

## **What you should know about psychosis:**

Psychosis refers to changes in the brain that interfere with the person's experience of their world. Characteristic symptoms include hearing voices or seeing visions (hallucinations), false beliefs or marked suspicions of others (delusions), and jumbled thoughts or speech and difficulty concentrating (disorganized thinking).

Symptoms of psychosis are treatable.

The common characteristic of psychosis is a heightened sensitivity. This includes sensitivity to:

- Incoming sensory information (sights, sounds, smells, touch, movement)
- Prolonged stress
- Strenuous demands
- Rapid change in expectations, events, or routines
- Complexity of situation (a lot going on at once)
- Illicit drugs and alcohol
- Criticism or lack of warmth

Psychosis is no one's fault—neither the symptomatic person nor the family is to blame for this sensitivity. It is a problem with the way the brain is working.

Symptoms of psychosis should not be ignored because the longer they exist, the less chance there is for treatment effectiveness and complete recovery.

Early experience of psychosis is extremely confusing and traumatic for both the person and his/her family. It can cause considerable distress and disruption to their lives.

Support, counseling, and education are aimed at reducing stress and teaching effective coping strategies for both the individual and family.

The best treatment addresses not only the specific symptoms, but also the impact of these symptoms on the person and his or her family.