

SWEETGRASS COUNSELING & CONSULTATION

Situation

Shaneika Smith, PhD, has a background steeped in education. She spent many years as a school counselor and earned advanced degrees in the subject. This history, Dr. Smith says, showed her the importance of gathering data and relying upon it to guide her decisions.

In 2020, just weeks before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Smith co-founded and opened Sweetgrass Counseling and Consultation, a practice that delivers a wide range of mental health, wellness and other related services to its Memphis, Tenn., community, including minoritized individuals and underserved people. Despite the substantial challenges of opening a practice at the beginning of a public health emergency, Sweetgrass thrived. Its services were in high demand, spurred on, in part, by the mental health crisis associated with COVID-19.

While Dr. Smith and fellow Sweetgrass co-founder and practitioner, licensed school psychologist Cathy Emerson, were helping many individuals improve their mental health, they found themselves frustrated with the tools they were relying upon.

“I was using the GAD-7 and PHQ-9, but not in a way where I could track and analyze the data,” Dr. Smith recalls. “One of the ways you can give quality service to clients is by taking the time to talk to them about what the data is saying about symptoms and progress. Unfortunately, with how we were using these tools, we couldn’t engage in conversations about the results and trends the assessments were showing over time.”

This frustration was exacerbated when Dr. Smith researched additional tools but encountered arduous processes and long wait times to receive permission to use them. “I was concerned that we weren’t using the most applicable instruments to our clients’ specific situations, but getting access to these instruments was difficult and time-consuming,” Dr. Smith says.

Fortunately, there was a solution that would help Sweetgrass gain access to the data and instruments needed to improve their quality of services: Proem Behavioral Health.

Solution

Proem is the premier clinical workflow software engine that helps behavioral health providers efficiently and accurately screen, test and measure treatment success for those suffering from mental illness. Proem is the exclusive digital licensee worldwide of gold-standard, evidence-based screening tools, structured interviews and post-diagnosis severity measurement scales to monitor patient outcomes.



Sweetgrass Counseling and Consultation is a provider of mental health and wellness services to individuals, organizations and communities in and around Memphis, Tenn. The private practice was founded in 2020 by Shaneika Smith, PhD, a licensed professional counselor and licensed school counselor, and Cathy Emerson, a licensed school psychologist. Services include individual counseling for adults, individual and group counseling in schools, supporting families working to navigate mental health systems, support for comprehensive school counseling programs and professional development.



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- Shaneika Smith, PhD

“When we researched what we could use that would provide us with the data we wanted, access to the instruments we needed, and trending information that would allow us to paint a clearer picture of a clients’ situation, Proem checked all the boxes,” Dr. Smith says.

Sweetgrass went live on the platform in March 2023. Dr. Smith says access to the platform had an immediate impact on how the practice could help its clients. “For many of our clients, we do not know right away what specific challenges they are grappling with,” she says. “Using Proem, we efficiently capture insightful data. We can have a hunch on what this data is telling us and then use specific tools to pop the hood and look around more closely.”

Results

Proem licensed digital tools, including the M.I.N.I. (Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview), have become an invaluable part of Dr. Smith’s diagnostic process. “Proper diagnosing for treatment planning would take almost 30 minutes to view the DSM-5 criteria and check all differentials,” Dr. Smith explains. “Proem doesn’t replace diagnosis, but it does put me in the ballpark so I am confident making a diagnosis in 5-10 minutes now.”

The information captured by the Proem platform is valued by practitioner and client, Dr. Smith says. “We finally have the data we’ve wanted to help us track progress and draw more accurate conclusions about our clients. They get to see data that backs up how they’re feeling, helps them better understand the frequency of what they’re experiencing and makes them a more active participant in their sessions.”

With a long client waitlist and desire to get mental health and wellness services to more individuals who would benefit from them, Sweetgrass Counseling & Consultation has significant growth plans. Proem, Dr. Smith says, will be an indispensable part of the growth.

“I’ve benefited so much from the platform and continue to tell others about its benefits and my great experience with it,” she says. “Proem gives us the data to dive deeper into our clients’ situations, allows us to find care gaps to fill and ultimately helps us provide better services to our community.”



Benefits



Accurate Diagnoses Faster



Improved Patient Engagement



Outcomes Data for Trending



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