

COMPLAINING ABOUT SERVICES AND TREATMENT: TIME 4 MEASUREMENT

Question: *Have you ever tried to complain about services at the mental health agency?*

Thirty-two percent of the participants (104 of 323) indicated that they have tried to complain about services at the mental health agency.

Although participants were not required to describe what they complained about, almost half of the participants who reported complaining provided an explanation. The following are examples of their responses:

Case manager (26%; $n = 11$):

- I had a personality conflict with my case manager.
- I reported two of the case managers to my case manager.

Unsuccessful (14%; $n = 6$):

- I can't get anybody to listen.
- I can't get any help from them.

Living situation (14%; $n = 6$):

- I complained about the group home to my case manager.
- They've done nothing about me moving yet.

Waiting (10%; $n = 4$):

- I have to wait for rides too long.
- They make you wait too long. I had to wait 2-3 hours.

Financial (7%; $n = 3$):

- I was upset because they say that they have a check for you and they don't.
- I complained about my payee and appointments. Lately they have been great.

Services (7%; $n = 3$):

- I had been trying to get the kids back in therapy.
- I was not admitted to a substance group.
- You feel like you are in jail at the clubhouse.

Confidentiality (5%; $n = 2$):

- Someone called my friend and asked personal questions.
- I complained about my case manager talking to other people behind my back.

Cleaning (5%; $n = 2$):

- Sometimes the floor gets dirty. I'd complain about that.
- I asked them to send someone up here to clean.

Transportation (2%; $n = 1$):

- I had to wait for rides too long.

Miscellaneous (12%; $n = 5$):

- The doctor is from another country and doesn't understand me.
- They won't let us smoke inside.

Question: Did anyone listen to you when you complained?

Those participants who indicated that they had tried to complain about services were asked whether anyone listened to them when they complained.

Sixty-two percent (64 of 104) of the participants who had tried to complain, indicated that someone listened to them when they complained.

An additional 9% (9 of 104) gave a conditional response such as:

- It took a really long time before they listened.
- You get a smiling face who says they'll direct your complaint.

Question: Was anything done to resolve your complaint?

Those participants who indicated that they had tried to complain about services were asked whether anything was done to resolve their complaint.

Forty-one percent (42 of 104) indicated that something was done, 15% (15 of 104) provided a conditional response (e.g., uncertain whether complaint was resolved), and 45% (46 of 104) said nothing was done to resolve their complaint.

Complaint was addressed (39%; $n = 38$):

- They started paying me and my husband was made the payee.
- It was corrected. I got a new therapist.

Complaint was not addressed (41%; $n = 40$):

- I tried to talk to the staff about it. Nothing was done.
- I just didn't get any response. I only said something one time.

Complaint was addressed, but not resolved to client's satisfaction (6%; $n = 6$):

- They tell me they will, and then they cancel my appointments.
- Not yet. Most of the time he is in crises and can't stop what he is doing.

Uncertain whether complaint was addressed (4%; $n = 4$):

- We don't know, but we have heard that a group home may be closed.
- I don't know. I did complain about my nerves and they changed my meds.

Complaint withdrawn (1%; $n = 1$):

- I thought about it and I apologized.

Consumer left the agency (5%; $n = 5$):

- I got moved away.
- Her son wanted medicine changed. No change was made, so she left the agency.

Miscellaneous (3%; $n = 3$):

- You can go to a state hearing on benefits, but I never did.
- It resolved itself really.

Question: How much help do you need with complaining about services or how you were treated?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4
None A little Some Quite a bit Complete/completely

- The mean consumer rating of help needed with complaining about services and treatment was .89 (SD = 1.26; range = 0 - 4) indicating a very low level of need on average.
- Sixty-two percent of consumers (200 of 323) reported needing no help complaining about services and treatment.

Question: How much does someone help you with this?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4
None A little Some Quite a bit Complete/completely

- The mean consumer rating of help received with complaining about services and treatment was .61 (SD = 1.09; range = 0 - 4).
- This rating was lower than most other types of help consumers reported receiving.
- Twenty-three percent of consumers (81 out of 292) indicated that they were not receiving as much help as they needed complaining about services and treatment.

Question: How important is complaining about services or how you were treated to you?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4
Not at all A little bit Moderately Quite Extremely
important important important important important

- Complaining about services was rated the least important of all needs. The mean rating was 2.0 (moderately important).

Question: Who usually helps you the most with complaining about services or how you were treated?

↪ **Family** ↪ **Mental health staff** ↪ **Friends** ↪ **Others**

- Seventy-two percent of the participants (211 of 292) reported that no one helped them with complaining about services or treatment .
 - Twenty-three percent (48 of 211) of those participants who reported receiving no help indicated that they needed help complaining about services or treatment.
- For those who indicated that they did receive assistance (81 of 292):
 - 48% named the mental health agency as the primary source of help;
 - 25% named family as the primary source of help;
 - 11% named friends as the primary source of help;
 - 16% named other sources, including attorney, nursing home staff, group home staff, or significant other.

SUMMARY:

- *Many consumers (about a third in our sample) do complain about services or treatment.*
- *Complaints revolve around major service issues: availability, access, appropriateness, acceptability, and quality.*
- *Only about half of those who complain feel that their complaints are addressed.*
- *The amount of assistance needed and help received with complaining about services and treatment is low (between none and a little, on average).*
- *Relatively little importance is attributed to complaining about services and treatment compared to other types of assistance (e.g., help needed obtaining medication, benefits, and services).*
- *Among those who do receive assistance complaining about services, the mental health agency is the most frequent source of help.*

CONCLUSIONS:

- *The amount of assistance needed complaining about services is low.*
- *However, the fact that only half of consumers feel that their complaints are resolved suggests that the system is not responsive enough to consumers who complain.*

If you have questions about his report, please call Dushka Crane-Ross, Project Manager, at 466-9981.