

When a Student Experiences Psychosis

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No Matter What Else I Say Today Know

- Every Youth Has Their Own Story (Usually Many), Which May or May Not Align With These Trends
- There is Wisdom in This Room Beyond What I Have to Share
- None of What Any of Us Do is Simple



Who are You
People? 😊





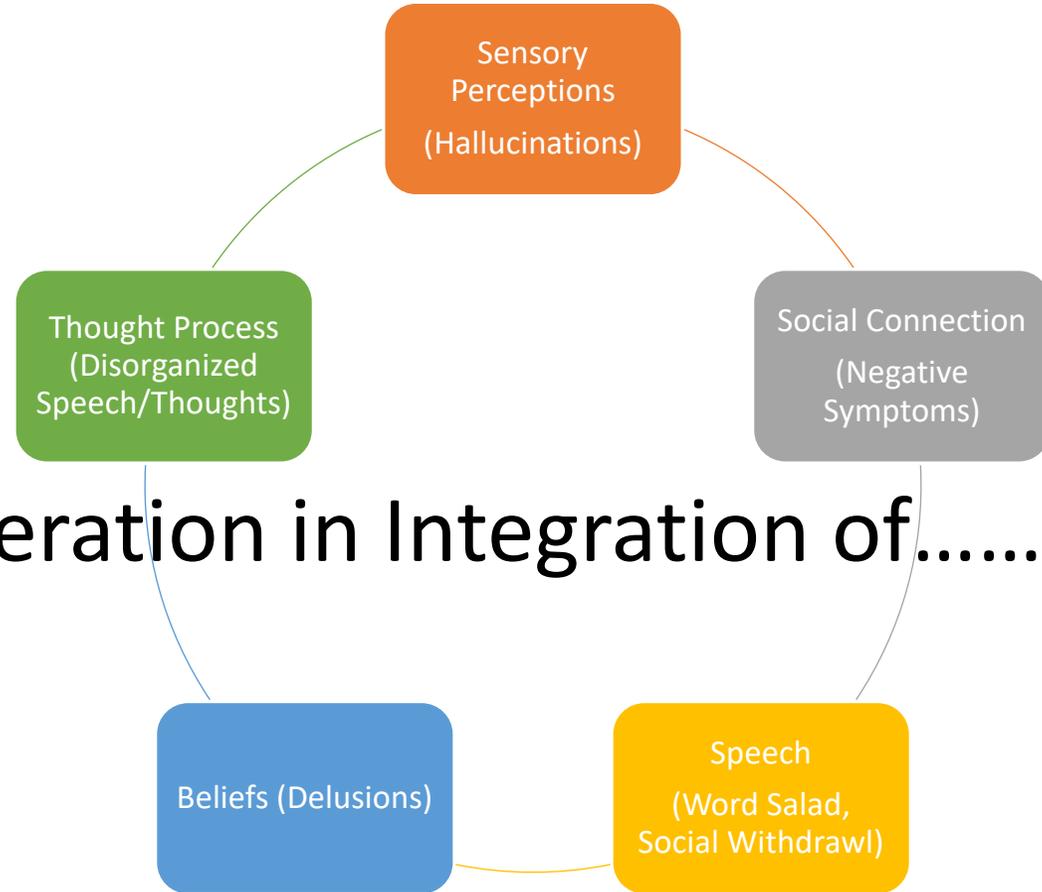
Real Lived Experience

This is who I am....

1. Lived Experience Consultant for EPC
2. Mental Health Clinician
3. A Person Who Enjoys Watching Squirrels Play in the Trees from the Sweet View on My Hammock
4. A Person with Lived Experience of Psychosis and Mental Illness

Psychosis

Psychosis



Is an Alteration in Integration of.....

“People with psychosis are fundamentally different from the rest of society.”

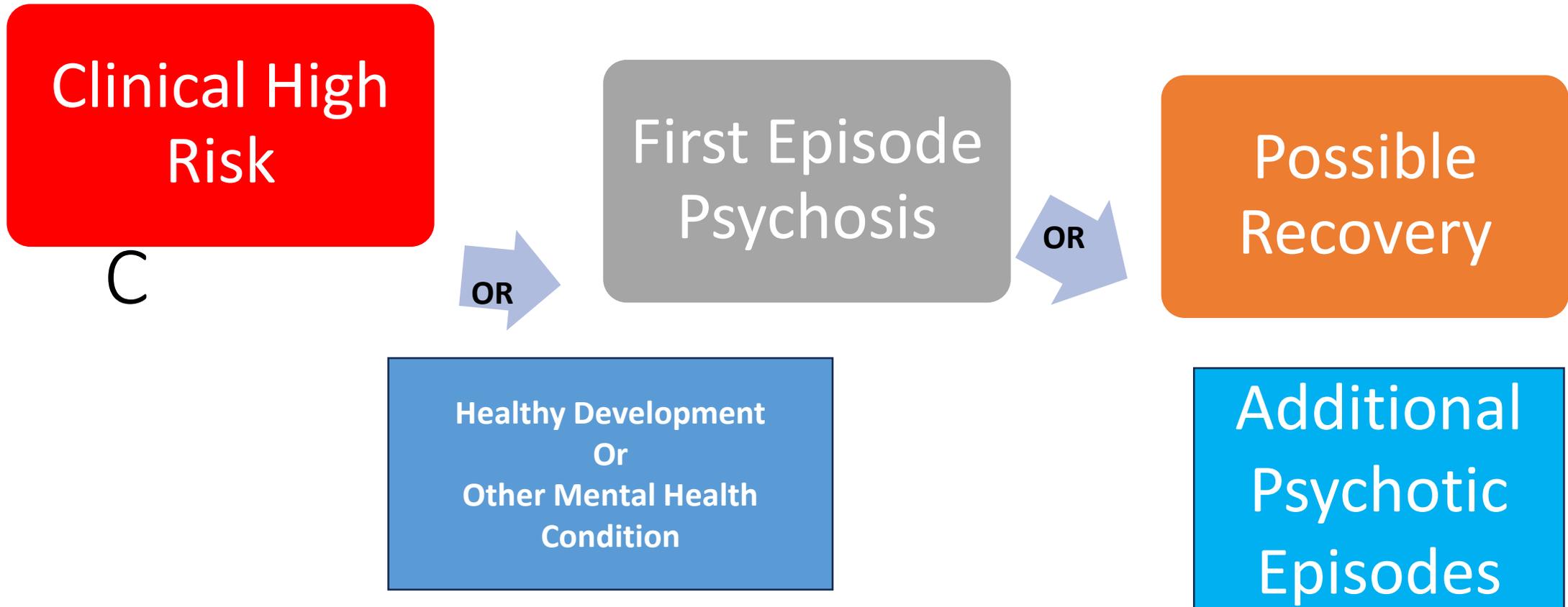
True or False



False

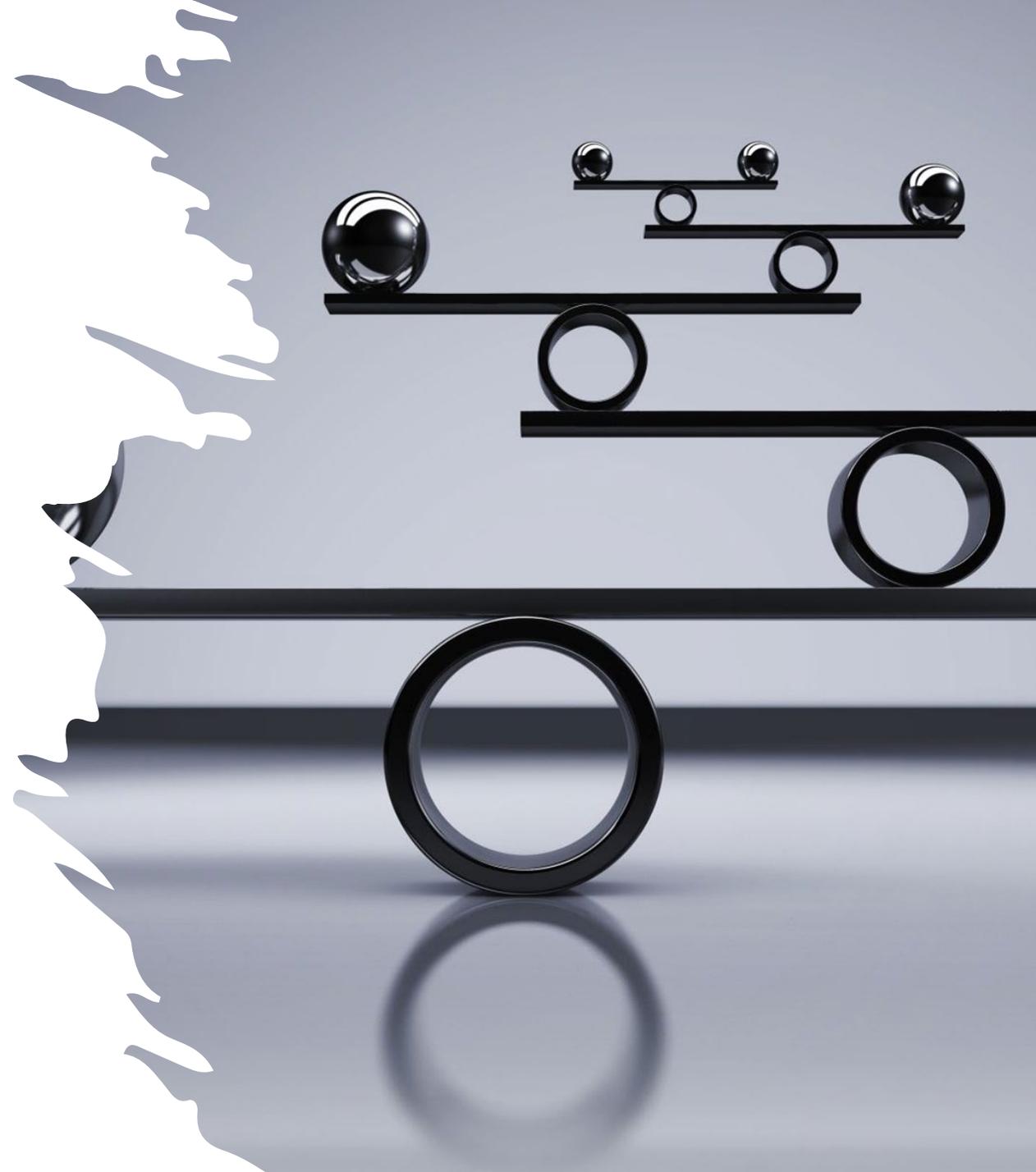
If you have a brain, you can experience psychosis. Anyone will experience psychosis under the right conditions (example; severe sleep deprivation, severe stress, substance use, many health conditions)

How Psychosis Progresses



Stress Vulnerability Model

Biological Vulnerability
+ Sufficient Stress
= Mental Health
Challenges



Won't Blind You with Science.....

Genetics/Biological Predisposition Sets the Tracks Stress/Trauma Switches on the Train

In people with a genetic/biological predisposition for psychosis, severe stress and trauma can ignite.....

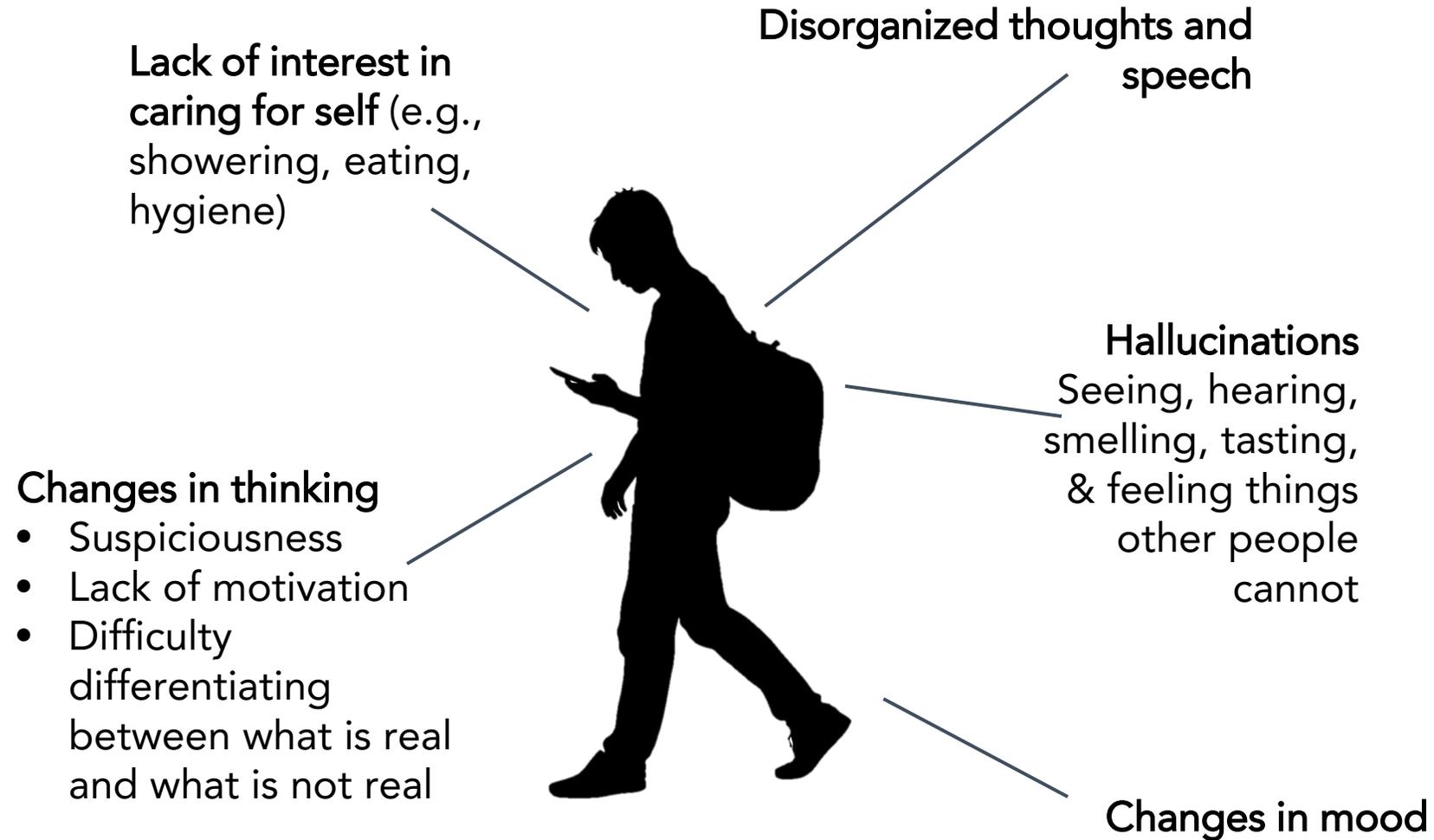
Cortisol

Inflammation

Oxidative Stress

Changes to Brain
Signaling (Xenaki
et al., 2024)

Early Signs and Symptoms



What is it like for you when a student is showing up with symptoms of psychosis?

As a teen, I believed accepting psychosis as an experience I'd had meant...

I am to blame for the problems in my family

I am crazy

My perspectives are not credible

I will not be able to go to college or live on my own

I will be in and out of the hospital forever



How Can We Alter These
Messages?

Impact of Psychosis on Students

- Slower response time
- Decreased attendance
- Increased tardiness
- Incomplete work
- Lower work quality
- Decreased participation
- Social isolation
- Changes in mood– anxiety, depression, irritability



Many difficulties youth face following an episode of psychosis (ie; Lower motivation, trouble focusing, not completing work) can be mistaken for willful behavior

After psychosis, a youth's brain has been through a lot, and it will take a lot to bounce back

Needs at School.....

1. To Belong (Psychosis can be an isolating experience)
2. To Continue to Move Toward Valued Goals (Psychosis does not have to be a life sentence)
3. To Have Support at School if Symptoms are Disruptive (Many Symptoms are Invisable or Can Be Misinterpreted as Behavioral Choices, Example; Low Motivation, Trouble Concentrating May Lead to Incomplete Work, Late Assignments)



What You Can Do.....

1. Reject Stigma and False Limitations



What You Can Do.....

2. Normalize the Experience



What You Can Do.....

3. Be Curious and Show Compassion

I believe you

That sounds
frighting...what can
we do to help?

Thank you for
talking to me
about this

Many people have
experiences like this

Is there anything that
helps you when you are
coping with this?

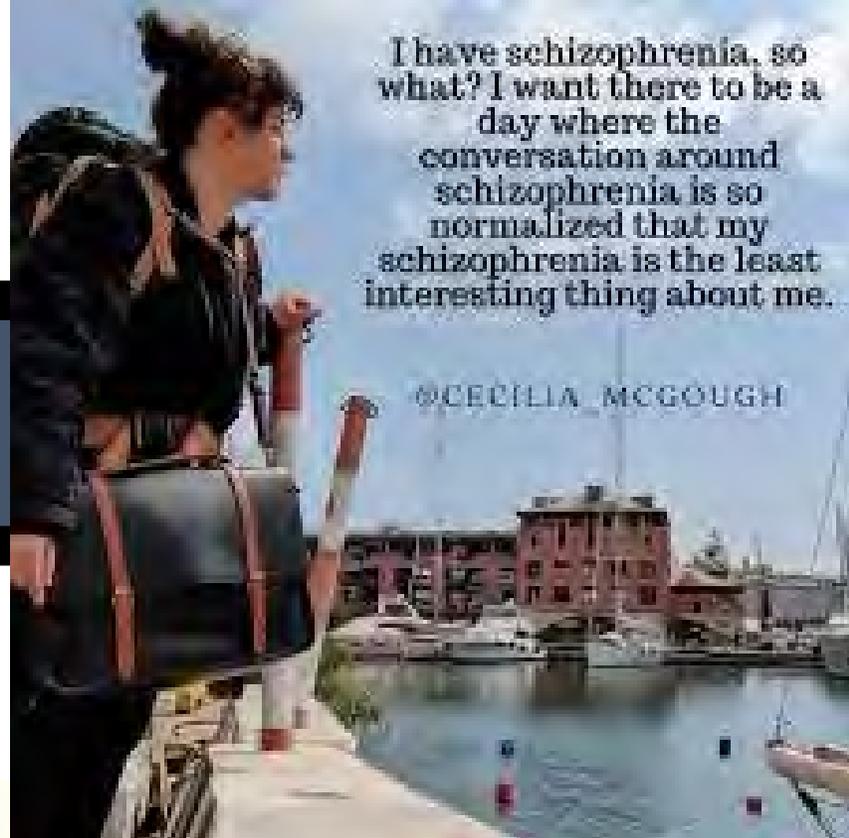
Would you like me to
turn on some music or
nature sounds? Would
you like a fidget?

How do you
understand what
might be going on for
you?



What You Can Do.....

4. Share Recovery Stories



“

Don't let stigma from society get in the way of living your best life, and don't let self-stigma get in the way of living your dreams.

— MICHELLE HAMMER, FOUNDER
SCHIZOPHRENIC.NYC



Carlos Larrauri

“Part of living with this condition is you have to make sense of it. We have immense capacity to be resilient, but we can't do that without that sense of meaning or purpose.”

5. Refer to the Right Support

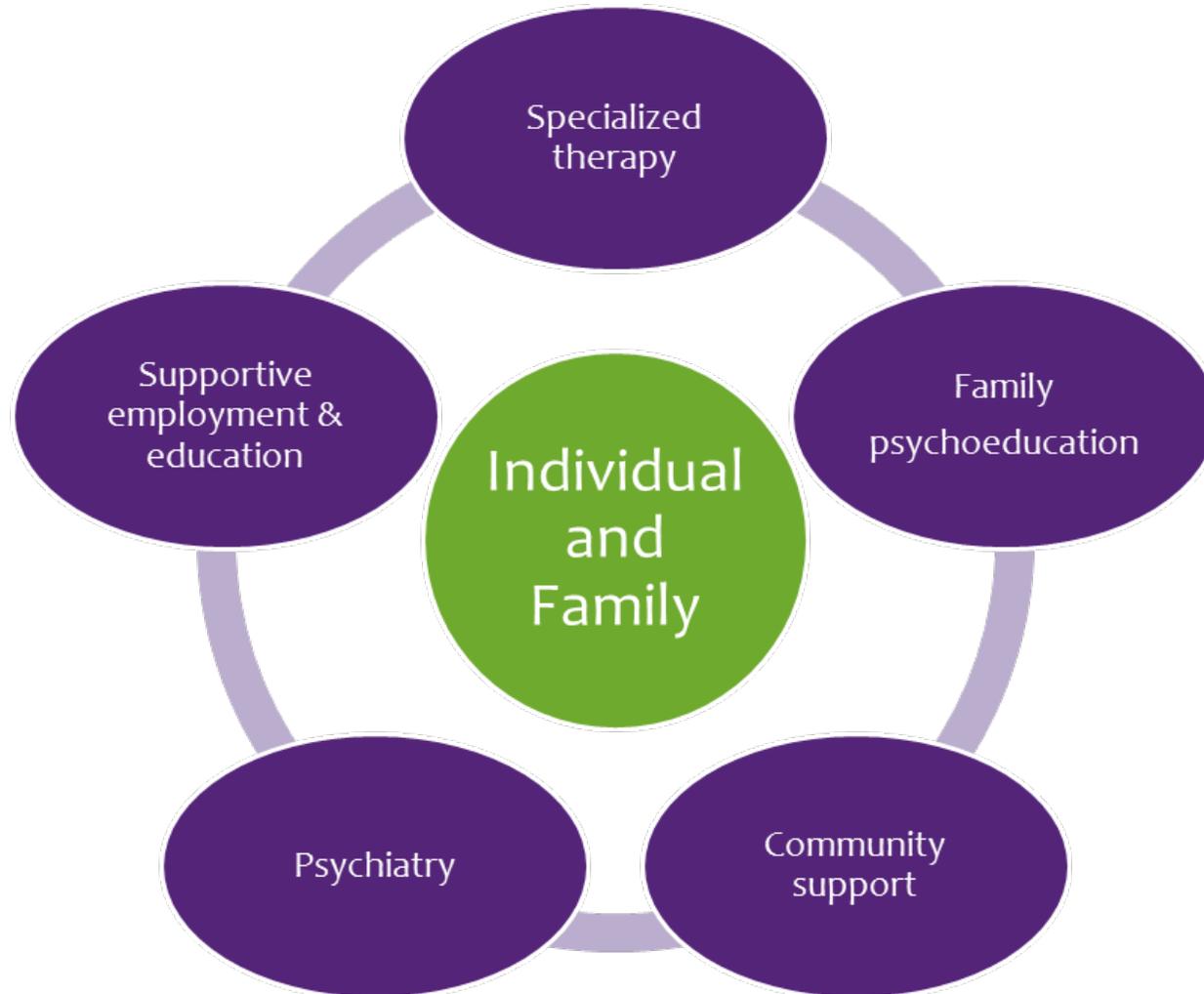


A Critical Period

Outcomes across categories appear to improve if intervention is given within the first two years of illness
Onset

Some have suggested that the weighted benefits of receiving assistance within the first two years of onset of psychotic symptoms is similar to the importance of receiving treatment in the **first fifteen minutes of a stroke**

Coordinated Specialty Care



It makes a huge difference

A study of Coordinated Specialty Care in New York Found that after six months of support, 80% of participants were able to return to work or school (Nossel et al., 2018) and participants continued to improve in their well-being over all 12 months followed.





**Refer
Now!**

Is someone you know experiencing
symptoms of psychosis?

Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) teams in
Missouri accepting referrals!

For care in downtown Kansas City, please contact
University Health at

Nathan.haywayd@uhkc.org

For care in Wentzville or Odessa, please contact
Compass Health at

cscteams@compasshn.org

For care in Saint Louis, please contact Independence Center at
mabrams@independencecenter.org

Possible Accommodations

1. Flexible Deadlines on Assignments
2. Extra Time on Tests
3. Ability to Wear Headphones to Help Cope with Sensory Symptoms and Voices
4. A Later Start Time at School (Many Medications Can Cause Drowsiness)
5. ½ Day or ½ Homebound
6. Ability to Have Water or a Snack (Can Be Grounding)
7. Ability to Have a Fidget in Class (Can Be Grounding)
8. A 'Five Minute Pass' to Leave Class Five Minutes Early During Period Shifts to Avoid Hallway Stampedes
9. A Space to Go When Overwhelmed
10. Visual Aids
11. Executive Functioning Support



Youth Advisory Council



**Join our Youth
Advisory Council!**

We are looking for youth & young adults ages 15-35 with personal lived experience with psychosis. Influence change, empower others, and build connections!



[www.epcmissouri.org/
youth-advisory-council/](http://www.epcmissouri.org/youth-advisory-council/)

The EPC YAC is working to reduce stigma about psychosis by sharing resources, raising awareness, and providing fact-based education in order to improve young people's access to care.

Virtual meetings are held on the second Monday of every month from 6-7pm CST

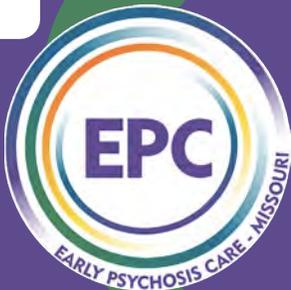
- The YAC is a group of youth and young adults aged 15-35 with personal lived experience with psychosis
- Working to reduce stigma about psychosis by sharing resources, raising awareness, and providing fact-based education in order to improve young people's access to care
- Helps EPC create more effective, targeted, and responsive services, while also engaging youth, building community, reducing stigma, and elevating the voices of lived experience



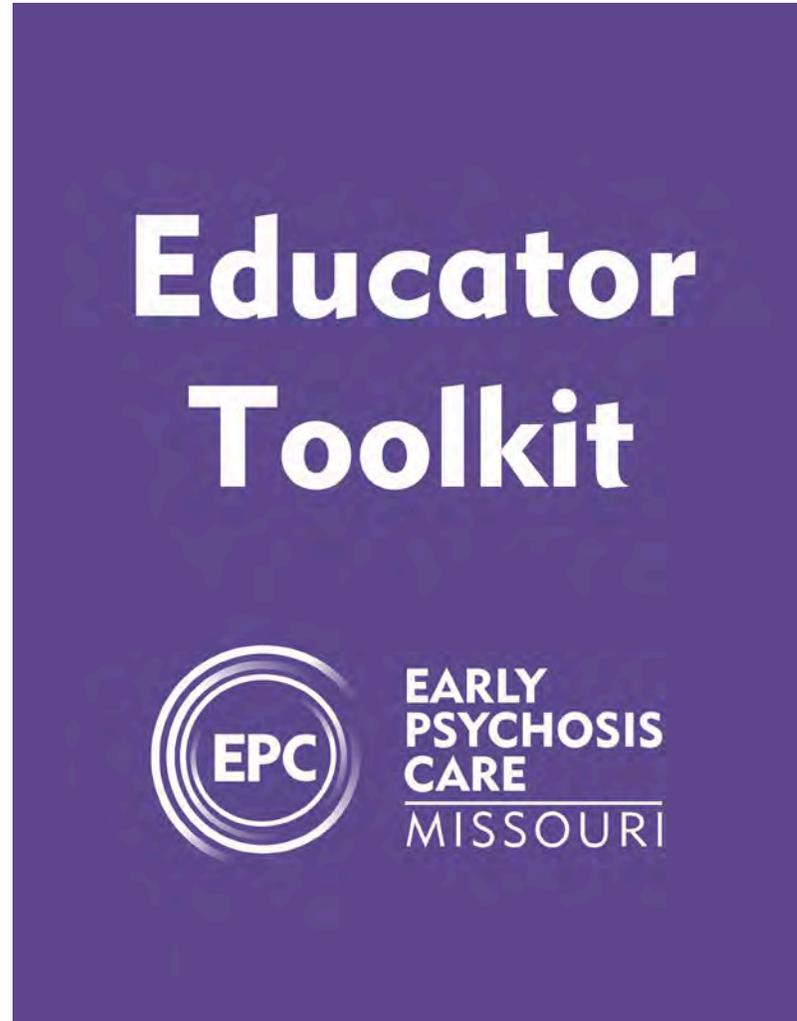
Meetings



- Virtual meetings
- Second Monday of each month
- 6-7PM CST
- Open to all youth and young adults aged 15-35 with personal lived experience with psychosis



Educator Toolkit



- Created by the Youth Advisory Council
- Free toolkit packed with resources
- Available online at epcmissouri.org
- Contains...
 - Frequently Asked Questions About Psychosis for Educators
 - HANDOUT: Student Mental Health: First Episode Psychosis
 - HANDOUT: Coordinated Specialty Care in Missouri
 - Free Online EPC Educator Course Referral
 - CLASSROOM POSTER: Myths vs. Facts
 - CLASSROOM POSTER: Say This, Not That
 - Youth Advocacy Resources
 - And more!



LifeLaunch



- Free, online centralized resource hub
- Dedicated to addressing and facilitating the essential aspects of the transformative journey to adulthood
- Contains:
 - Tailor-made life skills resources
 - Playbook for professionals
 - Video interviews with young adults
 - Hope board
 - Connections to external resources for a variety of topics



Connecting the Family to Care

Some actions which may be helpful:

- Connect with the student's teacher
- Communicate concerns with the family
- Share information:
 - Early Psychosis Care Center website
 - MOBHC treatment locator
- If appropriate, develop an IEP



Above all, **follow policies from your school and district**



EPC Trainings

The screenshot displays the EPC Missouri website with a navigation menu at the top: Home, About Us, Resources, Courses, Events, Blog, and Get Help. Below the menu are six course cards, each with a title, description, and a 'Go to' button.

- ASSESSMENT 101 COURSE**: Assessment 101 is a free 1-hour training. This training will focus first episode psychosis intake questions. Attendees will learn how to feel comfortable asking questions about psychosis and speaking to individuals who are reporting signs and symptoms of first episode psychosis.
- PSYCHOSIS 101 COURSE**: Psychosis 101 is a free virtual training held multiple times a year by the Missouri EPC Center. Topics include the importance of early intervention and treatment, symptoms, diagnosis, communication with families, the roles of culture and trauma, and education of referral sources.
- BEHAVIORAL HEALTH COURSE**: This course for behavioral health professionals delves into the intricacies of recognizing and treating individuals experiencing the onset of psychosis. Tailored for behavioral health professionals, this course offers a comprehensive overview of the diagnostic criteria, evidence-based therapeutic interventions, and multidisciplinary approaches to care. Participants will gain information to enhance their ability to provide compassionate and [...]
- FIRST RESPONDER COURSE**: This course provides emergency personnel essential knowledge to address situations involving individuals in early psychosis. As critical contacts in crises, first responders play a vital role in ensuring the safety and well-being of those distressed. Participants will gain a foundational understanding of psychosis symptoms, effective communication, de-escalation strategies, and appropriate referral pathways. The training empowers [...]
- EDUCATOR COURSE**: This course equips educators and school professionals with tools to assist students experiencing first episode psychosis. Grounded in current research and best practices, it highlights educators' critical role in early identification, intervention, and support. Participants will learn to recognize symptoms, understand triggers, and apply effective classroom strategies. By fostering compassion, patience, and evidence-based care, educators [...]
- CAREGIVER COURSE**: Caregiver's Guide to First Episode Psychosis is a course designed to help caregivers support loved ones experiencing early psychosis. It teaches how to recognize symptoms, explore treatment options, and access resources. Participants will gain skills to respond effectively and compassionately, fostering informed support during a critical time. By the end of the course, caregivers will [...]

- EPC offers a variety of free, online courses
- Psychosis 101 discusses the importance of early intervention and treatment, symptoms, diagnosis, communication with families, the roles of culture and trauma, and education of referral sources
- The Educator Course highlights educators' critical role in early identification, intervention, and support. Participants will learn to recognize symptoms, understand triggers, and apply effective classroom strategies



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