



SA Federation for  
Mental Health

# SCHIZOPHRENIA SPECTRUM AND OTHER PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS

## SCHIZOPHRENIA

### What it is:

Schizophrenia is a disorder characterized by a withdrawal from reality, illogical patterns of thinking, delusions and/or hallucinations, and accompanied in varying degrees by other emotional, behavioural, or intellectual disturbances. The symptoms of individuals with schizophrenia may vary greatly from one another, as the disorder may present differently in each person. The symptoms of schizophrenia usually make achieving educational progress and maintaining employment very difficult. The typical age of onset for schizophrenia is early to mid-twenties. The onset of the disorder may in some cases be abrupt, but in most cases it is gradual.

### Common symptoms:

1. Delusions
2. Hallucinations
3. Disorganised speech
4. Grossly disorganised
5. Negative symptoms
6. A low level of functionality in one or more major areas, such as work or self-care
7. Social withdrawal
8. Inappropriate emotional behaviour, for example laughing or crying in the absence of appropriate stimulus
9. Reduced memory and ability to concentrate
10. Flat or inexpressive facial expression
11. Hostility or suspiciousness towards others



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## **Causes:**

There are a number of different factors that could contribute to the development of schizophrenia. Genetic and psychological factors are thought to play an important role. A close relative who has schizophrenia may make an individual more susceptible to the disorder, although most people who are diagnosed with schizophrenia have no relatives with the disease. Pregnancy and birth complications, greater paternal age as well as conditions such as maternal diabetes and other perinatal health complications have also been linked to schizophrenia. However, the majority of children born with these risk factors do not develop schizophrenia. Environmental factors also play a role. It has been found that there is a greater incidence of schizophrenia and related disorders in children growing up in urban areas.

**Remember to always consult a mental health or medical practitioner regarding any questions you may have about a mental health diagnosis and treatment options.**

This factsheet is based on information obtained from the DSM-5:  
American Psychiatric Association, 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition.*