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First Episode Psychosis: Symptoms and Evidence- Based Treatment Options

Fiscal Year 2021

Presentation Goals

- 1. Explain psychosis (symptoms, causes, who it impacts)**
- 2. Discuss treatment options for recovery from psychosis**
- 3. Share resources for individuals and their family member(s)**



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What Is Psychosis?

Psychosis refers to the conditions in a person's brain that causes the person to have difficulty recognizing what is real and what is not real. ^{1,2}



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Sources: (1) National Alliance on Mental Illness. Retrieved from: <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions/Psychosis> ; (2) National Institute of Mental Health (2015). Recovery After an Initial Schizophrenia Episode (RAISE). Retrieved from: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/raise/fact-sheet-first-episode-psychosis.shtml>

Scientifically-Identified Risk Factors

- Being young (12-30)³
- Family history of psychotic disorder, especially parent or sibling³
- History of difficulty making friends and unusual thoughts and odd/eccentric behaviors³
- Growing research base for the role of severe trauma²
- Substance misuse



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Source: (3) Lynch S, McFarlane WR, Joly B, Adelsheim S, Auther A, Cornblatt BA, Migliorati M, Ragland JD, Sale T, Spring E, Calkins R, Carter CS, Jaynes R, Taylor SF, Downing D. Early Detection, Intervention and Prevention of Psychosis Program: Community Outreach and Early Identification at Six U.S. Sites. Psychiatr Serv. 2016 May 1;67(5):510-6. doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201300236. Epub 2016 Jan 14. PMID: 26766751.

Challenges of Emerging Adulthood

Early Adulthood

Feeling in between



Age of possibilities



Instability



Early Adulthood with Serious Mental Health Challenges

Feeling too young in an adult mental health system

Limited possibilities (perceived or real)

Acute, especially if exiting multiple child systems



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What is First Episode Psychosis?

- Complex medical condition where changes in the brain interfere in a person's experience in the world.
- Many brain regions react abnormally in schizophrenia.
- Imbalance in a neurotransmitter, dopamine, was once thought to be the primary cause of schizophrenia.
- New findings suggest that the impoverished signaling by glutamate better explains the wide range of symptoms in this disorder. ⁵



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Psychosis develops over time

Premorbid
Phase

- First non-specific indication
- Start of negative symptoms

Prodromal
Phase

- Start of condition

Psychotic
Symptoms

- Start of psychotic episode
- Start of positive symptoms

Initial
Treatment

Long-Term
Phase

- End of first episode

Source: (6) Molly K Larson, Elaine F Walker & Michael T Compton (2010) Early signs, diagnosis and therapeutics of the prodromal phase of schizophrenia and related psychotic disorders, *Expert Review of Neurotherapeutics*, 10:8, 1347-1359, DOI: [10.1586/ern.10.93](https://doi.org/10.1586/ern.10.93)

Early Signs of Psychosis

- Others (especially family) notice an individual thinking and acting differently⁶
- Isolation and social withdrawal
- Loss of interest in peers⁶
- Declining self-care/hygiene⁶
- Disorganized thinking
- Feeling suspicious
- Preoccupations/paranoid thinking⁶
- Lack of motivation⁴ and lacking energy
- Complaints about sleep; changes in appetite difficulties with memory and concentration⁶
- Feeling anxious or irritable
- Feeling down or depressed



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Key Symptoms of Psychosis

- **Hallucinations:** hearing or seeing things that are not there
- **Delusions:** false or bizarre beliefs that make sense to the individual; including marked irrational suspicions of others
- **Confused thinking:** disorganized thoughts or speech; difficulty concentrating or understanding others
- **Paired with substantial life disruption**



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Negative and Positive Symptoms

Negative Symptoms

- Inexpressive faces
- Little display of emotion
- Few gestures
- Hard time thinking and coming up with ideas
- Lower level of motivation or drive
- Lack of interest in other people

Positive Symptoms

(they add symptoms/behaviors)

- Hallucinations
- Delusions
- Visual hallucinations
- Disorganized thought and speech
- Agitation



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Treatment Options for Recovery from Psychosis



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What Type of Treatment is Effective for Psychosis?

- Psychosis is a treatable symptom
- Treatment is most effective when it occurs immediately
- There are multiple interventions that can help treat psychosis



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Effective Treatment Modalities (1 of 2)

- Individual or group psychotherapy
 - ▶ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Antipsychotic medications
- Case management
- Family support and education
- Supported employment and education



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Effective Treatment Modalities (2 of 2)

Research indicates that the most effective treatment for first episode psychosis is the **Coordinated Specialty Care** model.⁷



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Coordinated Specialty Care

- The Coordinated Specialty Care model incorporates all of the previously listed treatment elements:
 - ▶ Therapy
 - ▶ Medication
 - ▶ Case management
 - ▶ Family support
 - ▶ Supported education and employment
- Services are provided in an outpatient setting using a team-based approach.



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Coordinated Specialty Care: Model (1 of 2)



Coordinated Specialty Care: Model (2 of 2)

- Shared decision making
- The team's required roles:
 - ▶ Team Lead – Licensed Professional of the Healing Arts
 - ▶ Certified Peer Specialist
 - ▶ Supported Employment/Education Specialist
 - ▶ Psychiatrist (prescriber)
 - ▶ Psychotherapist - Licensed Professional of the Healing Arts
 - ▶ Rehabilitation Clinician (skills trainer)



Coordinated Specialty Care: Outcomes

- Fewer crisis service contacts
- Fewer inpatient psychiatric services
- Increased engagement in supported employment



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Coordinated Specialty Care: Length of Program

This is a time-limited program with a maximum length of stay of **three years**.

At that time, it is anticipated that individuals will be discharged out of services or transitioned to the most appropriate level of care.



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Coordinated Specialty Care: Eligibility

- Available to individuals between 15-30 years at time of enrollment
- Must have a diagnosis given within the past two years that contains a component of psychosis



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Coordinated Specialty Care: Referral Process

- Individuals can be identified through a self-report, a Uniform Assessment, or from medical or therapeutic providers
- Once identified, referrals go to the local mental health authority or local behavioral health authority



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How to connect an eligible person with a Coordinated Specialty Care program in Texas.

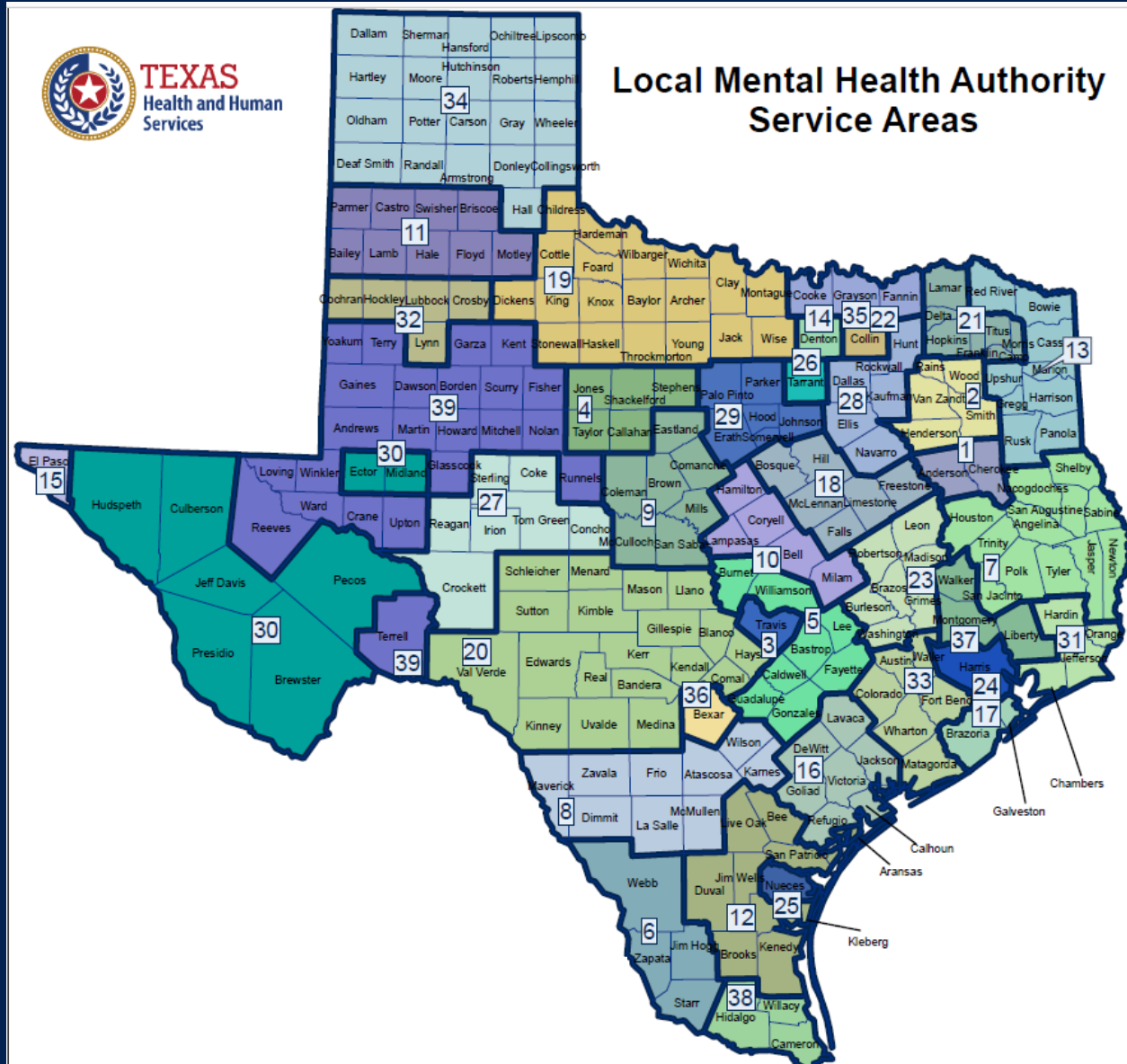


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Identifying local mental health or behavioral health authorities



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Coordinated Specialty Care Sites in Texas

- Andrews Center
- Bluebonnet Trails Community Services
- Border Region Behavioral Health
- Burke Center
- Center for Healthcare Services
- Central Counties Center
- Community HealthCore
- Coastal Plains Community MHC
- Denton County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Center
- Emergence Healthcare
- Harris Center
- Integral Care
- LifePath Systems
- Metrocare Services
- My Health My Resource of Tarrant County
- Pecan Valley Centers
- Spindletop Center
- StarCare
- Texana Center
- Texas Panhandle Center
- Texoma Center
- Tri-County Services
- Tropical Texas Behavioral Health
- West Texas Center



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Thank you

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