

Oregon's Early Assessment and Support Alliance (EASA)

Transforming Systems and Lives through Early Psychosis Intervention

WHAT IS PSYCHOSIS?

Every teen and young adult is at risk of developing psychosis. Psychosis is far more common than insulin-dependent diabetes. It affects three in one hundred people, usually starting between ages 12 and 25. One in one hundred develop schizophrenia (ongoing psychosis), and almost as many develop psychosis associated with bipolar disorder.

Psychosis prevents people from knowing what is real and what is not real. People experiencing psychosis get the wrong messages from their brains. Symptoms include hallucinations, delusions, disordered speech, and impaired memory, attention, and ability to initiate action.

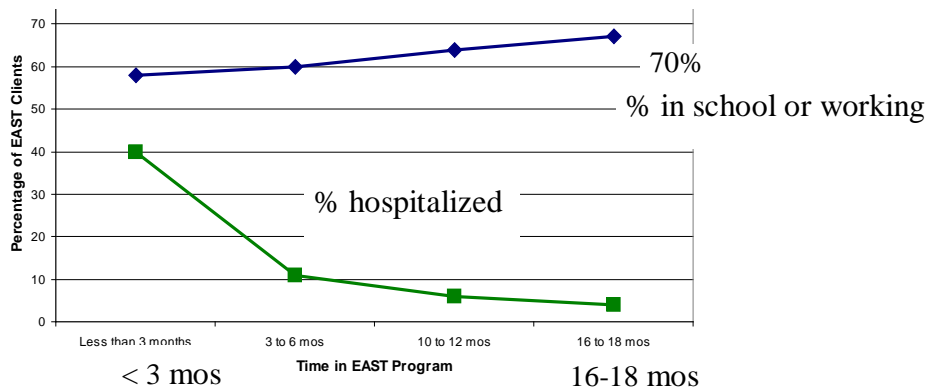
Early intervention is critical. Untreated, psychosis is a major threat to teens and young adults, their families and communities. Psychosis can lead to homelessness, accidental death or suicide, injury, legal involvement, isolation, poverty, and life-long unemployment and reliance on the federal disability system. Schizophrenia and bipolar disorder cost the U.S. billions of dollars and millions of productive lives each year, yet effective early treatment is not generally available.

With the right support, most people with psychosis can complete an education, have careers and families, and participate fully in the community. Treatment for psychosis is highly effective.

For less than the cost of a typical hospitalization, EASA provides state-of-the-art services when young people first become ill. *EASA is the first state-level effort in the U.S. to embrace evidence-based early intervention for psychotic illness as a standard of practice.*

The 2007 Oregon Legislature funded EASA, a replication of Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network's Early Assessment and Support Team (EAST) early psychosis intervention program. Early psychosis programs are now available in 18 counties, to 72% of Oregon's population. Planning and implementation efforts are underway to achieve 100% by 2013.

Hospitalization, School and Work by Time in the EAST Program (2002-2008)
Hospitalizations, School and Work by Time in EASA



What EASA Does: EASA follows evidence-based practice guidelines combining the work of the Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Center in Australia, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, and the Family-Assisted Community Treatment model developed by the Portland Identification and Early Referral (PIER) Program in Portland, Maine. Core elements include:

- System-level commitments and redesign as necessary
- Community education and rapid, flexible outreach
- Intensive multi-disciplinary treatment which includes medical, mental health, occupational therapy and vocational support
- Multi-family education and groups
- Support for independent living, school, work, and other goals

Outcomes: EASA is showing tremendous benefits financially and in human lives. Community-based programs have been smoothly and rapidly established. EASA currently works with 400 young people and their families. Results include reduced hospitalizations and other negative consequences, maintained family and social support, and successful progression in school, work and transition into adulthood.

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