

# **Central New York Services, Inc.**

**Syracuse, New York**



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# Take A Number

The Tale of The Misguided Deli Counter

&

The Maitre D'



## The Location of the Change:

The Single Room Occupancy program (SRO) provides permanent housing in three side-by-side buildings for 48 adults with chronic mental illness and chemical dependency.



## The Level of Care:

Residential

## The Aim:

Continuation



## The problem:

Many people  
+ Many meds = chaos + errors

- ☞ Some residents take 10 different meds per day, at 4 different times per day.
- ☞ All of the residents have been lining up at “Med time” and jockeying to be first in line. This results in a lack of privacy as clients crowd around the med room door.
- ☞ None of the residence like waiting to get their meds, and some openly express this frustration
- ☞ This resulted in pressure on the staff to complete the task quickly, thereby increasing the risk of errors.



## The Change: Cycle One — “Take A Number”



Staff developed a set of numbers, so that residents could pull a number and sit in the dining room, rather than waiting in line. A simple Stress Survey was used to gather data regarding the stress experienced by the staff.

### The results:

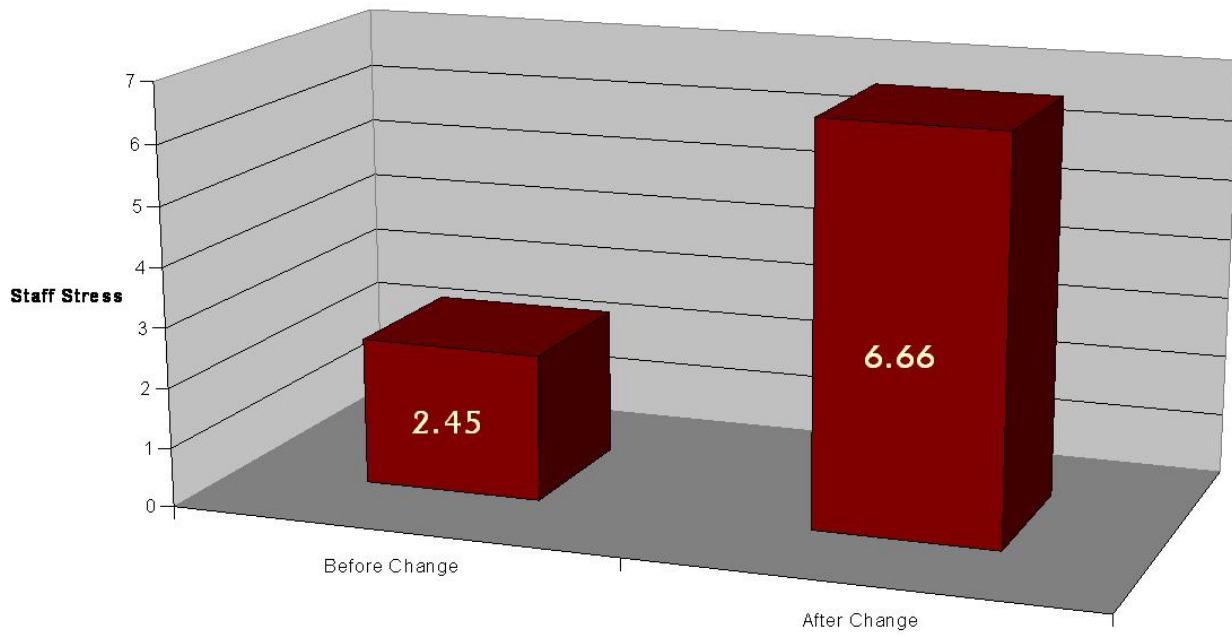
So much for the Deli Counter! (Talk about fanning the flames!)

Baseline: 2.45 (*OOOPS*, we *thought* it was stressful)

Change: 6.66

- ☞ Residents became highly agitated by this change
- ☞ Many were so disoriented at no longer waiting in line, that they refused to stay to receive their meds.
- ☞ This resulted in med errors, *the very problem we were trying to fix!*
- ☞ As a Result, Staff at the SRO called off the project prematurely after only three days





## The Change: Cycle Two — “The Maitre D”

The team reviewed this unexpected result. Some members were in favor of abandoning the project. Others felt that staff had not allowed enough time for the residents to become accustomed to the change. A compromise plan was developed



One of the Senior Counselors of the SRO agreed to function as a host during med times, her plan included:

- Encouraging residents to sit in the comfort of the dining room, rather than weighting in line.
- Using a clip board, to take down their “reservation” offering beverages to the residents while they waited.



We are currently  
conducting  
Cycle Two.

Preliminary results  
from the Stress Sur-  
veys indicate that the  
Maitre D' change:

- Is effective at reducing staff stress.
- Creates enhanced privacy, as the med room crowd has been reduced.
- Residents appear to experience this process as more flexible and accommodating.
- Yet another reminder to...

## Keep It Simple