

If you are the person experiencing these problems you will probably be confused and scared. You may have felt like this for some time, but tried to ignore it or make sense of it somehow. It's not unusual to want to deny that there is a problem and be reluctant to get help.

Friends and Relatives

As a friend or relative you may be feeling the stresses yourself and not know what to do for the best. It can be hard to know what to do and who to talk to, but remember it could happen to anyone and it is important to talk about your concerns.

Help is Available

In most cases help can be given at home to help recovery from psychosis. An initial meeting is arranged to discuss the situation and decide the sort of help required. This is likely to include treatment advice as well as practical assistance. Information and support can be offered to family and friends.

To get **help** you could initially talk to a relative, youth worker, teacher or school/college/ occupational health nurse or counsellor. For more information about psychosis contact:

- ◆ Your local doctor (GP)
- ◆ Early Intervention Service

If you contact the Early Intervention Service you will be able to speak to someone or leave a message.

You can contact the service if you are the person experiencing psychosis. You can also contact if you are a friend or relative concerned about someone.

You will be able to discuss your concerns and receive help in getting an assessment.

Useful Information

www.gripinitiative.org.uk
www.youngminds.org.uk
www.hearing-voices.org
www.rethink.org
www.psychosissucks.ca



NHS

Avon and Wiltshire

Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust



**SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE
EARLY INTERVENTION FOR
PSYCHOSIS SERVICE**

TEL: 01173 787970

**E-MAIL: Early
InterventionSouthGloucestershire@
awp.nhs.co.uk**

In Bristol about 90 people will have their first episode of psychosis each year. Like other problems it can be treated and most people recover.

The Early Intervention for Psychosis Team specialises in working with people in the early stages of psychosis along with their families. The service sees people between the ages of 16-35.

A psychotic experience or episode can be distressing and often includes things like hearing or seeing things that other people can't see or hear. It may also involve unusual beliefs that others don't share such as thinking others are trying to harm you or your friends or family. Sometimes it can be difficult to know who can be trusted, especially if you feel at risk.

There are many different cultural and individual ways of understanding experiences of psychosis. It is important to understand each person's beliefs about these experiences to enable working together to achieve the best outcome.

Early signs of psychosis can be vague and will vary from person to person. The sort of things you or someone you know might experience are:

- Feeling confused, irritable, anxious or depressed
- Feeling suspicious, tense or threatened
- Mood swings
- Problems with sleeping or changes in appetite
- Struggling to cope with work or study
- Difficulty in getting going or loss of interest in the things that your used to enjoy
- Less able to concentrate, work things out or remember things.

Of course any of these changes could be a temporary reaction to stressful events such as difficulties at school / college / work, relationship break-ups, or the process of changing roles. For some people recreational drug and /or alcohol use may trigger these difficulties.

It is a good idea to get these checked out so you know what is happening. This means that if a psychotic episode is developing, any treatment needed can be started sooner rather than later. You may feel uncomfortable about needing help but remember it could happen to anyone.

Later signs are more likely to be obvious and can be very distressing.

The sort of things you might notice are:

- Things around you may seem strange and you might feel uneasy about seeing friends or going out and start preferring to spend time alone.
- Thoughts seem jumbled, slowed down or speeded up, or interfered with. Feeling like you are being taken over or changed in some way.
- It might seem like other people don't understand the things you say.
- Friends or family may say that you are saying strange things or acting oddly, or you may interpret things in a different way to people around you.
- You might think that other people are talking about you or watching you and so you feel suspicious or scared.
- You might hear or see things that seem very real to you but that no one else notices, or you might believe that there are special messages and signs for you in the things around you.