

REALITY RULES!

Yukon Early Psychosis Intervention

What is Psychosis?

Psychosis is a condition that affects the mind. It affects a person's ability to determine what is real and what is not real, characterized by changes in thinking, believing, perceiving and/or behaving. When someone shows these signs, it is called a psychotic episode. Psychosis is a serious but treatable medical condition.

Recognising Symptoms

During a psychotic episode, a person might experience the following symptoms which can indicate psychosis. Don't ignore them – early intervention is key.

Confused Thinking

- scattered thoughts
- difficulty concentrating
- thoughts may seem to speed up or slow down
- difficulty following conversations

False Beliefs (Delusions)

- unusual beliefs
- suspiciousness
- feeling like one is being controlled by an external force
- believing that one has special abilities or powers

Hallucinations

- experiencing senses that others in the same vicinity do not, such as:
 - hearing voices that no one else hears
 - seeing things that no one else sees

Changed Feelings and Behaviours

- appearing anxious, depressed or irritable
- disconnecting from friends and family
- difficulty attending or performing in work or school

Who Gets Psychosis?

Approximately 3% of all people will experience psychosis at some point in their life. It commonly occurs between the ages 15-25. Males tend to have an earlier onset than females. People from all social backgrounds can be affected by psychosis.

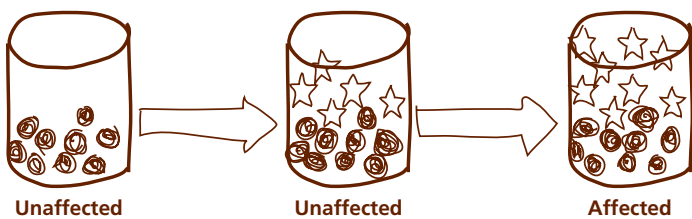
People with a family history of mental illness combined with environmental stress or drug use are most likely to develop psychosis.

For those people with a genetic vulnerability, it is important to monitor stress and be cautious about the use of alcohol and drugs.

Some people can have a genetic vulnerability but never get psychosis.

The partially filled jar shows the combination of genetic and environmental risk factors for psychosis.

Psychosis is triggered when too much stress is combined with genetic vulnerability.



- Genetic vulnerability factor
- ☆ Environmental vulnerability factor

Diagram adapted from BC EPI Program – Fraser Health

Phases of Psychosis

Prodromal Phase – changes in thoughts and behaviours but no active psychosis

Acute Phase – psychotic symptoms are present

Recovery Phase – medical treatment and getting your life back after an episode of psychosis

Psychosis may be a temporary condition or it may be a symptom of the onset of a chronic mental illness. Some people who experience psychosis will eventually receive a mental health diagnosis such as schizophrenia, schizophreniform disorder, bipolar disorder, psychotic depression, or schizoaffective disorder. For others, the psychosis can be caused by using drugs or from a medical condition (ie. caused by a head injury or physical illness).

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Early Intervention
+ Caring Support

Optimal Recovery

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Early
Intervention

If psychosis is detected and treated early, many problems can be prevented. Early intervention is key to an optimal recovery.

The earlier the intervention, the greater the chance of a successful recovery! Those people who receive treatment following the onset of psychosis have a better chance for recovery than those who wait. Untreated psychosis can disrupt a person's ability to develop their own identity, form lasting relationships, establish careers and make future plans. Relationships with family and friends, at school and at work, may be affected by psychosis. As well, other problems such as substance abuse, unemployment, and depression may occur.

Access
Supports

How can I help someone with psychosis?

Help is needed for the person to find out exactly what is happening and what type of treatment is required. People with psychosis often do not tell others because they are afraid of their reaction.

If someone you know is showing symptoms of psychosis encourage them to contact a medical or mental health professional. Support them in maintaining social connections and in making healthy lifestyle choices.

Psychosis can be a confusing and distressing experience for the individual and their family. The whole family needs to have information and support from a professional team. Studies show that family involvement has a very strong influence on successful recovery.

If the person and their family does not access help on their own, notify an adult who is in a position to make a difference for the person you are concerned about.

If you have a friend with psychosis, continue to care and reach out, even if the person doesn't respond. Educate yourself about psychosis, and help the person stay connected with friends and community activities.

To access treatment and support contact:

Mental Health Services in Whitehorse
867-667-8346

Whitehorse General Hospital
867-393-8700

You can also contact:

- your family doctor or walk-in clinic
- school or other counsellor
- social worker
- youth worker

Mental Health Services in Communities

867-993-7897 or call
1-800-661-0408 extension 8346

Community Health Centres

Beaver Creek	862-4444
Carcross	821-4444
Carmacks	863-4444
Dawson City	993-4444
Destruction Bay	841-4444

Faro	994-4444
Haines Junction	634-4444
Mayo	996-4444
Old Crow	966-4444
Pelly Crossing	537-4444
Ross River	969-4444
Teslin	390-4444
Watson Lake	536-7483
Watson Lake Hospital	536-4444

Recovering from Psychosis

The Yukon Early Psychosis Intervention Program provides a holistic care approach to young people experiencing psychosis. Services include consultation, assessment, and a treatment plan. The treatment plan may include counselling, family support and education, medication, and working with the person's school or place of employment. People experiencing psychosis often feel disconnected from their life and will need support in reconnecting to people and activities.

Recovery times vary with each person. Treating psychosis early significantly increases the person's probability of being able to enjoy a healthy and productive life.

Live life

With Recognition,
Early intervention
and Access to supports,
Life is worth living.

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Mental Health Services, #4 Hospital Road, Whitehorse, Yukon 867.667.8346 or 1.800.661.0408 ext. 8346