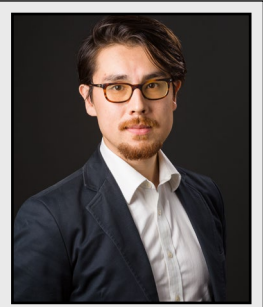




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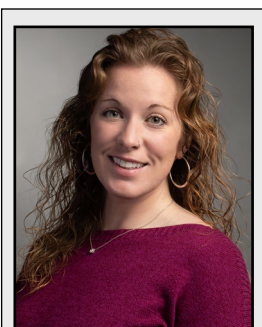
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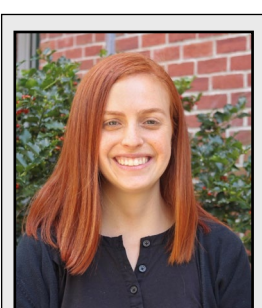
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About: STEP is based at the Connecticut Mental Health Center (CMHC) at **34 Park St., New Haven, CT 06519**. CMHC is a public-academic collaboration between the Yale University Department of Psychiatry and the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS).

Check out our website for more information:
<https://medicine.yale.edu/psychiatry/step/>

What we offer: STEP offers free, comprehensive clinical care to help young people and their families get back on track. STEP employs a **hybrid model of care**, utilizing both telehealth and in-person services. **Our services are tailored to the individual** and can include:

- Comprehensive clinical evaluation and regular outcome assessment
- Individual therapy
- Medication management
- Family support and education
- Work and educational support

What we work on:

- School and/or work goals
- Problem-solving
- Communication skills
- Stress management
- Health and wellness
- Reducing symptoms
- Other goals identified by the patient





CONTACT SHEET

Your STEP Team:

Primary Clinician: _____ Phone: _____
Contact with any clinical questions or concerns
Hours: _____

Psychiatrist: _____ Phone: _____
Contact with questions about medications
Hours: _____

Family Clinician: _____ Phone: _____
Contact with questions or concerns about family support and education
Hours: _____

STEP Clinic Phone (call or text): (475) 434-4843

Covered by STEP treatment team Monday-Friday (except holidays), 9:00am-5:00pm
Use as an alternative way to reach your clinicians, if unable to reach them directly

Crisis Resources:

211 - Crisis line, available 24/7 throughout Connecticut. Call if you have immediate concerns and are unable to access other providers/services.

911/Emergency Room

Call 911 or go to the nearest ER if you feel unsafe, like you might hurt yourself or someone else, or if there is a crisis and you are unable to access other providers/services

CMHC On-Call Number - (203) 974-7300; after hours and weekend phone support. Call to be connected to the MOD for urgent but non-crisis questions.

Mental Health Crisis Intervention Services - Connecticut - link to mobile crisis services throughout Connecticut

Educational Information about Psychosis:

- [Understanding a First Episode of Psychosis for Caregivers](#) - brief handout
- [Information Guide on First Episode Psychosis](#) - more in-depth guide
- [STEP Learning Collaborative](#) - virtual resources on early psychosis, educational offerings for providers, families, and community members
- [Cannabis use and Psychosis](#) - Fact Sheet
- [Short Guide to Psychiatric Drugs](#)

Stories of People Living with Psychosis:

- [Voices of Recovery](#) -24 brief video clips featuring individuals and family members telling their stories about who they are and what has been helpful in managing their psychotic disorder. You'll meet people who are single, married, in school, working, hanging out with old and new friends, and living healthy lives.
- [Cecila McGough-'I am not a monster'](#) - Founder of Students with Psychosis
- [Bethany Yeiser - 'My Journey Through Schizophrenia and Homelessness'](#) TedTalk
- [A Father's Journey - "My Son has Psychosis"](#)

Tips for Coping with Symptoms:

- [Tips for Dealing with Symptoms of Psychosis](#)
- [NAMI - Self Help Tips for Coping with Mental Illness](#)
- [How to cope with voices - Strong365](#)

Support and Skills for Families:

- [NAMI Connecticut](#) -Friends and Family virtual support groups
- [MILO](#) - Free e-course on motivational interviewing skills for families
- [Psychosis REACH](#) - Recovery by Enabling Adult Carers at Home - online course
- [Students with Psychosis](#) - Empowering Students and Advocates Living with Psychosis
- [Mental Health Crisis Intervention Services - Connecticut](#)

Information on Benefits and Entitlements:

- [SSI \(Supplemental Security Income\)](#)
- [SSDI \(Social Security Disability Insurance\)](#)
- [Medicare](#)
- [Husky \(Medicaid Connecticut\)](#)
- [Veyo \(Non-emergency medical transportation\)](#)
- [Title 19](#)
- [SNAP \(Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program\)](#)

This checklist can help you keep track of all the activities you can take part in with STEP as you get back on track:

- Confirm with STEP team **how you will access our hybrid treatment** (telehealth and in-person) discuss any barriers such as: technology access or transportation issues
- Meet with **clinician** for your first STEP appointment
 - Clinician: _____
- Meet with **Outreach & Admissions coordinator**, Philip, for your intake evaluation
 - Contact info: (203) 589-0388
- Meet with **psychiatrist or psychiatry resident** to discuss medications and your overall health
 - Prescriber: _____
- Have blood work done and receive physical examination, if necessary
- Have a **family meeting** to learn about how to help important people in your life support your recovery
 - Ask your clinician or have your family contact Dr. Sykes directly: (203) 654-9646
- Encourage your family to attend a **family workshop** to get education and support
- Discuss any of your **education and or job goals** with your clinician. Together you can decide if working with the STEP supported employment or educational specialist would be helpful and get your referral completed
- Meet with OT staff for an evaluation of your strengths and growth areas
- Discuss with your clinician if you are **eligible for any benefits or entitlements** to assist with important things like groceries, transportation, and insurance
- Visit our **website** for more information and resources:
 - <https://medicine.yale.edu/psychiatry>

A first episode of psychosis in someone we care about can have a tremendous impact on family members and other support persons. It is common for family members to struggle to adjust to changed circumstances, new demands, and to have questions about what is happening and how to best support their loved one. Family services at STEP can help.

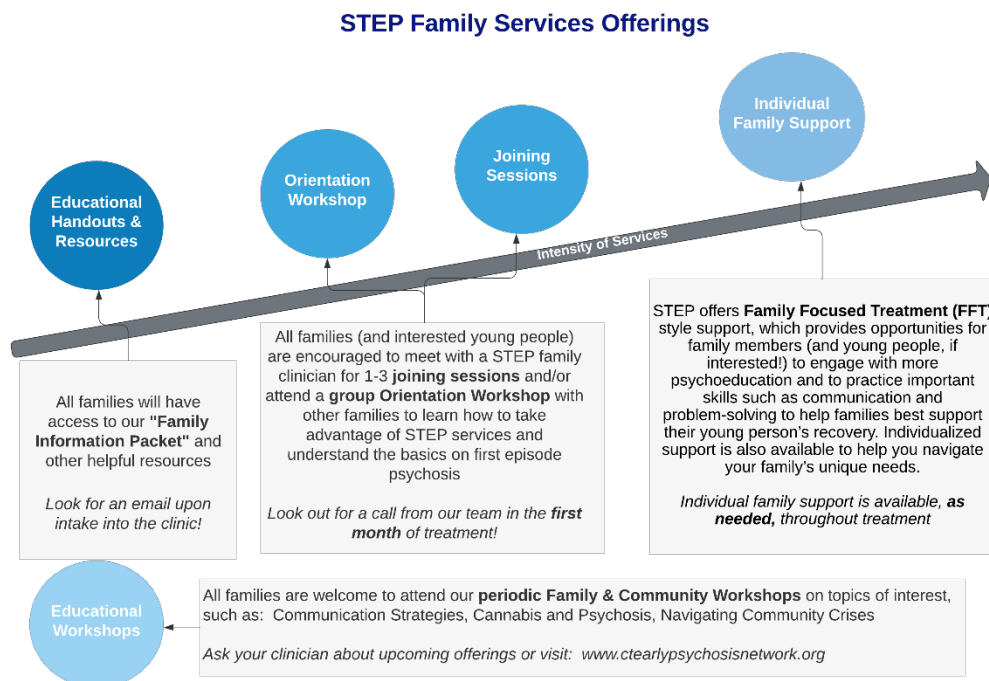
Why family services are helpful?

Family support and education is an important part of early psychosis care and is recommended for all families. Engaging in family support and education can have a variety of benefits including **fewer symptoms** and **hospitalizations**, improvements in **overall functioning**, more effective **family communication**, and **decreased caregiver burden**.

What does STEP offer for families?

STEP offers a variety of supportive and educational opportunities for family, based on an individual family's needs, interest, and the young person's preference. Such opportunities include:

- Education about psychosis, treatment, recovery, and other important topics
- Communication, problem-solving, and crisis management skills
- Connection to local and virtual resources





Family Guidelines for Supporting a Young Person with Psychosis

Families can play an important role in supporting recovery, reducing stress, and helping to prevent the onset or worsening of symptoms.

CONSIDER:

- Psychotic illnesses are influenced by **both biological and environmental factors**
- **Reducing stress** within family relationships, schedules, and daily interactions can make it easier for someone to manage day-to-day life
- Family support can also **buffer** against outside stressors.
- *People experiencing psychosis may be particularly sensitive to the following:*
 - o **Warmth, structure, support, space:** help them recover at their own pace
 - o **Criticism:** negative comments and interactions can lead to increased symptoms
 - o **Over-involvement:** intrusiveness or doing too much can overwhelm people
 - o **Complex, unclear communication:** is hard to process and can worsen symptoms

GUIDELINES:

- **Take one step at a time.** Go slow. Progress may be gradual. Recovery takes time.
- **Lower expectations for the short term.** Compare this month to the last month rather than last year. Increase expectations only after a period of improvement or stability.
- **Use symptoms as a guide.** If they worsen, slow down, simplify, reach out, and ask for more professional help. If they improve, continue forward gradually.
- **Know and watch for early warning signs.** If you notice subtle changes in behavior or increases in symptoms, slow down or take a break. Ask for help early, when a little may go a long way.
- **Keep it cool.** Enthusiasm is normal. Disagreement is normal. Just tone it down.
- **Give each other space.** It's okay to offer. It's okay to refuse.
- **Observe your limits.** It's okay to say "no." A few good rules keep things clear and safe.
- **Ignore what you can't change.** Pick your battles. Let some things slide.
- **Don't tolerate violence or threatening.** Contact your clinician or emergency services immediately if you notice any behaviors suggesting risk for suicide or violence.
- **Keep it simple.** Keep sentences short and to the point. Stay calm and positive
- **Keep or re-establish family routines.** Stay connected to friends and family.
- **Solve problems step by step.** Work on one thing at a time. Consider alternatives.
- **Support the reduction of cannabis (and other drug use).** They make symptoms worse, can cause relapse, and prevent recovery.
- **Consider therapy for yourself.** if you experience changes in mood, sleep, capacity to cope
- **Stay Hopeful.** You are not alone. Recovery is possible. Treatment can help.

CONNECT: Educate *yourself and connect with family support networks, such as:*

- **NAMI Connecticut** – offers virtual family support groups (namict.org)
- **FAVOR Connecticut** – family and youth support and advocacy (www.favor-ct.org)

Common Stages of Adjustment for Family Members.

It is distressing to learn that someone close to you is experiencing psychosis. You may experience a variety of emotions, including shock, confusion, bewilderment, and guilt. There is no right or wrong way to feel, and you should not feel disloyal or uncaring for any of the thoughts or feelings you are having. It is common for families and friends to go through the following stages:

- As you realize something serious is happening to your loved one, you may feel worried or frightened.
- As the problem worsens, you may realize you can't manage it yourself and seek help.
- You'll probably have lots of questions, all of which are normal:
 - o What caused this? How do you treat it? What can I do to help? What should we tell people? Should we have sought help sooner? Could it happen again?
- As the person begins to recover, you will be relieved. You may understand the illness more and start to feel hopeful about the future.
- Meeting your loved one's needs for independence and care is a balancing act. As they start to reintegrate back into daily life, you may find yourself nervously watching for signs of relapse, and you may be try to shield your loved one from anything that might cause a relapse
- With a return to normalcy, you may speak with your loved one about psychosis, how it affected everyone involved, and how to help each other in the future

Families, partners and friends need time to understand and accept what has happened. Don't keep things bottled up. Talking with family members, friends, or professionals is very helpful.

***Be sure to ask your STEP providers about upcoming family support offerings or call/text Dr. Sykes, family clinician, directly at (203) 654-9646**

When a person experiences an acute psychotic episode, it can be frightening, confusing, and distressing to both the individual and his or her family and friends. Here are some things you can do to make their experience easier.

1. If they are having difficulty concentrating:

- Keep your statements short
- Give one message at a time
- Don't give too many choices at once

2. If they are expressing delusions and are 100% convinced:

- Don't argue, don't say "You're crazy," or "That's not happening"
- Accept this is their reality. Be true to yourself. You might say, "I can't see them but I know you can."

3. If they are expressing delusions AND have previously been open to discussing them:

- You might gently remind them, "These thoughts come up sometimes" or "You've learned not to give those thoughts too much attention."
- They might check out their interpretations with someone they trust. You can ask respectfully, "How might that be/happen?"

4. If the person's behavior is frightening you:

- Give the person space. Move gently to quieter, more open surroundings. Don't crowd or rush the person.
- Try to speak and act calmly. Ask what might help.
- Try to stay calm and communicate simply and clearly.
- If there are warning signs of a relapse, reassure them that you are seeking help for them.

If you feel you need support from first responders due to an acute safety issue, please make sure to do the following:

- When calling 911, it is helpful to say to the operator that your call is regarding a mental health crisis and you require assistance. If your family member/friend has a diagnosis, let the 911 operator know what it is. Advocating for your family member/friend's treatment and care can help ensure that their illness is taken into account by the police and other first responders during their interactions with them.
- If appropriate, **request a mobile crisis team** to come to your home instead of police. When speaking with the 911 operator and/or police, provide as much information about your family member/friend's mental illness, prior contact with the law, and any concerns you have about the situation.
- Be prepared to repeat this information once police or other first responders arrive.
- If you must vacate the premises to call the police, stay close enough so you can identify yourself and speak with officers when they arrive.