

## Think PLANT to recall vegetative symptoms

Obvious positive symptoms of schizophrenia—such as hallucinations and delusions—typically prompt treatment, but positive symptoms may be absent or clouded by the rationalizations and minimization often seen in paranoia. Negative symptoms can also escape detection because of their subtlety.

Andreasen and Olson's criteria for negative symptoms<sup>1</sup> provide the basis for the Schedule for the Assessment of Negative Symptoms (SANS) that includes the five As: avolition/apathy, alogia, affective flattening, anhedonia/asociality, and attentional impairment.

Many remember Bleuler's four As of schizophrenia—autism, loosening of associations, affective disturbances, and ambivalence—but may have a harder time remembering the SANS' five As. I find the pseudo-acronym PLANT (for the vegetative changes manifested with negative symptoms) helpful for recalling all five As (Table).

**Table**  
Use PLANT pseudo-acronym to recall vegetative symptoms

Symptom	Meaning	Examples
a <b>P</b> athy/ avolition	Lack of drive	Poor grooming Anergia Impersistence
a <b>L</b> ogia	Marked impairment in thought processing and/or content	Poverty of speech Poverty of content Thought blocking Latency of response Poor abstracting
<b>A</b> ffective disturbances	Altered expressiveness	Poor eye contact Aprosodic speech Lack of expression Poverty of gestures
a <b>N</b> hedonia/ asociality	Loss of interests and pleasures	Little interest in sex Lack of closeness Few friends Poor capacity for rapport
a <b>T</b> tentional impairment	Inattentiveness	Poor concentration Stereotyped thought

References

1. Andreasen N, Olson SC. Negative versus positive schizophrenia: definition and validation. *Arch Gen Psych* 1982;39:789-94.

**Dr. Wagner** is assistant clinical professor, Indiana University School of Medicine, and staff psychiatrist, Richard L Roudebush VA Medical Center, Indianapolis.