



1st Step Program

reaching out...staying connected

What is Psychosis?

Psychosis is a medical condition that affects the mind, resulting in a loss of contact with reality. Psychosis affects a person's thoughts, feelings, behaviours and, actions.

A first episode of psychosis is often frightening, confusing and distressing for the individual and upsetting for their family and friends.

Early Warning Signs of Psychosis (*things are not quite right*)

- lack of energy or motivation
- difficulty in concentrating and paying attention
- depressed and/or anxious feelings
- change in sleeping patterns
- social withdrawal
- suspicious or paranoid thinking
- difficulty with role functioning
- tense, irritable or angry

Symptoms of Psychosis

- hallucinations: seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling or tasting things that does not actually exist
- delusions: strongly held beliefs which are unusual and unjustified
- disorganized or confused thinking, speaking and behaviour
- changes in mood: an empty feeling of any emotions, difficulties expressing feelings

Treatment

- assessment: interviews with a mental health clinician, blood tests and x-rays may also be done
- medications: important for recovery and prevention of psychotic episodes. There are a number of different types of medications like antipsychotics, antidepressants, mood stabilizers and sedatives that are effective.
- psychosocial education
- family education and support
- individual and group therapy
- cognitive behavioural therapy

Recovery will vary from person to person and is a gradual process that takes time. Psychosis is treatable; and with the appropriate treatments many people will recover from their psychosis.