

What is Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a brain disorder with abnormal levels of activity and chemicals. The illness affects each person differently and can follow a varying course over time. It generally strikes between the ages of 15 and 30 and affects approximately 1% of the population. That means Nearly 12,000 people in Saskatchewan live with schizophrenia.

What are the Symptoms?

Psychosis is most common in schizophrenia and can involve a variety of symptoms that each person experiences differently.

Early warning signs can include: being unable to relax, concentrate or sleep. Becoming reclusive or socially withdrawn. Performance at school or work may deteriorate along with their personal appearance and social skills.

Symptoms of Schizophrenia can include:

- **Hallucinations:** hearing, seeing, smelling, feeling or tasting things that other people are not experiencing
- **Delusions:** beliefs for which there is no proof
- **Paranoia:** suspicious feelings, irrational thoughts of persecution
- **Thought disorders:** disorganized and fragmented thinking leading to incoherent ideas and speech
- **Flatness of affect:** inability to express emotions
- **Out of character behavior:** a change in behavior patterns
- **Social withdrawal:** isolation and reclusiveness
- **Cognitive deficits:** memory loss, difficulty in concentrating, planning and decision-making
- **Functional deterioration:** loss of skills
- **Depression:** constant feeling of sadness or despair

What is Bipolar Disorder?

Bipolar disorder is an extreme change in mood, thought, behaviour and energy. A person's mood can cycle between mania and depression. Episodes can be mild, moderate, or severe. 4% of the population has experienced bipolar disorder.

Symptoms of Bipolar Disorder can include:

- Increased physical and mental activity and energy
- Heightened mood, exaggerated optimism and self confidence
- Excessive irritability, aggressive behaviour
- Decreased need for sleep without fatigue
- Increased spending or gambling
- Racing speech, thoughts, and ideas
- Increased sex drive, and reckless behaviour
- Depression to varying degrees of severity



What is Depression?

Depression is a mood disorder and it is not the same as sadness. It is more than just feeling down due to life's regular upsets. Depression can range from mild, moderate, to severe.

Symptoms of Depression can include:

- Prolonged sadness
- Unexplained crying spells
- Eating too much or not enough
- Sleeping too much or not enough
- Persistent lethargy and loss of energy
- Feelings of guilt and worthlessness
- Withdrawal from interests or activities
- Feelings of wanting to die or suicidal actions or thoughts

Schizoaffective Disorder is where one or more of the symptoms of Schizophrenia are present combined with one of more of the symptoms of depression or bipolar disorder. About 1 in 500 people has schizoaffective disorder.

What is Anxiety Disorder?

Anxiety is a normal response to stress that can become a disorder when it interferes with: a person's ability to function every day, maintain relationships, or lasts for an extended period of time. There are many types of anxiety disorders, and up to 25% of people will experience an anxiety disorder.

Symptoms of Anxiety Disorders can include:

- Feelings of panic, fear, and uneasiness
- Problems sleeping
- Cold or sweaty hands or feet
- Shortness of breath, heart palpitations
- Nausea and Dizziness
- Avoiding situations and public places

Psychosis:

This is a term used to describe a person who no longer knows what reality is. It affects about 4% of the population including people living with schizophrenia but also other illnesses.



Mental illness happens in cycles

Mental illness comes and goes in cycles of remission and relapse. People can experience remission of symptoms from all mental health disorders. Relapses can happen and it's ok. It's important to talk to your health professional.

Mental Health Resources

- Call the Schizophrenia Society Peer Support Worker at: **1-877-584-2620**.
- Join one of the support or educational groups offered by the Schizophrenia Society.
- Call **211** or use www.sk.211.ca to find mental health resources and more in your area.
- Call **811** if you need mental health support, you can talk to a nurse or mental health counsellor confidentially 24/7
- **911** if it is an emergency such as a suicide attempt
- **1st Nations and Inuit Help Line**
1-855-242-3310 (toll free) or visit <https://www.hopeforwellness.ca/>
- **Kids Help Phone**
1-800-668-6868
- **Centralized Intake for Mental Health and Addictions:**
Regina: 306-766-7800
Saskatoon: 306-655-7777
- **COAST:** 306-766-7800
- **Regina Mobile Crisis:** 306-757-0127
- **Saskatoon Crisis Service:** 306-933-6200

Don't Lose Hope: Remember You Are Not Alone and there is Help.



Recovery is likely

People living with mental illness can have fulfilling lives regardless of whether or not they have continuing symptoms.

Recovery is regaining a satisfying hopeful and contributing life regardless of mental health status.

Street Drugs and Alcohol

Street drugs, alcohol and prescription drug misuse can trigger and worsen symptoms of mental illness for many people. People may self-medicate with various substances for temporary relief but end up making things worse. Marijuana can trigger psychosis for some people and lessen the effectiveness of medication.

If you think you have an addiction or substance use issue it is important to seek help. It's important to be honest with your healthcare professional.

What Causes Mental Illness?

There is no one direct cause of mental illness, but there are many factors when looking at the chance of developing a mental illness such as:

- Genetics or Family History
- Physical or emotional trauma
- Stressful situations
- Misuse of drugs or alcohol
- Brain Injuries
- Viral infections during pregnancy or infancy

All Mental illness is treatable

Treatment for mental illness includes working with health care professionals, finding appropriate medication, sobriety from drugs and alcohol, counseling, healthy eating, exercise, and having positive interactions with people.



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DON'T FORGET!

Your illness does not define you, your strength and courage do.

Mental Health Statistics

- * 1 in 4 people will experience a mental illness at some point in their life.
- * Two thirds of people living with illness live in silence fearing judgment and rejection.
- * Only 1 person out of 5,000 people with schizophrenia commits violent crime. This is the same rate as the general population.
- * People with schizophrenia are 2.5 times more likely to become victims of crime.



- * On any given week, more than 500,000 Canadians will not go to work because of mental illness
- * People age 20-40 with mental illness use more hospital beds than those with any other medical condition.
- * For every \$1 spent in mental health care \$7 in economic, justice, and social costs are saved.
- * Only 5% of Saskatchewan's health care budget is spent on mental health, this is 2% below national average.

Contact Us

Provincial Office can be contacted at:
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Website: www.schizophrenia.sk.ca
Email: info@schizophrenia.sk.ca
Facebook:
fb.me/SchizophreniaSocietyofSaskatchewanInc

To book a Partnership Program Presentation
Regina Area:

Sean Barschel at: 306-988-8445
Email: sean@schizophrenia.sk.ca

Saskatoon Area:
Curtis Harman at: 306-374-3220
Email: curtis@schizophrenia.sk.ca

Rural Areas:
Jodie Lamb-Alecxe at: 306-584-2369
Email: jodie@schizophrenia.sk.ca

Language Matters:

- Media uses terms like schizo, psycho, or mental. It's not fair to define someone by their illness, or any single characteristic.
- You would never say to someone "They are cancer", to describe a person living with cancer. Let's treat mental illness the same as physical illness.
- Strive to use 'person first' language. They are a person **with or living with** a mental illness.
- **You are not your illness**

Your donations make a difference!

Call our toll free number to donate:
1-877-584-2620 or visit our website



Mental Health Information



Provided by the Partnership Program

Stigma busting information designed to promote treatment & recovery from schizophrenia and related mental illnesses.