

# What's Going On With Me?

## Signs & Symptoms of Psychosis

*"Brain problems are physical problems just as much as breaking your leg is. The thing is, when I have something wrong with my leg, I can look at it, touch it and my brain can help me figure out what's wrong. When I was ill with psychosis, it was my brain that was injured, so my brain couldn't help me figure out what was wrong. I was confused and paranoid, and what I told myself to explain what was going on, I now know was pretty out of touch.  
It was a good thing my family got me to a doctor.  
It was a really good thing my doctor got me on some medication that works."*

**Psychosis is a medical problem of the brain. It makes it hard for a person to think and can cause you to hear, see and believe things that seem very real, but aren't.**

First experiences with psychosis are more common in people aged 16-30. Psychosis is believed to be caused by vulnerabilities a person is born with, combined with the stress of difficult situations, drugs, illnesses or injuries. It can be very confusing to the person experiencing it. If several of the early psychosis symptoms below fit for you, it would be a good idea to see your doctor.

Treatment is possible, recovery is expected.

### **Feelings – Not feeling 'right', not sure what's wrong**

You might feel anxious or depressed. You might feel 'high' or stoned for no reason. It might seem like people are out to get you, and you may feel irritated or unsafe.

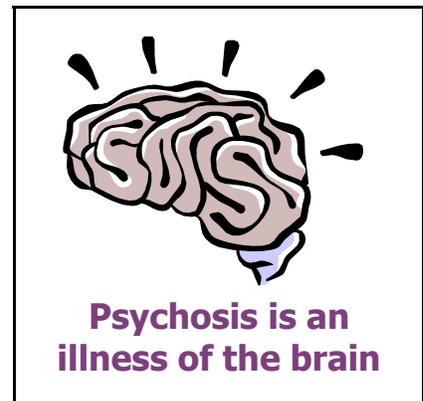
### **Actions – Not your usual self**

You might have trouble sleeping. You might not feel like eating. You might feel just like being quiet and away from other people. You might be using more drugs or alcohol than usual. You might be doing things that seem odd to others, or even to yourself.

### **Thoughts – Too fast, too slow, hard to string together**

It might be difficult to think, remember or concentrate. It might be difficult to make decisions. You might think very fast but be confused. *"At first I thought I was coming down with the flu since the strange mental state I was experiencing was similar to the viral delirium that people get when they have the flu."*

You may find that you are getting 'lost' a lot in the middle of talking about something, or going blank. *"Sometimes I feel like the operator in my brain just doesn't get the message to the right place."*



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## **Low Motivation - Hard to move, hard to get things done**

It may not seem worthwhile to get out of bed, to cook breakfast or even to wear clean clothes. It may not feel right to be around people. You might have a hard time starting tasks, or not feel much like doing anything. It may be impossible to perform as usual at work or school.

## **Delusions – It might not be what you think**

A delusion is a false belief that is strongly held. Some people with psychosis believe that they are being followed or watched or that someone is plotting against them. Others feel that they have been chosen for special abilities or powers or that their thoughts are being controlled by others.



## **Hallucinations – They sound real, but only to me**

Hallucinations are when a person sees, hears, feels, smells or tastes something that others do not. These sensations may feel very real and special, and it may be impossible to tell that they are not really there. The most common type of hallucination involves hearing things – such as voices talking to you about yourself or telling you to do things.

## **For More Information**

British Columbia Schizophrenia Society [www.bcscs.org](http://www.bcscs.org)

South Fraser Early Psychosis Intervention Program  
[www.psychosissucks.ca](http://www.psychosissucks.ca)

BC Partners for Mental Health and Addictions  
[www.heretohelp.bc.ca](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca)

Helping Overcome Psychosis Early  
[www.hope.vancouver.bc.ca](http://www.hope.vancouver.bc.ca)

## **How to Get Help**

Go to your family doctor or another doctor and tell them what's been going on. Ask a friend or family member to go with you, or help you make the appointment.

Whether problems are caused by psychosis or not, getting a checkup can help the doctor figure out what is wrong.

You can also go to a Mental Health Centre (look under the Health Authority or Ministry of Children and Families in the Blue Pages of your phone book) or if your community has one, you can go to an Early Psychosis Intervention Program.



**“You don't have to deal with this alone. Help is available.”**

The sooner you get medical treatment the faster you will recover and the more complete your recovery will be. Often people can be treated at home. It can take a little while to get the dosage and type of medication right for your body, so make sure you let the doctor know about any side effects or problems.

**Help is available. Treatment works.**

