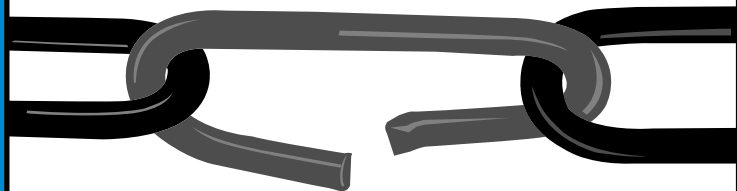


Schizophrenia

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF STIGMA



A Caregiver's Guide
to Understanding Schizophrenia

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What is Schizophrenia ?

Schizophrenia is a mental disorder that severely impacts how a person thinks, feels and acts. It is a disorder that makes it difficult for a person to differentiate between real and imagined experiences, to think logically, to express normal emotions or behave appropriately in society. Basically, it is a thought disorder that affects a person's ability to function in every day activity.

It is one of the most serious of the mental illnesses in terms of suffering and disability. Nevertheless, about a quarter of those diagnosed with schizophrenia recover completely, and the majority of the rest improve with medical treatment and other supports. In all, about 1 percent of the population develops schizophrenia.

Schizophrenia is not the same as split-personality or multiple personality disorder, and it is not the result of bad parenting or a weakness of character. Most scientists believe that schizophrenia is a biologically-based illness of the brain. And most people with schizophrenia are no more violent than the average person.

What causes Schizophrenia ?

Exact cause is not known. It appears to be multi factorial. Schizophrenia may occur due to genetic factors, psychological factors, personality factors, neuro-developmental factors such as complications during pregnancy and birth or neurotransmitter disturbances in the brain.

Who suffers from Schizophrenia ?

The most common age for developing symptoms is between the ages of 18 and 25. Both males & females are equally affected but peak age of onset differs in both sexes. (In females 15-25 years, In males 25 – 35 years).

Research does show, however, that schizophrenia does show up in childhood, but only 2 percent of individuals with schizophrenia had their onset in childhood.

Symptoms Of Schizophrenia

One of the most frequent symptoms of schizophrenia is "hearing voices" that others cannot hear, what are called auditory hallucinations. The patient may carry on conversations with these voices, or hear two hallucinatory voices carrying on a conversation themselves. Sometimes the voices can give commands or make comments on the patient's actions.

Other symptoms of schizophrenia can include:

- Visual hallucinations, or false sensations of smell, touch, or taste
- Delusions of grandeur (for example, thinking, one is a person of higher power)
- Delusions of persecution (as in thinking one is, being watched or is a victim of a conspiracy)
- Disorganized or bizarre thinking and behavior
- Being extremely withdrawn, expressionless, or . apathetic (such as isolating oneself from family or friends).

Early Warning Signs

Other visible signs that difficulties may be forming (which sometimes can be early warnings of schizo-phrenia) include changes in personal hygiene and appearance, changes in personality, changes in sleep patterns, not showing up for work or school, or pro-nounced inappropriate or bizarre behavior.

Different Types Of Schizophrenia

There are different labels for various clusters of symptoms. The most common types and related subtypes are paranoid schizophrenia and schizo-affective disorder, respectively.

A person with paranoid schizophrenia may feel persecuted, suspicious, or they may believe that the CID or CBI are after them. An individual with schizoaffective disorder experiences symptoms of schizophrenia and a major mood disorder.

Diagnosing Schizophrenia

Before reaching a diagnosis of schizophrenia, it is important to rule out other illnesses. Other medical illnesses can mimic schizo-phrenic symptoms. For this reason a medical history, laboratory tests, and a physical examination should be taken before concluding that a person has schizophrenia.

The diagnosis of schizophrenia is usually made by a medical doctor who specializes in mental and emotional conditions. This type of physician is called a psychiatrist.

The Treatment Of Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is treated in two general ways: by medications and various therapies. Medications directly affect the brain chemistry to treat hallucinations, anxiety, mood swings, and other symptoms.

However, medications can have a number of side effects that can discourage an individual from continuing this type of treatment. Psychotherapy (also known as talk therapy) is very important in the treatment process.

Although psychosocial treatments are very useful, medications have proven to be the most effective tool to treat schizophrenia.

What Is The Outcome For People With Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a serious illness and may cause great problems in your life. The first line of treatment is usually medications followed by individual and group therapies. Today there are no cures; however, treatment is readily available and effective. Outcomes can be very good for most of us, especially if we seek treatment early on in our illness.

Schizophrenia is not necessarily a chronic condition, as your doctor will confirm. About 30 % of all patients recover completely.

Talking about Schizophrenia

The symptoms of schizophrenia produce suffering that keeps us from seeking help and moving forward with recovery.

Trusting a mental health professional, such as a psychiatrist or a therapist, is essential to our success in recovery with our schizophrenia, and a trusting relationship has to be earned.

Talking With Your Psychiatrist

A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who specializes in the care of the mentally ill. The psychiatrist interprets medical and psychological tests and makes major decisions about diagnosis and treatment.

A psychiatrist makes diagnoses, prescribes medications, and has the authority to admit someone to the psychiatric hospital. In addition, some psychiatrists also provide psychotherapy.

At first, we might be sheepish about discussing our symptoms. Most likely, the psychiatrist has heard about every odd sort of symptom in existence, and nothing will be shocking to him or her. So, the psychiatrist is on our side—an ally.

What many of us do is test the waters. We begin in small ways to be open with the psychiatrist and gradually find out that he or she is someone who can be trusted. Over time, complete openness is often the outcome, and one that leads to a better understanding of our symptoms, and the psychiatrist's improved ability to offer the best treatments.

In the early stages it is always helpful to talk to the psychiatrist about your treatment goals, to see where the whole process is going. You can find a symptoms checklist later in this brochure so that you can make the best use of your visit.

Learn more about schizophrenia. Read about it. Talk about it with other patients to get a better understanding of what the psychiatrist says. Ask questions during the session about things that don't make sense or aren't clear. Rely on your psychiatrist to provide feedback and guidance that works.

Talking With Your Therapist

In addition to medication received from a psychiatrist, most of us participate in various forms of psychotherapy. The therapist is usually a social worker, or counselor with at least a master's degree. Often a psychologist (a doctorate level mental health professional) will also provide psychotherapy and other forms of counseling.

While the psychiatrist has strong training in the medical aspects of schizophrenia, the therapist usually has expertise in how to help with the hang-ups we keep to ourselves. A therapist helps us to keep things in perspective. If we have life problems, the therapist wants to hear about them and wants to join us in coming up with solutions.

Talking With Your Friends

How much we tell our friends about schizophrenia is often a matter of how trustworthy we think they are. It is a good idea to seek guidance from your therapist on how much to share.

This is a touchy issue, because stigma and rejection are so often the experience of those with schizophrenia. For those of us fortunate enough to have genuine and steadfast friends, sharing the nature of our illness can make the friendship closer.

Talking With Your Family

For most of us with schizophrenia, our family is the core of our support system. It is our parents who initially provide the largest share of help; however, siblings or other relatives become involved as well.

If the family members are to provide needed support, it is important that they have adequate information on schizophrenia and our experience with the illness. You should tell your family what your mental health professional thinks the outlook is for recovery and your adjustment to the illness.

Schizophrenia Symptoms & Problems Checklist

Have you recently:

- heard voices others haven't heard?
- had visions?
- felt odd physical sensations?
- smelled strange odors?
- heard unusual and distressing sounds?
- had someone else's thoughts come into your mind?
- felt like other people know what you are thinking?
- suspected others of conspiring against you?
- felt greater or more important than others?
- spent more time alone, preferring this to being with others?
- felt more confused than usual?
- felt overwhelmed with life?
- missed time from work or school?
- had more (or more troubling) conflicts with others?
- had trouble sleeping/or sleeping too much?
- felt depressed or down?
- felt particularly worried or anxious about anything?
- use alcohol or street drugs to cope with stress?
- had any thoughts of hurting yourself or others?
- had any accidents or mishaps?
- had bad experiences?
- had health problems?
- felt distress in your support system between yourself, friends, family?
- been taking your medication as prescribed?
- felt like the medications are working?

In schizophrenia,

Arip MT

Aripiprazole 10/15 mg

Restores **life** back to normal

- Unique mechanism of action
- Better control of positive negative & cognitive symptoms
 - Low propensity for EPS
- Minimal weight gain & sedation
- Melt in mouth tablets ensure patient compliance

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