

Early Psychosis: What's Going On and What Can You Do?

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Pinpointing the exact moment when you begin experiencing psychosis is not easy. You may become intensely focused on a thought or idea, yet you can't seem to think straight. Gradually, the world begins to seem strange or unfamiliar. Maybe you begin questioning if your mind is playing tricks on you or your friends are conspiring against you.

Everyone's experience is unique, but that is how some young people have described psychosis, a condition that disrupts thinking and perceptions. In many instances, psychosis comes and goes in episodes.

You are not alone

Psychosis is more common than you think. In the United States, about 100,000 young people experience psychosis each year. Three in 100 will have an episode during their lives. Psychosis is thought to be caused by



Know the Signs

These warning signs may signal early psychosis:

- Hearing, seeing, tasting or believing things that others don't
- Suspiciousness or extreme uneasiness with others
- Persistent, unusual thoughts or beliefs
- Strong and inappropriate emotions or no emotions at all
- Withdrawing from family or friends
- A sudden decline in self-care
- Trouble thinking clearly or concentrating

If you or someone you know is experiencing these warning signs, contact a healthcare professional or a first-episode psychosis program if one exists in your community. Early action can help keep your life on track!

family genetics, stressors or trauma, or some combination of both. Psychosis can also be the result of physical illness or substance use. Sometimes psychosis can mean the start of a more serious condition like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.

Psychosis is treatable—get help early

In the early stages or the first episode of psychosis, treatment provides the best hope for recovery by slowing, stopping and even reversing the effects of psychosis.

Even though you may feel locked inside your experience, reaching out to someone you trust and telling them what you're experiencing is the beginning of recovery.

Currently, the most effective treatment for early or first-episode psychosis is called Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC). The programs delivering this care are often referred to as first-episode psychosis or FEP programs. These programs are available in a growing number of areas. CSC focuses on you and your unique needs using a team-based approach.

Know what to do

Don't ignore early warning signs. Talk to someone you trust and tell them what you're experiencing. Ask for help to locate an FEP program or contact a healthcare professional.

Getting help early makes a big difference. Reach out to learn more and to keep your life on track.

Key Components of CSC

- **Case management**—working with you to develop problem-solving skills, manage medication and coordinate services
- **Family support and education**—giving families information and skills to support your treatment and recovery
- **Psychotherapy**—learning to focus on resiliency, managing the condition, promoting wellness and developing coping skills
- **Medication management**—finding the best medication for you at the lowest possible dose
- **Supported education and employment**—providing support to continue or return to school or work
- **Peer support**—connecting you with others who have been through similar experiences

Find out if your community has a CSC program



Visit NAMI's website:
www.nami.org/earlypsychosis



Call the NAMI HelpLine:
800-950-6264
(Monday–Friday
10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. ET)



Email NAMI:
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