Schizophrenia Diagnostic Criteria

- Schizophrenia is a psychotic disorder characterized by a combination of specific positive and negative symptoms.
  - **Positive Symptoms:**
    - Hallucinations: something a person experiences that other people do not experience
      - Most common are **Auditory & Visual**
        - Auditory hallucinations are often threatening & critical ("you’re fat and stupid")
        - It is important to consider a person’s culture because some cultures it is maybe appropriate or part of a grieving process.
    - Delusions: a false believes that does not change despite being presented with facts.
      - Common examples are paranoia, thinking they are famous/important ("I’m the president"), or believing people are imposters ("you’re not my mom, you’re an imposter").
      - It is important not to argue about the delusions because these are the person’s reality—you can make the person agitated.
    - Severe impairment in speech & thought process
      - Common examples are severe tangents, not being able to describe a thought, or random words put together without meaning.
    - Facial expressions that do not fit the situation
      - Example: Telling someone that a relative died while laughing.
    - Inability to shower, brush teeth, changing clothing without assistance or promptings.
  - **Negative Symptoms:**
    - Severely restricted or no observable facial emotions.
      - Example: lack of smiling, lack of crying, etc.
    - Loss of willpower and decisiveness
      - Example: not going out with friends, lack of interests in activities, sitting in the house for many hours of the day doing nothing.
    - Ability to communicate is impaired
      - Example: Not able to think of simple words to describe something
    - Speech is limited and contains little to no meaningful information
      - Speech contains little of no meaningful information
    - Loss of ability to experience pleasure
- Individuals must show signs of disorder for a minimum of 6 months.
Treatments:

- The most common treatment for schizophrenia is anti-psychotic medication. Below is a list of the medications that you might see (most common are in *italics*).
  - Clozaril
  - Zyprexa
  - Seroquel
  - Geodon
  - Abilify
  - Risperdal
  - Haldol
  - Prolixin
  - Thorazine
  - Droperidol
  - Stelazine
  - Loxapine
  - Moban
  - Loxitane
  - Trilafon
  - Navane
  - Mellaril
  - Serentil

- Other treatments include:
  - Social skills training
  - Education about the disorder
  - Therapy (group, individual, family)
Quick Facts About Schizophrenia

- **Causes:**
  - Research indicates that there are environmental and biological factors associated with schizophrenia.
    - Research states that schizophrenia is associated with a chemical imbalance in the brain. The medications are designed to help that chemical imbalance.
    - It is interesting to note, that the Diagnostic Criteria for Psychiatric Disorders Manual indicates that there is no known etiology of schizophrenia found at this time. Meaning, there has not been a direct finding of the cause of the illness.

- **Onset:**
  - Onset typically occurs in late adolescence of early adulthood. Although it is rare, early onset can occur during late childhood and early adolescence.
Community Resources

- Support Groups:
  - Visions of Hope Peer Support Groups (various locations within Phoenix)
    - [http://phxhope.org/support-groups](http://phxhope.org/support-groups)
  - NAMI Connection
    - [http://www.namisa.org](http://www.namisa.org)
    - NAMI has a lot of different support groups and services available throughout the state.

- Community Information and Referral Services
  - [http://www.cir.org/](http://www.cir.org/)
  - Online directory to various agencies that can help with anything from adoption, to mental health, transportation needs.

- Book:
  - “Surviving Schizophrenia: A manual for families, patients, and provider”
    - Author: E. Fuller Torrey
    - I have not read this book yet, but from what I understand, the book is comprehensive, easy to read, and a valuable resource.