

## EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

### *DAN AND MARGOT*

Documentary Feature

A film by Chloe Sosa-Sims & Jake Chirico



#### **Basic Facts about Schizophrenia**

- It is a brain disease: the result of physical and biochemical changes;
- Age of onset is 15 – 24 years;
- Prevalence is 1 in 100;
- It is treatable, but not curable;
- Symptoms are varied but may include social withdrawal, disordered thinking, hallucinations, delusions, paranoia;
- Self-medicating and suicide rates are extremely high;
- Early intervention and treatment is critical for better prognosis.

#### **Schizophrenia is not:**

- Split personality;
- Caused by childhood trauma, bad parenting or poverty;
- Caused by the actions or personal failure of the individual.

#### **Margot**

Margot is very brave and struggles to make things “right”. She says she “screwed up her education, “that “when she was on her own she didn’t do things 100% right” and “others are doing better in life than I am”. Despite believing she has failed, there are no known ways to prevent schizophrenia. Margot did not cause her illness.

## Recovery

Schizophrenia is unique to each individual, and recovery is supported by: a good psychiatrist, a mental health team, family, and supportive friends. Recovery is often not going back to who you were before you became ill, but finding meaning, belonging, health, and happiness in making a new life.



### Questions to consider:

What steps does Margot take to aid in her recovery?

How have her family or friends assisted in her recovery?

How do stressors impact Margot's recovery?

### Answers

In the movie, there are some comments about medication. Anti-psychotic medication is essential for recovery. It is not the only part of recovery, but after diagnosis, it is the first step. Many other factors play an important role in recovery: psychosocial therapies, sleep, exercise, healthy eating, safe and clean living space, and supportive friends or family. Eventually, there can be a return to meaningful work, however that is defined by each individual with schizophrenia.

In Margot's case, she was very dedicated to losing weight associated with the medication, and continuing with an exercise regime. She has the support of family and friends. She has a drive to make things better in her life.

Stressors for Margot included: lack of sleep, moving, smoking, and drinking alcohol. In the case of Margot, she is taking a medication called Clozapine. This medication is very effective for people who do not respond to other medications, but it is hard on the body. In addition, smoking reduces the effectiveness of Clozapine by up to 50%.

## Stigma

“Schizophrenic” is no longer considered an appropriate term. People who are diagnosed with any illness are not their illness. “She has schizophrenia” is more commonly used than “she is schizophrenic”.

In the movie Dan and Margot, a comment is made that there is “no stigma” anymore. At mental health organizations, like the Schizophrenia Societies, they battle stigma every day. Many people, including government agencies, do not believe the prevalence rate is 1 in 100. Funding for severe mental illness is extremely low based on prevalence, compared to other illnesses like AIDS, Type 2 Diabetes, and many others. Some psychiatrists believe we should NOT use the diagnostic word “schizophrenia” because people with schizophrenia are discriminated against. We believe the more we say it, like AIDS and Cancer, the more people will except it, and the stigma, that results in discrimination, will be decreased.



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For more information on schizophrenia & support, contact your local schizophrenia society [here](#).

For more information on the film, contact: [info@silenceandspace.com](mailto:info@silenceandspace.com) or check our website: <http://danandmargot.com/>