



What is Psychosis?

'Psychosis' is a word used to describe conditions of the mind where there has been a loss of contact with reality.

Psychosis can happen to anyone. About 3 in 100 people experience a psychotic episode, which makes it more common than diabetes.

Psychosis can be treated. Most people make a full recovery from the experience.

There is a huge amount of ignorance about mental illness in general and particularly psychosis. Myths about the illness can lead people to believe that people with psychosis are dangerous and unpredictable. This can create a vicious cycle of alienation and discrimination for people who have suffered a psychotic episode and also for their family members.

Common symptoms can include:-

- ❖ **Confused Thinking** – Everyday thoughts become confused and don't join up properly. Sentences are unclear or don't make sense. A person may have difficulty concentrating, following a conversation or remembering things. Thoughts seem to speed up or slow down.
- ❖ **False Beliefs** – It is common for a person experiencing a psychotic episode to hold false beliefs, known as delusions. The person is so convinced of their delusions, that the most logical argument cannot make them change their mind. For example, someone may be convinced from the way that cars are parked outside their house that they are being watched by the police.
- ❖ **Hallucinations** – In psychosis, some people see, hear, feel, smell or taste something that is not actually there. For example, they may hear voices which no one else can hear, or see things which aren't there. Things may taste or smell as if they are bad or even poisoned.
- ❖ **Changed Feelings** – How someone feels may change for no apparent reason. They may feel strange and cut off from the world with everything moving in slow motion. Mood swings are common and they may feel unusually excited or depressed. People's emotions seem dampened they feel less than they used to, or show less emotion to those around them.
- ❖ **Changed Behaviour** – People with psychosis behave differently from the way they usually do. They may be extremely active or lethargic sitting around the house all day. They may laugh inappropriately or become angry or upset without apparent cause. Often, changes in behaviour are associated with the symptoms already described above. For example, a person believing they are in danger may call the police. Someone who believes he is Jesus Christ may spend the day preaching in the streets. People may stop eating because they are concerned that the food is poisoned, or have trouble sleeping because they are scared of something.

(This information has been adapted from the EPPIC web site)

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