



## **CONSUMER QUALITY TEAM OF MARYLAND**

### **The Consumer Quality Team of Maryland empowers partnerships in mental health services.**

Our purpose is to improve quality oversight of the public mental health system by recording and addressing individual consumers' satisfaction with the services received.

CQT partners with consumers, providers and funding agencies to present, discuss, and find resolutions to problems experienced by individuals served by the public mental health system.



## WHAT WE DO

**CQT partners to solve problems in the public mental health system. We are staffed solely by consumers and family members.**

### **SITE VISIT**

We make unannounced site visits to mental health facilities in Maryland. During our visit, consumers volunteer for confidential interviews and share their satisfaction with the program, specific needs, and overall quality of life. CQT concludes the visit with a verbal report of general comments to program staff.

### **REPORTS WRITTEN**

CQT provides a written report of consumers' comments, in their own words, while keeping identities confidential. The report is given to the program director and the funding agency for that program.

### **MEETING WITH FUNDING AUTHORITY**

CQT meets monthly with representatives from the funding agencies, provider associations and the Mental Hygiene Administration. Concerns brought up during site visits are addressed, referred or resolved at the table. Each funding agency provides CQT with a written report documenting actions undertaken to resolve consumer concerns. Each site is visited 3-5 times each year, ensuring that concerns from previous visits have been addressed.



## HOW WE HELP

**Quality is our goal. CQT helps improve individual consumers' quality of life, the quality of mental health services, and consumers' satisfaction with the public mental health system.**

### **INDIVIDUAL CONCERNS**

Issues are reported anonymously to both program staff and the funding agency. With the consumer's permission, CQT will address individuals' concerns with the program. Problems can often be immediately addressed and resolved. If further action is required, it will be taken to the funding agency.

### **PROGRAMMATIC CONCERNS**

CQT documents consumer comments about the strengths and weakness of the program and becomes a source for honest, real-time feedback about consumers' satisfaction with programming, staff, procedures and communication. Providers often use this information within their own quality assurance and improvement programs.

### **SYSTEMIC CONCERNS**

At the monthly Feedback meeting, representatives from local and state agencies hear comments and concerns in the consumer's own voice. This provides policymakers with information about the needs and wants of the consumers served by the system and allows them to assess successful program models as well as areas in need of improvement.



## HISTORY

**The Consumer Quality Team is the final product of many years of cooperative planning by a number of mental health organizations.**

### **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

Based on the reported success of other consumer quality programs, a team formed in the 1990s to advocate bringing this program to Maryland. This Working Group included consumers, family members, providers, advocates, Core Service Agencies and the Mental Hygiene Administration. The team evaluated similar programs in other jurisdictions and concluded that the program in Philadelphia was the preferred model to reach Maryland consumers.

### **PHILADELPHIA MODEL**

The Consumer Satisfaction Team, Inc. (CST) of Philadelphia was founded in 1990, and is a consumer/family run organization using qualitative interviews. They have successfully resolved consumer problems and formed a successful partnership with providers by collecting information without judgment or blame and focusing on problem resolution.

### **IMMEDIATE RESULTS**

CQT began making site visits to mental health facilities in January 2007. Within the first few weeks of operation, we were able to identify specific areas of consumer dissatisfaction within programs. Providers made immediate changes based on our findings, and consumers reported substantial improvement within a month of our initial visit.



## PROCESS

**CQT's unique process can facilitate immediate resolution of quality issues at every level.**





## VALUES

**CQT recognizes and honors the experience and knowledge of mental health consumers, and we value their voice. Our team members and associates embrace the following values:**

- The knowledge that individuals with mental illness are resilient and can and do recover and lead healthy and productive lives
- The right of individuals with mental illness to be equal partners in their health care
- The important role of health care professionals in the treatment of individuals with mental illness
- The important role of family support in the treatment of individuals with mental illness
- A diverse network of providers and policy makers who deliver mental health services in a culturally competent manner
- Education and ethical research designed to improve the quality of life for individuals and their families living with mental illness
- Open-mindedness and avoiding blame

**TO REPORT A COMMENT  
OR CONCERN, CONTACT US**

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