

# THE SOTERIA MODEL

## A New Effective Treatment for Schizophrenia Being Created by Community Members in Las Cruces

The original Soteria House was operated in the San Francisco Bay Area from 1971 to 1983.



### Treatment Characteristics:

- ✚ Home-like residence designed to treat persons who were experiencing their first psychotic breaks
- ✚ Psychological and physical safety through therapeutic relationships with staff
- ✚ No pressure to get back on track too quickly
- ✚ Residents could stay until recovered and have a bridging plan into the community
- ✚ Treatment in community was based on relationship
- ✚ The goal was to help the person navigate the experience in a safe place where they were understood, supported, affirmed and could slowly and steadily recover
- ✚ May or may not use medication but medication was voluntary and not the primary mode of treatment



### Staff Characteristics

- ✚ Compassionate
- ✚ Similar experiences to residents
- ✚ Ability to provide safety and affirming relationships

### Supervision

- ✚ Provided by the Director who was a licensed clinician
- ✚ Contracted psychiatric oversight who provided services as needed

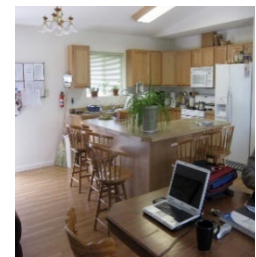


### Program Activities

- ✚ House upkeep, shopping, gardening and cooking
- ✚ Supported community activities (education, employment)
- ✚ Art
- ✚ Exercise
- ✚ Therapeutic meetings

### Outcomes

The typical resident became stabilized in about six weeks with an average stay of three months. A well-done scientific study compared outcomes of persons served at Soteria House with those treated in hospitals.\* At one and two-year follow-ups the patients treated at Soteria House were doing significantly better in terms of symptoms, rehospitalization, social functioning and employment status thus averting a trajectory of chronic mental illness. The cost of Soteria House was one-third of hospitalization.



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\* Bola J & Mosher L. (2003). Treatment of acute psychosis without neuroleptics: Two-year outcomes from the Soteria project. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*. 191(4). Pp. 219 - 229

## Replications

The program was replicated in the San Francisco Bay area, Berne, Switzerland, Anchorage AK, Burlington VT and Jerusalem, Israel with similar success.



The Burlington, Vermont Soteria home is funded by the state of Vermont and operated by Pathways Vermont. You can learn about Soteria Vermont by going to [www.pathwaysvermont.org](http://www.pathwaysvermont.org), clicking on “What We Do”, clicking on “Our Programs” and clicking on “Pathways Vermont Soteria House”. That site includes a short video which describes the treatment program.

## COST-BENEFIT

- Hospitalization: \$1200 Soteria \$350
- Long Term Cost Benefit: Reduced Recidivism, Lower Medication costs, Reduced use of more expensive Assisted Living Home Care
- Social Value: People go to work, People go to school, People become role models and reduce stigma



\*\*From Soteria-Alaska Program Assessment conducted by Brian Saylor, Ph.D, MPH and Anda Saylor, BS.

House photos are from the Soteria-Alaska home.

**Soteria Las Cruces has been included as one of the "Game-changing Strategies" in the Local Behavioral Health Collaborative's strategic plan. We believe it is an important addition to the behavioral health system in Dona Ana County.**

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