

Let's Talk About Mental Health

Hope For Families Coping with Schizophrenia

(NAPSA)—A new report has good news for people with schizophrenia and their families. While a recent study by the National Institute of Mental Health highlighted the challenges for patients with schizophrenia to stick to a treatment regimen, many medical professionals and mental health advocates believe that the newer antipsychotic drugs—and innovations in how they are delivered—make it more likely that the more than three million people in the U.S. with schizophrenia will be able to stay on treatment and control their symptoms.

“Many of our medications are very effective if they are taken properly,” said Dr. Robert Conley of the University of Maryland. “In an illness like schizophrenia, where not taking medications can lead to cycles of relapse and rehospitalization, some people may need a different way to take their medicine. For example, while an oral medication may be good for some people, others may benefit from a long-acting injectable.”

The failure to take prescribed medications is one of the most serious problems in treating people with schizophrenia. For 44-year-old Randy Polk of Jackson, Mississippi, not adhering to the medications prescribed to treat his schizophrenia also led to unemployment, frequent jail sentences and alienation from his family. When his doctor suggested a long-acting injectable as a means to help Randy stay on



A new therapeutic approach could help people with schizophrenia.

his medication, Randy's wife Connie was eager for “anything that could help”—her husband had never stayed on any medication for more than three months. To the couple's surprise, Randy was able to adhere to the injectable dosage, and his cycle of hospitalizations and incarcerations was broken.

Today, Randy has reconnected with his family and describes himself as a “calmer, happier” person who for the first time is able to enjoy being with people. Because an inclination to discontinue treatment is an inherent trait of schizophrenia, physicians need to carefully consider which medication and delivery system will work best for each individual patient.

For more information about schizophrenia and innovations in treatment, visit www.mentalwellness.com.