

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Schizophrenia is . . .

a mental illness that affects the way a person thinks, feels and behaves. It causes the individual to lose touch with reality and express 'psychotic' symptoms. Although life long treatment is required, it can be manageable and early detection can help prevent the development of serious implications.^{1,3}

Available Treatment²

Everyone's struggle with schizophrenia is unique, and with treatment, it is possible to function completely and significantly improve symptoms. Medication, as both oral pills and long acting injections (LAI), for schizophrenia is core in its treatment and antipsychotic drugs may be prescribed to help manage symptoms. Above all, it is the client's willingness to participate in a treatment regime and the power to make those decisions are in the client's hands.

Treatment Options Overview:

- First Generation Antipsychotics
 - Chlorpromazine
 - Fluphenazine
- Second Generation Antipsychotics
 - Abilify
 - Latuda
 - Saphris
 - Invega
- Psychosocial Interventions
 - Individual / Family therapy
 - Social skills training
 - Active lifestyle
 - Self care / routine activities
 - Regenerative sleep
 - Reduced substance use
- Counselling and supportive psychotherapy
- Cognitive Behavioural
- A combination of various treatment options may be beneficial (Note: there are only a select few options for medication as treatment).

Causes¹

It is not clear what causes schizophrenia, but it is believed to result from a combination of genes, brain chemistry and the environment including stress and family problems. Heavy use of drugs, alcohol and cannabis may also increase the risk of schizophrenia.

Symptoms¹

There are three categories of symptoms for those living with schizophrenia: Positive, Cognitive and Negative.

Positive: The term positive symptoms refers to experiences that are added on to client's usual experiences. For example: hallucinations / delusions.

Negative: The term negative symptoms refers to experience(s) removed / decreased from client's usual ability / capacity. For example: loss of interest, apathy, and poor social functioning

Cognitive: The term refers to thinking processes that are involved in many tasks of daily living. For example: poor concentration / focus.

Diagnosis³

Proper diagnosis requires the health professional to rule out the possibility of the presented symptoms occurring from other mental health disorders. When the physician makes certain that the symptoms aren't due to other medical conditions or substance abuse, then they may proceed with the diagnosis. The client may participate in physical test, psychiatric evaluations, screenings (i.e. MRI and CT scans) and / or use the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5).

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¹ National Alliance on Mental Illness. (n.d.). Schizophrenia. Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Schizophrenia/Overview>

² National Alliance on Mental Illness. (n.d.). Schizophrenia. Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Schizophrenia/Treatment>

³ Mayo Clinic. (2018, April 10). Schizophrenia. Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/schizophrenia/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20354449>