



Connecticut Early Psychosis Learning Health Network



Caring for new onset psychosis during a pandemic

NAMI 2020 Convention – 10/23/20

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Introductions



Outline

- Background
 - Psychosis
 - STEP Program
 - Early Intervention
- COVID-19
 - Adjustments
 - Innovations
 - Challenges
- Connecticut Early Psychosis Learning Health Network
 - Mission
 - Current Offerings

What is psychosis?

- Difficulty with perceiving reality accurately and with coherent thinking “*What’s real? What’s not real?*”
 - Disturbances in perception (hallucinations)
 - Belief and interpretation of the environment (delusions)
 - Disorganized speech patterns (thought disorder)
- ~ 3 in 100 people will experience psychosis (>2.2 million people)
- Usually develops age 16-35 (earlier in men than women)
 - “Chronic diseases of the young” (Insel, 2005)
- Most common causes: psychiatric, medical, substance-induced

DREAM
REALITY



Why is treating psychosis important?

- **Individual and Family Impact:**
 - often leads to frequent hospitalization, and can derail functioning in school, career, and family
 - Risk of suicide (~1/100 FEP complete suicide, as many as 10% attempt suicide within the first 5 years)
 - Long-term cardiovascular and other physical health risks (shorter life expectancy)
 - Family / caregiving burden
- **Societal/Economic Impact:**
 - A top 10 leading cause of disability (*WHO*)
 - Justice system involvement
 - Homelessness (20% of have SMI) (*NAMI, Mental Health Ripple Effect*)
 - \$193.2 billion in lost earnings in US / year (*Kessler, et al., 2008*)
- ***Early identification and intervention can greatly minimize the disability and improve lives!***

Early Intervention

- Early Detection
 - Shortening the Duration of Untreated Psychosis (DUP)
 - Community education and outreach, rapid access to care
- Intensive Treatment in the first 2-5 years
 - Focus on reducing relapse and maximizing functioning
 - Interventions adapted from chronic SMI to younger patients
 - Goal of ‘phase-specific’ interventions

What is STEP?

Specialized Treatment Early in Psychosis (STEP) Program

- **What:** early detection and comprehensive early intervention treatment for young people and families impacted by early psychosis
- **Who:** young people within first 3 years of psychosis onset
- **Ages:** 16-35 years old
- Any insurance status
- **Where:** 10 towns surrounding New Haven



What services we offer

- Early Detection
- Comprehensive assessment
- Individual therapy (CBT, skills, wellness plans, working on co-occurring difficulties)
- Pharmacological treatment
- Employment and educational support
- Health and wellness monitoring and groups
- Family support and education
- Coordination with important people and community connections in your life!

COVID-19 Adjustments

- Pivoted (almost) exclusively to telehealth
 - Team working largely remotely
 - Seeing clients via video-conferencing platforms
- Innovation:
 - Increased accessibility for young people (and families!)
 - Provided those in need access to technology
 - Continuing outreach to hospitals, referral sources
 - Many have had more engagement, more frequent contact
 - Opportunities for virtual groups, events
 - Continued outreach and engagement with the inpatient units
- Challenges:
 - Accessibility...to technology
 - Those who are hard to engage, are still hard to engage

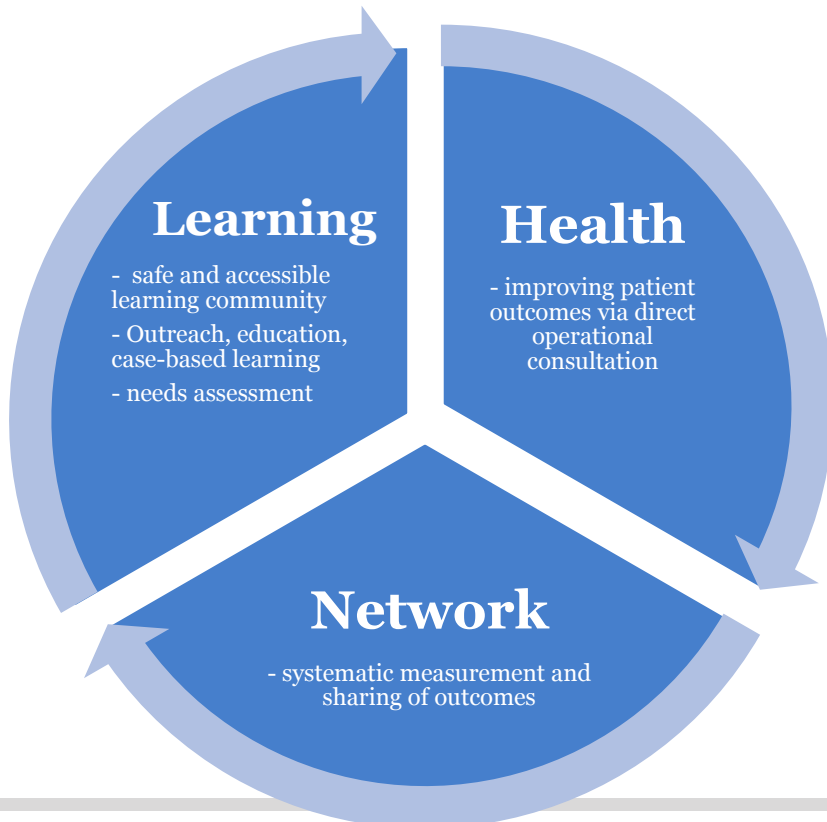
Does STEP care work?

- Yes, psychosis is TREATABLE, treatment works!
- STEP care
 - Reduced rates of re-hospitalization
 - Increased engagement in employment
 - Shortened DUP
- But we need to reach more people...



Connecticut Early Psychosis
Learning Health Network (CT EP-LHN)

Connecticut Early Psychosis Learning Health Network (CT EP-LHN)



- **About:** The Connecticut Early Psychosis Learning Health Network (CT EP-LHN) is a Connecticut-wide initiative dedicated to **improving outcomes for individuals and families impacted by recent onset psychosis.**
- **Our Mission:** The Connecticut Early Psychosis Learning Health Network's mission is to support **workforce development and community education** throughout the state of Connecticut to transform access, care quality, and outcomes for individuals and families impacted by recent onset psychosis.

[Register here](#)
[CT EP-LHN Website](#)

Current Offerings

- **Mental Health Providers:**

- ECHO Early Psychosis Case Discussions and brief didactics (2nd & 4th Thursday of the month)
- Webinars:
 - Nov 5th 11am - FEP Treatment Approaches

- **Community Education:**

- launching a new series of family and community workshops (coming Jan 2021)
- Online resources

What do you need? What do you want to see?

Questions, comments, suggestions?

Upcoming Events:

- Early Psychosis ECHO 2nd & 4th Thursday of the month (12-1pm)
 - 11/12 – Fostering Health and Wellness in FEP Care
 - 12/10 - topic TBD
- 11/5 at 11am - *FEP Treatment Approaches Webinar**

<https://medicine.yale.edu/psychiatry/step/research/network>

*Any questions or feedback, please email:
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