



UPDATE

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Four Winds Partial Hospitalization: Comprehensive Treatment through Progressive Programming

The Partial Hospital Programs at Four Winds have recently experienced an exciting reorganization in treatment programming under the direction of a new Director, Jane Mazza Howat, LMSW. Among the notable group therapy innovations in all three of the Programs {Child (ages 10-12), Adolescent (ages 13-17), and Adult (18 and up)} is *Impulse Control in the Age of Social Media*. This group is specifically geared toward helping clients understand how the technological world they live in can result in constant interactions online, triggering anxiety and impulsive reactions.

An initial radical step is that children and adolescents are not allowed access to their phones during the day. Mazza Howat reports that "This allows them to test their tolerance of being without their phones and to develop the skill of taking a break from technology and feeling okay with it." "This policy," she continues, "offers them the opportunity to disengage from social media in order to learn better social skills through their direct interaction

with other peers." Mazza Howat believes that a key concept participants learn is how to regulate their time on the phone. The result is "Having the kids take control and not having them be controlled." A review of apps in the group helps kids identify how each of these apps impacts them. Mazza Howat reports that as a result some kids have deleted certain apps from their phones. Another focus of the adolescent group is engagement in and exposure to cyberbullying. Mazza Howat observes that although phones are not taken away from the adults attending the program, the *Social Media* group helps clients learn to attend to their treatment and not let social media distract them.

In her role as Director, Mazza Howat supervises five therapists, two psychiatric nurse practitioners (NPP's) and three mental health workers. Each patient is assigned a therapist who is their primary point of contact. All three programs provide a full day of group therapy. The Child and Adolescent programs include attendance at Four Winds'

dedicated Learning Center where teachers provide educational services that are coordinated with treatment. Medication evaluation and management is a key component of treatment in all three of the programs.

DBT (Dialectical Behavior Therapy) is the foundation for each program. All aspects of DBT treatment influence all groups. There are two specific groups each day. The morning group is devoted to teaching the particular DBT skill, such as distress tolerance or emotional regulation, and in the afternoon the focus is on helping patients to incorporate the skill into their daily lives.

Mazza Howat believes in taking a hands-on approach as director. Much of her time is spent meeting with program participants individually or as a group to get their feedback. "The goal", she states, "is to evolve the program in the moment to address needs the community is raising with you." She and her multidisciplinary team of professionals are committed to providing comprehensive treatment programs that can evolve and adapt to the times.

Four Winds Hospital
800 Cross River Road ● Katonah, New York 10536 ● 914-763-8151
www.fourwindshospital.com

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