

**Polars' Express Speakers  
Winter 2018-2019**

**Dec. 12, 2018: "Take Control of Your Depression: Strategies to help you feel better now" Susan Noonan, MD**

Dr. Susan Noonan is a medical doctor, author of three books on depression, a consultant, patient, and certified Peer Specialist. She regularly blogs for Psychology Today and facilitates peer groups at McLean. Susan graduated with an AB from Mount Holyoke College, earned a Doctor of Medicine degree from Tufts University School of Medicine and a Master's Degree in Public Health from the Harvard University School of Public Health. After achieving board certification in Emergency Medicine, Dr. Noonan focused her clinical career in the greater Boston area. Emergency Medicine gave her the opportunity to treat patients with a variety of medical conditions, including many years counseling, treating, and advocating for individuals with mental illness.

As a physician who has treated, supported, and educated those living with a mood disorder, and as one who has personal experience in living with depression, Dr. Susan Noonan has firsthand knowledge of what is most helpful, backed by medical evidence. Her new book describes effective strategies for taking control of your depression (Take Control of Your Depression: Strategies to help you feel better now). She will discuss three topics of interest to those who have a mood disorder, from her new book: the fear of getting better, wellness as the goal of treatment, and how to survive the holidays with friends and families.

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**Jan. 09, 2019: "Can We Get Better Drugs, Nassir Ghaemi, MD, MPH, and Gopi Shanker, PhD**

We all recognize the need for better new drugs in psychiatry, but it is well known that the process is difficult. There have been few breakthrough new drugs in recent years, and many companies have begun to stop working in psychiatry and neuroscience. In this discussion, we'll discuss some of the challenges and promises of trying to discover and develop new drugs in psychiatry. We'll give you a peek into how the process works, why and how it is difficult and expensive, but also how recent discoveries hold the promise for drugs that are much more effective. This presentation will be given by two leaders of psychiatry drug development – one a clinical psychiatrist and the other a neuroscientist – at a major pharmaceutical company which has research headquarters in Cambridge, MA.

Nassir Ghaemi, MD, MPH, is a psychiatrist who has treated patients and conducted clinical research for over twenty years. That work was conducted in academic centers until last year, when he joined Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research (NIBR) in

Cambridge, MA, to help develop clinical research in early drug discovery in psychiatry. He remains a Professor of Psychiatry at Tufts University and a Lecturer on Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, where he continues to teach and see patients.

Gopi Shanker, PhD, is a neuroscientist who has conducted laboratory research aimed at developing drugs for psychiatric and neurological diseases for the past 17 years. During his career, he has worked on developing drugs for Schizophrenia, Depression, Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease, chronic pain and migraine. His work contributed to the development of a drug for prevention of migraine (Aimovig), which was recently approved by the FDA. He obtained his PhD from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (India) and completed his postdoctoral fellowship in neurobiology at The Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City. Thereafter he moved to the biopharmaceutical industry and worked initially at Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, and then at Amgen. He moved to Novartis Institutes for Biomedical Research (NIBR) five years ago and is currently heads the drug discovery efforts in the area of Psychiatric and Neurodevelopmental disorders.

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**Feb. 13, 2019: "How and when does mental illness stigma impact treatment seeking?"  
Annie B. Fox, PhD.**

Mental illness stigma has been identified as a critical barrier to treatment seeking. However, despite a large body of research examining the relationship between mental illness stigma and treatment seeking, we know very little about how and when stigma impacts the decision to seek care. Mental illness stigma is complex and multi-faceted, and different aspects of stigma may impact people differently. In this presentation, I'll discuss a framework for understanding and defining mental illness stigma, and review several studies examining how and when mental illness stigma impacts both functioning and treatment seeking.

Annie B. Fox, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Quantitative Methods at the MGH Institute of Health Professions. Dr. Fox received her Ph.D. in Social Psychology from the University of Connecticut. She then served as a postdoctoral research associate and statistical consultant in the Women's Health Sciences Division of the National Center for PTSD at VA Boston until joining the IHP in 2017. Dr. Fox's research examines the conceptualization, measurement, and consequences of mental illness stigma. She also conducts research examining the relationships among psychosocial stressors, mental health, and quality of life.