

# What would you like other medical professionals who may not be familiar with catatonia to know about it?

**Dr. Caroff:**

I devised a very simple algorithm for trainees. Catatonia to me is wonderfully complex. There's a lot to know about it and it's fascinating, but I like to boil it down to three things that clinicians should know first. They should recognize the signs of catatonia. It would have been well described in a Bush-Francis scale. So they have to be able to recognize catatonia.

Second, they have to realize that it's a syndrome caused by other things. So they have to run through the differential diagnosis and find out why the patient became catatonic. What are the underlying disorders? And the third leg is to treat it effectively with benzodiazepines or ECT, which is effective for the majority of people, certainly with stuporous catatonia.

So even for medical professionals who are busy, have other things to do, other things on their mind, and psychiatric professionals who unfortunately are not necessarily any more informed than a lot of medical professionals, and nurses, by the way, as well. Those are three simple things they need to know: the diagnostic signs, the differential diagnosis. and treat with benzos and ECT.

So that's the way I've boiled it down over the years. And I think that's what all medical and healthcare professionals should learn and know, including psychiatrists and people in the mental health field.