

# LIFE WITH PSYCHOSIS

## PEOPLE WITH PSYCHOSIS SAY IT FEELS LIKE:



## #mentalillnessfeelslike



Share what life with psychosis feels like for you in words, images or video by tagging your social media posts with [#mentalillnessfeelslike](https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/feelslike).

Posts will be displayed at [mentalhealthamerica.net/feelslike](https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/feelslike) where you can also submit anonymously if you choose.

- Speak up about your own experiences
- Help others who may be struggling to explain what they are going through to figure out if they are showing signs of a mental illness
- Break down the discrimination and stigma surrounding mental illnesses
- Show others that they are not alone in their feelings and their symptoms

**PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS ARE REAL ILLNESSES THAT INVOLVE CHANGES IN PERCEPTION OF REALITY, AND TYPICALLY START IN ADOLESCENCE OR EARLY ADULTHOOD. THEY AFFECT:**



### THE BODY

**Causing a person to:** hear sounds or voices that others don't; see trails, ghost-like shadows or wavy lines; have heightened sensitivity to light, sound or touch; or have decreased sense of smell.



### BEHAVIORS

**Causing:** withdrawal from family and friends; changes in sleep, including reversal, where a person sleeps during the day and is awake at night; changes in appetite; decreased attention to personal hygiene; behaviors that are strange or seemingly uncharacteristic; incoherent or bizarre speech or writing; or dramatic drop in ability to function at work or school.



### THOUGHTS

**Causing people to feel:** disconnected; out of control; that things aren't real or quite right; that something is happening to their thoughts; extreme fear for no apparent reason; or like they can't focus or remember.

**NEARLY  
3.5%  
OF ALL PEOPLE WILL  
EXPERIENCE PSYCHOSIS  
IN THEIR LIFETIME.<sup>1</sup>**



**THAT'S OVER  
11,300,000**

**AMERICAN PEOPLE.<sup>2</sup>**



**MORE THAN THE ENTIRE  
POPULATION OF GREECE.<sup>3</sup>**

## PSYCHOSIS IS NOT:

- Made up
- One specific mental illness
- Caused by bad parenting
- Permanent – symptoms change over time
- Just being “eccentric”
- Untreatable
- Violent by nature
- Having multiple personalities
- A choice
- A sign of weakness
- A character flaw

# TIPS FOR TACKLING PSYCHOSIS



If you feel like your brain is playing tricks on you, reach out for professional help right away - before Stage 4. The earlier you get treatment the better. Medications are very effective at reducing symptoms of psychosis, but are most the most helpful when combined with other services such as case management, supported employment, supported education, family supports, and psychoeducation.



Find tricks that help you feel “grounded in reality.” Some tricks could be a change in scenery, realizing that hallucinations only come at certain times, or that hallucinations go away when you say or do a specific thing.



Give your senses a break. If you are feeling especially sensitive to light, sound or touch, find a place where you can close the blinds or curtains, where it is quiet, and you feel safe and comfortable. If you are having trouble finding a place that suits you, try noise canceling headphones to help with sounds, or sunglasses to help with light.



Stay away from recreational drugs. Drugs make it more difficult for treatment to work. Even though smoking marijuana might make you feel relaxed in the short term, marijuana and other hallucinogenic substances have been connected to increased symptoms of psychosis.



Minimize the stress in your relationships. Struggling with mental illness can be difficult, and fighting increases stress which can aggravate symptoms and make it harder to recover. Focus on finding solutions and not placing blame. Know when it is best to walk away from conflict and come back when everyone is able to collect their thoughts and talk calmly.



Try to get about 7 hours of sleep each night. It can be really hard to sleep when you're experiencing psychosis, but not sleeping definitely makes things worse. Melatonin is a supplement that can help with sleep, but you should talk with a doctor before taking it, especially if you take prescription sleeping pills or tranquilizers.



Eat Omega-3 rich foods (like wild-caught fish) or take high quality fish oil supplements. Regular, long-term inclusion of Omega-3s can reduce symptoms of psychosis. They are also really good for your body in general!

## SOME OF THE COMMON TYPES OF PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS INCLUDE:

Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder, Schizophreniform Disorder, Delusional Disorder, and Schizotypal Disorder

## PSYCHOSIS CAN ALSO BE A FEATURE OF OTHER ILLNESSES LIKE:

Bipolar Disorder, and Depression

To learn more visit:  
[mentalhealthamerica.net/psychosis](http://mentalhealthamerica.net/psychosis)

## SCREENING CAN HELP CATCH MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS EARLY—B4STAGE4.

If you think you may be showing warning signs of psychosis, take a screen at [mhascreening.org](http://mhascreening.org).

A screening is not a diagnosis, but it can be a helpful tool for starting a conversation with your doctor or a loved one about your mental health.



[www.mhascreening.org](http://www.mhascreening.org)  
Anonymous • Free • Confidential

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 1-800-273-TALK (8255), go to your local Emergency Room or call 911.

**MHA**  
Mental Health America  
**B4Stage4**

### SOURCES

1 Perälä J, Suvisaari J, Saarni SI, et al. Lifetime Prevalence of Psychotic and Bipolar I Disorders in a General Population. Arch Gen Psychiatry. 2007;64(1):19-28. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.64.1.19.  
2 <http://www.census.gov/population/www/popclockus.html>  
3 [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Publications/Files/World\\_Population\\_2015\\_Wallchart.pdf](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Publications/Files/World_Population_2015_Wallchart.pdf)