



EARLY Program staff are available to give presentations about the early warning signs of psychosis and serious mental illness. Call 1-888-NM-EARLY to schedule a presentation.

For more information, referrals, questions or consultations, or to request an outreach presentation:

1-888-NM-EARLY
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EARLY Staff Member Profile

Brian Jonkman, BA Research Associate

Brian graduated from the University of New Mexico in 2008 with a BA in Psychology, and now conducts assessments and interviews as a research associate in the EARLY Program. Brian spent the majority of his childhood in Crownpoint and Gallup, New Mexico, and feels that this taught him how to work with diverse groups of people. He is married and has a twin



brother who also lives in Albuquerque.

Brian values church, family, and friends above all else. He also enjoys reading works of theology

and philosophy, studying the economic market and stock trading, keeping up with mixed martial arts, and writing and playing music.

A Word from the Principal Investigator and Medical Director of EARLY

During a recent call with our national partners on the EARLY Program, we were lamenting the fact that, for most young people, the time from the onset of symptoms to actually being evaluated and treated for a mental illness is usually several years. Most mental illnesses have their onset prior to the age of 14 and studies indicate that the younger a person is when their symptoms start, the longer the time it takes from symptom onset to treatment. When we are able to reduce the time between symptom onset and treatment, an individual has better treatment outcomes, even 10 or 15 years later. The more we learn, the more important it seems to take advantage of this “window of opportunity” to intervene early and possibly prevent and/or change the long-term trajectory of a mental health issue.

Unfortunately, in most cases this is a window of opportunity that we are missing. In my years as a child and adolescent psychiatrist focused on school mental health, early identification and breaking down stigma, I have had several opportunities to see the benefits that prevention and early intervention programs for mental health conditions can bring for children and their families. Unfortunately, in these times of scarce resources, it is often hard to know where to turn to find the partnerships and support to create this critical public health approach to mental health.

How can we develop more opportunities for taking advantage of this window of opportunity? What can we all do to support the expansion of our mental health system to an early intervention and prevention framework? Clearly it will take all of us, coming together in dialogue and action, to start creating a place in the state and national agenda for an early intervention framework. I invite your partnership and thoughts on this critical imperative. Thanks.

Steven Adelsheim, MD, sadelsheim@salud.unm.edu

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