

# Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)



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## What is Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)?

The traditional outpatient model directs patients to other health services on their own. But sometimes this does not help individuals with severe mental illnesses. ACT is a community-based treatment that goes to the person whenever and wherever needed. ACT team members are trained to help in the areas of psychiatry, social work, nursing, substance abuse, and preparation to regain employment.

They can cater their aid to the individual, inside the comfort of their own home. The ACT team works 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. ACT works best for a range of individuals, such as:

- those in their late teens to their elderly years
- those with schizophrenia, other psychotic disorders, and bipolar disorder
- those who experience extreme disability from other mental illnesses and are not helped by traditional outpatient models
- those who have difficulty getting to appointments on their own
- those who have had bad experiences in the traditional system
- those who are unsure of what they need help with

## What are the primary goals of ACT?

ACT strives to do the following:

- lessen the symptoms of mental illnesses
- minimize ongoing episodes of the illness
- improve functioning in adult social and employment roles
- reduce homelessness and reliance on hospital stays

## What are the key features of ACT?

Long term treatment plans will be centered around personal strengths, needs, and desires for the future.

- **Medication**
- **Individual supportive therapy**
- **Mobile crisis intervention**
- **Substance abuse treatment**
- **Structuring time and handling activities of daily living**
- **Supported employment, volunteer work, and education**
- **Support, education, and skill-teaching to family members**
- **Direct support to help clients gain legal and advocacy services, financial support, supported housing, money-management services, and transportation**

## How do ACT clients compare with those receiving hospital treatment?

ACT clients spend less time in hospitals and more time living independently so they can have more positive social relationships. In one study, ACT clients who were re-hospitalized, stayed at the hospital shorter than those who were not ACT clients. ACT has also reduced the risk of being imprisoned and lower alcohol use. For clients who are homeless, ACT provides a more stable housing situation.

**How available are ACT programs?**

Only six states (DE, ID, MI, RI, TX, WI) currently have statewide ACT programs. Nineteen states, including Minnesota, have at least one or more ACT (pilot) programs in parts of the state.

**Is there a difference between ACT and PACT?**

There is no difference between the PACT (Program of Assertive Community Treatment) model and the ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) model. ACT or PACT is also known by other names across the country.