

# Central MA MIND Network



SPRING 2021

## Spreading the Word: Psychosis Education on College Campuses

By: Catherine Leonard



In efforts to reduce the duration of untreated psychosis, UMass MIND has partnered with several universities' Active Minds chapters across Massachusetts to spread knowledge and information along with providing a space for open discussion about psychosis.

Students from schools including Brandeis, UMass Amherst and UMass Lowell met with UMass MIND members over Zoom for presentations that touched upon topics relating to understanding psychosis, exploring stigma, and practicing how to respond to specific scenarios. The program seeks to raise awareness of psychosis by meeting with students, professors, and university faculty.

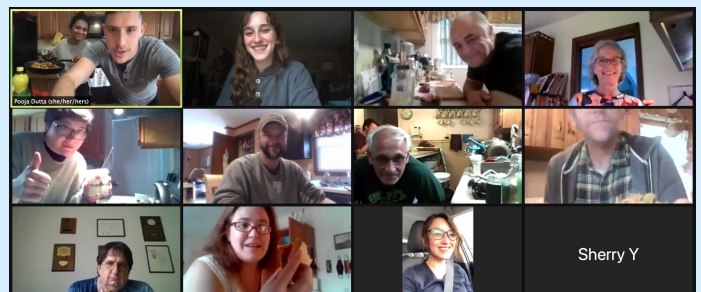
Our team recently attended a graduate level class at UMass Amherst to explain the possible neurobiological mechanisms of psychosocial and creative arts therapies improving schizophrenia symptoms. We hope to continue to assist with the education and de-stigmatization of psychosis across more college campuses.

## Promoting Healthy Eating in the Greater Worcester Area

By: Lauren Silva

Throughout 2021, UMass MIND has partnered with Genesis Club to address one of the many barriers to wellness for individuals living with serious mental illness: nutrition.

After attending Genesis Club's weekly meal-planning sessions, the UMass MIND team developed a virtual program to bring more awareness to healthy eating. Medical students Marko Stojcevski, Amy Cheung, and Pooja Dutta created a curriculum with three units: nutritional psychiatry, mindful eating, and cooking on a budget. Sessions occur every three weeks over Zoom, where UMass MIND staff are joined by Genesis Club staff and members. Informational sessions include free conversation and structured activities, and the cooking workshops allow members to cook simple, healthy recipes in their home. Additionally, ingredients are provided with no cost to them through the generosity of Genesis Club. When describing the atmosphere in the Clubhouse after the first session, Ruth Osterman, program director, stated the following: "... there was a buzz about [the cooking workshop] throughout the Club. It sounds like the workshop was engaging, informative and people got a lot out of it."



# Health Equity Award: Strides for a Healthier, Happier Worcester

By: Kalea Barger

On March 24th 2021, the UMass MIND's Community Intervention Program (CIP) was one of three programs honored by the Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester as a recipient of their Health Equity Award. The Coalition works with organizations around Worcester County to bring attention to and eventually eliminate health disparities among communities in an effort to improve citizen's health and quality of life, as well as build a sense of community. The Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) is an initiative motivating and guiding the efforts of UMass MIND and nearly 100 other organizations working toward the shared goal of improving health equity within the Worcester community.



The UMass MIND CIP program is composed of medical professionals, students, and community partners working in collaboration to improve the lives and wellbeing of individuals living with a serious mental illness via meaningful community engagement. Our 5-module approach addresses clusters of social determinants of health including "Lifestyle as Medicine," "Arts & Music," "Culture & Identity," "Community Education & Support," and "Early Detection & Intervention." Each module works to collaborate with community partners and oftentimes holds events and workshops to engage community members.

## ONGOING RESEARCH

### Study #1 - Substance Use Study

The purpose of this study is to see whether brexpiprazole, a recent FDA approved antipsychotic medication to treat schizophrenia, may help reduce substance use in individuals who are living with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder. Docket # H-00014611

### Study #2 - Negative Symptoms Study

The purpose of this research is to see if a new medication helps with day-to-day functioning, motivation, and negative symptoms in people with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder. Docket # H-00016707

**If you or someone you know is interested in participating in a research study or clinical service, please call 508-856-MIND (6463) or email [MIND@umassmed.edu](mailto:MIND@umassmed.edu).**

*The Central Massachusetts MIND Network aims to create a community space to build knowledge, develop skills, and share resources regarding psychosis, schizophrenia and severe mental illness. Please share with us your novel ideas, useful resources, upcoming events, research updates and inspiring stories. You may reach us by phone at 508-856-MIND (6463) or by e-mail at [mind@umassmed.edu](mailto:mind@umassmed.edu). To learn more about us, [click here](#).*

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## EDITORS

Kalea Barger, Lauren Silva, Catherine Leonard,  
Zachary Wipff, Brianne Calitri

