

FACTS ABOUT SCHIZOPHRENIA

**Schizophrenia is a long-term mental health condition that causes a range of different psychological symptoms, including:**

* **hallucinations - hearing or seeing things that do not exist**
* **delusions - unusual beliefs not based on reality which often contradict the evidence**
* **muddled thoughts based on the hallucinations or delusions**
* **changes in behaviour**

**Doctors often describe schizophrenia as a psychotic illness. This means sometimes a person may not be able to distinguish their own thoughts and ideas from reality.**

**Misconceptions about schizophrenia**

**Split personality**

It is commonly thought that people with schizophrenia have a split personality, acting perfectly normally one minute and irrationally or bizarrely the next - this is not true.

**Violent behaviour**

Some people mistakenly equate schizophrenia with violent behaviour, but people with the condition are rarely dangerous.

Any violent behaviour is usually sparked off by illegal drugs or alcohol, which is the same for people who don’t have schizophrenia.

**How is schizophrenia treated?**

Schizophrenia is usually treated with a combination of medication and therapy appropriate to each individual. In most cases, this will be antipsychotic medicines and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

People with schizophrenia will usually receive help from a community mental health team (CMHT), which will offer day-to-day support and treatment.

Many people recover from schizophrenia, although they may have periods when symptoms return (relapses). Support and treatment can help reduce the impact of the condition on your life.

If schizophrenia is well managed, it is possible to reduce the chances of severe relapses.

This can include:

* recognising signs of an acute episode
* taking medication as prescribed
* talking to others about the condition

There are many charities and support groups offering help and advice on living with schizophrenia. Most people find it comforting to talk to others with a similar condition.

Support:

FASA: Tel: 02890803040 e-mail: [info@fasaonline.org](mailto:info@fasaonline.org)

Get Self Help: [www.getselfhelp.co.uk](http://www.getselfhelp.co.uk)

Live Life to the Full: [www.llttf.com](http://www.llttf.com)

Mood Gym: [www.moodgym.anu.edu.au](http://www.moodgym.anu.edu.au)