



Fall Issue 2025

Family and Friends Connect

A newsletter from EASA's Family & Friends Leadership Council
TALKING TO YOUR EASA MEDICAL PROVIDER



Join our group!

Family & Friends Leadership Council is a group of EASA family members and friends. We get together to support each other and to work on projects to improve EASA. Virtual meetings happen on the **4th Thursday of most months, from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM.** Contact Karma at clarkejung@ohsu.edu if you would like to be sent the zoom link for the meeting.

EASA C4E



**OPEN
PHONE
LINE**

Do You Want to talk to another parent who has been there? Open Phone Line:

5-6pm Tuesdays and 9-10am Fridays or email Karma at

clarkejung@ohsu.edu to set up a time that works.

NOTE: There is a pause in Call-In hours from 8/20 - 9/21/25

Getting into EASA means your loved one will very quickly have access to a medical provider who knows about psychosis. Initial medical appointments can be challenging in many different ways, and this newsletter aims to support you through the process.

While during crisis situations and hospitalizations medication dosages are often high, EASA's philosophy around medication can best be summed up as, '**Start Low and Go Slow**'. Taking medication is not required to receive treatment through EASA. The team will provide information to help the young person make an informed decisions about their care and will be respectful of their values and preferences. When a young person seems unaware of their own illness, this can be a challenge for families. More on this in a future issue!

FAQs from families

Is medication going to be necessary to help my loved one?

Most people who experience ongoing psychosis need to take medication for some time to manage the symptoms. The medical provider will try to find a dose low enough to avoid significant side effects and high enough to affect the

HAVE A QUESTION FOR THE FAMILY & FRIENDS?

Contact Us (see blue box on left)!



"Since starting medication my son has stopped getting worse, and I'm grateful. But how much sleep is too much? That's all he seems to do now!"



symptoms. The goal is to help the young person obtain stable mental health so that they can focus on their future dreams without their symptoms getting in the way.

How do I find the right medication? What if it doesn't work at first?

Expect it to take awhile to find the right fit. Some people find the right medication and dosage on the first try, but on average, it takes 6 changes to find just the right fit (in either dosage or medication). The EASA team will support your loved one to carefully find out what medication and how much is best for them. While many caregivers find this to be one of the most challenging periods in managing the illness, in hindsight, many also report it marking the beginning of a return to normalcy for their family.

How long will it take for medication to work?

Meds take varying amounts of time to work: Ask your EASA medical provider about this. It is important to continue the medicine long enough to determine whether it is effective.

What about side effects?

Most medications cause some side effects, and antipsychotic medications are no exception. However, something can be done about many side effects, so tell your doctor what is happening. Side effects can usually be reduced or eliminated by changes to dosage; timing; sleep; nutrition; or exercise.

Is what my loved one is experiencing a side effect or a symptom?

This can be tricky to figure out. Ask the medical provider and talk to your team.

Can I change the dosage myself?

This is NOT recommended because it could lead to a variety of problems, such as withdrawal symptoms, a mental health crisis, issues with other medications, and more. Your loved one and their EASA medical provider are in this together! They need to be rowing in the same direction to get to where they want to go.



The medical provider knows how the medication works. Your loved one knows what feels OK in their body. Help your loved one to use **Power Statements*** (see below) to tell their provider what their priorities and goals are!

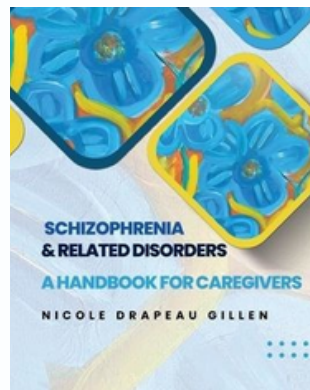
What else do I need to know?

Some medications need to be taken with enough food or water. How much they help will vary based on: How consistently they are being taken, individual body chemistry and use of drugs or alcohol. Most psychiatric medications intensify the effects of alcohol (1 beer can have the effect of 3 to 5 beers for someone who takes medication). Cannabis & related products interfere with how your body responds to medication. New research shows that for some people, cannabis can trigger long-lasting psychotic episodes. Regular cannabis use has also been shown to interfere with deep and restorative sleep, which can worsen psychotic symptoms.

EXAMPLE POWER STATEMENT

"I want to work with you to find medication that will help me (i.e. sleep better and be able to concentrate) so I can (i.e. make it to class on time and graduate high school)."

***Dr. Pat Deegan talks about these.**



Parent Picks

Be skeptical of random internet information on medication. Not every site is reliable. Here are some sites we've found helpful: The book pictured here was written by Nicole Drapeau Gillen, a parent whose daughter experienced psychosis. It is packed with practical information, including about medications.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) has great information in general. They also offer support groups around Oregon. Go to [nami.org](https://www.nami.org) to see if there is one near you. This particular NAMI site is all about medication <https://www.nami.org/about-mental-illness/treatments/mental-health-medications/>, including the different types, how they work, common side effects and brand specific information.

