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## Special Interest

### Articles

Obsessive-compulsive Disorder

Helping Someone with Schizophrenia

Dealing With Chronic Illnesses and Depression

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## Obsessive-compulsive Disorder

Post published by National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is characterized by repetitive, unwanted, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and irrational, excessive urges to do certain actions (compulsions). Although people with OCD may know that their thoughts and behavior don't make sense, they are often unable to stop them.

Symptoms typically begin during childhood, the teenage years or young adulthood, although males often develop them at a younger age than females. More than 2% of the U.S. population (nearly 1 out of 40 people) will be diagnosed with OCD during their lives.

**Symptoms**-Most people have occasional obsessive thoughts or compulsive behaviors. In an obsessive-compulsive disorder, however, these symptoms generally last more than an hour each day and interfere with daily life.

**Obsessions**-are intrusive, irrational thoughts or impulses that repeatedly occur. People with these disorders know these thoughts are irrational but are afraid that somehow they might be true. These thoughts and impulses are upsetting, and people

may try to ignore or suppress them.

**Compulsions**-are repetitive acts that temporarily relieve the stress brought on by an obsession. People with these disorders know that these rituals don't make sense but feel they must perform them to relieve the anxiety and, in some cases, to prevent something bad from happening. Like obsessions, people may try not to perform compulsive acts but feel forced to do so to relieve anxiety.

**Causes**-The exact cause of obsessive-compulsive disorders is unknown, but researchers believe that activity in several portions of the brain is responsible. More specifically, these areas of the brain may not respond normally to serotonin, a chemical that some nerve cells use to communicate with each other. Genetics are thought to be important. If you, your parent or a sibling, have an obsessive-compulsive disorder, there's close to a 25% chance that another immediate family member will have it.

**Treatment**-A typical treatment plan will often

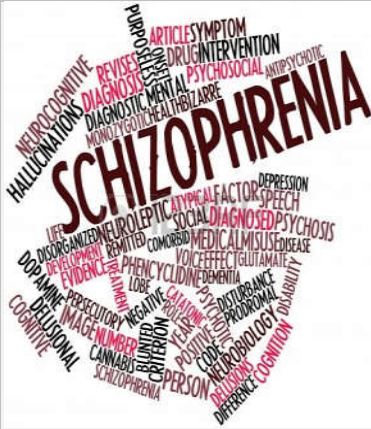


include both psychotherapy and medications, and combined treatment is usually optimal.

Medication, especially a type of antidepressant called a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI), is helpful for many people to reduce the obsessions and compulsions.

Psychotherapy is also helpful in relieving obsessions and compulsions. In particular, cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and exposure and response therapy (ERT) are effective for many people. Exposure response prevention therapy helps a person tolerate the anxiety associated with obsessive thoughts while not acting out a compulsion to reduce that anxiety. Though OCD cannot be cured, it can be treated effectively. Read more on our treatment page.

Cited From:  
<http://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Obsessive-Compulsive-Disorder>



## Sunpath Outcomes on Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

The Consumer Satisfaction Survey is helping Sunpath to improve services in all areas. This survey is conducted twice a year. Here it is a summary of the outcomes for this period:

Community Support Team	91%
Outpatient Therapy	86%
Substance Abuse	94%

**Overall 88%**

## Helping Someone with Schizophrenia

### Schizophrenia and the family: How to help your loved one

If a loved one has schizophrenia, you may be struggling with any number of difficult emotions, including fear, guilt, anger, and frustration. You may feel helpless in the face of your loved one's symptoms, be worried about the stigma of schizophrenia, or confused and embarrassed by strange behaviors. You may even be tempted to hide your loved one's illness from others. To help someone with schizophrenia, it's important to:

- Accept the illness and its difficulties

- Don't buy into the myth that someone with schizophrenia can't get better or live a meaningful life

- Do your best to help your loved one feel better and enjoy life

- Pay attention to your own needs

- Maintain a sense of humor and remain hopeful

### Tips for helping a loved one with schizophrenia

**Educate yourself.** Learning about schizophrenia and its

treatment will allow you to make informed decisions about how best to cope with symptoms, work toward recovery, and handle setbacks.

**Reduce stress.** Stress can cause schizophrenia symptoms to flare up, so it's important to create a structured and supportive environment for your family member.

**Set realistic expectations.** It's important to be realistic about the challenges of schizophrenia. Help your loved one set and achieve manageable goals, and be patient with the pace of recovery.

**Empower your loved one.** Be careful that you're not taking over and doing things for your loved one that he or she is capable of doing. Support your loved one while still encouraging as much independence as possible.

### How to help someone with schizophrenia tip: Take care of yourself

Schizophrenia places an incredible amount of stress on family. It can take over your life and burn you out. And if you're stressed, you'll make the person with schizophrenia stressed, so it's important to take care of yourself and find

[healthy ways to relieve stress.](#)

**Connect with others.** Social interaction with someone who cares about you is the most effective way to relieve stress. Find someone you can connect with face to face—someone you can talk to for an uninterrupted period of time, someone who will listen without judging or continually being distracted. That person may be a friend, family member, clergy member, or professional therapist.

**Get regular exercise.** Physical activity reduces stress and releases endorphins, powerful chemicals in your brain that energize your spirits and make you feel good. Aim for 30 minutes of activity on most days or if it's easier, three 10-minute sessions.

**Eat a healthy diet.** What you eat has a direct impact on the way you feel. Minimize sugar and refined carbs, foods that quickly lead to a crash in mood and energy. Boost your intake of Omega-3 fatty acids from fatty fish, fish oil, walnuts, and flaxseeds to help improve your focus, energy, and outlook.

Cited From:  
<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/schizophrenia/helping-a-person-with-schizophrenia.htm>

## Dealing With Chronic Illnesses and Depression

Cited From: <http://www.webmd.com/depression/guide/chronic-illnesses-depression>

For millions of people, chronic illnesses and depression are facts of life. A chronic illness is a condition that lasts for a very long time and usually cannot be cured completely, although some illnesses can be controlled or managed through lifestyle (diet and exercise) and certain medications. Examples of chronic illnesses include diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, kidney disease, HIV/AIDS, lupus, and multiple sclerosis. Many people with these illnesses become depressed. In fact, depression is one of the most common complications of chronic illness. It's estimated that up to one-third of people with a serious medical condition have symptoms of depression.

It's not hard to see the cause and effect relationship between chronic illness and depression. Serious illness can cause tremendous life changes and limit your mobility and independence. A chronic illness can make it impossible to do the things you enjoy, and it can eat away at your self-confidence and a sense of hope in the future. No surprise, then, that people with chronic illness often feel despair and sadness. In some cases, the physical effects of the condition itself or the side effects of medication lead to depression, too.

### What Chronic Conditions Trigger Depression?

Although any illness can trigger depressed feelings, the risk of chronic illness and depression gets higher with the severity of the illness and the level of life disruption it causes. The risk of depression is generally 10-25% for women and 5-12% for men. However, people with a chronic illness face a much higher risk - between 25-33%. Risk is especially high in someone who has a history of depression.

Depression caused by chronic disease often makes the condition worse, especially if the illness causes pain and fatigue or it limits a person's ability to interact with others. Depression can intensify pain, as well as fatigue and sluggishness. The combination of chronic illness and depression might lead you to isolate yourself, which is likely to make the depression even worse.

Research on chronic illnesses and depression indicates that depression rates are high among patients with chronic conditions:

**Heart attack:** 40%-65% experience depression  
**Coronary artery disease (without heart attack):** 18%-20% experience depression  
**Parkinson's disease:** 40% experience depression  
**Multiple sclerosis:** 40% experience depression  
**Stroke:** 10%-27%

experience depression  
**Cancer:** 25% experience depression  
**Diabetes:** 25% experience depression  
**Chronic pain syndrome:** 30%-54% experience depression.

### Tips for Living With a Chronic Illness

Depression, disability, and chronic illness form a vicious cycle. Chronic medical conditions can bring on bouts of depression, which, in turn get in the way of successful treatment of the disease. Living with a chronic illness is a challenge, and it's normal to feel grief and sadness as you come to grips with your condition and its implications. But if these feelings don't go away, or you are having trouble sleeping or eating, or you've lost interest in the activities you normally enjoy, seek help. To avoid depression:

- Try not to isolate yourself.
- Learn as much as you can about your condition.
- Make sure that you have medical support from experts you trust and can talk to openly about your ongoing questions and concerns.
- Talk with your doctor about pain management.
- As much as is possible, keep doing the things you like to do.

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**“Learn as much as you can about your condition”**

### Treatment Team Meeting Outcomes

Every 3 months a Treatment Team Meeting is conducted between the staff, the consumer and the consumer support system to evaluate progress and work with the consumer on their necessities.

The Treatment Team Surveys for this period revealed the following percentages of satisfaction for the first and second quarter of this year:

**100%** of satisfaction in all services



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Pathway to brighter  
futures...



### Bilingual Services

If you or someone  
you know needs  
services in Spanish,  
please contact our  
offices to assist you.



We're on the Web!  
See us at:  
www.sunpathllc.com

## Tips for Staying Healthy in Summer

1. Stay cool and hydrated.
2. Protect yourself from overexposure to sunlight by wearing a hat and using natural sunscreens without excessive chemicals.
3. Keep up or begin an exercise program.
4. Relax and breathe.

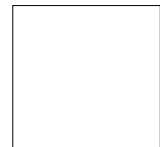


## About Sunpath LLC.

Sunpath LLC is a nationally accredited by CARF and CABHA certified behavioral health agency that provides mental health and substance abuse services to individuals and families in Western North Carolina. We provide an efficient and effective array of services that are psycho-educational and supportive in nature. These services are intended to meet the Mental Health, Developmental Disability, and Substance Abuse needs of clients with significant functional deficits or who because of negative environmental, medical or biological factors, are at risk of developing or increasing the magnitude of such functional deficiencies.

Sunpath LLC focused on providing the highest caliber service through professionalism and building a dependable therapeutic rapport with consumer and their families.

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