

# MAPS.EDU, GAS POPS, and AEIOU: Acronyms to guide your assessments

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**M**neumonics and acronyms are part of our daily lives, helping us to memorize and retain clinical information. They play an invaluable role in medical school because they can help students recall vast amounts of information in a moment's notice, such as psychiatric conditions to consider during a "review of systems."

Most medical students are trained to conduct a review of systems as a standard approach when a thorough medical history is indicated. Clinicians need to assess all patients for an extremely broad range of syndromes. Because of the extensive comorbidity of many psychiatric disorders, it is important to review the most common conditions before establishing a diagnosis and formulating a treatment plan.<sup>1</sup>

For example, a patient presenting with a chief complaint consistent with a depressive disorder may have unipolar depression, bipolar depression, or substance-induced depression (after general medical comorbidity has been excluded). In this scenario, it would be equally important to identify co-occurring conditions, such as an anxiety disorder or psychotic symptoms, because these can have a major impact on treatment and prognosis.

In our work as clinical educators, we have noticed that many students struggle with a review of psychiatric systems during their evaluation of a new patient. Acronyms could serve as a map to guide them during assessments. While these may be most valuable to medical students, they are also helpful for clinicians on the frontline of medical practice (primary care,

family practice, OB-GYN) as well as for early-career psychiatrists.

## MAPS.EDU

The acronym **MAPS.EDU** covers several common psychiatric conditions seen in routine practice: **M**ood disorders, **A**nxiety disorders, **P**ersonality disorders, **S**chizophrenia and related disorders, **E**ating disorders, **D**evelopmental disorders (eg, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder), and **U**se disorders. While not comprehensive, **MAPS.EDU** can be a quick method to help psychiatrists remember these common conditions.

## GAS POPS

Anxiety is a core symptom of several psychiatric disorders. The mnemonic **GAS POPS** can help clinicians recall disorders to consider when screening patients who report anxiety: **G**eneralized anxiety disorder, **A**goraphobia, **S**ocial anxiety disorder, **P**anic disorder, **O**bsessive-compulsive disorder, **P**osttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and **S**pecific phobias.

## AEIOU for PTSD

The diagnostic criteria of PTSD can be memorized by using the acronym **AEIOU**: **A**voidance (of triggers), **E**xposure (to trauma), **I**ntrusions (reliving phenomena), **O**utbursts (or other manifestations of hyperarousal), and **U**nhappiness (negative alterations in mood and cognition).

## Reference

1. Rush J, Zimmerman M, Wisniewski S, et al. Comorbid psychiatric disorders in depressed outpatients: demographic and clinical features. *J Affect Disord.* 2005; 87(1):43-55.

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