



Razor's Edge Forum

A Cut Above in Residential Treatment

**“It was a great experience for me,
I got to speak freely with my brothers.”**

David J.

The neighborhood barbershop has long held a special place in the American culture. For more than a hundred years, it has provided a safe haven where people can feel free to share their feelings in an environment that encourages and celebrates diverse opinions.

Recently, PSCH's Renaissance Residence launched the first *Razor's Edge Forum* initiative to explore whether a barbershop setting could help members of the house open lines of dialogue to improve socialization.

Haircuts Pave the Way for Open Dialogue

At this first Razor's Edge Forum, held in October, participants received a free haircut from volunteer, Corey Doctor, and voiced their views on various subjects. Conversation was lively with discussions focusing on the ongoing Presidential debates to “small talk” about events at the home to the World Series. All residents, both men and women, participated and enjoyed this new venue. The discussion was very healthy and demonstrated to all the residential staff members that the individuals are ethical and have clear short and long-term life goals. Many of the men enjoyed the haircut *Razor's Edge* provided. Most importantly, all the residents had an opportunity to discuss their current life challenges, reconcile differences, laugh and joke with one another and understand that everyone in attendance was receiving assistance to regain their independence. By the end of the forum, participants agreed that the experience helped them develop closer bonds with residence staff and, in turn, staff better understood the residents.

Marcel Crooks, who coordinated the forum, said, “Share—Shave—Shear . . . this was a positive experience for everyone. I know we will have similar forums in the future.”

PSCH-Pederson-Krag operates more than 25 residential alternatives throughout metropolitan New York and Long Island that meet the needs of individual with mental illness. Our community residences, apartment treatment and supported housing provide safe, secure and nurturing environments which promote wellness, recovery and independence. ■