

What is the Early Assessment and Support Alliance (EASA)?

EASA is a statewide network of programs which identify youth with symptoms of psychosis as early as possible, and provide support and treatment based on current research.

Who does EASA serve?



EASA helps identify and support young people whose symptoms are consistent with the onset of a psychotic illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder with psychosis. EASA also helps clarify diagnosis and appropriate treatment, and supports referents in linking to appropriate care.

Acute symptoms of psychosis include hallucinations (seeing and hearing things others don't); delusions (bizarre, out-of-character, fixed beliefs); and disturbances to speech, emotional expression, and movement. Onset of these symptoms usually occurs gradually.

Without early identification young people with psychosis are at great risk of school drop-out, loss of social support and ability to function, long-term trauma, legal involvement, disability and poverty.

WITH early intervention and appropriate support, most of these consequences can be prevented, and most will graduate from school, enter the workforce, and live a full and successful life.

Who should I refer?

Refer anyone who you believe may be experiencing the early signs of psychosis. If a person is having ***new, significant and worsening difficulties in several*** of the following areas, call for a consultation:

1. Reduced performance

- Trouble reading or understanding complex sentences
- Trouble speaking or understanding what others are saying
- Becoming easily confused or lost
- Trouble in sports or other activities that used to be easy (Example: can't dribble basketball or pass to team members)
- Attendance problems related to sleep or fearfulness

2. Behavior changes

- Extreme fear for no apparent reason
- Uncharacteristic actions or statements that make no sense
- Impulsive and reckless behavior (giving away all belongings, etc.)
- New, bizarre beliefs
- Incoherent or bizarre writing
- Extreme social withdrawal
- Decline in appearance and hygiene
- Dramatic changes in sleep (sleeping almost not at all or all the time)
- Dramatic changes in eating behavior

3. Perceptual changes

- Fear that others are trying to hurt them
- Heightened sensitivity to sights, sounds, smells or touch
- Making statements like "my brain is playing tricks on me"
- Hearing voices or other sounds that others don't
- Reporting visual changes (colors more intense, faces distorted, lines turned wavy)
- Racing thoughts
- Feeling like someone else is putting thoughts into their brain or that others are reading their thoughts

Other referral guidelines include:

- Age 12-25 (12-27 in Deschutes, Crook & Jefferson Counties)
- Lives in local region
- No more than 12 months since diagnosed with a major psychotic disorder, if applicable
- Symptoms not known to be caused by a medical condition or drug use

What should I do if someone is experiencing these changes?

Call EASA for a consultation. Anyone can refer to EASA, or can call for an anonymous consultation. EASA can come meet with the family at school, home, or any other location.

Don't wait!!

What does EASA offer?

EASA services are based on current research. They are available without regard to ability to pay.

Services include:

- Training and consultation for organizations and individuals
- Outreach, specialized assessment, and linkages to appropriate care
- Coaching to understand changes and help the young person succeed in school and elsewhere
- For youth with ongoing symptoms not best treated elsewhere, an intensive two-year transitional program from a local team including medical professionals, counselors, occupational therapists, and school/work specialists
- Family groups and peer support opportunities where people come together to learn relevant information and skills and to support each other

EASA is changing the way services are delivered.

EASA is about continually improving the way Oregon responds to early symptoms of psychosis. The EASA Center for Excellence and its partners work at local, state and national levels to learn from emerging research and the experiences of EASA participants.

You can always find up-to-date contact info and more at

www.easacommunity.org
easa@ohsu.edu



Early Assessment and Support Alliance



Investing in the Success of Teens and Young Adults Who Confront Psychosis

Information for Referents



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