

## Far more common

## The Difference Early Intervention Makes

*than insulin-dependent diabetes...*

*... and just as treatable.*

1 in 100 people develop Schizophrenia, a neurochemical disorder affecting the brain's ability to perceive, process and express information. Onset of Schizophrenia is usually between age 18 to 25. These are critical years for:...

- Becoming independent,
- Completing an education and entering the workforce,
- Becoming a renter or homeowner;
- Becoming a spouse and sometimes a parent,
- Becoming an active citizen

*Untreated, Schizophrenia puts a stop to life as we know it:*

- The person loses touch with reality
- They often become unable to go to school, work, parent, or take care of themselves
- They are at great risk of poverty, suicide, accidental harm, legal involvement, and homelessness

**Without early intervention:** At age 18, John began to hallucinate and lose his ability to put thoughts together. His family tried to get help but were confused and encountered many barriers. He was hospitalized briefly but did not follow up with care. His illness grew worse.

Conflicting views of what to do contributed to his parents' divorce. He was kicked out of the home because of his behavior. Homeless, with no job or friends, his bizarre and threatening behavior on the street led to an arrest and involuntary hospitalization. Angry at his "captors", without living skills, and with little understanding of his illness, John spent the next 10 years fighting all attempts to provide treatment yet becoming more and more dependent on the public system.

Over several decades, John had more than a dozen hospitalizations and his care cost more than a million dollars in public funding. Today, John lives alone, unemployed and with little hope for the future. His case manager works to establish trust and rebuild the hope he lost so long ago.

**With early intervention:** At age 18, Scott began to develop hallucinations and delusions. His schoolwork slipped, his sleep changed and he withdrew socially. His parents and school counselor knew about psychosis because of the education they had received from EAST. They immediately contacted his doctor, who called EAST.

Through outreach, relationship-building, education, medical care, counseling and persistence, EAST staff helped Scott and his family understand his illness and learn to manage the symptoms. After a few months' delay, Scott returned to high school, graduated and got a job. After a year, he returned to college, pursuing a degree in health care. He worked with the college disability office to provide the accommodations he needed to succeed in classes.

In the years to come, Scott will certainly have times of struggle. He will need understanding from his family and employer. But he has a good support network, knowledge, and the skills to be successful. His is *the "new face" of Schizophrenia.*

## What is EAST?

EAST provides early intervention and transitional services for young people who have developed a schizophreniform psychosis within the last 12 months. Services are based on best practices from the Early Psychosis Prevention and Intervention Center (EPPIC, [www.eppic.org.au](http://www.eppic.org.au)) in Melbourne Australia, and integrate federally recognized evidence-based best practices for Schizophrenia.

## Why is it Important?

EAST the only early intervention program for Schizophrenia in Oregon, and is one of a small handful of programs in the United States. In the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada, early intervention for psychosis has become a standard of practice. In the United States, the discussion has just begun.

Growing research demonstrates that by providing the right supports and services without long delays, young people with Schizophrenia are able to succeed in their roles within the family, school, workplace and community. Long delays and ineffective treatment remain common in the United States, and the consequences can last a lifetime.

## Early treatment for Schizophrenia results in:

- Quicker and more successful stabilization of medical symptoms
- An opportunity to educate the young person, family, and others about this manageable medical condition
- Reduced use of involuntary hospitalizations
- The ability to continue in school and work
- The ability to return to social roles
- A greatly reduced burden on families and local communities
- The benefit of a productive, talented citizen!!

*"Because I got help early I was able to start my own business, and now I'm back at school getting my degree. When I was hallucinating and paranoid, I thought other people were going to hurt me and that I needed to protect myself. Now I know how to identify and manage my own symptoms, and I have a good relationship with my doctor. I can't imagine what my life would have been like if the help wasn't there when I needed it."*

*-Graduate of EAST program*

## 1 in 100 Oregonians Will Develop Schizophrenia



## Which Future Do We Choose for Them?



## Early Assessment and Support Team (EAST)

An Initiative of Mid-Valley Behavioral Care Network serving Linn, Marion, Polk, Yamhill and Tillamook Counties

[www.eastcommunity.org](http://www.eastcommunity.org)

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