



Huntington Disease 101 – From a Clinician’s and Family Member’s Perspective

Presenters:

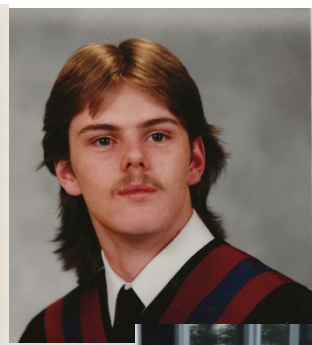
- **Carol Eckert**, Retired from Toronto Board of Education and mother of a son with Huntington's disease in a long term care facility
- **Corey Janke**, M.Ed, BSW, RSW, Southwestern Ontario Resource Center Director, Huntington Society of Canada



www.huntingtonsociety.ca

Carol's Story







Huntington Disease

- An inherited, degenerative, neuropsychiatric disease
- Characterized by a progressive loss of control over movements, thinking and emotions



HD – Some Numbers

- There is a 50% chance of inheriting the HD gene from the gene-carrying parent
- Approx. 1:7000 People in Canada have HD
- Average age of onset 35-50 years of age
- Average life span after dx: 15-20 years



HD - Genetics

- 46 Chromosomes – 23 each parent
- chromosomes made up of genes
- genes made up of DNA
- DNA is made up of bases: Adenine, Thymine, Guanine, Cytosine
- HD gene located on chromosome 4
- Characterized by an expanded CAG repeat



Physical Impairments

Clumsiness/falling

Unsteady gait

Involuntary dance-like movements

Slurred speech

Difficulty swallowing

Intoxicated appearance

Difficulty sleeping

Excessive perspiring/body temperature

Locked-in" (late stages)



Cognitive Impairments

Memory

Impulse control

Slowed information processing

Decision making

Problem solving

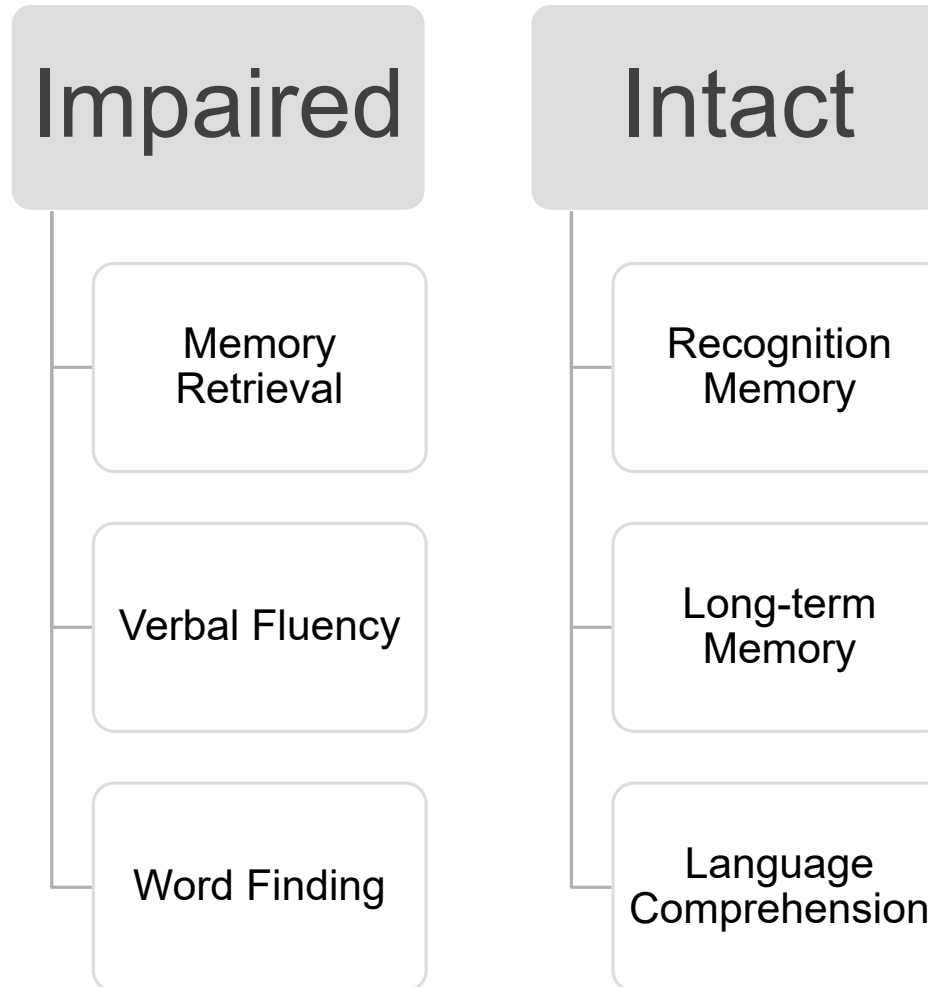
Confusion

Judgement

Rigid (stubborn)

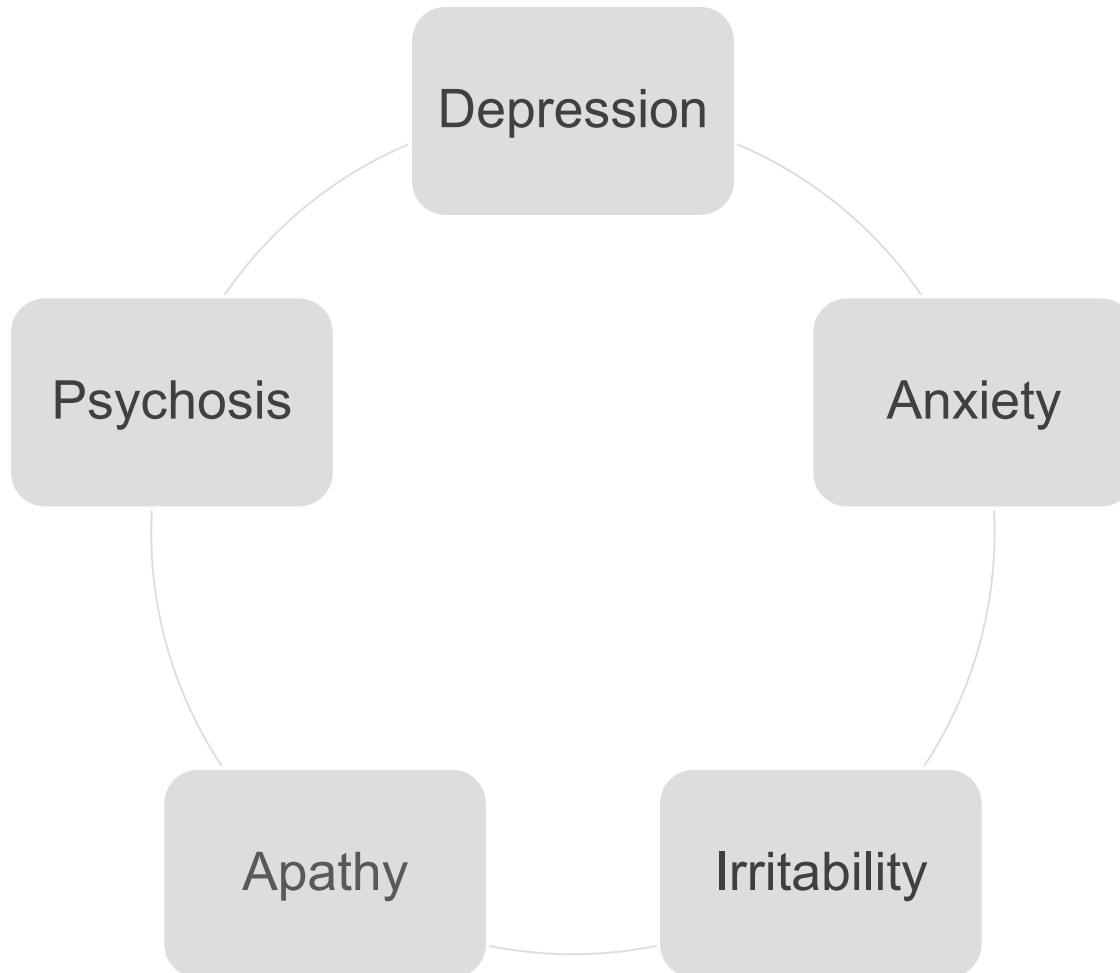


Selective Cognitive Changes





Emotional Disturbances





Emotional/Behavioural Impairments

Short
Temper

Depression

Apathy

Irritability

Verbal
Outbursts

Assaultive

Psychosis
(rare)

Mood
Swings

Suicide



Resulting Emotional Behaviour

Apathy

Impulsiveness

Irritability

Social
Withdrawal

Obsessive
Compulsive
Behaviours

Depression

Anxiety

Sleep
Reversal or
insomnia

Suicidal
Thoughts or
Acts



Psychiatric and Behavioural Changes in HD

- Over 33% of HD persons develop psychiatric symptoms as the initial manifestation of illness
- Up to 73% of HD persons have concomitant psychiatric diagnoses-
 - $\geq 50\%$ with affective disorder
 - $\geq 10\%$ with psychotic disorder
 - Unknown % -intermittent explosive disorder



For More Information Contact:

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