



What is Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a serious mental illness that interferes with a person's ability to think clearly, manage emotions, make decisions and relate to others. It is a complex, long-term medical illness, affecting about 1% of Americans.

Symptoms

For a diagnosis of schizophrenia, some of the following symptoms are present for at least 6 months:

Hallucinations.

These include a person hearing voices, seeing things, or smelling things others can't perceive. The hallucination is very real to the person experiencing it, and it may be very confusing for a loved one to witness. The voices in the hallucination can be critical or threatening. Voices may involve people that are known or unknown to the person hearing them.

Delusions.

These are false beliefs that don't change even when the person who holds them is presented with new ideas or facts. People who have delusions often also have problems concentrating, confused thinking, or the sense that their thoughts are blocked.

Negative symptoms.

Negative symptoms are ones that diminish a person's abilities. They often include being emotionally flat or speaking in a dull, disconnected way. People with the negative symptoms may be unable to start or follow through with activities, show little interest in life, or sustain relationships.

Cognitive issues/disorganized thinking.

People with the cognitive symptoms of schizophrenia often struggle to remember things, organize their thoughts or complete tasks. Commonly, people with schizophrenia have "lack of insight." This means the person is unaware that he has the illness, which can make treatment challenging.

It can be difficult to diagnose schizophrenia in teens because the first signs can include a change of friends, a drop in grades, sleep problems, and irritability. Other factors include isolating oneself and withdrawing from others, an increase in unusual thoughts and suspicions, and a family history of psychosis.

Treatment

There is no cure for schizophrenia, but it can be treated and managed with antipsychotic medications and psychotherapy.

You are not alone. We can help you or someone you love cope with Schizophrenia.

Visit www.centermh.org/help to take a fast, confidential online screening test.

Information provided by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.



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