

Cultural and Contextual Considerations in the Early Identification of Risk for Psychosis
Dr. Jason Schiffman

Date: Thursday, December 14, 2023

Time: 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM (PST)

Location: Virtual training by Zoom

Registration Deadline: Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Fee: Free for UCI Counseling Staff

CE Credits: 2 hours (*will only be granted to those who attend the entire program and complete an evaluation*).

Zoom link: To be provided after
registration

Program Description:

Inspired by the growing recognition that early intervention leads to better outcomes among people along a continuum for psychosis, efforts to identify people at clinical high-risk (CHR) for psychosis have grown exponentially in the past decade. Gains in identification and assessment have been propelled by advanced statistically derived formulas based on large samples. Although this macro-level process has been productive for many, this approach has focused primarily on White people, evolving from a mental health system grounded in White culture. Typical CHR interview practices such as those employed with the Structured Interview for Prodromal Syndromes (SIPS) may in some cases not fully honor individual differences of those being evaluated. As a result, existing practices can fail to identify some individuals from marginalized communities who are at risk for psychosis, while at the same time misdiagnose others. Evidence suggests that conditions associated with marginalized identities such as the stress of immigrant status, being “othered” as an ethnic/racial minority, and exposure to neighborhood crime and trauma increase risk for developing psychosis-spectrum disorders. Simultaneously, contextual or environmental factors can lead to endorsing items – particularly those related to suspiciousness – on CHR assessment tools when the underlying mechanism is unrelated to psychosis. Whether potentiating the development of psychosis, or creating a context where measurement error leads to over/mis-pathologizing, or both, accurate conceptualization of a person’s situation through the use of psychometrically valid strategies across diverse populations is critical. This talk grapples with contemporary factors related to the disparate assessment of psychosis across racial/ethnic groups, discussing how responses to discrimination, crime, and/or trauma may be causally or concurrently (or concurrently that leads to causality) linked to psychosis risk symptoms. The validity of common assessment measures is described among Black people, and in the context of high-crime neighborhoods, with findings suggesting a need for focused attention towards intercultural and contextual responsiveness. Further, assumptions inherent in certain risk assessment questions are scrutinized to assess if behaviors or beliefs considered problematic if observed among White people are equally predictive among minority groups (e.g., belief in superstitions, déjà vu, having special talents, religious convictions). Ultimately, this talk asserts that a lack of cultural/contextual consideration, as well as a lack of validated measures for marginalized groups, can lead to diagnostic confusion, false-positives, and large-scale health disparities, especially in the context of federal funding that is actively encouraging growth to scale in this area. The talk concludes with steps clinicians, researchers, and leaders can take to challenge the status quo in the service of making assessment of risk more inclusive and accurate.

Learning Objectives:

1. Provide an overview of psychosis and risk, with a focus on social/societal/systems influences.
2. Identify signs of psychosis-risk symptoms through exposure to risk assessment tools.
3. Describe actions that can be taken to change the status quo with respect to potential biases and health disparities in this field.

Agenda:

9:00 - 9:05 AM:	Introductions.
9:05 - 9:20 AM:	Overview of psychosis and value of early identification.
9:20 – 9:30 AM:	Historical and contemporary context.
9:30 – 10:00 AM:	Diagnostic assessment.
10:00-10:20 AM:	The need for careful consideration.
10:20 – 10:35 AM:	Tangible recommendations to reduce bias and increase equity.
10:35 – 10:50 AM:	Clinical vignette.
10:50-11:00 AM:	Discussion/Questions

About the Presenter:

Dr. Jason Schiffman earned a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Southern California. He is Professor and Director of Clinical Training within the Department of Psychological Science, University of California, Irvine. Dr. Schiffman previously founded and developed two clinical, research, and training programs serving people at clinical high risk for psychosis. He has published nearly 200 scientific articles and procured \$12M in grants. Dr. Schiffman is one of only three certified trainers of the SIPS in the US. His psychosis research refines the identification process of people at risk, elucidates the effects of psychosocial interventions, and uncovers mechanisms reducing stigma.

Click on the following link to register:

[Cultural & Contextual Considerations
in Early Identification of Risk for
Psychosis - Registration Form](#)

