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HDSA encourages all attendees to consult with their primary care provider, neurologist or other healthcare provider about any advice, exercise, medication, treatment, nutritional supplement or regimen that may have been mentioned as part of any presentation.
Presenter Disclosures

Anne Leserman, Marsha Miller, Randi Jones

The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose or list.
Uncertainty

At risk individuals: do I have the gene? If so, when does the disease start?

Partner of at risk individual: my loved one has become irritable and distant. Is this a relationship issue or is it the onset of HD?

Caregiver: my loved one is unwilling to give up the checkbook, keys, responsibility for child care, etc. How do I provide the proper care?

Affected individuals: will I lose myself? Who am I if I am no longer the breadwinner, etc? How will I take care of myself and who will help me?
Denial

- A defense mechanism used by most of us at one point or another characterized by refusal to acknowledge a painful fact.
- Thought to be an unconscious process, but the most accessible defense in terms of intervention.
- Ego is trying to help us, but the avoidance often prevents addressing an appropriate course of action.
Anosognosia

- A=without + nosos=disease +(a)gnosia =awareness.
- Lack of awareness of physical symptoms due to brain changes.
- Caused by disruption of basal ganglia/frontal lobe circuit. [Not by the person’s deliberate attempt to be difficult.]
- One of the most problematic symptoms in HD.
Attribution

- What we perceive as the reasons for another’s behavior often determines our responses to that behavior.
- Elements in our perception of reasons for another’s (or our own) behavior: locus (external v. internal); stability; controllability. [B. Weiner]
- Ex: If the refusal to recognize HD sx in oneself is actually due to brain changes rather than a deliberate attempt to be difficult, the caregiver can avoid taking this personally and move on to:
Decision Making

- How to get the job done, i.e., the neurological exam arranged and attended, the bath accomplished, the keys relinquished.
- Spouse whose behavior has changed- seek marital counseling, consider neurological eval
- Anxious at risk person- consider genetic testing, psychotherapy, changing situational stressors.