Psychosocial Issues and Asthma Management

Susanna Rozema, LMSW, AE-C
Licensed Social Worker
Asthma Network of West Michigan
I. Issues or Concerns for Asthmatic Patient or Caregiver

A. Compliance
   - Explore reasons for non-compliance (ie: side effects of medications; forgetful)
   - Motivational Interviewing

B. Knowing how to deal with an asthma attack or related emergency

C. Communication w/ family, work & school
Issues or Concerns for Patient or Caregiver (Continued)

D. Limitations
E. Missed work or missed school
F. Impending psychosocial issues that override importance of asthma management
II. Issues or Concerns for Pediatric Asthmatic Patient

A. Compliance with the treatment plan
   - Taking medications as prescribed
   - Following Asthma Action Plan

B. Thoughts or feelings regarding normalcy:
   - Embarrassment
   - “Different” or left out
   - Alternate plans to avoid triggers
Issues or Concerns for Pediatric Asthmatic Patient (Continued)

C. Fear of fatality
D. Limitations
E. Relationship problems due to asthma
F. Impending psychosocial issues that override importance of asthma management
III. Interventions to Address Patient or Caregiver Concerns

A. Individualized asthma education with patient and caregiver
- “Knowledge is power”
- Education provides the needed tools to take an active role in asthma management
Interventions (Continued)

B. Communication with family and friends
   - Trigger reduction in the home
   - Family get-togethers related to trigger avoidance
   - Balance of providing time and positive attention to the child with asthma, as well as to the other children in the home
Interventions (Continued)

C. School Environment
   - School visit to teach staff how to deal with an asthmatic child
   - Copy of asthma action plan
   - Medic alert tag
   - Collaboration with teachers
   - Accessibility of medication
   - Premedicating before gym or activity
Interventions (Continued)

D. How to deal with limitations
   - While allowing patient to vent their feelings, promote positive thinking by focusing on those things they can do
   - Provide opportunities for the patient to express emotions related to having asthma
Interventions (Continued)

E. Options for expression of feelings
   (ie: counseling, journaling, artwork, music, relaxation exercise)
F. Encourage patient to pursue his/her dreams and address obstacles as they arise
G. Collaboration with the physician and health care team- provides a sense of control
Interventions (Continued)

H. Counseling or support groups for those experiencing difficulty with adjustment of having asthma
IV. Impending Psychosocial Issues and Resources

A. Housing
   - State Emergency Relief (SER)
   - Salvation Army
   - Housing commission / Section 8
   - Healthy Homes
   - Habitat for Humanity
   - Collaboration with landlords
Psychosocial Issues / Resources (Continued)

B. Inadequate finances
   - First Call for Help
   - Department of Human Services - State Emergency Relief (SER)
   - Pregnancy Resource Center
   - Patient Assistance Programs through pharmaceutical companies.
   - Financial assistance through local churches
Psychosocial Issues / Resources (Continued)

C. Insurance
- Health Insurance Marketplace Exchange
- Medicaid
- MI Child
- Michigan Enrolls
- Children Special Health Care Services
D. Mental illness

- Depression

  Symptoms include: Change in appetite, mood swings, irritability, insomnia or oversleeping, withdrawal from normal activities or interests, tearfulness, hopelessness, suicidal ideation, etc.

- Counseling and / or medication
Psychosocial Issues / Resources (Continued)

- Possibility of suicide.

Basic assessment questions:

* Do they express reasons to live? 
  (ie: family, their faith, etc.)

* Do they express suicidal ideation? How often?

* Do they have a plan?
Psychosocial Issues / Resources (Continued)

E. Transportation
- Cab vouchers - Medicaid plans.
- Public transportation
- American Red Cross
- Go Bus
Psychosocial Issues / Resources (Continued)

F. Food, clothing and furniture
   - Food and clothing banks by location
   - Goodwill or Salvation Army
   - In the Image
G. Domestic Violence

-Signs of former abuse: depression, nervousness, uncontrollable rage, “tough attitude,” antisocial behavior, frequent illness / psychosomatic symptoms, nightmares, hyperactivity, hypervigilant, attention seeking behavior, etc.
- Signs of current abuse:
  Bruises, bumps, scratches, cuts; burns and bite marks; vision and/or hearing problems; aggressive or withdrawn behavior; poor hygiene; uncomfortable when sitting, signs of malnutrition; attention seeking; daydreaming; inappropriate play or inability to play with peers, etc.
Psychosocial Issues / Resources (Continued)

H. Cultural and / or language barriers
   - Dealing with differences
   - Appreciate differences
   - Focus on similarities between cultural groups
   - Focus on personal characteristics and qualities of individuals
   - Make efforts to interact with other cultures
Psychosocial Issues / Resources (Continued)

I. Hostility and negativism
   - Remind them that participation is voluntary
   - Resentment and hostility is most often a result of other factors - try not take it personally
   - Empathize and allow them to vent feelings
Do what you can, where you are are, with what you have.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you today! 😊