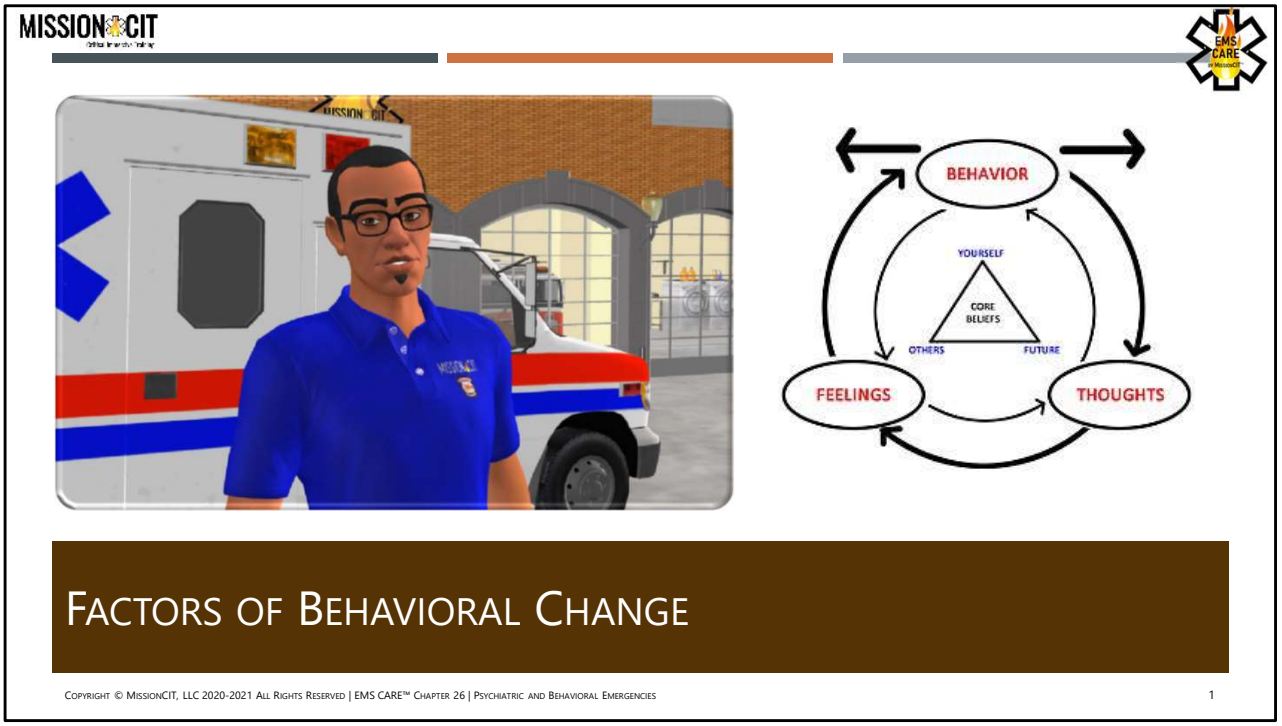
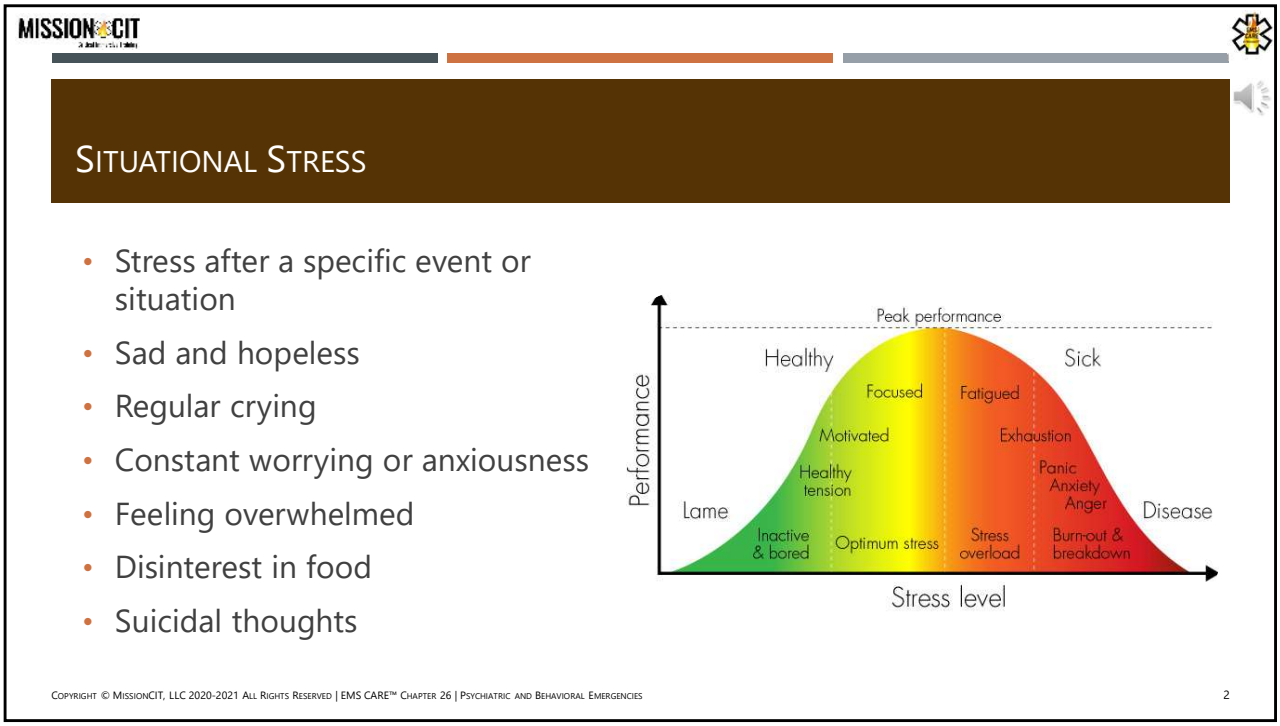


Thank you Missah! In this lesson, we will talk about the factors of behavioral change. Generally speaking, the behavior is an individual's response to an environment. Most times, individuals respond in reasonable ways and even adapt to these changes over time.

However, sometimes the environmental or internal change is too much for some individuals, and this impacts their mental well-being.

We will discuss these factors in this lesson.

Good studying!



A situational stress is a stress that a patient develops after a specific event or situation like a trauma. This stress is more like an adjustment disorder that helps to adjust to a life after that situation. The interim time to adapt to the trauma and the related stress is situational stress.

Some of the symptoms you should watch out for are:

- Sad and hopeless feeling
- Regular crying
- Constant worrying or anxiousness

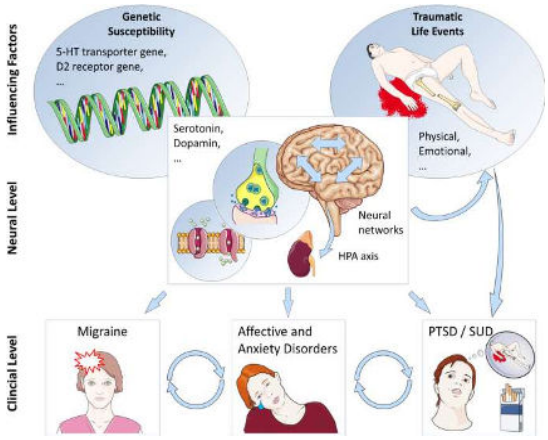
- Feeling overwhelmed
- A sense of fear about the future
- Suicidal thoughts
- Disinterest in food

You can get more details about a person's symptoms and the reasons for the same when you talk to them calmly.

If you think a person is suicidal, calm down the person, and reach out for help if needed.

Medical Illness

- Tumors in Central Nervous System
- Stroke
- Migraine
- Endocrinal Disorders
- HIV
- Medications
- Gather information from patients and family members

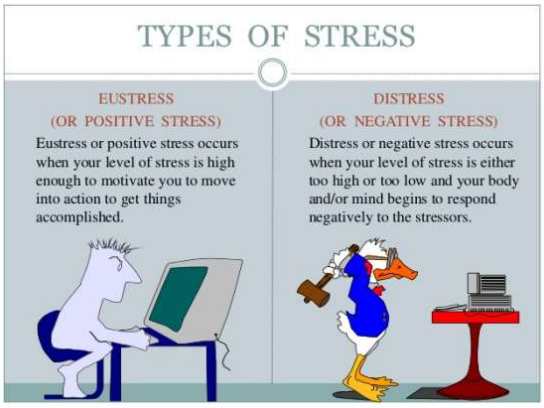


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Some medical illnesses may lead to psychiatric disorders. Some of the common ailments include tumors in the central nervous system, stroke, migraine, endocrinal disorders, and HIV. In some cases, the medication taken to address these physical conditions can lead to psychiatric disorders like depression.
The good news is that when these illnesses are treated, the symptoms go away for the most part, though some patients may also need psychiatric treatments.
As an EMT, you can gather this information by speaking with the patient, caregivers, and family members. And relaying your findings to the hospital care providers.

Psychiatric Problems

- Confusions
- Delirium
- Disorganized speech
- Random and unpredictable behavior
- Hallucinations
- Extreme mood swings
- One or more of these problems



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Moving on, sudden, or gradual changes in behavior may happen due to psychiatric problems as well. Some common behavioral patterns that indicate an underlying psychiatric challenge are:

- Confusions
- Delirium
- Disorganized speech
- Random behavior that means nothing for self and others
- Hallucinations, and
- Extreme mood swings

It’s important to understand that some people may have one or more of these disorders, depending on the underlying psychiatric difficulties they may have.

Alcohol and Drug Overdose

- Loss of coordination
- Slurred speech
- Shallow and irregular breathing
- Difficulty waking up
- Clammy skin and low body temp
- Difficulty remaining conscious
- Aggressive behavior
- Moderate memory impairment



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Drugs and alcohol overdose are another common reason for changes in behavior.

During your scene safety assessment, if a drug or alcohol overdose is the cause for behavioral change, you may find empty bottles or syringes. Also, look for prick marks on the patient, odor of drugs or alcohol in the room, as well as other pertinent signs.

Some of the common behavioral changes that can help to determine the alcohol or drug overdose are:

- Loss of coordination

- Slurred speech
- Shallow and irregular breathing
- Inability to wake up
- Clammy skin and low body temperature
- Difficulty remaining conscious
- Aggressive behavior
- Moderate memory impairment
- Poor balance, and
- Long response time

Alcohol and Drug Overdose

- Unpleasant changes when giving up an addiction
- Unable to handle the physiological changes
- Suicides are common
- Restlessness, irritability, and excitability
- Agitation and crying
- Talk to patient and family members to gather information



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Withdrawal symptoms are the unpleasant changes that a person goes through while giving up one's addiction to smoking, alcohol, and drugs. Since the body is used to a certain dose of chemicals and intoxications, it takes time for the body to get used to living without them. As a result, the interim period can trigger many unpleasant changes.

Unfortunately, withdrawal symptoms may cause aggressive behavior because an individual is unable to handle the physiological changes as the body gets back to normal. Sometimes, this inability to handle the pain

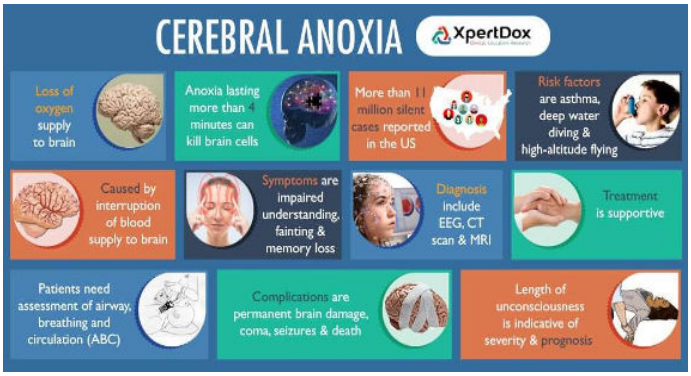
may cause an individual to attempt suicide. Be cognizant of these risks while attending to patients with withdrawal symptoms.

Other behavioral changes from withdrawal may include agitation, crying, restlessness, irritability, and excitability.

Talking to family members and care providers can provide more details about the patient's past use of drugs or alcohol to help in your patient risk assessment.

Lack of Oxygen

- Lack of enough oxygen to brain
- Short-term memory loss
- Depression and anxiety
- Loss of focus and coordination
- Emotional instability
- Spatial problems
- Lowered consciousness



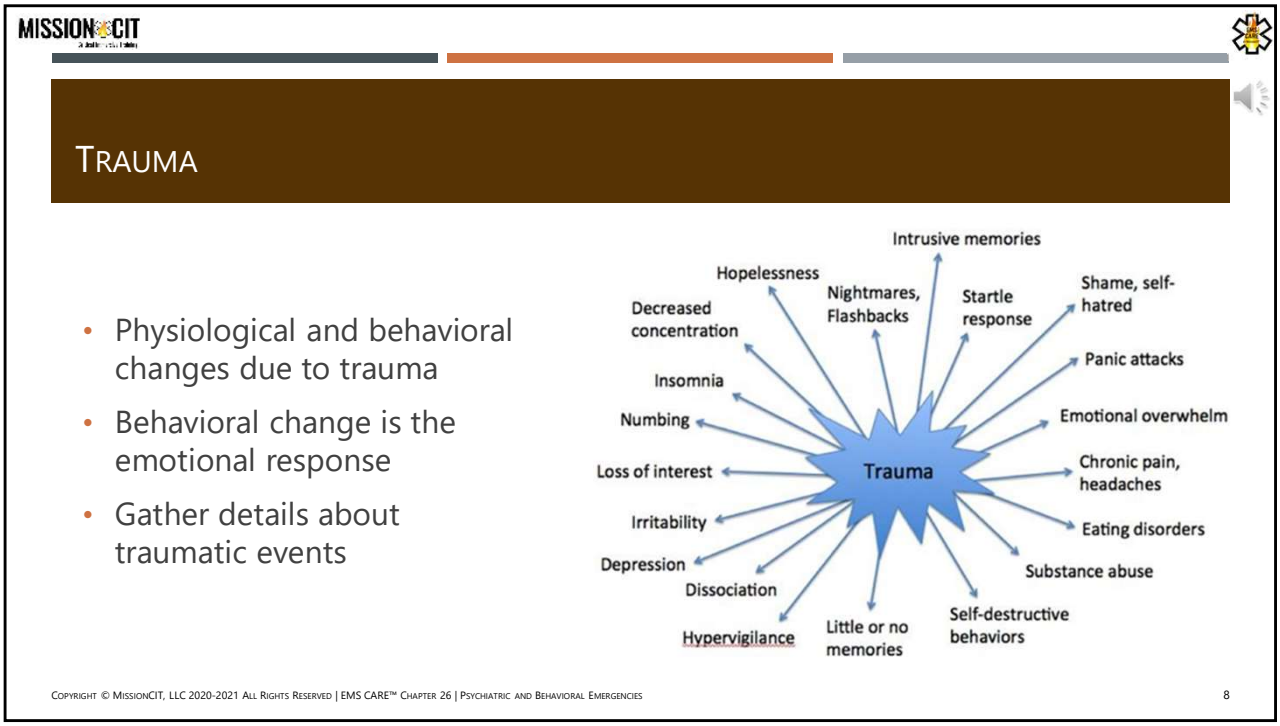
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Behavioral changes can also happen when a person doesn't get enough oxygen in the body. This condition is called Hypoxia.

When the brain doesn't get enough oxygen for an extended time, there are many cognitive, behavioral, and personality changes, because the brain needs a constant supply of oxygen for its vital functioning. This condition is called cerebral anoxia.

Some behavioral changes that occur due to this cerebral anoxia include,

- Short-term memory loss
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of coordination and balance
- Dizziness, sweating, and an increase in heart rate
- Loss of concentration and coordination
- Confusion and disorientation
- Lowered consciousness
- Difficulty talking and understanding
- Emotional instability, and
- Spatial problems, that is the inability to sense the place of one’s body in a room



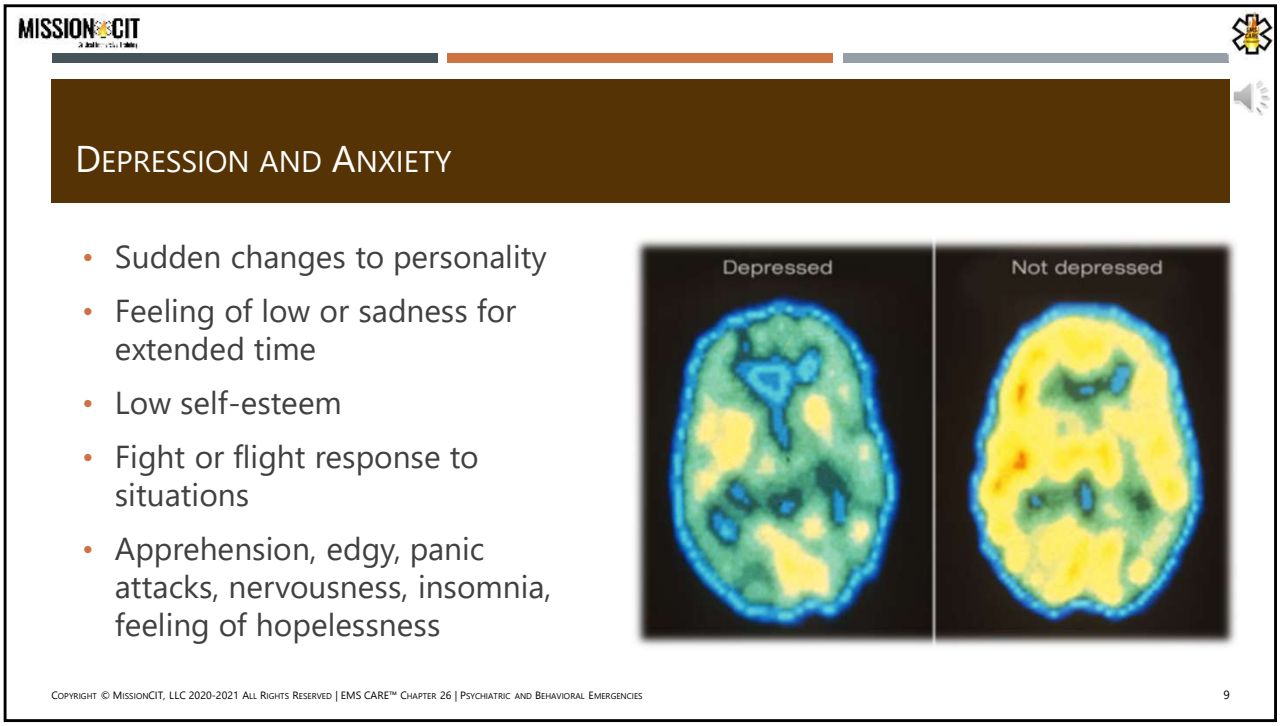
Changes to personality and behavior are common after a traumatic event, especially if it has led to the loss of a loved one.

Behavioral changes occur due to two reasons. The first is the physiological changes that can happen in the brain as a result of the trauma, while the second is the emotional response of an individual towards that incident. A concussion is a common physiological event that can trigger behavioral changes.

Some common behavioral changes that occur due to the physiological impact of the trauma include anger,

irritability, oversensitivity to stimulation through sense organs such as excess noise or light, mood swings, anxiety, memory loss, and depression.

On the other hand, some common behavioral changes that happen due to the emotional impact of trauma are fear, anxiety, heightened state of alertness, insomnia, uncontrollable tears or laughter, social withdrawal, and lower attention span.



Some mental disorders can bring about sudden changes to personality, and depression is one of the most common mental disorders.

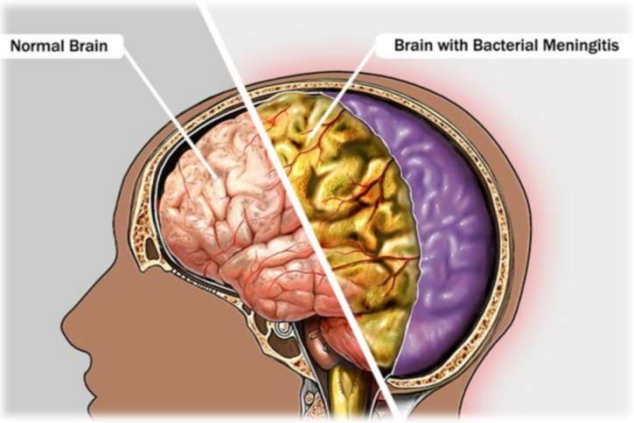
This disorder is characterized by a feeling of low or sadness for long periods, a sense of hopelessness about the future, low self-esteem, tears and crying behavior, no motivation or interest in anything, irritability, difficulty in making decisions, and suicidal thoughts.

Anxiety, on the other hand, is a body fight-or-flight response to a perceived danger. The body takes certain measures to respond to these dangers, and this leads to

changes in behavior. Some of the common behavioral changes associated with anxiety include avoiding situations or people, social withdrawal, alcohol or drug overdose as a means to handle this anxiety, apprehension, fear, nervousness, panic attacks, being edgy at all times, insomnia, memory difficulties, concentration problems, and a feeling of hopelessness.

MENINGITIS

- Severe brain damage is possible
- Causes behavioral change like
  - ✓ Low self-esteem
  - ✓ Anger or aggression
  - ✓ Mood swings
  - ✓ Difficulty in expressing emotions

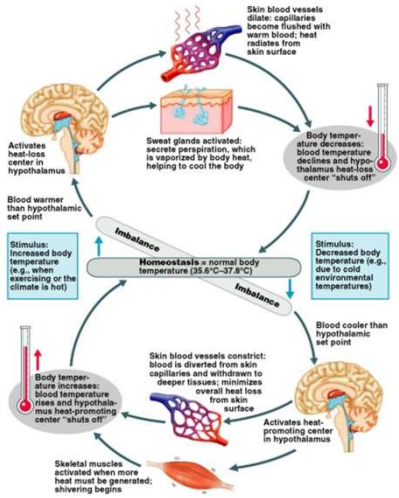


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Severe brain damage is a possibility in meningitis, and this can lead to behavioral changes in individuals. Anger, depression, isolation, anxiety about the future, low self-esteem, anger or aggression, mood swings, and difficulty in expressing emotions are some of the common behavior to expect in people who have meningitis.

Excess Heat or Cold

- Thermoregulation is the process of adaption to outside temperature
- Excess heat or cold can lead to confusion, hallucinations, and delusions
- Most times, symptoms are temporary



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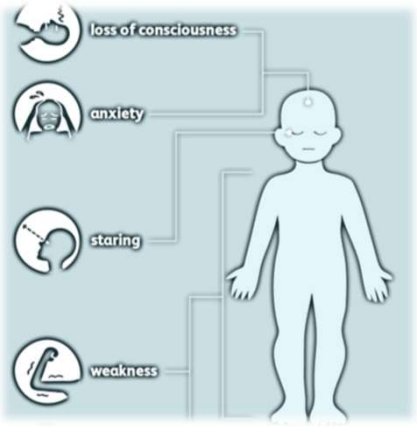
Thermoregulation is the process by which the human body adapts to the external rise or fall in temperatures. Based on the outside temperatures, it comes up with its signs to regulate the internal body temperature, and maintain it at a fairly steady rate.

In the process, many physiological and behavioral changes can happen. Also, some people are unable to adjust or have a low threshold for variations in outside temperature. All these aspects lead to temporary behavioral changes such as confusion, hallucinations, and delusions. These symptoms are temporary and can

go away by regulating the patient’s temperature.

Seizures or Epilepsy

- Depression and anxiety are common
- Dysphoric episodes are common
- More likely during episodes of seizures



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When epilepsy or seizures affect individuals for long periods, there is a profound change in their behavior.

In such patients, depression and anxiety are fairly common. A few patients are even known to experience psychosis where they lose touch with reality. Dysphoric episodes, where a patient loses a sense of pleasure or joy, are also common among epileptic patients.

A major difference between depression and changes in behavior due to epilepsy is that depression symptoms tend to last for a long time, while dysphoria is closely

connected with episodes of seizures.

With this, we come to the end of this lesson, and in the next, Missah will talk about the legal and medical considerations that come with handling psychiatric and behavioral emergencies.