

Think you know about mental illness?



Schizophrenia

The Mississippi Department of Mental Health is working to change the way you think about mental illness. Our goal is to eliminate misconceptions about and to promote a better understanding of mental health. It's time for us to change the way we think about mental illness. It's time to think again.

What is Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a serious mental illness that affects how someone thinks, feels, and behaves. People with schizophrenia are not violent, but their illness does make it hard for them to interact with other people, go to school, keep a job, or take care of everyday life. Schizophrenia may make it seem like people have lost touch with reality, and they may not make sense. Sometimes they may hallucinate or hear voices. It is important to help someone with schizophrenia symptoms get help right away. The risk of violence is greatest when the illness is untreated, but people with schizophrenia are more likely to harm themselves than others.

What are the signs & symptoms?

Some symptoms of schizophrenia can be severe and leave people unable to tell what is real from what is imagined. These include:

- Hallucinations, when someone sees, hears, smells, tastes, or feels things that aren't real
- Delusions, when a person believes things that are not true

- Illogical thinking or unorganized thoughts, such as making up words
- Social withdrawal or difficulty showing emotions, such as talking in a dull voice or showing no facial expressions
- Having trouble sticking with normal activities, or difficulty using information to make decisions

What type of treatment is available?

Medications can help people in dealing with the psychotic symptoms of schizophrenia. There are often side effects, so sometimes people may need to try multiple medications. Psychosocial treatments help patients and their families deal with the challenges of this illness. These treatments include family education, cognitive behavioral therapy, or support groups to help with work and living skills. The outlook for people with schizophrenia continues to improve. Many people with schizophrenia experience recovery and lead independent, satisfying lives.

For more information, call the Mississippi Department of Mental Health help line at 1-877-210-8513.



All information obtained from the National Institute of Mental Health at www.nimh.nih.gov.

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