

GET THE FACTS

You've probably heard the word schizophrenia before, but how much do you know about it?

If you've recently learned that you or someone you love has schizophrenia, you may be frightened. As you learn more about this disorder you will find that it is treatable and manageable. People with schizophrenia can lead a rewarding and meaningful life. This brochure will help you begin the process of learning about schizophrenia. The Schizophrenia Society can guide you to further information and support.

What Is Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a serious but treatable brain disorder. The person with schizophrenia has psychotic experiences during which they have difficulty telling what is real and what isn't.

At times, some people with schizophrenia have trouble thinking logically. Their emotional response to people and event may seem unusual. They may even behave in a strange way when they are around other people or in public.

Schizophrenia IS NOT a split personality. It is not the result of bad parenting. It is not a character flaw or moral weakness.

Schizophrenia is a disorder of the brain in the same way that diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas.

Contact Information



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The Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia wishes to thank Dr. David Whitehorn for his contributions to this pamphlet.

Developed with the assistance of:
Eli Lilly Canada Inc.
Astra-Zeneca Canada Inc.
Janssen Ortho Inc.
Novartis Canada Inc.
GenPharm Inc.
Fusion Print + Imaging



SCHIZOPHRENIA

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Can It Be Treated?

YES. Schizophrenia is treatable. Medication is one important component of treatment. Education about the disorder, social supports and meaningful activities are also essential. With improved medications and comprehensive psychosocial treatment people with schizophrenia have a better quality of life than they would have even a few years ago.

Treatment

It is important that people with schizophrenia be diagnosed and begin treatment as soon as possible. In addition to ongoing care from a psychiatrist or family physician, people recovering from schizophrenia also benefit from the care of nurses, social workers and occupational therapists who can provide case management and supportive therapy. Safe and affordable housing and vocational training programs are also important.

People with schizophrenia and their families will benefit as well from education that helps them understand the disorder and develop skills to manage it on a day-to-day basis. Families are an essential part of recovery and treatment plans.

Is There A Cure?

Researchers are learning more and more about schizophrenia and what causes it. This work is leading to early intervention, new treatments, and new ways to identify people with the disorder in its early stages, before it seriously disrupts the person's life.

Where Can I Go For Help?

The Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia is here to help.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Our objectives are to:

- Provide public education and awareness to eliminate the stigma and misunderstanding associated with schizophrenia.
- Provide support and education for families and those with schizophrenia through local support group.
- Provide education for family members on how to be caregivers and manage the day to day challenges of schizophrenia.
- Promote research into finding better treatments and an ultimate cure for schizophrenia.

It Does Not Discriminate

It most often strikes people in their late teens and early 20's.

Schizophrenia is a brain disorder. Researchers are discovering that a large number of genes contribute to a vulnerability to develop a psychotic disorder. People who have a close relative with psychosis are at increased risk, but in most cases of schizophrenia no one else in the family has the disorder.

How Does Someone Know If They Have Schizophrenia?

Unfortunately, many people are unaware that they have a psychotic disorder, such as schizophrenia, until after they have a full-blown psychotic episode that seriously disrupts their life. Psychosis comes on suddenly for some and very slowly for others. Symptoms vary from person to person and may change over time. Psychotic symptoms include hallucinations, such as hearing voices, and delusions (false beliefs). Delusions are often paranoid in nature and the person believes they, and perhaps their friends and family, are being threatened and are in danger. Early intervention programs that provide care for people in the early stages of the disorder can lead to better treatment outcomes.