



# Psychosis

Communities in  
Transition

BY  
**extern**  
CHANGING LIVES EVERY DAY

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## What is Psychosis?

Psychosis is a mental illness in which someone's experience of reality is changed and you may experience things that are not real or develop beliefs that are clearly untrue.

You may hear voices or see things that are not experienced by others, known as hallucinations. This is often a frightening experience, particularly if voices or images are unpleasant and distressing. In other cases you may experience smells, tastes or touches that are not actually present but feel very real for you.

You can also develop beliefs that are not true, known as delusions. Some examples include: believing you are related to a celebrity or public figure, that the TV or radio is talking directly to you or about you, or that you have special powers, such as the ability to change other's thoughts.



## Symptoms

- Delusional beliefs
- Hallucinations
- Difficulty concentrating
- Racing thoughts
- Connecting events or words that seem unrelated
- Jumping from one topic to another

## Causes

Causes of psychosis include:

- High levels of stress over a long period
- Health conditions:- brain tumour(s), Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease
- Use of drugs including cannabis, cocaine, LSD, ecstasy (MDMA), crystal meth (methamphetamine), speed (amphetamine)
- Alcohol misuse, including sudden withdrawal from drugs or alcohol
- Sleep deprivation

## Treatment and support

If you are worried about having this condition then the first step is to speak to your GP, or if you are worried about someone else, encouraging them to speak to their GP.

During an episode of psychosis, you may not recognise you are unwell and so you may not believe you require support. At times like this, family members, your partner or close friends may notice a change in your behaviour and play a vital role in helping you access support for your mental health.

Once diagnosed you may be offered the following based on your needs at that time:

- Medication such as anti-psychotics
- Talking therapy:- counselling, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Psychosis (CBTp), etc
- Hospital admission:- where the condition is severe and/or where you are unable to keep yourself safe
- Referral to a Community Mental Health Team
- Referral to Community and Voluntary services or support groups

## Self-Help Tips

There are things you can do to prevent a new episode of psychosis and to plan for this if you were to become unwell in the future, these include:

- Developing a Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)
- Making time for yourself
- Taking up a hobby
- Developing a positive routine
- Reducing drug and alcohol use
- Trying mindfulness, relaxation or yoga
- Eating a balanced diet
- Exercising regularly
- Attending local support groups

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