

For Immediate Release

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Community Access Hosts First-Ever Supported Education Symposium in NYC on May 28

– More than 150 attend in person and online

– Goals are to identify best practices, and a policy agenda for Supported Education in NYC

(New York, NY, 5/29/19) – Community Access hosted the first [Supported Education Symposium](#) in New York City on May 28 in lower Manhattan. More than 150 people attended in person and online. The symposium focused on advancing equity in access to education and developing improved supports for students with a history of mental health concerns, including those with justice involvement. The primary objectives were sharing best practices, network building, and identifying a policy agenda for Supported Education in New York City.

The keynote address, “Building a Supported Education Network: Lessons Learned from Europe” was given by **Prof. Lies Korevaar, ImpulSE Project, Hanze University of Applied Sciences, the Netherlands**. Participants had the opportunity to choose from a range of workshops and presentations given by noted local and European authorities and advocates for Supported Education. Topics included “Mindset: a Cognitive Remediation for Students with Mental Health and Cognitive Problems,” “To Tell or Not to Tell: Disclosing your Mental Health Problems at School and at Internships,” and “Vocational Rehabilitation: an Overview of Supports and Services for Individuals with a Mental Health Diagnosis.” A panel discussion was held on “Cultural Competence: Understanding the Experience of Justice Involved Students.”

Community Access hosted the symposium in conjunction with their groundbreaking Blueprint Supported Education program. Blueprint is the only free, Supported Education program specifically designed to serve New York City residents who have histories of mental health conditions and involvement in the justice system. Since beginning in 2015, Blueprint has served 255 individuals, supporting them to attain their education goals.

In making her introductory remarks, **Alysia Pascaris, Deputy CEO of Community Access** said: “Blueprint is one of only two programs in New York City that are discrete and dedicated to Supported Education within the mental health realm. The role of post-secondary education for education’s sake, meaning to learn and be empowered with knowledge, has not been a priority. Education profoundly affects a person’s socio-economic status. Socio-economic status profoundly affects a person’s health and their potential to recover.”

Prof. Korevaar said, during the keynote: “We see Supported Education as the link between psychiatry and education. When you go for treatment, you are in the role of ‘patient.’ In education, you have the role of ‘student.’ In Supported Education, we ask: what are your education goals and how can we help you to achieve them?”

About Community Access:

Community Access’ mission is to expand opportunities for people living with mental health concerns to recover from trauma and discrimination through affordable housing, training, advocacy, and healing-focused services. We are built upon the simple truth that people are experts in their own lives.

www.communityaccess.org

About Blueprint:

Blueprint at Community Access is a Supported Education program that began in the fall of 2015 and is funded by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Our services are grounded in the belief that mental health struggles do not preclude a successful education. Blueprint asks each participant to define for themselves a satisfying life, with meaning and purpose. From there we explore what role education can play in creating that vision, and begin the work of matching barriers with supports and strengths.

www.blueprintsed.org

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