



Early Psychosis Care Center Newsletter

Managing Behavioral Health Through the Holidays

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Or at least, that's what we all hear from seasonal songs and movies. While the holidays can be filled with cheer, joy, and wonderment, for many it brings stress, anxiety, and grief. A survey from the National Alliance on Mental Illness found that 64 percent of people with a diagnosed behavioral health illness report that the holidays worsen their symptoms and condition. While it's important to prepare for holiday fun and festivities, it's equally important to establish some holiday-specific coping skills and recovery and relapse-prevention strategies.

If you are in recovery from substance use disorders, the holidays can bring on a particularly unique kind of stress. For some, the presence of freely flowing alcohol at holiday parties or gatherings can be a stressor. For others, interacting with family members can lead to uncomfortable feelings and potentially threaten sobriety. In order to keep recovery at the forefront, have a plan for when prompting events arise. Bring a sober friend or skip gatherings with alcohol all together if needed. Also, don't forget to check in with others who are in recovery during the holiday season.

For many families, schizophrenia is a challenge at any time of year. For someone trying to manage schizophrenia episodes and symptoms, the holidays present so many activating events to derail recovery. Stress can be most damaging to those living with schizophrenia. It leads to the production of cortisol, which in turn, can cause episodes of schizophrenia. Families can work together to limit stress, manage and minimize symptoms, and keep everyone happy and healthy.



It's important to know that the holidays don't have to feel like a celebration. You can give yourself permission to simply be where you are emotionally. Give yourself a break by letting go of the need to meet the expectations of others. Be conscious of your evolving needs for emotional and physical space, and give yourself the gift of that space as necessary.

Team Member Spotlight



REBECCA PRESTON, PHD
CLINICAL LEAD OF
EARLY PSYCHOSIS CARE
CENTER

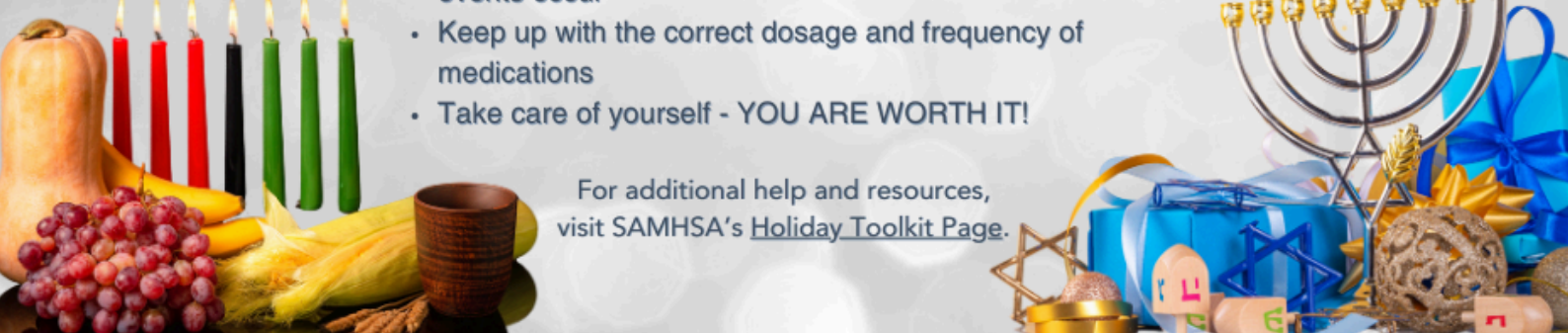
Dr. Rebecca Preston is the Clinical Lead of the Early Psychosis Care Center. She received her PhD in Clinical Psychology from Hofstra University with training strongly rooted in evidence-based treatment modalities and rigorous research methods. Her research interests concentrate on stressors and impaired self-regulatory behaviors that both predate and maintain disorders of self-control and co-morbid psychiatric disorders in vulnerable populations. With the Early Psychosis Care Center, Rebecca develops trainings and facilitates the implementation of evidence-based practices to prevent the onset of and provide treatment for early psychosis in individuals in Missouri.



How to Hurdle the Holidays

Holidays aren't always merry and bright! Here are a few ways to manage your mental health through the holidays:

- Maintain regular therapy appointments, or even add more if necessary
- Acknowledge your feelings and allow time to feel those emotions
- Maintain healthy habits and stick to the day-to-day routine
- Set boundaries - it's okay to say "no" or even pick and choose which events are attended
- Plan ahead - have an escape plan for when activating events occur
- Keep up with the correct dosage and frequency of medications
- Take care of yourself - YOU ARE WORTH IT!



For additional help and resources, visit SAMHSA's [Holiday Toolkit Page](#).



Join our Youth Advisory Council!

We are looking for youth & young adults ages 15-35 with personal lived experience with psychosis. Influence change, empower others, and build connections!



The EPC Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is working to reduce stigma about psychosis by sharing resources, raising awareness, and providing fact-based education in order to improve young people's access to care.

[www.epcmissouri.org/
youth-advisory-council/](http://www.epcmissouri.org/youth-advisory-council/)

Virtual meetings are held on the second Monday of every month from 6-7pm CST

Upcoming Trainings

Assessment 101 | Part A

Assessment 101 Part A is a free 1-hour training. CEUs are available. This training will focus first episode psychosis (FEP) intake questions. Attendees will learn how to feel comfortable asking questions about psychosis and speaking to individuals who are reporting signs and symptoms of first episode psychosis.

Register Here: <https://cvent.me/x1nmPm>

Assessment 101 | Part B

Assessment 101 Part B is a free one-hour training. CEUs are available. Building upon Assessment 101 Part A, attendees will learn about differentiating between clinical high-risk and psychosis symptoms. Individuals will be oriented to the use of screening, self-reporting, and structured and semi-structured clinical interviews to assist in diagnosis, treatment planning, and ongoing assessment of psychosis symptoms.

Register Here: <https://cvent.me/15oM3w>

Psychosis 101

Psychosis 101 is a 1.5 hours virtual training that will include a screener and discussion of the screening process. Assist providers in learning how to talk to clients and families about possible psychosis symptoms as well as understand the importance of early intervention and treatment. Provide a brief overview of diagnostic criteria, describe the threshold for attenuated versus full psychosis, and discuss role of culture and trauma, the importance of good therapeutic rapport, and emphasize educating referral sources. Virtual format, recorded, and made available online.

Register Here: <https://cvent.me/g494ln>



**EARLY PSYCHOSIS
CARE CENTER
CONFERENCE 2025**

April 22-23, 2025

**SHERATON CHALET
Westport
191 W Port Plaza Dr
St. Louis, MO 63146**



SCAN HERE TO REGISTER
EPCMissouri.org



REGISTER NOW!

**EARLY PSYCHOSIS CARE
CENTER CONFERENCE 2025**

Missouri's EPC Conference offers a forum in which to learn about best practices, current trends in research, network with peers, and implement new strategies, research, and trends into practice.

Holidays and Observances

November



National Stress
Awareness Day
Nov 6



Veteran's Day
Nov 11



Thanksgiving
Nov 28



December



Start of Hanukkah
Dec 25



Christmas
Dec 25



Kwanzaa
Dec 26



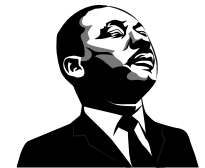
January



New Year's Day
Jan 1



National Missouri Day
Jan 4



Martin Luther King Day
Jan 20

Resources

FIND A PROVIDER

Click here to view an interactive map of potential behavioral health providers in Missouri

LIFELAUNCH

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE