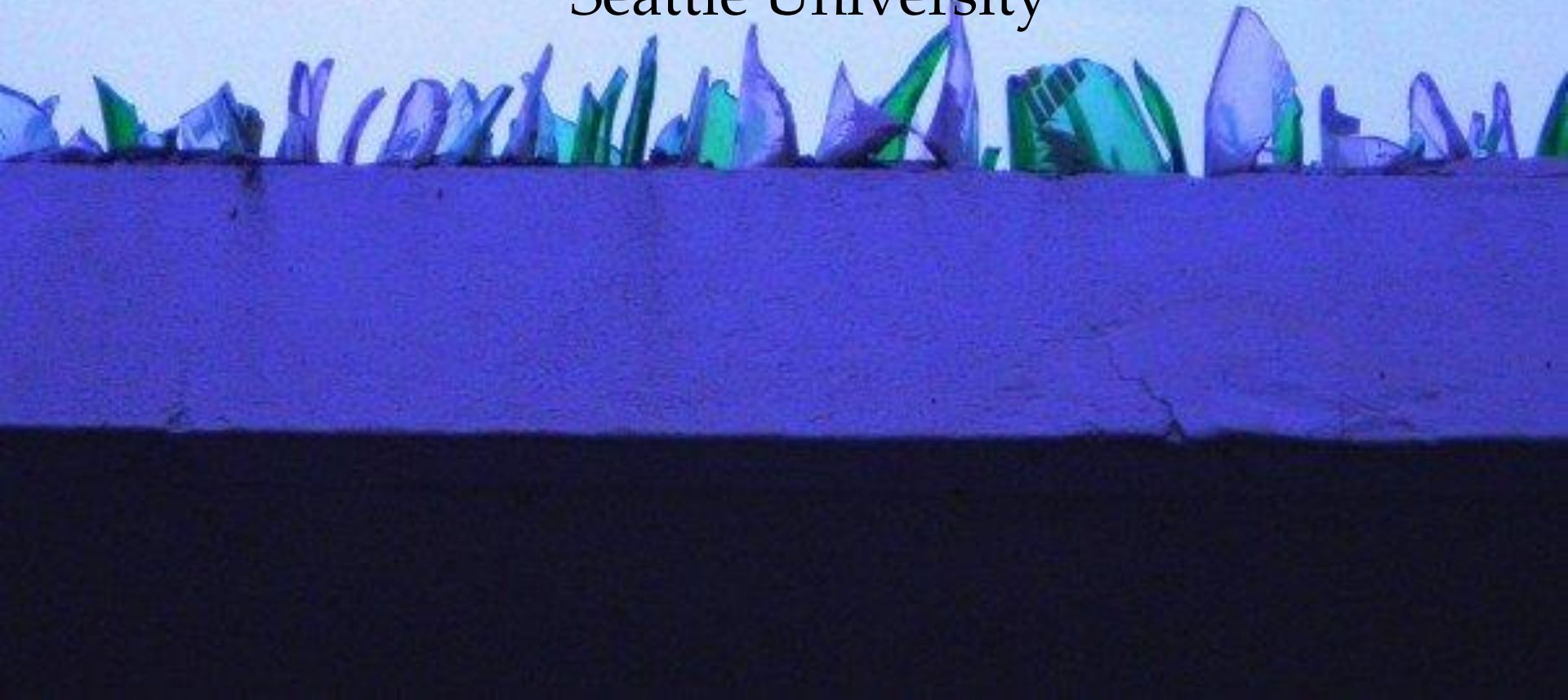


A Journey of Bipolar: Supporting Adolescents with Mental Health Conditions

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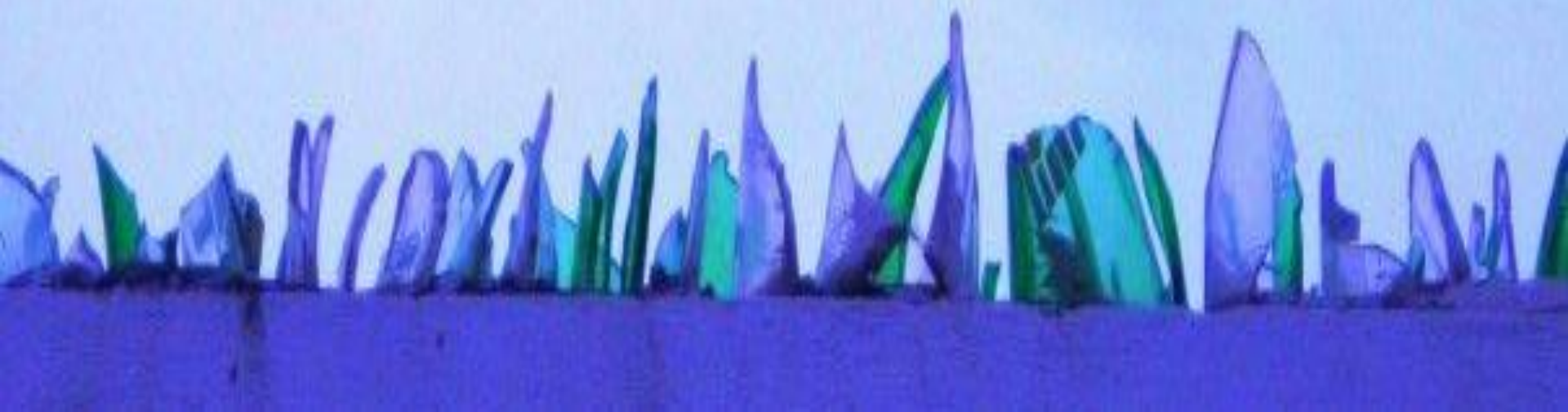
Mental Health Conditions in Adolescents

- Often first symptoms of MHCs occur in early adolescence and during the crucial stages of social, emotional and cognitive development.
- Adverse affect on typical transitions and learning experiences in areas critical to adolescent development.



MHC in Adolescents

- Any acute illness in teenage years affects social, emotional and educational development.
- Early symptoms may be markedly different from adults.
- Increased risk of substance abuse.
- Increased risk of suicidal behaviors.



Mental Health Conditions in Adolescents

- 1 in 5 adolescents have some sort of mental, behavioral or emotional problem.
- 1 in 8 have a serious depression.
- 1 in 10 have a severe mental health condition including bipolar or other significant mood disorders.
- Increased risk of substance abuse.



Bipolar Disorder in Adolescents

- Bipolar is under-recognized in childhood and adolescence.
- Diagnosis and distinguishing between ADHD, schizophrenic disorders, depression and physical disorders is problematic.
- Few studies to establish prevalence of bipolar in children but diagnosis has increased.

Symptoms & Diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder

- Core feature for diagnosis is repeated (at least two) episodes of elevated or depressed mood.
- Depressive episodes, with/without psychotic symptoms.
- Hypomania, mania, with/without psychotic symptoms.

Depressive Phases

- Apathy
- Social withdrawal
- Loss of interests and pleasure
- Irritable
- Hopelessness
- Suicidal ideation



Hypomania or Mania Phases

- Overactive
- Full of energy
- Poor concentration
- Irritability, anxiety
- Excesses: spending, drugs, alcohol, sex



Multiple Poles

- High end competencies, energies and creativity.
- Mixed affective episodes.
- Rapid cycling mood disorders.
- May alternate, cycle, or not be strongly felt.
- Primary intensity may be thoughts or beliefs.



Diagnosis

- Diagnostic uncertainty & misdiagnosis
 - ADHD, Oppositional Defiant/Conduct Disorder
 - Depression, Bipolar II
 - Acute manic state vs. schizophrenia
- May be important to avoid early definitive diagnosis
- Recurrent depressive episodes may be first presentation in adolescents



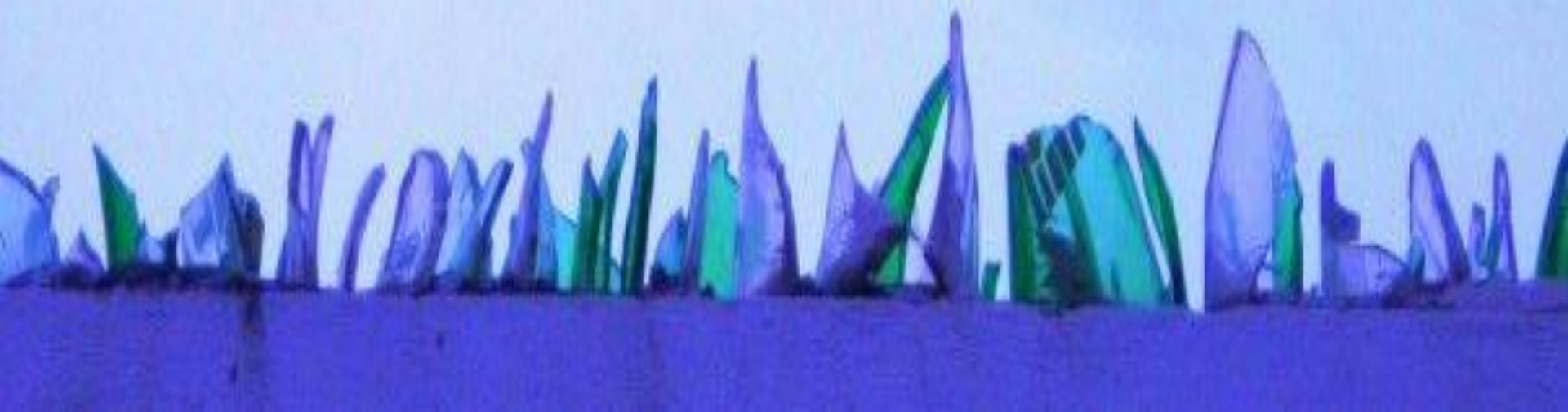
Treatment

- Management of a depressive episode
- Management of manic episode
- Treatment between episodes

Multi-modal approach is critical

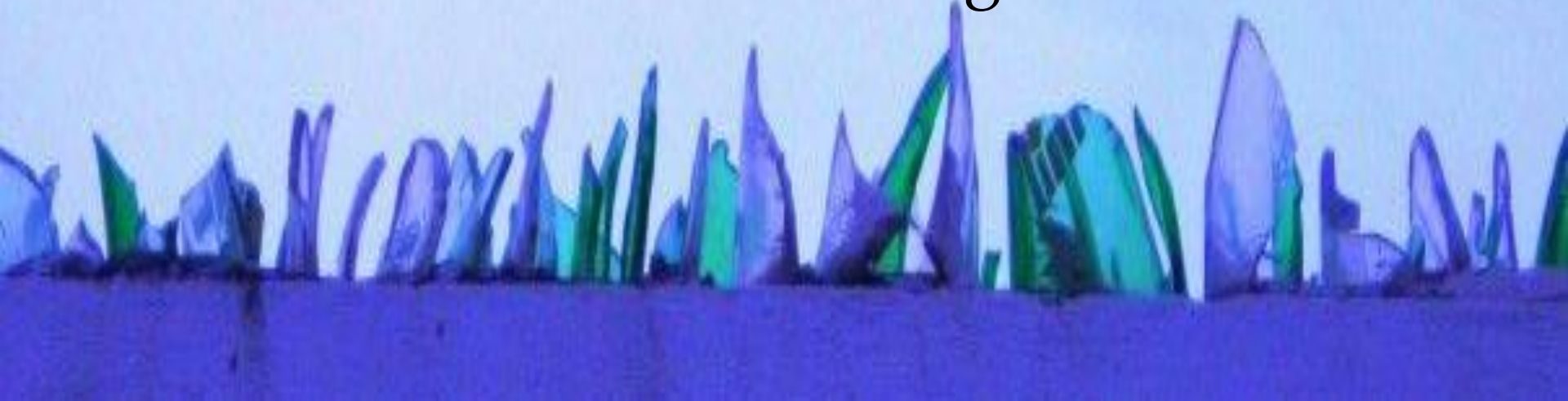


Only 30% of youth who want
and need services receive
services one year after leaving
high school.



Transition Outcomes for Youth with MH Conditions

- Fewer than half complete high school.
- Consistently less employed than same-age peers.
- Income at poverty level.
- Fewer lived with families.
- Homelessness & arrests high.



Strike A Balance

- Youth want to define for themselves who they are.
- Youth want guidance and knowledge about how to function independently.
- Youth report either too authoritative or assumptions that they have many life skills they have not yet acquired.



Goals

- Engage the young person.
- Involve and support their families and other informal key players (friend, foster parent, aunt).
- Ensure the delivery of coordinated, developmentally-appropriate services and supports to the young people and their families.

(Clark, et al., 2000)

Linea's Transition Plan

- Employment
 - A job that will allow me to be fully independent
 - A job that is interesting, exciting, and makes use of my talents
 - A job that understands my health needs
 - A job with health insurance

To Find Employment:

- Use (and don't be afraid to use) family and friend connections
 - Informational interviews
 - Services to search for jobs of interest
 - Developing a “package” with resume, etc.
 - Identifying “marketable skills”

In General...

- Assistance if I don't get a job figuring out how to keep medical insurance.
- Counseling and support to help me through the transition process, to help me move into a place that I am afraid of and to realize that I am not simply going to be thrown out into the cold world.

Thoughts for Teachers

- Don't turn away
- Notice every student every day
- Gather data
- Communicate with families
- Advocate for student with administrators, others
- Develop robust transition plans and provide services.

Thoughts for Families & Friends

- Listen (don't try to fix it)
- Be careful with advice
- Be there (don't try to fix it)
- Offer to do even small things that may be overwhelming
- Accompany to meetings that may be stressful (DSS, doctor, employer)

Youth Lead

Young people cannot be expected to take responsibility for themselves when systems communicate that they are not capable of making decisions about their own treatment or services.



www.lineacinda.com