

What is Psychosis?

Psychosis, itself, is not a diagnosable illness. The word is usually used to describe an experience. It can be a symptom of some serious mental health illnesses including bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, paranoid personality disorder, post-partum psychosis or delusional/paranoid disorder.

If someone has a psychotic episode, they lose touch with reality. They might hear voices or have hallucinations (seeing things that aren't there) or delusions (believing things that aren't true). They may also become paranoid or feel that their life is in danger. Sometimes psychosis can cause muddled thinking and difficulty concentrating and can also make you feel as if something else is controlling you.

Even if you are experiencing one or more of these symptoms, it doesn't always mean that you are affected by psychosis. Just like all mental health issues, if you suspect that you may be suffering you should go and talk to a medical professional.

Psychosis can be very serious but, if it is caught early enough, it is treatable and, despite what the media says, the word psychotic does not mean dangerous.

It is also possible to experience psychosis on its own because of other factors including:

Physical illness or injury – if you have a high fever or a head injury, you may see or hear things. Conditions such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's can cause hallucinations and delusions

Drugs – some drugs can cause hallucinations or can make you hear things that aren't there

Lack of Sleep – this, too, can cause hallucinations

Hunger – extreme hunger or low blood sugar can cause hallucinations

Bereavement – sometimes when you have lost someone you love you may hear them talking to you and you may also feel that they are there with you even though you can't see them

Abuse or Trauma – both of these can cause psychotic episodes

Spiritual or Religious Experiences – some people hear voices or see visions as part of these types of experience. This can be very positive

Family – it is possible to inherit psychosis if a blood relative has it.

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