



# Psychology Awareness 2021

## Issue # 4

### Psychology?! But my patient has a chronic health condition!

Adebayo was a 37-year-old man with type 2 diabetes. Despite regular visits with his physician, he was struggling to lower his A1c. A psychologist was called in to consult and support ...

#### Why would I bother referring to psychology?

- Behaviour plays a role in the **etiology** and **prognosis** many conditions.
- A person's mental health **can increase the risk** of developing a chronic condition.
- Receiving a diagnosis can cause low mood, worry, and stress. This can make it harder to follow medical treatments.

#### You can educate a patient ...

- Health education often isn't enough to prompt adherence.
- (How many of us make "unhealthy choices" in our day-to-day life, even though we know better?)
- Adherence is **extremely complex**, and involves factors like confidence, readiness, skills, resources, and social support.

#### My patient is depressed/anxious because they are upset about their disease.

- Mental and physical health issues are **intertwined**.
- It's normal to go through a period of **adjustment** after being diagnosed.
- Many patients show **resiliency**. Some will need help to adjust.
- Patients can have mental health issues that can **exacerbate** disease.

... The psychologist provided education on diabetes, including the fact that diabetes can cause depressive symptoms. They worked together to identify avoidance patterns and develop emotion regulation skills. With 4 psychology visits over 8 weeks, Adebayo's A1c dropped to healthy levels.

Psychologists work with patients to help **optimize self-management**, **cope with chronic disease**, and **deal with stressors**. They take a **collaborative** and **person-centred approach to reaching goals**.