

# **Mental Illness and Psychotropic Medications: What you need to know**



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# Overview

## Specific Mental Health Disorders:

- Major Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Anxiety Disorders
- Phobias
- Obsessive/Compulsive Disorder
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

# Objectives

- Identify the common diagnoses for which psychotropic medications may be prescribed.
- Define psychotropic medications, and identify the classes of psychotropic medications.
- Recognize side effects of medications and other modalities that can assist treatment.

# What is Mental Illness??

- ▶ A mental illness is a medical condition of the brain that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and their daily functioning. Signs and symptoms vary depending on the disorder and other individual factors.
- ▶ Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis.
- ▶ Mental illnesses effects persons of any age, including children. And happen to people of all ethnicities, income and stage of life.

# What is Mental Illness, cont.

- ▶ Just like diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are a disorders of the brain.
- ▶ One in four adults – approximately 60 million Americans – experience a mental illness in a given year.
- ▶ One in seventeen adults lives with a serious mental illness such is schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

# Signs and Symptoms

- ▶ Feeling sad or down
- ▶ Confused thinking
- ▶ Not being able to concentrate
- ▶ Excessive fears or worries
- ▶ Extreme feelings of guilt
- ▶ Extreme mood highs and lows
- ▶ Withdrawal from family, friends
- ▶ Insomnia, or sleeping too much
- ▶ Having delusions
- ▶ Feeling paranoid
- ▶ Changes in sleep habits
- ▶ Sex drive changes
- ▶ Excessive anger, violence
- ▶ Hallucinations
- ▶ Inability to cope with stress
- ▶ Problems with drug use
- ▶ Changes in eating habits
- ▶ Delusions
- ▶ Suicidal thinking

# Children with mental health disorders

It is estimated that 1 in 5 children in the U.S. will be diagnosed with a mental health disorder.

Between 1995 and 2010 the use of psychotropic medications for treatment of mental health disorders in children has doubled in frequency.

Psychotropic polypharmacy (use of more than one medication at a time) has also increased substantially between 1996 and 2007.

*\*Merikangas et al., JAACAP 2010; Olfson et al, JAMA Psychiatry 2014; Comer et al., JAACAP, 2010.*

# Kentucky

- ❖ Benchmark Average Medicaid Children With Psychotropic Rx = 7%
- **Ky. Medicaid Children With Psychotropic Rx**  
→ 14%
- ❖ Benchmark Average Foster Children with Psychotropic Rx = 26%
- **Ky. Foster Children with Psychotropic Rx**  
→ 42%

Source–Kentucky Medicaid Report

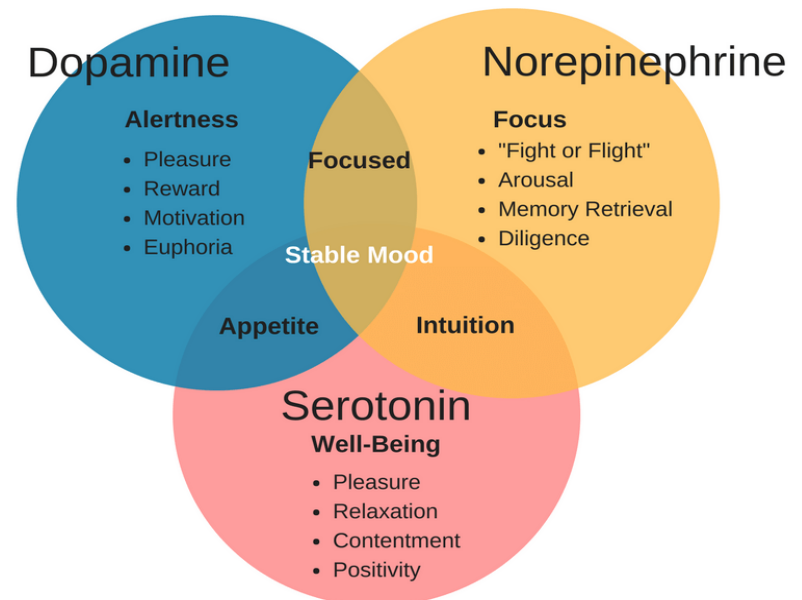
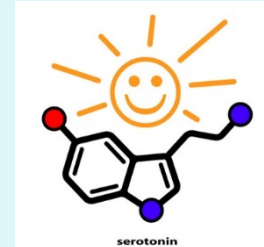
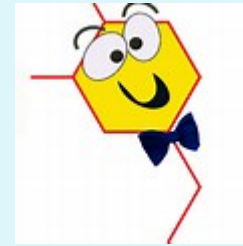


# What are psychotropic medications?

- ▶ Psychotropic medications treat the symptoms of the illness to assist the person to function.
- ▶ They **cannot** cure the disease. Some people need medication for only a short time, and other people may be on medication(s) for a long time and even for the rest of their lives.
- ▶ Some people get side effects from these medications and others don't.

# How do they work?

Psychotropic medications target the brain. They work by changing or balancing the amount of important chemicals in the brain called neurotransmitters.



# Factors that effect how meds work

- ▶ Age, Sex, body type
- ▶ Physical illnesses
- ▶ Habits like smoking or drinking
- ▶ Liver and Kidney function
- ▶ Genetics
- ▶ Other medications or herbal/vitamin supplements
- ▶ Diet
- ▶ Whether or not medications are taken as ordered:
- ▶ Right drug right dose right route.

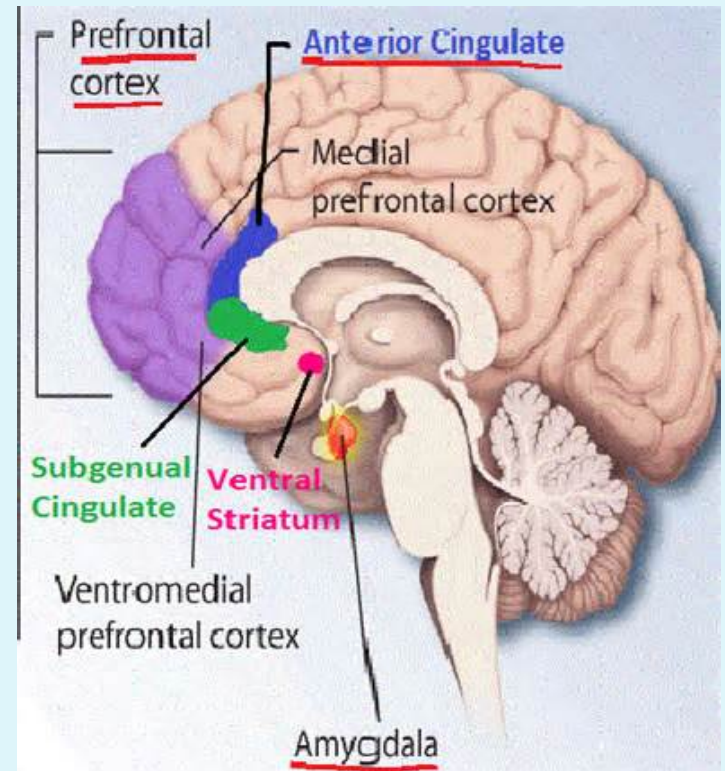
# Classes of psychiatric medications

- anti-anxiety agents
- anti psychotics
- antidepressants
- mood stabilizers
- stimulants
- sleep agents



# Common Mental Illnesses

- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Post-partum Depression
- ▶ Bi-polar
- ▶ Schizophrenia
- ▶ Anxiety disorders
- ▶ Attention Deficit Disorder



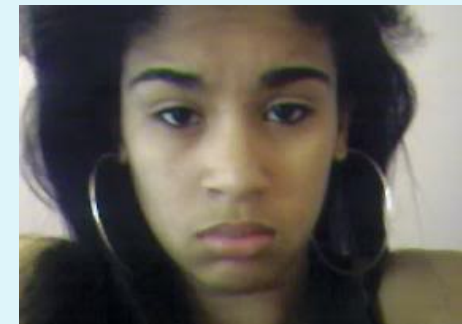
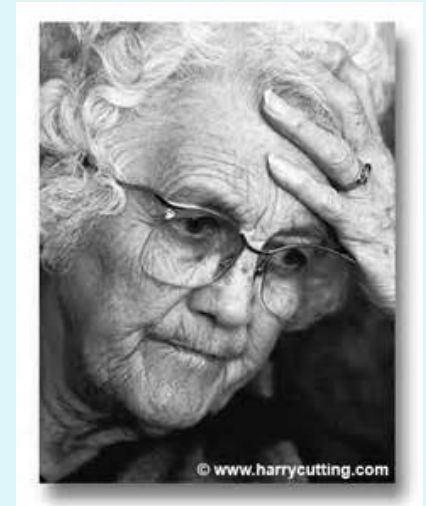
**They are all brain diseases!**

# Depression

- ▶ A serious emotional and biological disease that affects one's thoughts, feelings, behavior, mood and physical health.
- ▶ A life-long condition with periods of recurrences.
- ▶ May require long-term treatment.
- ▶ An estimated 25 million American adults are affected by major depression in a given year, only half ever receive treatment.

# Depression - Symptoms

- ▶ Change in sleep patterns
- ▶ Change in appetite
- ▶ Poor concentration
- ▶ Loss of energy
- ▶ Loss of interest
- ▶ Low self esteem
- ▶ Hopelessness or guilt
- ▶ Impaired concentration
- ▶ Thoughts of suicide or death
- ▶ Stomach aches school failure, sadness , boredom,
- ▶ Reckless behavior, substance abuse, running away
- ▶ Are often seen in children and adolescents.



# Lots of things can cause depression!

- ▶ **Common Medical Disorders** - Anemia, asthma, chronic pain, diabetes, malnutrition, etc.
- ▶ **Drugs** – Antihypertensive, hormones, birth control pills, alcohol and other drug use/abuse
- ▶ **TRAUMA!!** Losing a loved one, being hurt in an accident, being abused, bullied or neglected.

**\*\*A thorough exam must be done by a mental health clinician to make a diagnosis of depression.\*\***

**\*\*When at all possible children should be diagnosed by a pediatric psychiatrist.\*\***



# Treatment of Depression

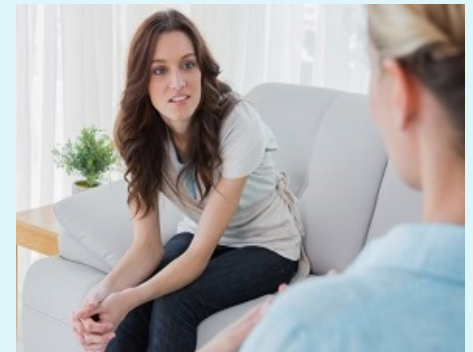
Talk therapy - Cognitive behavioral therapy

Medication - Antidepressants

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS)

**Most people respond well to a combination of talk therapy and pharmacotherapy.**



# Medications used for Depression

- ▶ **Antidepressants** work to balance some of the chemicals in our brains like **serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine**.
- ▶ These chemicals affect our mood and emotional responses.
- ▶ The most popular antidepressants are called **Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs)**. Examples: Prozac, Celexa, Zoloft, Paxil, Lexapro. These medications can be prescribed for children as well as adults.
- ▶ **Serotonin and Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors (SNRIs)** are also popular and are not generally used with children who suffer from depression. Examples: Effexor and Cymbalta.

**With Children think about talk or play therapy for treatment of depression before starting medication.**

**Psychotherapy for kids with mild to moderate depression is very effective!**



# Monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs)

MAOIs are medications that are also used to treat and help relieve the symptoms of depression. Examples: Marplan, Nardil, Parnate and Emsam. These drugs interact with certain foods containing tyramine and can cause a hypertensive crisis and even death.

**These medications are seldom used in children.**



# Antidepressant medication side effects

- ▶ SNRIs and SSRIs: Headache, nausea, Sleeplessness, drowsiness, feeling numb, agitation, decreased sexual drive, apathy and weight gain.  
Most of these side effects are short lived.
- ▶ MAOIs: Dry mouth, constipation, bladder problems and sexual problems, blurred vision, and drowsiness.  
Mixing MAOIs with Tyramine can cause sharp increase in BP and may lead to a stroke!

# Cautions when taking antidepressants

- ▶ Antidepressants should be taken as prescribed-right drug, right dose and right time.
- ▶ Sometimes it takes three or four weeks for the patient to notice feeling better. Each person is different, some will take the medication for a brief period of time and others will stay on the medication.
- ▶ People should **not** stop taking antidepressants without discussing it with their doctor. People do not become addicted to this medication but there is a withdrawal when it is stopped.
- ▶ People taking an antidepressant need to monitor their alcohol use  
Alcohol is a depressant!

# Suicide – Risk and Protective Factors

## □ Major risk factors for suicide include:

- Prior suicide attempt(s)
- Mood disorders
- Family History of suicide
- Substance abuse
- Physical pain
- Access to lethal means

## □ Major protective factors include:

- Effective mental health care
- Connectedness - People and pets
- Problem-solving skills
- Religious/spiritual factors

**“Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem”  
Phil Donahue**

# Suicide Warning Signs

- ▶ Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- ▶ Looking for a way to kill oneself, such as searching online or obtaining a gun
- ▶ Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- ▶ Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- ▶ Talking about being a burden to others
- ▶ Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- ▶ Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- ▶ Sleeping too little or too much
- ▶ Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- ▶ Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- ▶ Displaying extreme mood swings

# Children and Suicide

- ▶ 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in in 5-11 year olds.
- ▶ 2nd leading cause of death in 12 – 24 year olds.
- ▶ Depression doesn't seem to be a big factor, bullying, social media and relationship problems are prominent.
- ▶ Family issues such as domestic violence, parental loss through divorce, incarceration, or DCBS involvement are pivotal for children.

**Don't ignore signs! TALK about it!**

- ▶ One out of 15 teenagers admit to at least one suicide attempt.



# Post-partum Depression

- ▶ A severe form of depression that occurs after the delivery of a child.
- ▶ Not just the “baby blues.”
- ▶ Can lead to psychotic and delusional thinking
- ▶ Can increase risk of harm to the infant
- ▶ Is often confusing for family members
- ▶ May require in-patient treatment
- ▶ Tends to recur with subsequent pregnancies.
- ▶ Risk for suicide is significant



# Bipolar Disorder

A persistent illness with recurring episodes of mania and depression that can last from one day to months.

More than ten million American's suffer from Bipolar Disorder and it is often hard to diagnose. More than half of the cases begin between ages 15-25 and it effects men and women equally.



# Bipolar Symptoms

A manic episode can be identified by feelings of extreme irritability or euphoria. During an episode of mania other symptoms can occur such as agitation, surges of energy, spending sprees, reduced need for sleep, pleasure seeking, risky and socially inappropriate behavior and drug use.

The other state, depression, produces feelings of acute sadness, hopelessness, thoughts of suicide and lack of energy. Between episodes there is a return to usual behavior and mood.



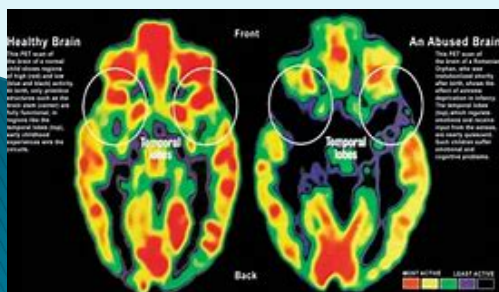
# Bipolar Treatment

Psychotherapy – learning how to cope and changing ineffective ways of thinking. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is often used.

Education about the disease, self-care and the use of family and friend support is also important.

Children can have Bipolar disorder and it can be hard to differentiate from ADHD.

They generally have strong family history of bipolar.



# Medications used for Bipolar

Mood Stabilizers are medications used to treat **symptoms** of mood disorders. They can also be used to treat irritability, aggression or self injurious behavior, particularly in children with developmental disabilities. Mood stabilizers include lithium, antiepileptic medications and antipsychotic medications.

Examples: lithium, Depakote, Lamictal, Risperdal.



# Side effects of Bipolar medications

Lithium - excessive thirst, muscle weakness, dry mouth, frequent urination, hand tremors, weight gain or loss, vision changes, itching, rash and restlessness

Many drugs can affect lithium (antidepressants, MAOI inhibitors, tramadol, buspirone, and others. Always check with the doctor before beginning a new medication.

People taking Lithium need to visit their doctor regularly to make sure the kidneys and thyroid are working properly and to check lithium levels in the blood.

Depakote and other mood stabilizers -weight changes, nausea, stomach pain, vomiting, anorexia and loss of appetite.

# Lithium Toxicity

Usually occurs because of an overdose.

Symptoms include diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pains, fatigue, tremors, uncontrollable movements, muscle weakness, drowsiness, and weakness.

Severe toxicity symptoms include seizures, agitation, slurred speech, kidney failure, rapid heartbeat, hyperthermia, uncontrollable eye movements, low blood pressure, confusion, coma, delirium, death.

Nutritional counseling is important for patients taking Lithium. Salt, caffeine and alcohol can made lithium levels rise or fall.

# Schizophrenia

- ▶ Schizophrenia is a serious mental illness that involves problems with brain chemistry and structure and is thought to be caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors.
- ▶ It interferes with a person's ability to think clearly, manage emotions, make decisions and relate to others. It is a long term, complex illness that affects each patient differently.
- ▶ 3.5 million people are living with this disorder in the U. S. today. Onset is in the teens and 20s. It is uncommon for it to be diagnosed before the age of 12 or after the age of 40.



# Schizophrenia - Symptoms

## Positive or “psychotic” symptoms

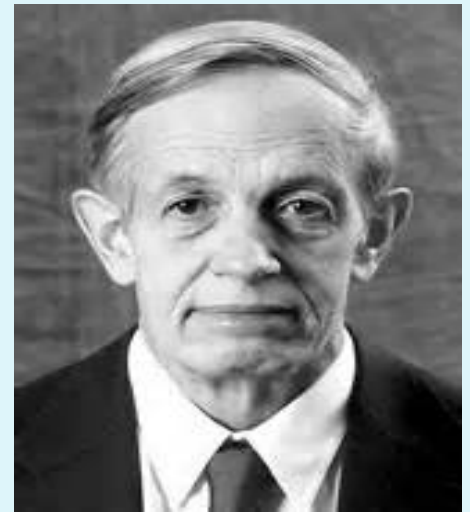
- ▶ Delusions
- ▶ Hallucinations
- ▶ Disorganized speech

## Negative symptoms refer to a reduction of capacity

- ▶ Emotional flatness
- ▶ Inability to start and follow through with activities
- ▶ Lack of pleasure or interest in life

## Cognitive Symptoms

- ▶ Trouble with memory and organizing thoughts
- ▶ and lack of insight



# Schizophrenia – Treatment

- ▶ Medication is important to manage symptoms.
- ▶ Therapy helps to develop coping strategies for persistent symptoms.
- ▶ Psychosocial rehabilitation helps to achieve life goals.
- ▶ Recovery is possible for most people if they are successful at managing their symptoms.



# Medications used in Schizophrenia and Psychosis

- ▶ Typical antipsychotics have been widely used since the 1950's and include Thorazine, and Haldol.
- ▶ Newer medications or “Atypical” include Clorazil, Zyprexa, Risperdal, Seroquel, Geodon, Abilify and Invega.
- ▶ Used for psychotic breaks and aggressive behavior when a patient is at risk for harming themselves or others.
- ▶ **Due to their side effects these drugs are used in children only when there are severe symptoms and other medications don't work.**



# What are the side effects?

- ▶ Drowsiness
- ▶ Blurred Vision
- ▶ Rapid heartbeat
- ▶ Dizziness
- ▶ Sensitivity to the sun
- ▶ Skin Rashes
- ▶ Menstrual problems
- ▶ Atypical psychotropic drugs can cause major weight gain, changes in metabolism and increase the person's risk for diabetes and high cholesterol.
- ▶ Tardive dyskinesia in long-term use.
- ▶ Patients should have routine visits with their doctor and have labs drawn for glucose, triglycerides and cholesterol levels.

# Psychosis

- ▶ Is a **symptom or condition, not a disease**. It effects the way your brain processes information and can cause you to lose touch with reality. You may experience hallucinations or delusions.
- ▶ **Drug use** and **many diseases** can cause psychosis:
- ▶ CNS infections or traumas
- ▶ Cushing's Disease
- ▶ Dementia
- ▶ Huntington's chorea
- ▶ Multiple Sclerosis
- ▶ Stroke
- ▶ Pancreatitis
- ▶ Pernicious Anemia .....



# Anxiety Disorders

- ❖ A group of mental illnesses that cause people to feel excessively frightened, distressed or uneasy. When not treated, anxiety disorders can affect all facets of the patient's life.
- ❖ It is the **most common** mental illnesses in this country - 42million people!
- ❖ 20% of the population have an anxiety disorder at any given time.
- ❖ It effects people of every age.
- ❖ Studies suggest a genetic link is possible.
- ❖ It can also be caused from a brain injury or
- ❖ other medical illness.



# Common Anxiety Disorders

- ▶ Panic Disorder
- ▶ Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- ▶ Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- ▶ Phobias
- ▶ Generalized Anxiety disorder (GAD)



# Panic Disorder



- ▶ Characterized by sudden feelings of terror that strike with no warning.
- ▶ Symptoms include – fast heart rate, chest pain, heart palpitations, upset stomach and fear. Often times children can't articulate what's happening and may end up in the ER with these symptoms.
- ▶ Some sufferers have recognizable “triggers”.
- ▶ Children may also have “anger attacks” when feeling trapped.
- ▶ Often treated with an antidepressant, a benzodiazepine and talk therapy.





# Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

- ▶ OCD is characterized by repetitive and intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and/or rituals that seem impossible to control (compulsions).
- ▶ Trichotillomania (hair pulling) and tics seen in children
- ▶ OCD ranges from a mild annoyance to a debilitating disease.
- ▶ Treated with talk therapy, CBT or Exposure therapy
- ▶ Medication- antidepressants (Prozac, Anafranil), anti anxiety meds.



# Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- ▶ An acute or chronic disorder that follows a traumatic life changing event – natural disaster, abuse, extreme violence, etc.
- ▶ Patients often suffer from nightmares, flashbacks, an exaggerated startle response. They have feelings of anger, numbness, fear, and/or irritability that can last for weeks, months, months or more after the event.
- ▶ It can be so severe that it makes it difficult for a person to return to “pre-event” normal.
- ▶ Treated with talk therapy, antianxiety medications, antidepressants, and/or antipsychotics if needed.



# Phobia



- ▶ Phobia is a disabling and irrational fear of something that actually poses little or no danger.
- ▶ A phobia can be crippling when it leads to avoidance of objects or situations that may cause extreme feelings of panic and terror.
- ▶ Agoraphobia is the fear of crowds and can prohibit people from leaving their home.
- ▶ Treated with aversion therapy and/or a beta-blocker (Inderal).

## THE NATION'S TOP TEN PHOBIAS

- 1 Arachnophobia – spiders
- 2 Social phobia – social or public situations
- 3 Aerophobia – flying
- 4 Agoraphobia – open or public spaces
- 5 Claustrophobia – enclosed spaces
- 6 Emetophobia – vomiting
- 7 Acrophobia (vertigo) – heights
- 8 Cancerphobia – developing cancer
- 9 Brontophobia – thunderstorms
- 10 Necrophobia – death (your own and others')



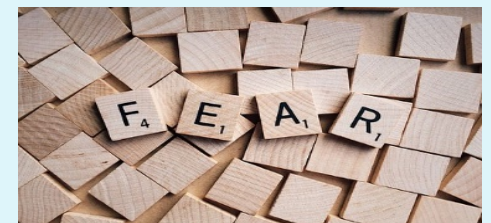
# Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) Symptoms- Adults

- ▶ Severe, chronic and exaggerated worrying about everyday events is the cornerstone of GAD.
- ▶ Other symptoms are:
  - ▶ Restlessness and fatigue, trouble sleeping.
  - ▶ Difficulty concentrating and mind going blank.
  - ▶ Irritability and muscle aches and tensions.
  - ▶ Trembling, easily startled, twitching.
  - ▶ Shortness of breath, rapid pulse.
  - ▶ Sweating, nausea and diarrhea.



# Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) Symptoms- children and teens

- ▶ Feel overanxious to fit in
- ▶ Be a perfectionist
- ▶ Lack confidence
- ▶ Redo tasks if they're not perfect
- ▶ Strive for approval
- ▶ Require a lot of reassurance about
- ▶ their performance in school, social
- ▶ Activities and sports.



# Anxiety Disorders - Treatment

- ▶ Medications – Benzodiazepines (anti-anxiety agents) such as Valium, Xanax, Ativan.
- ▶ SSRI anti-depressants like Lexapro, Celexa, Prozac or Zoloft.
- ▶ Beta Blockers (Inderal)
- ▶ Bupirone

Typically the treatment plan will call for talk therapy and medication.



# Benzodiazepine side effects

- ▶ Drowsiness, dizziness, nausea, dry mouth, constipation, weight gain, unsteadiness and confusion
- ▶ As with all medications, pregnant women must consult with their physician before using any medication

Benzodiazepines are addictive and can be drugs of abuse.

# Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

- ▶ Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a mental illness that is characterized by difficulties paying attention and staying on task. Hyperactivity is usually present.
- ▶ It is a condition that starts in childhood, generally before the age of twelve and often occurs with other mental illnesses, and learning disabilities.
- ▶ Many adults continue to live with ADHA.
- ▶ ADHD It is more common in males

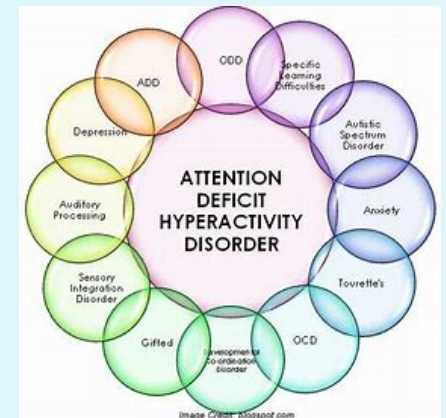


FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH ADHD  
(Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)



# ADHD Symptoms

- ▶ Difficulty staying on task
- ▶ Feeling restless, not being able to relax
- ▶ Problems with *disinhibition* ( butting into conversations, difficulty waiting their turn, blurting out answers to questions)
- ▶ Trouble maintaining a schedule (missing appointments, forgetting deadlines)



# ADHD Treatment

- ▶ ADHD is caused by chemicals in the brain that control alertness and attention (catecholamine's)
- ▶ There is no physical test for ADHD. The diagnosis comes from psychiatric assessment including academic record review, psychological testing and interview. This should be done by a pediatric psychiatrist when considering this diagnosis for a child.
- ▶ Stimulants such as Ritalin, Dexedrine, Concerta, and Adderall are commonly used medications. Non stimulant medications (Strattera, Effexor and Wellbutrin are also used. Blood pressure medication (Kavpay and Tenex may also be effective. Psychotherapy can be helpful in treating ADHD, cognitive behavioral therapy has shown to be the most effective.

# Side effects

- ▶ Decreased appetite, sleep problems, increased blood pressure, dizziness, headaches, stomach aches, moodiness, rebound and nervousness.

Stimulants are addictive and can be drugs of abuse.

- ▶ Non-stimulant medications ( Strattera, Intuniv, Terex, and Kapvay can also have side effects:
  - Nausea, decreased appetite, weight loss, fatigue, drowsiness and mood swings

# Indicators of Possible Mental Issues

- ▶ History of Psychiatric Hospitalizations
- ▶ History of Suicide attempts or self – cutting
- ▶ History of receiving SSI for mental health condition
- ▶ History of dramatic change in mood or cycles
- ▶ History of exposure to trauma
- ▶ History of head injury
- ▶ Estrangement from family
- ▶ History of homelessness
- ▶ History of substance misuse

# Medication Indicators of Possible Mental Issues

- ▶ **Medication history indicates evidence of treatment for a mental health condition**
  - Antidepressants (Lexapro, Celexa, Pristiq)
  - Antipsychotics (Haldol, Risperdal, Geodon)
  - Mood Stabilizers (Lithium, Depakote)
  - Anxiety Medications (Xanax, Valium, Klonopin)
  - Chronic Pain Medications (Lortab, OxyContin)



# Impairment Indicators

- ▶ Incoherent rambling speech with bizarre content
- ▶ Paranoia
- ▶ Agitation
- ▶ Withdrawal and immobility (Catatonia)
- ▶ Severe anxiety and panic
- ▶ Substance Intoxication, Abuse or Dependence
- ▶ \*Psychosis

These may represent risk to care givers!

# Remember!

- We must not discriminate against individuals with Mental Health Diagnosis just as we must not discriminate against those with other medical conditions.
- The presence of mental illness **does not** mean an individual cannot parent a child, just as having cancer does not mean a caregiver cannot parent.
- However, we must determine if it contributes to risk of harm to self or others.

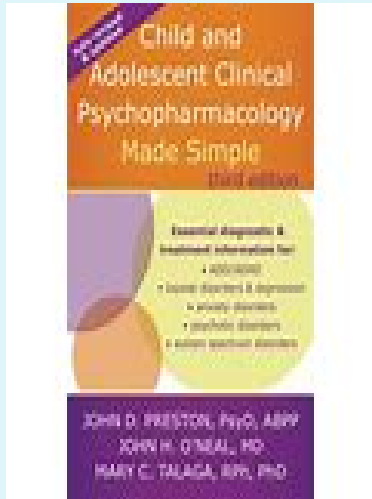
# Recovery Happens!

One of the most important principles is this: *recovery is a process, not an event*. The uniqueness and individual nature of recovery must be honored. While serious mental illness impacts individuals in many ways, the concept that all individuals can move towards wellness is paramount.

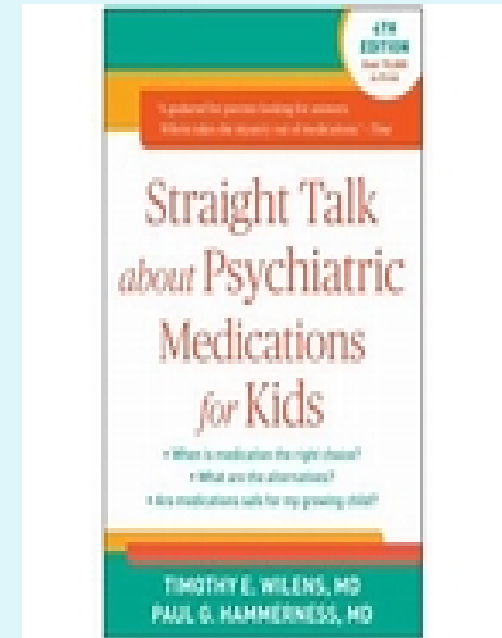
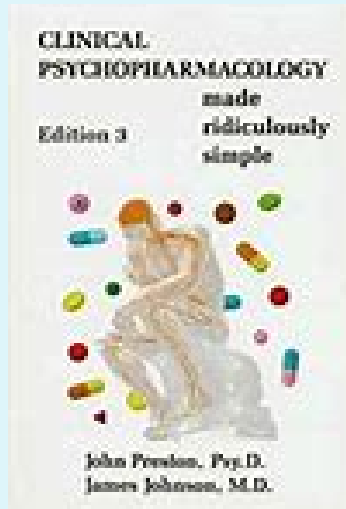
National Alliance on Mental Illness



# References



John D. Preston, Psy.D



Timothy Wiles

**Epocrates on line or app!**

**Google- National Institute of Mental Health  
Search- "Mental Health Medications"**