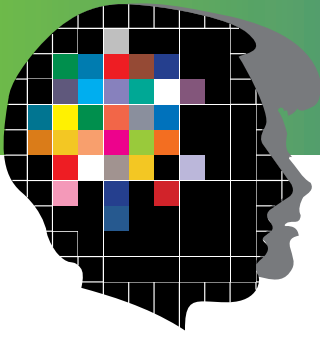


# EARLY DETECTION & TREATMENT OF PSYCHOSIS EDUCATION SERIES



## Recovery From Psychosis

*“My parents thought I was acting strange. I didn’t think anything was really wrong but I was having some weird experiences. The psychiatrist said I had a psychotic illness and there was treatment that would help. I didn’t want to take any medication but my parents said it was very important. So I agreed to give it a try. At first nothing seemed to change but after a couple of weeks, I noticed that I was thinking clearer and feeling more like myself. One time I thought I was having some side effects so the psychiatrist changed the dose of medication. I’ve been taking the medication for four months now. My concentration is better and I’m spending more time with my friends. I’m starting back to school but I’m kind of nervous about it. It’s almost like I broke my leg and I’m still not sure how much I should run on it. Only it wasn’t my leg, it was my mind that got messed up.”*

**With treatment most people recover from psychosis and lead satisfying and productive lives.**

Psychosis, like other illnesses, can be treated. Most people make a good recovery. Sometimes psychotic symptoms go away rapidly and people resume their normal activities quickly. More often, recovery is gradual, taking weeks and months. The symptoms decrease and people gradually re-enter the life they lived before symptoms began.

**Antipsychotic medications play an important role in the treatment of psychosis.**

In the past few years there have been significant improvements in the medications available to treat psychosis. When used properly, antipsychotic medications can be effective against psychosis without causing significant side effects.

### Making the Decision to Take Medications

The decision to take medication is a big step. To help make that decision people often ask questions like these:

**Q: Do I really need to take antipsychotic medications?**

A: In almost all cases, psychosis will get worse if it is not treated with antipsychotic medications. Research shows that the sooner antipsychotic medication is started, the quicker and more complete the recovery.

**Q: Will the medication have bad side effects?**

A: Like any medication, those used to treat psychosis can have side effects. However, side effects can be kept to a minimum by starting the medication at a very low dose and slowly increasing the strength over a number of weeks. If any side effects do appear, the dose can be reduced or a different antipsychotic medication used.

**Q: Who decides whether I take medications or not?**

A: Taking medication involves a partnership between the person taking the medication and the doctor and other mental health professionals working with the person. Ultimately, it is up to the person taking the medication to make the decision. The doctor, other mental health professionals, family and friends can advise and recommend, but only the person taking the medication can really decide.

## Getting Your Life Back On Track

While a person is psychotic they often have trouble keeping up with the social relationships and other activities in their life. They may lose contact with former friends. They may have to drop out of school or find it impossible to continue working.

Treatment with medication starts a person on the road to recovery. As recovery continues, other kinds of help are also needed. Most mental health teams include professionals that can help a person with the social, emotional and school/work issues in rebuilding their life.

As people recover from psychosis they want to get back to their usual activities. Sometimes people feel nervous about how much they can do and whether they will really be able to handle relationships, school and work.

## Frequently Asked Questions During Recovery

**Q: My psychotic symptoms aren't bothering me as much, but will I have the energy to lead a busy life again?**

A: As with any illness, when you've been ill for a while you get tired easier and may not have as much energy as you once did. Increasing your activity slowly over time allows you to build up your energy and confidence.

**Q: If I push myself too hard and try to do too much, will I get sick again?**

A: Most people find that they can do more and more as they recover. Of course, it is important to get enough rest, eat well and generally not overdo it. You can also be alert to any return of psychotic symptoms and adjust your activity accordingly. If your symptoms return, you should contact your doctor or health care professional.

**Q: Who can help me get my life organized again?**

A: In addition to mental health professionals, people recovering from psychosis may also gain support by talking with people in community organizations that focus on mental health issues. Talking to other people who are recovering from psychosis can also help.

Perhaps, most of all, family and friends can provide encouragement and concern. They can offer support when things don't go well and share in the celebration as recovery progresses successfully.

**Recovery from psychosis is different for every person. Don't be afraid to ask questions and get answers about your own recovery.**

## Key Points

- Most people recover from psychosis.
- Taking antipsychotic medications is a crucial part of recovery.
- Recovering from psychosis involves getting your life back on track.

## For More Information Contact:

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