



# PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS

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**PSYCHOTIC  
DISORDERS**

# **SCHIZO- PHRENIA**

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## WHAT IS SCHIZOPHRENIA?

Schizophrenia is a mental health condition characterized by distortions in thinking, perception, emotions, language, sense of self and behavior.

People with schizophrenia experience symptoms falling into one of three different categories: positive symptoms (as in, abnormally present) such as hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that do not exist in the external environment) and delusions (strongly held beliefs that conflict with reality); negative symptoms (as in, abnormally negative) such as loss or decrease in the ability to initiate plans, speak, express emotion or find pleasure; and disorganized symptoms, such as confused and disordered thinking, speech, and movements. The severity, duration, and frequency of symptoms vary from one individual to another, and typically tend to decrease as a person gets older.

Common misconceptions about schizophrenia are that individuals suffering from the disorder are violent and dangerous, and that little can be done for these individuals to lead a healthy life. Both these ideas are erroneous: individuals with schizophrenia are not more violent than people in the general population, and symptoms of schizophrenia, if managed effectively, can allow people with the disorder to lead healthy, productive lives.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF LEFT UNTREATED?

Treatment of schizophrenia with psychiatric medications and psychotherapy can greatly improve the affected individual's quality of life. If untreated, the symptoms of schizophrenia can be very disabling, and can lead to a higher risk of suicide.



**PSYCHOTIC  
DISORDERS**

**POST-  
TRAUMATIC  
STRESS  
DISORDER  
(PTSD)**

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## WHAT IS POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER?

PTSD is a disorder that may occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a serious accident, a rape, a murder, a terrorist attack, a war, a natural disaster. An individual with PTSD might have intense, disturbing thoughts and feelings related to their experience that last long after the traumatic event has ended.

They may relive the event through flashbacks or nightmares; they may feel sadness, fear or anger; and they may feel detached or estranged from other people. A person with PTSD may avoid situations or people that remind them of the traumatic event and may have strong negative reactions to something as ordinary as a loud noise or an accidental touch.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF LEFT UNTREATED?

It is important to note that not everyone who experiences trauma develops PTSD. For some people, symptoms of PTSD subside over time, especially with active support from close ones. Indeed, it is both typical and appropriate to experience some feelings of nervousness, sadness, or anger, for some time after exposure to a potentially traumatic event. If these feelings or behaviors persist or worsen with time, this could be a sign of a problem that requires professional treatment to recover from psychological distress that can be intense and disabling. It is important to remember that trauma may lead to severe distress. The earlier a person gets treatment, the better chance of recovery. Treatment options include medication and/or trauma-focused psychotherapy like eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR).



# PERSONALITY DISORDERS

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## WHAT IS PERSONALITY?

Personality is the unique and enduring ways in which a person thinks, acts, feels, and behaves that evolve from biological and environmental factors.

## WHAT ARE PERSONALITY DISORDERS?

A personality disorder is defined as a way of thinking, feeling, or behaving that deviates from cultural norms and that disrupts one's daily functioning and causes them distress. Personality disorders tend to affect at least two of the following areas of a person's life: their way of thinking, their emotional responses, their way of relating to others, and/or their way of controlling their responses in the long-term. Not every person who exhibits one of these problems has a personality disorder.

Personality disorders are typically diagnosed in adulthood, but their patterns may begin to be recognizable in late adolescence or early adulthood. People with personality disorders have enduring dysfunctional ways of perceiving themselves or other people, problems with emotions and relationships, or impulsivity. There are 10 personality disorders: antisocial, avoidant, borderline, dependent, histrionic, narcissistic, obsessive-compulsive, paranoid, schizoid, and schizotypal.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF LEFT UNTREATED?

Many people with personality disorders do not typically seek treatment. However, psychotherapy can be greatly effective in helping an individual with a personality disorder gain insight about their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and their contributing factors and reducing problems in functioning and relationships. Type of treatment will depend on the specific personality disorder, how severe it is, and the individual's circumstances. Some examples of psychotherapy for personality disorders are group therapy and dialectical behavioral therapy. Medications can sometimes be prescribed to manage particular symptoms of personality disorders or comorbid disorders such as anxiety and depression



# SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

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## WHAT IS SUBSTANCE USE?

Excess use of certain substances, such as alcohol, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and others, can be harmful to one's health. While some people who use these substances do not get addicted to them, others may develop a substance use disorder. It is important to note that not everyone who uses a substance has a substance use disorder.

## WHAT IS SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER?

When someone develops a substance use disorder, they lose control over how much or how often they use a substance, to the extent that obtaining and using the substance takes precedence over personal and professional responsibilities. Individuals with substance use disorder will go through great lengths to obtain the substance they are addicted to, often putting themselves and others in danger.

Key characteristics of the disorder include feeling that you have to use the drug regularly (daily or even several times a day), having intense urges for the drug that block out any other thoughts, needing more of the drug to get the same effect over time, and taking larger amounts of the drug over a longer period of time than you intended.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF LEFT UNTREATED?

Substance use disorder is a chronic condition that affects all aspects of a person's life: biological, psychological, and social. People with substance use disorders require treatment that involves medications in conjunction with psychotherapy, and may sometimes need to be administered in a residential treatment setting like an addiction center. If left untreated, an individual with substance use disorder might suffer from organ damage or failure, get a communicable disease (such as HIV), have work and family problems, and be in legal trouble. Additionally, people with substance use disorders might be suffering from another psychiatric condition that also requires medical attention.



# SEXUAL DISORDERS

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## **WHAT ARE SEXUAL DISORDERS?**

Sexual disorders are disorders that prevent someone from experiencing satisfaction from sexual activity. The problem may be physical (i.e. dysfunction of genital organs, nerves, etc.) or psychological (i.e. anxiety performance or trauma-related or other). Sexual disorder can be related to the desire to have sex, arousal, orgasm, or pain. They negatively affect the person's mental health and quality of life.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF LEFT UNTREATED?**

If left untreated, sexual disorders can cause increasing anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, relationship problems, among others. Sexual disorders are often treated with medications and/or psychotherapy depending on the cause of the problem.

## **WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF A PARAPHILIC DISORDER?**

A paraphilic disorder is an atypical sexual behavior or fantasy (a paraphilia) that is considered pathological because it either causes distress or harm to the person, or others, or violates the consent of another person.