



Your health:What is psychosis?

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This information sheet describes some common features of psychosis, which is a type of mental illness.

Some features of psychosis are:

Confused thinking

Everyday thoughts become confused or don't join up properly. It is hard to concentrate, follow a conversation or remember things. Thoughts seem to speed up or slow down.

False beliefs

It is common to experience unusual thoughts that are not reality based, but they seem very real at the time. The thoughts might be very worrying or frightening, and may be different to the person's usual thoughts. These thoughts are called delusions and can be very overwhelming. For example, someone might have a strong belief that people are following them, poisoning their food or plotting to harm them.

Hallucinations

It is common to hear voices that other people cannot hear. A person might hear people talking about them or to them. Sometimes people also see, smell or feel things that are not actually there.

Changed feelings

Mood swings are common. A person might feel unusually excited, irritable or depressed. Feelings might change for no apparent reason, and sometimes people feel strange and cut off from the world.

Changed behaviour

As a reaction to psychosis and all the unusual experiences, a person's judgement and behaviour

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will be different to usual. Friends and family know something is wrong, because the person doesn't behave the way they usually would. They might be more withdrawn, not feel like socialising, or not doing as well as usual at work or study.

Things to remember

Psychosis is quite common in young people
– 2 or 3 out of every 100 young people will experience symptoms of psychosis at some time
Psychosis is treatable – most people recover and many never experience another psychotic episode
Psychosis can happen to anyone
Recovery takes time – take each day at a time

More information

Information is available for **Primary school children**....

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