

BRONX VOICE

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FOR BRONX BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NURSES, CARING IS MORE THAN AN “ACT”



Andrea Abramoff is a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner with the Visiting Nurse Service of New York

By Chandra Wilson, April 28, 2020

May is [National Nurses Month](#), a time to recognize the thousands of dedicated nurses and healthcare workers on the COVID-19 frontlines in hospitals, as well as those caring for New Yorkers in their homes. One Bronx home care nurse is part of a team that helps some of our community's most at-risk residents find peace of mind in this difficult time.

Andrea Abramoff is a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner with the [Visiting Nurse Service of New York](#), where she works with VNSNY's Assertive Community Treatment program, known as ACT.

As part of VNSNY Community Mental Health Services (CMHS), ACT provides community-based behavioral health care to individuals who struggle with severe mental illness and substance abuse.

The program ensures that patients have access to care and are correctly taking their medications, and that they have adequate housing, food and essential treatments needed to keep them on a healthy path.

“People who suffer from mental illness are already facing enormous challenges,” says Abramoff, “and with everyone pushing past their limits during this pandemic, our patients are at an even higher risk.”

To keep people safe and minimize the spread of the virus, the ACT team relies on Telehealth communication whenever possible, but since many who are served by the program have trouble taking oral medications consistently, they require medical treatments delivered in-person by a nurse.

Despite the pandemic, ACT nurses are continuing to make regular trips to visit clients and administer medications where needed. Each visit begins with a screening phone call to assess for COVID-19 symptoms, then the ACT behavioral nurses carefully put on protective masks, goggles, gloves and gowns to protect themselves and their patients as they provide care wherever home may be for the patient.

“Nourishing relationships with our patients is top priority,” adds Abramoff. “If we’re not able to keep our clients stable and healthy mentally and physically, they might undo all the progress made. Anxiety levels are certainly higher than normal for everyone, and it is critical that our clients see an encouraging face to remind them that they will get through this time.”

So, when 7:00 p.m. rolls around this evening, and you join in to cheer for the brave healthcare workers fighting on the frontlines in our city, give a special Nurses Month shout out to behavioral health workers like Andrea and her ACT team in the Bronx who play a critical role in supporting the health and well-being of some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers among us.

To learn more about Community Mental Health Services at the not-for-profit Visiting Nurse Service of New York, please visit www.VNSNY.org, or call 1-800-675-0391.