



Mental Disorders

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a mental disorder that impacts how a person can clearly act, think, and relate to others. Schizophrenia is a serious, complex disorder that can impact someone long-term. Schizophrenia symptoms tend to emerge in early adulthood (age 18 -30). Black people have a history of being misdiagnosed at disproportionately higher rates for schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. Given the misdiagnosis of schizophrenia and its complexity; it is important to understand how to identify the symptoms and treatment options.

Symptoms

- **Delusions:** Believing things that are not true; even with evidence that the belief is false.
- **Hallucinations:** Seeing or hearing things that are not present but they seem real.
- **Disorganized Speech:** Conversations that are challenging to understand and switching from to various topics.
- **Disorganized Behavior:** Lack of verbal and nonverbal responses to the environment. Easily becoming irritable and agitated.
- **Lack of emotional response:** Lack of emotional expression and responses to events/activities that would normally produce an emotional expression.

Warning Signs

- Sudden irritability and hostility
- Difficulty concentrating and completing tasks
- Decline in mental abilities
- Hearing voices
- Changes in sleep
- Less engagement in social relationships - isolation

Treatment

- **Medication:** Antipsychotic medications
- **Psychotherapy:** Cognitive Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- **Social Skills & Employment Support:** Support with communicating, processing thoughts, and managing responsibilities in social settings.

Sources: Mayo Clinic, National Alliance on Mental Illness, DSM-V, National Institutes of Health