

Early Psychosis Intervention for Post-secondary Settings

Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI) programs, give early, intense assessment and treatment. Research shows that EPI programs have good results. Youth who have received help stay in school longer, need less medication, have fewer hospital stays, less problem drug and alcohol use, and better social relationships.

WHAT IS PSYCHOSIS?

- A symptom, not a diagnosis
- Affects 3/100 people
- Most common in young adults



LOOK BEYOND THE SURFACE

If any of these are interfering or blocking what you want to do, contact your family physician or your local Early Psychosis Intervention program.

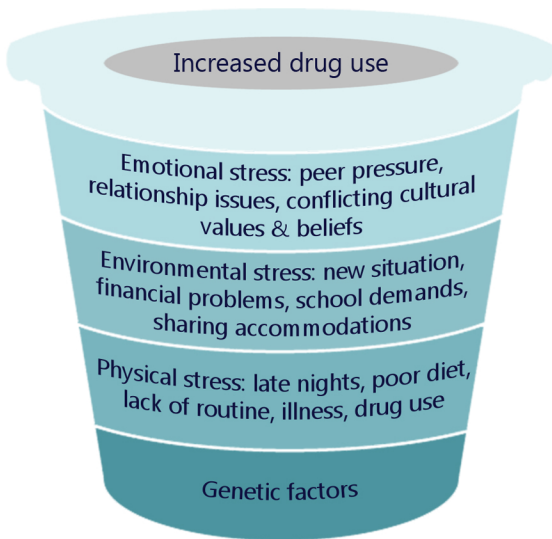
POSITIVE SYMPTOMS: Something ADDED.	NEGATIVE SYMPTOMS: Something MISSING.	COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS: Something CHANGED.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hallucinations • Delusions (false beliefs) • Disorganized thoughts and speech) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apathy • Reduced socializing • Restricted facial expression • Change in rate of speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with attention, concentration, memory, planning and organization

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STRESS-VULNERABILITY MODEL

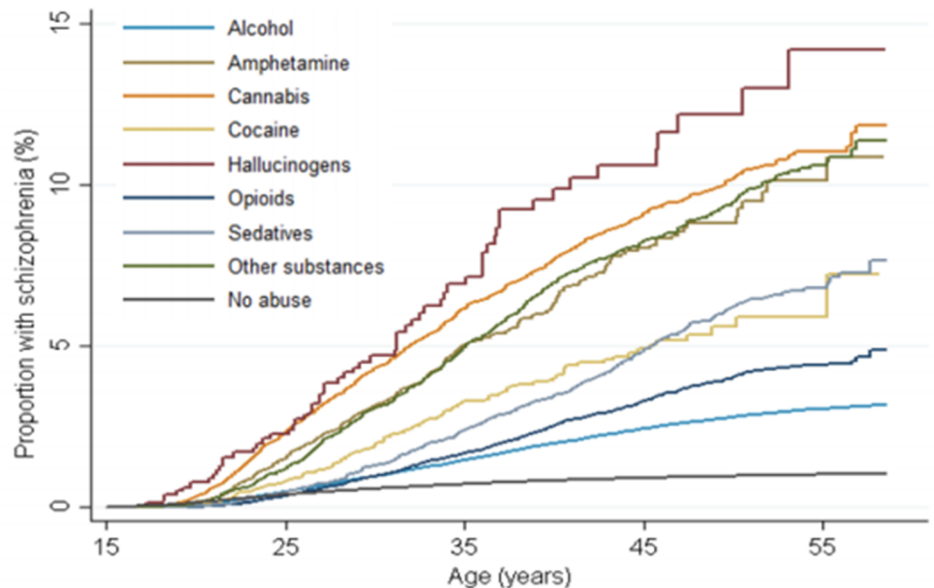
The “bucket” of stress-vulnerability (Brabben & Turkington, 2002) is the idea that stress rises like the water level in a bucket. Sometimes an issue might arise, so the bucket fills, leading to self-medication - drinking and not sleeping enough - so the bucket fills again and physical signs of stress appear. Then more self-medication occurs to deal with the additional stressors. Suddenly, the bucket is full and it becomes very difficult to manage the physical and mental symptoms. This is when psychosis is more likely to occur.



CANNABIS AND PSYCHOSIS IN YOUTH

Quick facts:

- Cannabis use in adolescence doubles the risk of developing psychosis later in life
- Use of cannabis is linked to an increased risk of symptom relapse
- Canada has the highest rate of teen cannabis use in the developed world
- Canadian youth are 2x more likely to use than adults
- The brains of 18-25 year olds who smoke pot at least once a week show structural changes
- Teens who smoke pot daily are 60% less likely to finish high school or university



Risk of Schizophrenia for Substance Use

*Psychosis is a common symptom in people affected by schizophrenia
 Nielsen, Toftdahl, Nordentoft & Hjorthøj (2017)

HOW PSYCHOSIS MAY IMPACT A STUDENT

- Discomfort around people
- Difficulty concentrating in class
- Difficulty with reading comprehension
- Falls behind – affects self esteem
- Low mood and lack of facial expression
- Avoids events in dorm and on campus
- Decreased hygiene
- Lack of interest in many activities
- Spending more time in room alone
- Difficulty with sleep – affects concentration
- May initially present with depression or anxiety
- If not living on campus, increased isolation

SUPPORTING THE STUDENT'S RETURN TO CAMPUS

- Dispel myths and stigma – can be hard to return to school
- Remember that psychosis is a brain disorder and a medical condition
- Medications are a foundation of treatment, but may have side effects
- Allow for difficulties in concentration and thinking
- Provide academic accommodations as required
- Support reintegration; campus life, back to classes, residence
- Connect with the student's EPI service providers (with consent)
- Maintain a positive, encouraging stance with students

HOW ELSE TO HELP

- Take family, friends, residence don, and faculty concerns seriously
- If student (and/or family etc) is help-seeking:
 - Check out local EPI service provider
 - Connect with general practitioner
 - Check out Kids Help phone, Good2Talk and local Distress Centre/Crisis Lines
- If student is not help-seeking:
 - Keep the door open
 - Check-in periodically with student
 - Determine student's present needs
 - Provide resources to families
- If a threat to self or others, follow emergency protocol as per your institutional policy

WATCH THE WEBINAR!

To learn more about early psychosis intervention, be sure to read the webinar slides at <http://campusmentalhealth.ca/webinar/early-psychosis-intervention-postsecondary-settings/>

Credits for this collaborative webinar and content go to our speakers: Brian Cooper, Community of Interest Chair of EPION, Sarah Bromley, Co-Chair of EPION and Josette Morin, nurse educator with EPION.