



Your health: 'Someone in my family has psychosis' Information for young people (primary school age)



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This brochure comes from Northern Sydney Health, Area Mental Health, Early Intervention Project. It will help you understand what is happening to your family member. Read it with a grown-up that you trust.

Facts about mental illness

- ✓ **TRUE:** Mental illness makes a person think, act and feel differently
- ✓ **TRUE:** A person with mental illness is NOT lazy, bad or stupid
- ✓ **TRUE:** You cannot catch mental illness like a cold or chicken pox
- ✓ **TRUE:** You did not cause the mental illness. Nothing you did or didn't do made your family member sick
- ✓ **TRUE:** Mental illness can happen to anyone
- ✓ **TRUE:** Just because your family member is unwell, it doesn't mean it's going to happen to you too.

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Psychosis (si-ko-sis)

Psychosis is one type of mental illness. Your family member has psychosis, and it makes it hard to know what is real and what is not real.

This is very confusing for them.

It's like their mind is playing tricks on them.

- They might hear or see things that are not really there
- Or think things that are not real or true
- They might laugh or talk to themselves
- They might think someone is following them or trying to hurt them
- These things can be very confusing, scary

- or upsetting for them
- They might seem happy, sad, angry, cranky or scared, but you can't understand why
 - They might say you've done or said things that you haven't.

Who can I talk to?

- Mum or dad, or someone else in your family
- The health worker who sees your family member
- Your school counsellor
- The local child and family mental health service

Helpful Hints!

- Find someone to talk to if you are worried or don't feel safe
- It is important to remember it is no-one's fault including yours that your family member is unwell
- Try not to get into an argument about things that don't seem real. Sometimes changing the topic can help

Note

This brochure comes from Northern Sydney Health, Area Mental Health, Early Intervention Project. It is based on a book produced by ARAFMI titled "Handle with Care: A workbook about mental illness for 8-12 year olds". Thanks also to clinicians from the child, family and adolescent services for their assistance.



Links

We have more information on **Adult Mental Health** and the **Early Psychosis Intervention Service**. Other information brochures are also available: 'Someone on my family has psychosis (for young people in high school)'...

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