



What Smart Families Need to Know about a Brain Illness

10 Facts for all Parents

- 1) 3 in every 100 persons will become ill with a brain illness called psychosis. People get psychosis more commonly than other diseases like: Alzheimer's (2x), multiple sclerosis (5x), insulin-dependent diabetes (6x) and muscular dystrophy (60x).
- 2) The illness usually first shows symptoms when a person is in their teens or early 20's.
- 3) Men and women are equally likely to get this illness, and it is an illness, like diabetes, which anyone can get.
- 4) People are more likely to get psychosis if their mother, father or a sister or brother had it, but people without any family history become ill as well. The causes of the illness are complex.
- 5) Symptoms include:
 - ✓ Hearing things others don't hear
 - ✓ Having new, strange beliefs
 - ✓ Having difficulty speaking (too fast or slow)
 - ✓ Confused thinking and
 - ✓ Paranoia (being extremely suspicious of other people)

Sometimes families may assume these symptoms mean their child is misusing street drugs. Even if the child is using drugs, a brain illness may be involved as well. Your family doctor is the best person to determine what might be wrong and to connect your child with treatment services. If you don't have a family doctor, a walk in clinic will have qualified doctors as well. If symptoms are extreme and your family doctor is unavailable, a visit to emergency might be in order.

- 6) Youth whose families think might have symptoms which might be psychosis should see their doctor for a check-up as soon as possible. Medical treatment is available and **if caught early, full recovery is very likely**. Because of the illness, it is difficult for the ill person to be aware that they are ill. *This is why trusted family and friends can be a big help to encourage the sick person to get a doctor.*
- 7) The longer the person is ill without receiving medical treatment the more the brain can be damaged by the illness.
- 8) Even if caught early, full recovery from psychosis can take a year or more. Recovery time is shorter the earlier the disease is treated.
- 9) **Families of persons with all kinds of mental illnesses** (not just schizophrenia) can get information and help through the BC Schizophrenia Society (BCSS), who can refer you to local contacts and resources: 1-888-888-0029 (toll free) or at www.bcscs.org BCSS has support for families with respite care help, presentations, information, support groups and programs for children where there is parental mental illness, plus lots of referral information.
- 10) **Reach Out is a free concert touring through BC combining a fun, interactive musical and spoken word performance with basic facts about psychosis to help spot and stop psychosis early. See the next page for more...**



What is the Reach Out Concert Tour?

The Reach Out tour is a dynamic combination of live music, slam poetry, and interactive information for youth. This fun and light-hearted program is designed to promote early treatment of psychosis, a brain illness that affects 3 in every 100 people.

Reach Out is touring the Lower Mainland, the Williams Lake area and the Okanagan (more locations to be announced throughout the 2006-07 school year).

Performances are planned and booked November 20-24th in Kelowna, Kamloops, Vernon, and Penticton. The program will also be touring the lower mainland and in Williams Lake, with other locations being looked into for spring 2007.

Reach Out is a project of the BC Schizophrenia Society, in partnership with BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions Information, with funding from the BC Provincial Health Services Authority.

The Reach Out performers

Barbara Adler



At 22, Barbara Adler is one of the most prolific poets of her generation. A four-time member of the Canadian champion Vancouver poetry SLAM team, she has toured throughout North America and Europe while completing her undergraduate degree at SFU. Known for her dense, complex spoken word, she “writes smart, funny, and often deeply moving poetry around questions of history, identity, and self-image.” (Georgia Straight).

Ten Ways from Sunday



Ten Ways from Sunday is a Vancouver-based indie rock band in the tradition of epic, old-school arena rock.

At the 2006 New Music West Festival, Ten Ways from Sunday won the Best College Rock Band award.

Contact coordinator Carola Tize at reachout@bcss.org, 604-682-7020 or visit www.reachoutpsychosis.com for information on how to book a lunch hour or assembly presentation for your school, college or community group. Parent group presentations are also available.