

Understanding and Managing Symptoms of Psychosis

Objective

To understand and properly manage symptoms of psychosis.

What to Know

Psychosis is a condition that affects the way your brain processes information. It can cause you to lose touch with reality, making it hard to know what is real and what is not real. People with psychosis might see or hear things that others do not, or they might hold beliefs that are not based on reality. Here are some common symptoms of psychosis:

- hearing, seeing, or feeling things that are not there
- holding strong beliefs that are not based in reality
- trouble organizing your thoughts
- difficulty speaking clearly or making sense when talking
- lack of motivation
- withdrawal from social activities
- flat or inappropriate emotional responses

Recognizing and understanding these symptoms can help you and your loved ones take steps to manage and reduce their impact on your life. Experiencing psychosis is nothing to be ashamed of and help is available. Psychosis can have several causes, including:

- Genetic predisposition, brain chemistry, and structural abnormalities in the brain.
- Stress, trauma, or drug use.
- Certain illnesses or infections can lead to psychotic symptoms.

Here are some strategies for supporting your well-being:

1. Maintain a Healthy Lifestyle
 - Eat a nutritious and balanced diet. Good nutrition can have a positive impact on your mental health.
 - Engage in physical activities that you enjoy. Exercise can reduce stress and improve mood.
 - Ensure you get enough sleep. Establish a regular sleep routine to improve sleep quality.
2. Practice Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques
 - Practice mindfulness or meditation to help manage stress and anxiety.
 - Use deep breathing exercises to calm your mind during moments of distress.
 - Incorporate yoga into your weekly routine to promote relaxation and improve physical health.
3. Engage in Enjoyable Activities
 - Participate in hobbies and activities you enjoy. This can provide a sense of accomplishment and joy.

- Engage in creative activities such as drawing, writing, or playing music.

4. Establish a Daily Routine for Structure and Stability

- Set small, achievable goals, providing a sense of purpose and motivation.

5. Limit Substance Use

- Avoid or limit the use of alcohol and recreational drugs, as they can worsen your symptoms.
- Be mindful of your caffeine and nicotine intake, as they can impact your mental health.

6. Learn and Use Coping Strategies

- Work with your therapist to develop coping strategies for managing symptoms and stress.
- Use grounding techniques to help stay connected to the present moment during distressing episodes.

7. Education and Self-Advocacy

- Continue to learn about your condition and treatment options.
- Be an active participant in your treatment by communicating openly with your healthcare providers about your needs and concerns.

8. Build a Support Network

- Identify trusted friends, family members, or professionals you can turn to for support.
- Attend regular therapy sessions and consider joining a support group.

9. Avoid Isolation

- Regularly engage in social activities, even if it is just a small amount of interaction each day.
- Participate in community activities or volunteer work to stay connected and engaged.

10. Manage Stress

- Recognize and manage sources of stress in your life.
- Use time management techniques to reduce feelings of being overwhelmed.

This worksheet will help you recognize the symptoms of psychosis and help you manage these symptoms through a personal well-being plan.

What to Do

Tracking symptoms can help you and your therapist understand your experiences better and manage your treatment more effectively. Each day for two weeks, write down any symptoms you experience. Be specific about what you felt, saw, or heard. Include the time and what you were doing when the symptoms occurred. Use a scale from 1 to 10 to rate how intense each

Did any specific events or activities seem to trigger the symptoms?

Were there times when the symptoms were less intense? What were you doing then?

What did you do to cope with your symptoms? Was it effective or ineffective? Explain.

Create Your Personal Well-Being Plan

Review the following example, then create your own personal well-being plan. Use specific examples of action steps you can take. Make sure the steps are doable and practical!

Action Steps

Physical Health: *I will aim to exercise for 30 minutes at least three times a week and eat a balanced diet.*

Mental Health: *I will practice mindfulness meditation for 10 minutes daily and attend my weekly therapy sessions.*

Social Connections: *I will reach out to a friend or family member at least twice a week to stay connected.*

Daily Routine: *I will create a daily schedule that includes time for relaxation, work, and fun.*

Hobbies and Interests: *I will spend at least one hour a week on a hobby I enjoy, such as drawing.*

My Personal Well-Being Plan

Physical Health

Mental Health

Social Connections

Daily Routine

Hobbies and Interests

Other

What activities make you feel the most relaxed and happy?

Who in your support network can you turn to when you feel overwhelmed?

What small goals can you set for yourself this week to improve your well-being?

By incorporating these strategies into your daily life, you can enhance your overall well-being and better manage your symptoms. Remember, every small step counts, and it is important to be patient with yourself.

Reflections on This Exercise

Did anything surprise you about this activity? If so, describe.

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
