

Resources For Chronic Mental Illness

BY DR. MIKE ROSMANN

A farmer who is the major caregiver for his wife when she has episodes of bipolar disorder telephoned me after reading two recent "Farm and Ranch Life" columns about bipolar disorder. He wished to share what has been helpful for his wife and their situation.

Persons who have learned from their own experiences often are our best teachers. I appreciate that this man helped me realize many people needed more information than the previous articles contained about resources for individuals struggling with chronic mental illness and ideas for their caregivers as well. This article will refer to bipolar disorder as a "mental illness" because it is the commonly used term. Many people prefer the term "behavioral health problem" because it is less stigmatizing.

The term "chronic" does not mean continuous. Most persons with chronic mental illness have periods when symptoms clear up partially or entirely for a while.

Let's also remember that what works for one person or situation doesn't work for everyone. We have much yet to learn.

The most common chronic mental illnesses include schizophrenia, which affects approximately 2.4 million Americans age 18 and older, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, and bipolar disorder, which affects about 5.7 million American adults. Individuals with these illnesses almost always require psychotropic medication and a network of caregivers to protect and support them during crises.

The intensity and duration of these and other recurring mental illnesses, such as personality disorders like antisocial and borderline personality disorder, can vary greatly but usually are lifelong conditions. That's why they are called chronic mental illnesses. Many addictions also are chronic.

Some persons with chronic mental illness need legal guardians and conservators who can step in during illness flare-ups. In some states Psychiatric Advance Directives can be crafted by the person with the illness during a well-functioning period.

The farmer who called me said his wife agreed to his appointment by court to step in if she cannot manage her affairs and to have their adult children as alternates.

In some states persons with addictions can be court ordered to allow blood tests for illicit drugs and mentally ill persons on necessary medications can be required to submit for blood analyses to gauge if therapeutic levels of psychotropic medications are being maintained.

Rural residents often have more difficulty finding professional behavioral healthcare providers than urban and suburban residents. The number of psychiatrists and psychologists per 100,000 persons in rural areas is half that of urban areas of the U.S.; other behavioral health professionals are fewer also.

Likewise, peer support groups and family support

groups supervised by properly trained persons are fewer in rural areas and often require considerable travel. The farmer who called me said he and his wife attend family support meetings that are about an hour's drive from their home.

There also are fewer supportive employment and community living options in rural areas than in areas with more residents. The Affordable Care Act seeks to expand peer supports and supportive community living programs; it also forms care teams for persons with chronic mental illnesses that include case managers, health professionals, family and others who can offer assistance.

Resources that individuals and caregivers needing assistance can contact besides those available through community mental health centers and county/state agencies (e.g., Department of Human Services) vary from state to state.

All counties in some states, such as Iowa and Missouri, have mental health/developmental disability coordinators whose duties include helping residents find the resources they need. They are usually listed in the county government section of the local phone book or on the county government website.

Mental Health America (www.mentalhealthamerica.net; Ph.: 1-800-969-6642) has 240 affiliates in 41 states that are "dedicated to promoting mental health, preventing mental and substance use conditions and achieving victory over mental illness and addictions through advocacy, education, research and service." Many affiliates offer support groups to individuals, families and friends.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (www.nami.org; Ph.: 1-800-950-6264) has programs in every state and over 1,000 community affiliates. The alliance "offers an array of support and education programs that help build better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness."

The Karla Smith Foundation (www.karlasmithfoundation.org; Ph.: 1-618-624-5771) "supports families affected by mental illness and suicide." The program offers support groups, which are listed on the website, in Illinois, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin. The farmer who contacted me and his wife found help in one of their support groups.

Finding satisfactory supports is difficult. Telemedicine services and on-line support for recovery are becoming more widely available for rural areas.

There probably are other support programs that I don't know about and which may be of assistance to rural residents with mental illness. Please share your recommendations with me.

Persistence in finding the right options pays off by saving lives and relationships, and to maintaining the dignity of—and respect for—the ill person.

Dr. Rosmann directed a community mental health center at Harlan, Iowa where he lives. To contact him, see: www.agbehavioralhealth.com.

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Dr. Mike ROSMANN

Visiting Hours

Added Sugar: Is It Not So Sweet?

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In the field of nutrition, there are a lot of unknowns. Topics that need further study. Areas of controversy. (Ah, yes, the famous egg debates.) There are a few things, however, that can be said with nearly 100% confidence, and here is one of them: as a whole, Americans eat too much sugar.

By "sugar" I mean added sugar. What is it? By definition, added sugar is any sugar or syrup added to food during processing or preparation. Examples of foods that contain added sugar include granola bars, cranberry juice cocktail and spaghetti sauce. You can identify added sugar by looking at the ingredients list for words like dextrose, fructose, sucrose and syrup (and, of course, plain ole' sugar).

The America Heart Association recommends that women consume no more than 100 calories, or six teaspoons, of added sugar each day, and men consume no more than 150 calories, or 9 teaspoons. Unfortunately, this recommendation is far lower than the reality. On average, Americans adults consume 22 teaspoons of added sugar each day. That's almost half a cup! Teens consume even more. Soft drinks and sugar-sweetened beverages are the top source, which isn't surprising if you look at the label. Just one 20-ounce bottle of one of the most popular soft

drinks on the market, for example, provides 270 calories (17 teaspoons) of added sugar.

What happens when people eat too much sugar? A recent study showed that individuals who consumed 25% or more of their calories from added sugar (about one in 10 people) were more than twice as likely to die from cardiovascular disease as individuals who consumed less than 10% of their calories from added sugar. Researchers found that the higher the sugar consumption, the higher the risk. Most people consume about 15% of their calories from added sugar.

High sugar consumption is also linked to other diseases, including high blood pressure, high triglycerides, increased inflammation, and fatty liver disease. Unsurprisingly, drinking regular pop and eating sweets are both associated with weight gain over time. And the more sugar you consume, the less likely you're getting all the vitamins, minerals and fiber that your body needs.

Given the health risks, should all sugar be avoided? Not necessarily. Some foods, including milk and fruit, contain natural sugars. These foods also contain a lot of beneficial nutrients. For this reason, there's no recommendation to limit natural sugars in the diet. Compare that nutrition in milk and fruit to the nutrition in something like some of our favorite bit-size chewy

candy. In milk, you get calcium, potassium, B vitamins and protein. In fruit, you get fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. In our favorite bite-size chewy candy, you get... sugar, food coloring and saturated fat. That's about it.

Another exception to the eat-less-sugar recommendation is if someone is malnourished. Most Americans struggle with eating too many calories, but if someone struggles with the opposite problem, added sugar may be an appropriate way to get in more calories and make food more enjoyable. This is more likely to happen with older adults.

Even though I'm a dietitian, I'm not immune to sugar's siren call. (It may not be well known, but dietitians tend to be very enthusiastic about dessert. During my internship one of the dietitians brought in cupcakes every Friday - and never took any home.) Recently, I found that my sweet consumption was getting out of hand. If you find yourself in the same situation, I challenge you to do what I did: Give up sweets - including pop! - for two weeks. Taking a break from sugar can help reset your taste buds. It can also make you more aware of how big of a problem your sugar consumption is (or isn't), perhaps pointing you toward making diet changes. Try switching out foods high in added sugar with healthier options, like fruit, nuts, and veggies. Your body will thank you for it!

SHMS Science Olympiad



Front Row (L to R): Jess Jussell, Madie Cordell, Hunter Rockne, Tanner Fitzgerald, Holly Hicks, Anne Knoff, Kristen Rezac, Claire Kouri. Middle Row: Cate Perakslis, Erin McCarthy, Sophia Vyborny, Katie Hauser, Rachel Rucker, Alexis Rezac, Josie Krajewski. Back Row: Marcia Olnes-Coach, Lauren Rezac, Bryce Dangler, Noel Kusek

SHMS Shines At State Science Olympiad

The Sacred Heart Middle School Science Olympiad Team recently placed second at the 2014 South Dakota State Competition Saturday, March 22nd, on the University of South Dakota Campus. The team placed first in five events, second in five and third in three events, students bringing home a total of 27 gold, silver and bronze medals for the day.

Team results were as follows:
• Gold Medalists: Anatomy-Katie Hauser and Rachel Rucker; Disease De-

fectives-Alexis Rezac and Katie Hauser; Crime Busters-Madie Cordell and Noel Kusek; Helicopters-Tanner Fitzgerald, Holly Hicks and Hunter Rockne; Experimental Design-Lauren Rezac, Kristen Rezac and Rachel Rucker

• Silver Medalists: Meteorology-Kristen Rezac and Lauren Rezac; Wheeled Vehicle-Lauren Rezac and Kristen Rezac; Robo Cross-Jess Jussell and Bryce Dangler; Shock Value-Tanner Fitzgerald and Jess Jussell; Write It Do It-Sophia Vyborny

and Noel Kusek
• Bronze Medalists: Dynamic Planet-Anne Knoff and Holly Hicks; Road Scholar-Bryce Dangler and Sophia Vyborny; Rocks and Minerals-Tanner Fitzgerald and Anne Knoff
• Team members included Erin McCarthy, Cate Perakslis and alternates Hunter Rockne, Josie Krajewski and Claire Kouri. The Sacred Heart Team is coached by Marcia Olnes and Rebecca Peterson and parents of the team.

'King & I' Auditions Slated

The Lewis and Clark Theatre Company will hold auditions for Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The King and I" April 3-5.

Thursday, April 3, auditions will take place at Mount Marty College's Marian Auditorium at 7 p.m. The auditions will be for adults and students grades 8 and up, with female and male singing/non-singing roles available. A song from The King and I must be prepared for the audition.

Saturday, April 5, auditions will be held at the Dakota Theatre at three separate times. Ballet dance auditions only (non-singing) will be at 10 a.m. for grades 6 and up. Please bring ballet and point shoes if you own them. The 1 p.m. auditions will be for children's chorus only, grades K-7. Prepare to sing "Getting to Know You" from "The King and I." Auditions for adults and students grades 8 and up for female and male singing/non-singing roles will be at 2:30 p.m. Prepare a song from "The King and I."

Performance dates for "The King and I" are June 5-8 and June 12-15.

For individuals interested in auditioning but unable to attend an audition time, contact Andy Henrickson at (605) 660-9742. Musical selections can be obtained at the Dakota Theatre Box Office.

Comedy/Magic Show Set

Comedian, Magician To Do Homeless Shelter Fundraiser
Comedian, magician, juggler and pick-pocket Mike Bliss will perform a show to raise money for the Yankton Homeless Shelter on Friday, April 4, at Minervas in Yankton. Doors open at 7 p.m.

Whether he is reading minds, manipulating objects or stealing watches, Bliss keeps the audience engaged and constantly guessing about what's coming next.

The show is family-friendly. A nacho bar will be included with the price of admission.

Call 661-5153 for ticket information. Tickets are also available at JJ Benji's and Hy-Vee in Yankton.

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