Psychosis is when a young person finds it difficult to tell what is real from what is not real.

It is characterized by a loss of some contact with reality.

what is psychosis?

Psychosis keeps our brain from working well:

- Perceptions are altered, making things that are not real seem real.
- Thinking becomes jumbled and unrealistic ideas develop.
- Feelings and emotions towards self, others or the outside world change or are exaggerated.
- The intense changing slants on reality may trigger feelings of dread, panic, fear and anxiety.

when psychosis happens...

- It is a period of time when symptoms are intense and interfere with a young person's life.
- It can be a frightening experience.
- It may last only a short period of time or it may continue sporadically for weeks, months or even years, unless the young person receives medical care.
- There may be a desire to deny or be secretive about what is happening because of the fear of being different.

what to look for

The following are common characteristics of psychosis.

Changes in thinking:

- Everyday thoughts may be confused/jumbled or don't join up properly.
- · Sentences may be unclear or don't make sense.
- Thoughts are sped up or come very slowly.
- Difficulties planning, reasoning, making decisions, completing tasks, following a conversation, remembering details.
- Having odd ideas.

Changes in feelings and perception:

- Feeling strange and cut off from the world.
- · Feelings of distrust or suspicion about others and their actions.
- Noticing things others don't notice; things look or sound different from what others experience.
- The tone in a person's speech may change from how they usually talk.
- Facial and body actions may change from how they usually are.

Hallucinations:

- Hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling or feeling things that are not there, but seem very real to the person experiencing them.
- Hearing voices: the voices could be threatening or telling them to harm themselves.

Delusions:

- False beliefs such as being followed or monitored, or having special abilities or "powers."
- Thinking they are being controlled by other people or forces, or that their thoughts are being broadcast so others can hear them.
- These beliefs are often held firmly, and attempts at reasoning or debating can lead to anger or mistrust.

Learn more at mindcheck.ca.

John lives at home with his parents. He has been attending school irregularly over the past year and recently stopped attending altogether. Over the past six months he has stopped seeing his friends, and has begun to lock himself in his bedroom and to refuse to eat with the family or to have a bath. His parents also hear him walking about in his bedroom at night while they are in bed. Even though they know he is alone, they have heard him shouting and arguing as if someone else is there. When they try to encourage him to do more things, he whispers that he won't leave home because he is being spied on by the neighbour. They know he is not taking drugs because he never sees anyone or goes anywhere.

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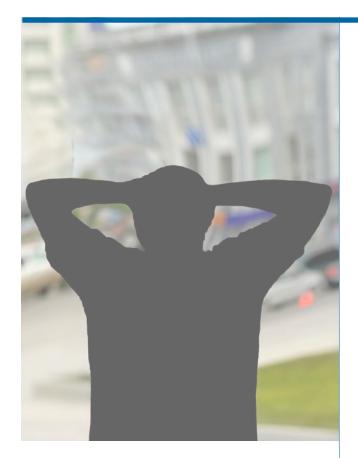
mindcheck.ca encourages the early detection and intervention of mental health and substance use issues in British Columbian teens and young adults.











who gets psychosis

- A first episode of psychosis usually occurs in adolescence or early adult life. It happens just as the young person is establishing his or her self-identity, forming key relationships and pursuing educational and career goals.
- Psychosis affects males and females equally.
- Psychosis has no boundaries. It occurs across cultures and levels of status.

psychosis is not:

- Caused by bad parenting or poverty.
- The result of any personal failure of the individual.
- A split personality.

When young people have difficulty coping, it can take various forms. Anxiety, depression and substance use can often be signs of difficulty. But it could also be psychosis.

If you think a problem might exist, visit mindcheck.ca.

phases of psychosis

Prodome Phase

- The early signs that psychosis may be developing the feeling that "something is not right."
- Is the period during which the individual is experiencing changes in feelings, thought, perceptions and behaviour, although they have not yet started experiencing clear psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions or thought disorder.
- Some early signs and symptoms include: difficulty with concentration, odd ideas, changes in sleep patterns and appetite, and feelings of depression, anxiety, tension and irritability.
- Family and friends may notice behaviour changes such as losing interest in studies, work and socializing, and becoming more withdrawn or isolated.
- May be attributed to "a phase" or drug use by friends, family, school counselors, teachers or employers.

Acute Phase

- The young person loses touch with reality.
- Symptoms such as hallucinations or delusions appear that ordinarily should not be there.
- The young person's thoughts, feelings and perceptions are all seriously affected.

Recovery Phase

- Psychosis is treatable and recovery is expected.
- The pattern of recovery varies from person to person.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Symptoms of anxiety and depression are common for people experiencing symptoms of psychosis.
- 3% of young people experience an episode of psychosis in their lifetime.
- There are different causes of psychosis.

psychosis can be treated

Learning all you can about psychosis types, causes, early intervention and treatments will help determine what works for you. Visit **mindcheck.ca** if you think a problem might exist and to find out how to get help for yourself or others.



Check it out... Act now!

Information and resources: mindcheck.ca