



Psychosis Fact Sheet for Professionals

Symptoms of Psychosis

Anyone can develop psychosis, however onset is usually youth or early adulthood. It is most likely to occur during young adulthood, between the ages of 15 – 30. Three out of every 100 individuals experience a psychotic episode. Symptoms may emerge gradually but onset tends to be earlier for males.

Early Symptoms

- Difficulty following conversation or understanding sentences
- Changes in a person's behavior, such as withdrawal from social activities
- Increased sensitivity to sensory input
- A change in how the person describes feelings, thoughts and perceptions

Acute Symptoms

- Hallucinations, like hearing or seeing things that aren't there
- Delusions: false beliefs about reality that are held onto despite evidence to the contrary
- Behavior that is out of character or bizarre, reckless or dangerously impulsive
- Major changes in sleep or eating patterns

The Importance of Early Intervention and Treatment

The consequences of delayed treatment include potential for a slower and incomplete recovery, further disruption of the person's family life, school or work life and interference with psychological and social development. There is also an increased risk of depression and suicide, addiction, and involvement with the criminal justice system. For these reasons and more, early intervention has been the standard of care for psychosis in most of the western developed world since the 1990s.

Who Should be Referred to the EASA Program

If you have a young person in your care whom you believe might be exhibiting early signs of psychosis not caused by a known medical condition or by drug use, contact EASA at 503-988-3272 for referral information. The team currently serves young people between the ages of 16 and 25.

How the EASA Team Works

The medical and mental health professionals who make up the EASA team work in *partnership* with local communities, primary care and individual clinicians to reduce delays in accessing treatment. Once a young person is in the program, he or she is assessed to determine treatment needs. If medication is necessary, EASA prescribers use low dose anti-psychotic medication to avoid treatment-interfering side effects. Counseling, therapy, practical and psychosocial assistance, vocational and occupational therapy are also provided. The family and friends of the young person are considered part of the treatment team and are treated as such.

Outcomes of Early Intervention Programs

The EASA program is modeled after the successful Early Assessment and Support Team (EAST) program begun by Mid-Valley Behavioral Healthcare in 2001. From 2001 through 2006, the rate of hospitalization among the program's 300 participants was reduced from 50% to 10% and continues to decrease. 74% of the program participants experienced a remission of their symptoms or only slight disruption from them by one year. Approximately 70% of participants remained in school or work.

Call the EASA team at **503-988-3272** if you have questions or for referral to the program.

