



WHAT IS PSYCHOSIS? (sy-ko-sis)

Psychosis is the name given to the symptoms, or signs, of certain kinds of mental illness such as Schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder. Being **psychotic** means that the person experiencing it can find it hard to know what is real and what isn't. A person with psychosis or with an illness like schizophrenia may hear and see things that are not really there. Or think things that are not real or true.

People with psychosis may show some or all of these signs:

Hallucinations (Hal-loo-sin-ay-shons)

A person with psychosis or schizophrenia may hear, see, taste, touch and smell things that are not really there. They may hear voices saying nasty things about them or someone they know. They may taste things or feel insects crawling on their arm that are really not there. They may also believe that people are out to get them, when they really are not. All these thoughts can be very scary for the person and for their family and may mean the person behaves in a way that is very different to their usual behaviour.

Delusions (Dee-looj-uns)

Delusions are strange and false thoughts that someone may think are real. A person with psychosis or schizophrenia who is also **paranoid** may think that someone is trying to follow them or trying to hurt them. They may also think that someone is trying to put thoughts into their head. They cannot easily be convinced that the delusions are not real as to them, they are.



Jumbled Thoughts Having psychotic symptoms can make it very hard to concentrate. Their thoughts may rush into their head, or come very slowly. Their words and sentences may come out all jumbled up. People may also use new words that no one has ever heard before.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR PSYCHOSIS?



Psychosis and illnesses like schizophrenia can be treated and most of the time people get better quite quickly. They may need to stay on their medication for a long time and the side effects can be pretty yucky. They can make a person feel drowsy, affect their vision, and give them the shakes. Medicines include tablets and injections.

The person may also be seeing a doctor regularly like a G.P. or a psychiatrist, and also maybe a counsellor or someone they can talk to regularly about how they are feeling.

Sometimes they may need to go to hospital for a while to receive the treatment, or else they stay at home and visit a clinic or doctor. Sometimes your parent may need to go to hospital for a while until they feel better. Sometimes they can be treated at home with the help of family, doctors or the **CATT (Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team). The CATT are all health professionals like doctors and nurses with special training in psychiatry to help people with mental health problems. CATT visit people at home if they are sick and try to help them get better at home. But sometimes if the mental illness makes a person really sick, CATT will help take people to hospital to get special care.**



Sometimes people get unwell again even when they are taking their medication and trying their hardest. This may be because of a stressful event. It is no-one's fault. It is important they, and you and your family, know what to do if you think they are getting unwell and get help as quickly as possible.

Remember:

- **it is not their fault they have a mental illness**
- **It is not YOUR fault**
- **it is not your job to make your mum or dad feel better (tho' hugs are free)**
- **with the right help they can feel better**
- **it is important for you to do the things each day that are important like going to school and having fun.**
- **talk to another trusted adult if you are worried, sad or confused....**

