

Presentation for the Peace of Mind Walk, Bronte Park, 14th of September 2019

A very good morning to all of you. I would like to thank the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario for inviting me to speak at this important event. I understand we are celebrating their 40th anniversary. I have had the pleasure of supporting the schizophrenia Society of Ontario since 1986, when it was known as the Friends of Schizophrenia Society.

My name is Dr. Peter Turner and I am psychiatrist affiliated with both the Burlington Joseph Brant Hospital and the Oakville Trafalgar Hospital and I have a special interest in schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and first episode psychosis.

I am going to talk about my

1. current involvement and work and history leading up to where I am today.
2. why it is important to treat psychosis
3. why it is important to treat it early and comprehensively
4. why it is important to pay attention to concurrent disorder that is recreational drug and alcohol use.

The Halton 3 first episode psychosis programs were founded in 2006, and I was involved in setting up these programs. I became the consultant to the Burlington First Episode Psychosis Program at that time and became a consultant to the North Halton Mental Health Clinic, Milton First Episode Psychosis Program in May of 2019. Burlington carries about 75 active clients and Milton carries about 60 active clients in their program.

These programs represent the front line of treatment for people experiencing psychosis and represent a significant advance for in the early and comprehensive treatment of psychotic illness. Psychosis is a complex condition and can be caused by his schizophrenia, early onset bipolar illness, and psychosis is often brought on or caused by the use of recreational drugs particularly by Marijuana.

Beyond that, I am consultant to the Case Management Program in Joseph Brant Hospital Burlington since 1982 to the present, the Medication clinic program, and emergency on call work. I am also consultant to the North Halton Mental Health Clinic, Acton, Case Management Program since 2006 and Georgetown Case Management Program since 2017.

I continue to be consultant to the Bethany Residential Treatment Program since 1990 to the present. Bethany is a private care facility that provides supervised residential care and treatment for 125 residents with severe mental health problems, and also works co-operatively with other community agencies, including ACT and PACT.

I originally became interested in psychiatry when I was a resident in medicine, neurology and surgery in New Zealand, and I was fortunate to work with a psychiatrist colleague who had studied in Canada. I found I enjoyed the personal contact in working with mental health clients. As a result I decided to come to Canada and completed my postgraduate psychiatry degree at McMaster University in 1973 to 1977.

Since 1977 I have been on staff at the Joseph Brant Hospital and initially worked in the psychiatric day program and inpatient psychiatry units. During this time I became interested in the treatment and the rehabilitation of severe psychiatric illness, particularly has Schizophrenia and severe mood disorders. I initiated the case management program in 1982 as well as an industrial therapy program, and started the Burlington branch of the work rehabilitation program in 1985.

In 1990 I became involved in the Bethany residential program where I continue to be a consultant to the present.

In the 2000, I created in the schizophrenia and mood disorders clinic, a private psychopharmacology treatment and research clinic program. It was closed in 2017. The program was involved in about 75 clinical trials and helped to develop novel psychiatric treatments and medications and give new hope to many clients. The website, moodclinic.ca, continues to the present.

Over the years I have also been interested in healthy lifestyle, exercise, healthy foods and nutritional supplements. I believe in the principle off a healthy mind in a healthy body.

I now want to address the issue of why it is important to treat psychosis early and comprehensively. The lifetime incidence of psychosis is about 3%. If left untreated or poorly treated, psychosis leads to chronic mental health problems that persist throughout the person's life and often lead to chronic disability. It is much easier to successfully treat an episode of psychosis when it is diagnosed early and also it results in much less stress and subsequent mental health problems. Each time there is another episode of psychosis, it generates anxiety and stress hormones that damage the physical and mental well-being of the body. Recurrent episodes of psychosis result in blunting of executive cognitive functions, that worsens with every relapse off psychosis. Comprehensive treatment of psychosis is designed to prevent relapse and preserve cognitive function, and usually it requires a combination of medication treatments, psycho education, and rehabilitation programs. Studies have shown that how our first episode programs have been successful in the majority of clients.

The last issue is treatment of concurrent disorders, particularly marijuana and alcohol use. People that have a positive family history and/or genetic predisposition to psychosis, often are vulnerable to the toxic effects of the THC in Cannabis, and other recreational drugs. We spend considerable effort in getting people off drugs, marijuana and alcohol. We thank the staff from ADAPT, AA and detox services, who are tirelessly helping with this difficult task.

Beyond the work that we do in our hospital clinics, there is a need for increased public awareness and education in all aspects of psychotic illnesses, addiction and mental health treatments. I would like to thank the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario and other support organizations that supported clients and families and provide public information.

Thank you for your attention, if you've any questions please feel free to ask.

Peter G Turner MD, FRCP (C).