

CHAMP CLINIC

The official newsletter of the UCLA Mood Disorders Program

10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



Pictured are Megan Ichinose, Ph.D. (Fellow); Manal Khan, M.D. (Fellow); Jessica Burns, Psy. D. (Fellow); Jenny Nguyen, M.D. (Fellow); Laurie Gordon (Founder, Max Gray Fund for Treatment of Mood Disorders); Colin Price, M.D. (2023-24 Adult Mood Disorders Clinic); Gregory Barnett, M.D. (Fellow); and David Miklowitz, Ph.D. (Director, CHAMP)

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Dear friends,

It remains a difficult time in our community. Please know that we in the Max Gray program have kept those affected by the wildfires in our thoughts. As the city moves forward, we are here for you and your family.

We are at a pivotal moment in mental health care. Rates of depression and anxiety in kids and teenagers have nearly doubled in the last five years, and we expect the need to continue to rise. Thanks to our psychiatry and psychology Fellows, the Max Gray Child and Adolescent Mood Disorders Program (CHAMP) has increased the number of evaluation and treatment sessions by 77% in the past year alone. The Max Gray program has also enabled CHAMP to engage in new research studies, further enhancing our approach to treating kids with complex mood disorders and their families. More details about these important initiatives can be found in this newsletter.

As always, thank you for your support of our work. You can keep reading to learn more about our Fellows and their efforts in 2024. And again, please reach out if we may be of assistance to you or your children.

Sincerely,

David Miklowitz, Ph.D.

Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA
Director, Max Gray Child and Adolescent Mood Disorders Program (CHAMP)
Jane and Terry Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior at UCLA

UCLA

Semel Institute for
Neuroscience & Human Behavior

MAX GRAY FUND FOR
TREATMENT OF MOOD DISORDERS



Greg Barnett, M.D.

Dr. Barnett is a fourth-year Max Gray Fellow. He is looking forward to further refining his skills in psychiatric evaluations, medication management and individual therapy with complex patients with mood disorders. Dr. Barnett is most excited about seeing the continued growth of the individuals and families he has worked with for multiple years as a Fellow in the CHAMP clinic.

From Dr. Barnett:

As part of my work during the Max Gray Fellowship, I have had the opportunity to pursue several interests. Since my first year, I have been deeply involved in engaging teens in psychotherapy, which can be particularly challenging as a psychiatrist, given that most medical systems often limit us to medication management. This year, I have also begun assisting on an exciting research study led by Marc Weintraub, Ph.D., and Dr. Miklowitz that explores the combination of psilocybin, the active ingredient in psychedelic mushrooms, and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) in the treatment of depression in adults. Transitioning from therapy with teens to research on psychedelics provides an interesting and dynamic pivot in my week. I would not have had these opportunities elsewhere.



Jessica Burns, Psy.D.

Dr. Burns is a second-year Max Gray Fellow. Her clinical and research interests are centered on the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of neurological and psychological conditions in children, including attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disorders, autism spectrum disorder and mood disorders.

In the CHAMP clinic, she conducts diagnostic evaluations and provides individual and family-based treatment for youth affected by mood disorders. She also delivers clinical care to youth and families involved in research studies, such as the Child and Adolescent Bipolar Network Study (CBN). In addition to the Max Gray Fellowship, Dr. Burns serves as the chief pediatric neuropsychology fellow in the UCLA Medical Psychology Assessment

Center. There, she performs comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations to assess cognitive, academic, emotional and behavioral functioning in children and adolescents. She also provides tiered supervision and training in pediatric neuropsychology to predoctoral trainees.

Dr. Burns is dedicated to using her training in brain development and mood disorders to create individualized treatment plans that are grounded in empirical evidence, informed by assessment results and aligned with each child's and family's strengths, background and needs. She strives to employ a collaborative approach that involves teamwork and open communication between youth, families and providers.



Manal Khan, M.D.

Dr. Khan is a third-year Max Gray Fellow. She believes in employing a holistic approach to clinical care and using the biopsychosocial framework in her interactions with patients. In addition to the Max Gray Fellowship, she works in UCLA's child and adolescent inpatient unit and the Child and Adult Neurodevelopmental Disorders Clinic. She is also the associate program director for the UCLA Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellowship Program, director of this fellowship's psychiatry clinic and faculty lead for the fellowship's Community and Global Child Psychiatry Area of Distinction.

From Dr. Khan:

The Max Gray Fellowship has enabled me to provide comprehensive care to patients with mood disorders. Often, the patients who are referred to us for treatment have been through multiple providers and diagnoses. The structure of this clinic allows us to do a thorough diagnostic assessment and medical evaluation by interviewing the patient and their parent(s). We also collaborate with our colleagues in psychology who do parts of this assessment; the clinic is truly interdisciplinary! Together, we obtain extensive information on the patient's life story, psychiatric history and presenting concerns. This gives us diagnostic clarity that is often difficult to achieve in places where providers operate alone and with rigid time constraints. I am also grateful for the supervision that I receive from psychopharmacology- and psychotherapy-based perspectives. This includes peer supervision, which fosters a sense of community among clinicians and researchers who are dedicated to addressing mood disorders in youth.

The Max Gray Fellowship has also given me the opportunity to think about family-based interventions for immigrant youth. Coming to the United States from Pakistan and as a parent to two Pakistani-American boys, I am sensitive to the needs, concerns and strengths that immigrant parents have. Children of immigrants are an ever-growing demographic, who must navigate unique psychosocial stressors while developing and consolidating a bicultural identity. I am interested in empowering immigrant parents to help children in this process of identity formation.



Megan Ichinose, Ph.D.

Dr. Ichinose is a licensed clinical psychologist currently completing her fifth year as a Max Gray Fellow. Her clinical focus is on providing individual, family and group treatments for adolescents and young adults with mood and commonly co-occurring disorders, such as anxiety and ADHD. Over the past year, she has taken on the role of clinical supervisor in CHAMP and the Adult Mood Disorders Clinic. As supervisor, she trains masters-level therapists and psychiatry residents in family-focused therapy. In addition to her clinical work, Dr. Ichinose helps coordinate and provide clinical care for adolescents and their families participating in CHAMP research studies. She also serves as a supervising clinician in a family therapy intervention study for youth at high risk for psychosis.

From Dr. Ichinose:

I have been excited by my ongoing involvement in CBN as a project coordinator and clinical supervisor. In my current role, I have enjoyed working with expert psychologists and psychiatrists across the country to determine best practices to identify, diagnose and treat children and adolescents at risk for or already diagnosed with bipolar disorder. As part of this team, I help track classic interventions, such as medications and therapy, that contribute to prognosis, as well as lifestyle factors like diet, exercise and sleep that may play important roles in illness trajectory and symptom improvement. I have particularly enjoyed the relationships I have been able to develop when working with families as part of their care team — not only being there for them when they may need extra support or direction but also celebrating successes and treatment gains.

In the past year, I helped launch UCLA's psilocybin-assisted CBT intervention for adults with depression. I have served as a therapist for this promising new treatment that aims to harness the potential therapeutic benefits of psilocybin by integrating cognitive and behavioral skills before and after drug administration. I am proud to be part of a study that examines new treatment options for adults suffering with depression who don't find relief from first-line treatments like antidepressants or psychotherapy.



Jenny Nguyen, M.D.

Dr. Nguyen is a second-year Max Gray Fellow in the CHAMP clinic. Her clinical interests are in acute psychiatric care settings, including inpatient hospitalization and psychiatric emergency services, with an emphasis on mood disorders and suicide prevention. Dr. Nguyen's research focuses on suicide prevention; addressing disparities in mental health care, especially for Asian Americans; and translating evidence-based interventions into clinical practice.

Additionally, she is an attending psychiatrist in the child and adolescent inpatient unit in the Stewart and Lynda Resnick Neuropsychiatric Hospital at UCLA, the psychopharmacology clinic and the Youth Mood and Stress Clinic.

From Dr. Nguyen:

CHAMP has provided me with a valuable opportunity to develop specialized knowledge and clinical training for managing bipolar disorder and other complex mood disorders. CHAMP introduced me to family-focused therapy, which promotes education, problem-solving and communication skills. This approach is particularly useful for bipolar disorder because it provides a framework for families to be productively involved in their child's care. The benefits of my training at CHAMP extend beyond the clinic. I am able to apply what I've learned directly in the inpatient setting, where we treat the most acute and high-risk patients. In the process, my own trainees learn about best practices for diagnosing and managing complex mood disorders, which will be crucial once they move on to work in the community and other medical settings.

Child and Adolescent Bipolar Network (CBN)

CBN is a multi-university network established to study the diagnosis and treatment of kids, adolescents and young adults (ages 9 to 21) with bipolar I or II disorder and develop evidence-based guidelines for treating them. The need for a child bipolar network modeled on national networks, such as the national cancer centers, has been recommended for many years. Five years of support has been provided by the Baszucki Brain Research Fund and the Milken Foundation to build this essential research infrastructure.

The network currently consists of five sites. UCLA (Max Gray CHAMP) is the lead university and organizing site, directed by Drs. Miklowitz and Ichinose. The other sites are the University of Pittsburgh/Western Psychiatric Institute, the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, the University of Cincinnati School of Medicine and Virginia Commonwealth University. We also have consultants from George Washington University and the University of Toronto.

CBN is conducting a cross-site study of diagnosis, course of illness and psychiatric treatment in youth and young adults who have a diagnosis or are showing the early warning signs of bipolar disorder: significant mood swings, changes in sleep and energy and decreases in school or social functioning. We are examining early childhood environments and metabolic and inflammatory variables that are important in the initial onset and long-term course of bipolar disorder. We are quite excited about CBN and the promise it holds for patients and families.

Understanding Prodromes and Lessening Illness in Family Therapy (UPLIFT)

UPLIFT is a multisite study looking at the efficacy of family-focused therapy for youth and young adults at high risk for psychotic disorders. The study, headed by Dr. Miklowitz and funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, has seven sites, including UCLA, Zucker Hillside Hospital (New York), the University of Calgary (Canada), Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (Boston), UC San Diego, UC San Francisco and Yale University. We currently have over 200 families in the study.



Psilocybin-Assisted Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

The Psilocybin-assisted Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Individuals with Major Depressive Disorder study, headed by Dr. Weintraub, is examining whether psilocybin, given after proper preparation and under supportive conditions, can be combined with 12 sessions of CBT to improve mood symptoms and functioning of adults with depression. Dr. Weintraub recently obtained funding from the National Institutes of Health to conduct a systematic clinical trial of psilocybin in combination with CBT.

The Ketogenic Diet Therapy Trial

The ketogenic diet therapy trial is a multisite collaboration that builds upon the work and infrastructure established by CBN. With ongoing support from the Baszucki Family Foundation and under the leadership of Dr. Miklowitz, this research explores the potential benefits of ketogenic diet therapy in reducing mood symptoms for youth with a diagnosis of a bipolar spectrum illness.

As with CBN, other sites are involved in this trial: the University of Pittsburgh/Western Psychiatric Institute, the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and the University of Cincinnati School of Medicine. At each site, participants receive a comprehensive evaluation, medication management from prominent psychiatrists in the field of pediatric bipolar disorder, 16 weeks of ketogenic meals delivered to their home and personalized support from a team of dietitians with expertise in this area.

This pilot trial will be an important step toward establishing the feasibility and acceptability of ketogenic therapy for children and youth struggling with severe mood disorders. The trial will provide insight into the nuances and challenges of diet administration and compliance, and it will allow research teams to study the metabolic and inflammatory effects of the diet and their relation to mood changes. Further, should the ketogenic diet prove effective, the pilot research taking place now will enable the building of clinical teams at four major universities to provide ketogenic therapy for youth in the early stages of severe psychiatric disorders.



Self-Care Tips

In addition to providing medications and psychotherapy, the Max Gray Fellows can help you design self-care strategies to be implemented at home when you're feeling anxious, depressed, isolated or just plain stressed out. Here are some of those strategies; not all of them will apply to your family's situation, but some will help:

- 1 Listen to a meditation recording with family members.
- 2 Exercise or move your body every day.
- 3 Schedule family meetings where problems in daily life are openly discussed.
- 4 Use good communication skills (e.g., active listening, praise).
- 5 Avoid using alcohol or drugs.
- 6 Practice good communication with your mental health provider.

TO OUR DONORS, WITH GRATITUDE

We remain deeply grateful for your commitment to preeminent mental health care for children, adolescents and adults. Please consider donating to further the work made possible by the Max Gray Fund.



YOUR IMPACT STARTS HERE

To find out more about how you can support the Max Gray Fund for Treatment of Mood Disorders, please contact:

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