

What is Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a mental illness that impacts how a person thinks, feels, and behaves. Often times, a person with Schizophrenia may appear to be out of touch with reality. During a psychotic episode, a person's thoughts and perceptions are altered, making it difficult for them to understand what is real and what is not. This can be a distressing experience for both the person experiencing symptoms and their loved ones.

Symptoms can include hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that others do not hear), delusions (false beliefs), disorganized speech, social withdrawal, lack of motivation, and difficulty functioning overall. The course varies among individuals but it is typically persistent and can be both severe and disabling.

Who does it impact?

- Schizophrenia affects men and women fairly equally but may have an earlier onset in men
- Most people are diagnosed with Schizophrenia in the late teens to early thirties
- The prevalence rate in the U.S.A. ranges between 0.25% and 0.64%
- Rates are similar across the world, affecting approximately 0.33% to 0.75% of the population worldwide

Prepared by the
**Department of Social Work:
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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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Schizophrenia



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Symptoms

Mental health professionals sometimes refer to symptoms of Schizophrenia as "positive" and "negative" symptoms.



Positive symptoms refer to the presence of symptoms such as exaggerated ideas, perceptions, or behaviors. Symptoms can include:

- **Hallucinations:** Hallucinations can be experienced in all five senses meaning people can see, hear, smell, taste or feel things others do not experience. A common hallucination is hearing voices.
- **Delusions:** These beliefs are rooted in an altered reality and are typically held despite evidence of the contrary. A common delusion may be that people on the radio or television are sending special messages.
- **Disorganized Speech and Thoughts:** Schizophrenia can cause people to have a hard time concentrating and organizing their thoughts. Due to this, people with Schizophrenia may present with disorganized speech.
- **Paranoia:** This experience may cause a person to have irrational suspicion, mistrust of others, and feel like they are in danger or being targeted.

Did you know? People with Schizophrenia are more likely to be victims of crime- or to harm themselves than to harm someone else.

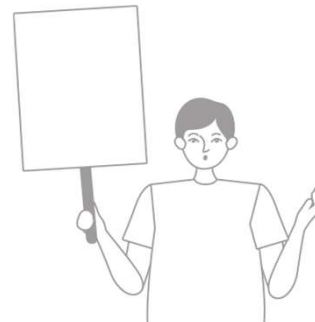
Negative symptoms refer to the absence or lack of normal mental functioning including thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaviors. Symptoms can include:

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

"There are no Schizophrenics, there are people with Schizophrenia"
- Elyn Saks

What causes Schizophrenia?

Researchers believe that Schizophrenia is caused by a combination of factors including family history of mental illness and differences in brain structure and chemistry. Often, stressful life events, such as trauma and abuse, can trigger the onset of Schizophrenia.



What treatments are available for Schizophrenia?

Numerous treatment options are available to help with recovery and stabilization:



- Medication prescribed by a doctor, such as anti-psychotics, may help manage 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 to help process difficult experiences and to 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 Schizophrenia. 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