

What is schizoaffective disorder?

Schizoaffective disorder is a mental health condition that affects how a person thinks, feels, and behaves. The person will experience symptoms of schizophrenia, such as delusions and hallucinations in addition to affective disorder (also known as mood disorder) symptoms such as mania and depression. Schizoaffective disorder is usually diagnosed in early adulthood but it can be diagnosed anywhere from late adolescence to late adulthood. Like other chronic mental health conditions, Schizoaffective disorder can cause distress to the individual experiencing symptoms and their loved ones and may impact the individual's independence and ability to engage in school, work, leisure activities and interpersonal relationships.

Who does it impact?

- Schizoaffective disorder affects men and women but with higher rates among women
- The prevalence or lifetime rate of schizoaffective disorder is 0.3%



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**Department of Social Work:
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To request additional brochures please contact:

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Additional Information

National Alliance On Mental Illness (NAMI)

www.nami.org

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

www.nimh.nih.gov

Additional Support

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or text 988

Chat at 988lifeline.org

NAMI HelpLine

Call (800) 950-NAMI or text "Helpline" to 62640

Veterans and Their Loved Ones Crisis Line

Call (800) 273-8255 or text 838255

National HelpLine

Call 211 for referrals for services such as housing, food, mental health, crisis and emergency, legal assistance, etc.

NIMH Resource Center

Call (866) 615-6464

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Schizoaffective Disorder



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Symptoms

Schizoaffective disorder is characterized by the presence of both psychotic symptoms and mood symptoms during an episode. Mental health professionals refer to psychotic symptoms as "positive" and "negative" symptoms.



Positive symptoms refer to the presence of symptoms including:

- **Hallucinations:** seeing, tasting, hearing, smelling, or feeling things others do not experience. A common hallucination can be hearing voices.
- **Delusions:** beliefs that are rooted in an altered reality and are typically held despite evidence of the contrary
- **Disorganized speech and thoughts:** Schizoaffective can cause people to have a hard time concentrating and organizing their thoughts. Due to this, people with schizoaffective disorder may present with disorganized speech.
- **Paranoia:** may cause a person to have irrational suspicion, mistrust of others, and feel like they are being targeted

Negative symptoms refer to the absence or lack of normal mental functioning including:

- Lack of pleasure
- Not talking much or having difficulty sharing thoughts and feelings
- Lacking emotional expressions
- Withdrawing from their friends, family, and community
- Decreased ability to take care of themselves and their responsibilities

Mood Symptoms

- **Manic symptoms:** can appear as heightened enthusiasm and expansive mood, risk-taking behavior, racing thoughts, and rapid speech
- **Depressive symptoms:** include feelings of sadness, loneliness, emptiness, and low mood and energy
- **Mixed symptoms:** sometimes people with schizoaffective disorder may experience both mania and depression, cycling between the two moods

What causes schizoaffective?

Researchers believe that schizoaffective disorder is caused by a combination of factors including family history of mental illness and differences in brain structure and chemistry.

Often times, stressful life events, like trauma and abuse, can trigger the onset of schizoaffective disorder.



What treatments are available for schizoaffective disorder?

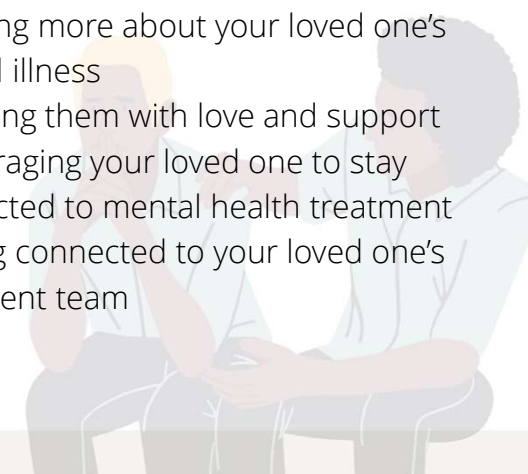
Numerous effective treatments are available to help people recover and improve their symptoms including:

- Medication prescribed by a doctor, such as anti-psychotics, may help reduce symptoms
- Talk therapy may help individuals cope with their symptoms and provide a safe place to explore their thoughts and behaviors
- Art and creative therapies help process difficult experiences and promote self-expression
- Ongoing mental health support and treatment

How can I support a loved one?

It can be hard knowing how to support a loved one experiencing symptoms of schizoaffective disorder. Below are a few ideas to help your loved one:

- Learning more about your loved one's mental illness
- Providing them with love and support
- Encouraging your loved one to stay connected to mental health treatment
- Staying connected to your loved one's treatment team



Did you know? About 1 in 200 people develop schizoaffective disorder.