

The Challenge:

While the causes of severe mental illness are still not perfectly understood, the scale of the problem – for adolescents and young adults, their families and friends, communities, and society at large – is increasingly clear.

- Approximately 3 percent of youth and young adults in America will develop schizophrenia or a severe, psychotic mood disorder, with most cases developing after age 12.
- 75 percent of people who have schizophrenia go on to develop a disability.
- Less than 25 percent of people suffering from schizophrenia are gainfully employed.
- An estimated 12 to 15 percent of people who suffer from a psychotic illness complete suicide.

For adolescents and young adults suffering from a severe mental illness, the impact can include:

- Lower academic achievement or dropping out of school.
- Behavioral problems.
- Substance abuse issues.
- Reduced job opportunities and/or difficulty performing job tasks.
- Impaired relationships with friends, family, and co-workers.
- Isolation from the broader community.
- An ongoing need for care and hospitalization.

Beyond these challenges, many adolescents and young adults who develop a serious mental illness end up trapped in a cycle that robs their ability to attain a good quality of life, denies them the tools to cope with their illness and places additional burdens on the family and community to provide what care it can.

What can be done:

The *Early Detection and Intervention for the Prevention of Psychosis Program* (EDIPPP) is a research initiative working, with the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation through its Vulnerable Populations Portfolio, to gather the evidence needed to better meet the mental health needs of adolescents and young adults at risk for severe mental illness – before the illness develops.

EDIPPP seeks to demonstrate effective early detection and intervention methods to minimize the negative impacts of severe mental illness on our adolescents and young adults.