

## CONARD HOUSE KICKS OFF MENTAL HEALTH MONTH BY RELEASING NINE METRICS TO MEASURE CAPACITY FOR SELF-MANAGEMENT OF CHRONIC MENTAL ILLNESS

**San Francisco, Calif. –May 6, 2009–** [Conard House](http://www.conardhouse.org), a pioneering nonprofit organization helping people self-manage mental illness since 1960, today kicked off National Mental Health Month (<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/mentalhealthmonth>) with the introduction of nine core progress assessment metrics used to measure someone's ability to self-manage chronic mental illness. Unlike traditional metrics which focus on a recovering person's general mental health and last substance usage, the guide used by Conard House case managers and their clients incorporates the principles of both the "Stages of Change" and "Supported Self-Management" as fundamental measurements of a client's progress in being able to provide for their own general well-being.

Conard House provides an array of services in a dozen San Francisco locations. Each service is designed to help people reduce their symptoms, find healthy pathways to recovery and promote long-term independent living.

The nine categories are correlated with the "Stages of Change" -- pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and in some cases, maintenance -- as defined in "The transtheoretical approach: Crossing traditional boundaries of change." (Prochaska and DiClemente, 1984). Now Conard House has incorporated these concepts into its newest Client Progress Assessment model. Specifically, the core metrics which Conard House has established for its own clients are as follows:

1. **Mental Health** – Evaluates whether a client experiences symptoms which can interfere with daily life, such as delusional thinking, visual/auditory hallucinations, depression, anxiety, manic or psychotic behavior, disorganization, confusion, paranoia, suicidal/homicidal ideas.
2. **Substance Use** – Determines whether someone engages in chronic drug use that interferes with normal living functions.
3. **Behavioral Issues** – Looks at whether there is a possible risk of suicide; homicide; violence; anger; abuse; poor impulse control; serious boundary issues; emotional deregulation; unwillingness to engage with treatment and/or medication; periodic incarceration; repeated crises and/or hospitalization; gambling; eating disorders; shoplifting; etc.
4. **Physical Health** – Assesses whether someone has observable physical health symptoms that interfere with normal life, such as: poor nutrition and/or mal-nourishment, chronic illness or disease, infected and/or untreated wounds or skin conditions. It also looks at whether a client is receiving treatment for physical health issues, recognizes a need for medical care, or may not be interested in improving his physical condition.
5. **Hygiene and Basic Needs (including Housing)** – Weighs whether someone has a history of being homeless or is unable to maintain long-term residency. It also looks at whether someone has major hygiene issues including appearance, odor, clothing and possible parasitic infestation.
6. **Social, Role-related Stressors** – Evaluates whether someone is socially isolated, has contact with family or friends and whether they have a significant relationship with another adult.
7. **Legal** – Looks at whether someone currently has unresolved legal issues, including possible incarceration, warrants, citations and civil suits, etc.
8. **Entitlements** – Assesses whether someone has enrolled for entitlements or entitlements are pending.
9. **Money Management** – Weighs whether someone is able to manage money, including whether they can establish a budget and pay bills and rent on time.

"Most social programs which assist people living with chronic mental illness only scratch the surface when it comes to tracking incremental improvements in a person's well being," said

Richard Heasley, Executive Director of Conard House. “Our mission at Conard House is to create and maintain the transformative resources that people who live with chronic mental illness need to self-manage their lives effectively. We focus on the quality of daily life as well as interactions with a community. Every client’s progress will be somewhat different. Our nine-parameter Progress Assessment is the most complete tool we know of for tracking short and longer-term progress for each individual.”

### **About Conard House**

Conard House, Inc. is a private, nonprofit organization providing mental health services to residents of San Francisco. Founded upon core principles of self-empowerment, self-determination and the least restrictive, community-based living, Conard House opened its doors in 1960 as the City’s first “halfway house” for adults following hospitalization. Today it serves more than 2,100 people in a dozen locations. Support for its programs and services come from various city agencies, service fees from organizations, rents from residents, foundation grants and gifts from businesses and individuals. For more information about Conard House and its programs, please visit [www.conard.org](http://www.conard.org).

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