

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

The purpose of EASA is to identify youth with symptoms of psychosis as early as possible, and to provide the most effective support and treatment so they can be successful.

What is psychosis?



Psychosis is a common brain condition which, if untreated, prevents the person from being able to know what is real and what is not real. **3 in 100 individuals develop psychosis, usually between ages 15 and 25.**

Early symptoms are often subtle, but can be the most disabling. They affect young people's ability to complete schoolwork, interact socially and accomplish daily tasks. Common early symptoms include:

- Changes to the brain's working memory and organizational ability
- Reduced ability to filter out information
- Sensory sensitivity

Later symptoms of psychosis include:

- Hallucinations (seeing and hearing things others don't)
- Delusions (bizarre, out-of-character, fixed beliefs)
- Disturbances to speech, emotional expression, and movement

With early, effective treatment and support, most young people will succeed in school, work and life. DON'T WAIT!

Who should I refer?

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 15-25 (16 in Multnomah County; 12 in Linn, Marion, Polk, Tillamook and Yamhill)
- Lives in local region
- Acute symptoms lasting no longer than 12 months (6 months in Multnomah County)
- IQ over 70
- Not already receiving treatment for psychosis
- 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 the most current research. They are available without regard to ability to pay. Services include:

- Educational seminars, written materials, consultation and problem solving for schools, community members, and families
- Outreach and specialized assessment
- Coaching to understand changes and help the young person succeed in school and elsewhere
- Treatment and support from a team including a doctor, nurse, mental health professionals, occupational therapist, and school/work specialist
- Family groups where families learn together how to understand the illness and how to provide the best support to the family member

EASA is changing the way services are delivered.

The 2007 Oregon legislature funded EASA to bring the most current, evidence-based treatment to individuals in the early stages of illness. The Early Assessment and Support Team (EAST) has provided these services since 2001 in five Oregon counties. The goal of EASA is to make these services available statewide.

Early Assessment and Support Alliance statewide contacts:

EAST Program and statewide technical assistance center (direct service to **Linn, Marion, Polk, Tillamook, Yamhill** Counties): 888-327-8817; 503-480-5122; fax 503-584-4837; www.eastcommunity.org.

Clatsop County Project Intercept:
503-325-5722

Columbia County EASA:
503-397-5211 ext. 282

Deschutes County EASA (also serves **Jefferson and Crook** Counties):
541-322-7583

Multnomah County EASA:
503-988-EASA (3272)

Center for Human Development EASA program serving **Union County**: 541-962-8855

LifeWorks Northwest EASA (serving **Washington** County): 503-593-6259

Mid-Columbia Center for Living, serving **Hood River, Sherman and Wasco** Counties: 541-296-5452 or 541-965-0540

"They provided hope, knowledge, support and expert treatment." -EASA Parent

Brochure updated 11/5/08

Early Assessment and Support Alliance (EASA)

Keeping Kids on Track with Life



An Oregon Initiative to Prevent the Consequences of Psychosis

Serving teens and young adults

Programs available in Clatsop, Columbia, Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Sherman, Tillamook, Union, Wasco, Washington, and Yamhill Counties