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Activity Journal 8

**History of Mental Healthcare in Your State. Check historical and archived material on mental healthcare in your state of residence. How did the state manage healthcare issues? Was there evidence of abuse? If so, describe.**

Mental healthcare in New York State has a long and complex history, dating back to the early 19th century. In the early years, mental health treatment was often primitive and ineffective, with patients often subjected to harsh and inhumane treatments.

In 1843, New York State opened the Utica State Hospital, which was the first public mental hospital in the state. Over the next several decades, the state would go on to establish a number of additional mental hospitals, including the Hudson River State Hospital, the Buffalo State Hospital, and the Willard State Hospital.

During this time, the prevailing view of mental illness was that it was caused by a physical defect or disease in the brain and that the best way to treat it was through institutionalization and isolation from society. Patients in mental hospitals were often subjected to cruel and degrading treatments, including confinement in straitjackets and other forms of physical restraint, and even lobotomies.

In the mid-20th century, there began to be a growing awareness of the need to treat mental illness in a more humane and effective way. This led to a movement towards deinstitutionalization, with many mental hospitals being closed down and patients being transitioned into community-based care.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy signed the Community Mental Health Act, which provided federal funding for developing community-based mental health services. This led to the establishment a network of community mental health centers across the country, including many in New York State.

Was there evidence of abuse (in mental health hospital in NY State)?
Yes, there was evidence of abuse. This was the purpose of the National Mental Health Association, The National Institute of Mental Health, and The Community Mental Health Centers Act, involvement to advocate for dignity and worth for people with mental illness.   Mental healthcare in New York State is provided through a combination of public and private providers, including hospitals, clinics, and community-based organizations. There is also a growing recognition of the importance of integrating mental healthcare with primary healthcare and the need for more accessible and culturally competent services for diverse populations.