

Dealing with Psychosis

What is Psychosis?

Psychosis is when a person loses contact with reality. This can involve seeing or hearing things that other people cannot see or hear, these are referred to as **hallucinations**. Psychosis can also mean a person believing in things that are not real, these beliefs are referred to as **delusions**.

Hallucinations

Hearing voices is the most common type of hallucination. Auditory hallucinations can be rare, frequent or continuous.

Voices can be:

- All genders
- Known or strangers
- Noisy or quiet
- Friendly and nice
- Critical and disturbing
- Commentary, or directive

Other hallucinations include:

- Visual
- Tactile
- Olfactory
- Gustatory

Delusions

Delusions are unusual beliefs that other people do not share, these beliefs are often based on paranoia and suspicion although not all delusions are distressing they often can be.

What causes psychosis?

Psychosis can be either a one off episode, a brief episode or a part of a mental health condition.

Conditions related to psychosis:

- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar Disorder
- Drug induced psychosis
- Depression
- Delusional disorder

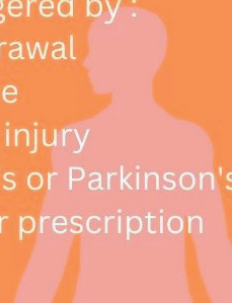
Other Causes

Psychosis can be due to experiencing significant life events such as: abuse trauma, divorce, grief or separation, long periods of stress and anxiety as well as lack of sleep and extreme fatigue.

What can trigger psychosis?

Psychosis can be triggered by :

- Alcohol withdrawal
- Menopause
- Acquired brain injury
- A symptom of Alzheimer's or Parkinson's
- A side effect of illicit or prescription drugs.



These are my warning signs and triggers!

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Do you know your warning signs?

By keeping a diary you can identify warning signs and triggers that include:

Feeling low or depressed, anxiety, mood swings, appetite changes, loss of energy, sleep disturbance.

Its often our friends or family who notice these differences so it can help to talk to them.

How to get help

The earlier you seek help the quicker you will be engaged in effective treatment.

Talking to your GP

Your GP can help in many ways they can discuss treatment options and coping strategies and can refer to secondary mental health services:

- Early Intervention in Psychosis
- Community Mental Health
- Crisis Resolution

If a psychotic episode is severe there is the possibility for help by admission to hospital, and is often on a voluntary basis.

Medication

Antipsychotic medication can be very helpful at reducing or silencing voices, delusional beliefs and distorted thinking.

Try the STOPP technique

Stop, Pause, take a breath, don't react and ask yourself these questions:

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- What am i reacting to?
- Is it fact or opinion?
- Is it possible?
- Do i have any evidence?
- What do i believe about that?
- What goes through my mind when the voice says that?
- Am i agreeing with the voice/ belief?
- Is there another way to look at this?

Can i use distraction?

Focus your attention on something else, music, mindfulness, being in others company or guided relaxation can help direct your focus.