

Fifteen people indicated they were “sometimes” or “never” able to access the help they needed. Following are the top 3 difficulties they experienced:

- ❖ Delays in getting appointments
- ❖ Ineffective services
- ❖ Lack of transportation



50% of people who experienced stigma shared that it had prevented them from accessing the treatment they needed.

Service Delivery and Treatment

85% of people indicated they were always able to make treatment decisions for themselves.

Out of 23 people who said their behavioral healthcare and physical healthcare providers had spoken together, 20 (87%) indicated it was at least “somewhat helpful.”

Twenty-four people said their providers had not spoken together to coordinate their care, and 18 people didn’t know if they had.

Of the 46 people who said they had a health concern, **83% indicated they were receiving help for the concerns.**

Due to COVID, **use of telehealth services** increased in Bucks County in 2020. Sixty people (92%) reported they had used telehealth to access their services. **Most people (80%) reported they liked something about receiving MH and/or SUD services through telehealth.** People also shared what they did or did not like about telehealth. Below are their top responses:

What people liked about telehealth:

- ◆ Convenience
- ◆ Saves travel time/cost
- ◆ Reduces/eliminates transportation problems

...and what they DIDN'T like:

- ◆ Too impersonal
- ◆ Technology problems
- ◆ Lack of privacy where they live

Questions about Substance Use were added to the Recovery survey this year. We wanted to know if providers are speaking to individuals about substance use and its possible negative impact on mental health, and whether they are connecting them to treatment and resources as needed.

Less than 60% of people reported their provider(s) had spoken with them about substance use.

Of the 15 people who indicated they had a substance use concern, more than half (54%) said they were receiving help to address all or some of their concerns.

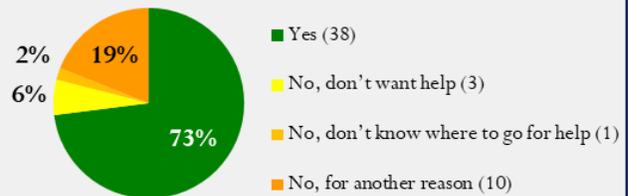
Service Delivery and Treatment continued...

Trauma and its effects may impact a person's mental health or substance use recovery process.

Out of 65 respondents, 44 (68%) reported their provider had asked about trauma they had experienced that may have affected their emotional/mental health.

This is a 25% decrease compared to 93% of people in 2019/20.

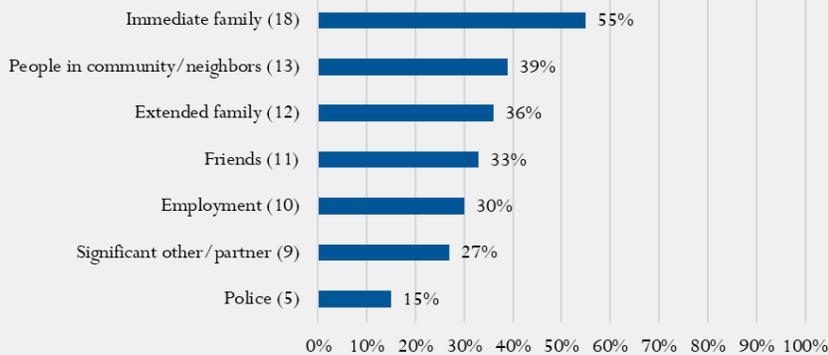
Are you receiving help to address concerns about the effects of trauma in your life? (52 respondents)



Recovery Indicators

Of the 33 people who said they had experienced stigma related to their mental health or substance use disorder, 23 (70%) reported they had experienced it from immediate or extended family, significant others/partners, and/or friends.

Have you experienced stigma related to your mental health or SUD concerns when interacting with any of the following? (Check all that apply) (33 respondents)



Removed from chart: MH professionals (4); Physical doctor/other medical professionals (4); Judicial system (3); Psychiatrist (2); Teacher (2) and Other: (2) (hospital; pharmacy). Also removed were the 31 respondents who indicated they had not experienced stigma.

“Just because you can't see [stigma] doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

It doesn't mean you are less of a person because you have a mental illness...”

Out of 65 respondents, 29 (45%) were working, going to school, or volunteering. The 13 people who said they were interested in working, but not yet doing so, shared a variety of ways their provider could help them with their work, school, or volunteer goals including: helping them find jobs or volunteer positions, assisting with tuition, getting help for medical or dental issues, and helping with housing and other resources.

Thirteen people (20%) indicated they were interested in, but were not yet working, going to school, or volunteering.