

Identification of Young People at Risk for Psychosis and Ideas Related to Early Intervention

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Summary:

Psychosis spectrum disorders (e.g., schizophrenia) are among the most distressing and debilitating of mental health concerns. Impacting approximately 3% of the population, clinicians can benefit from training and resources to recognize and partner with this vulnerable group of individuals, as many people with psychosis feel isolated, stigmatized, and without help. Growing evidence suggests that with thoughtful early intervention many people with psychosis can recover and lead a life of their choosing. This presentation will define and describe psychosis, emphasizing the early phases of illness. The presentation will also demonstrate strategies for reducing stigma, increasing empathy, and facilitating early identification. A screening tool will also be shared, and an overview of treatment strategies will be shared.

Objectives:

1. Recognize early phases and symptoms of psychotic illnesses.
2. Describe attenuated / subthreshold symptoms typically assessed to determine psychosis-risk status.
3. Identify myths associated with psychosis and be equipped with destigmatizing strategies.
4. Demonstrate awareness of psychosis-risk assessment and consultation services as well as the potential benefits of specialized treatment for this population.
5. Increase familiarity with psychosocial interventions for youth at risk for psychosis.

The Presenter:

Jason Schiffman received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Southern California in 2003. Currently, he is Professor of Psychological Science and Director of Clinical Training at UC Irvine, and runs the PREVENT research lab on early psychosis. Prior to arriving at UCI, Dr. Schiffman was the Co-Director of the Maryland Early Intervention Program's Strive for Wellness Clinic, which provides research, training, and services designed to improve the lives of young people at risk for psychosis, as well as their families. Dr. Schiffman was also the Program Coordinator for Maryland's SAMHSA funded CHRP grant, providing supervision, training, and services in the clinic in addition to his work on program development and coordination in the project. Prior to his work in Maryland, Dr. Schiffman was a professor at the University of Hawaii, Department of Psychology, where he was the Director of the Child and Adolescent Thought Disorders Program.

Dr. Schiffman has published over 165 scientific articles related to mental health. Procuring in excess of \$8.5m in his career, Dr. Schiffman has held grants with the National Institute of Mental Health for work on risk for psychosis and psychosis risk, the National Alliance for

Research on Schizophrenia and Depression for research attempting to improve early identification methods, the Mental Health Foundation embarking on anti-stigma efforts, the State of Hawaii Departments of Education and Health for clinical services he and his team provided to youth receiving public mental health services, and Maryland's Behavioral Health Administration for assessment and intervention services for youth and young adults at risk for psychosis. Dr. Schiffman's research seeks to refine the identification of young people at risk for psychotic disorders, better understand the effects of psychosocial interventions for adolescents with psychosis, and uncover mechanisms that can reduce stigma against people with serious mental health concerns.

Brief Bibliography:

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