



## **SCHIZOPHRENIA: A Fact Sheet To Share**

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Schizophrenia is a serious disorder that affects how a person thinks, feels and acts. Someone with Schizophrenia may have difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is imaginary, may be unresponsive or withdrawn, and may have difficulty expressing normal emotions in social situations.

Symptoms of schizophrenia usually appear between the ages of 13 and 25, and the disease may come and go in cycles of relapse and remission. Many older adults who have endured lifelong schizophrenia did not receive early treatment with the effective drugs that are commonly used now. Therefore, their health, functional life skills, social skills and independence have likely suffered. “Late-onset” schizophrenia is far less common and often involves people who were considered “odd”, “eccentric” or “paranoid” in earlier life. Late-onset schizophrenia usually comes on the heels of severe stress or illness. With the use of modern medications and good support, the likelihood that the individual can return to positive functioning is favorable, though antipsychotic medication use by older adults must be closely monitored.

### **The presence and severity of symptoms of schizophrenia varies among individuals but commonly include:**

Delusions – false ideas or beliefs

Hallucinations – seeing or hearing (more common) things that are not there

Disordered thinking

Emotional unresponsiveness / apathy

Social interference

Poor self care

“Odd” habits



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### **Types of schizophrenia include:**

Paranoid schizophrenia – a person feels extremely suspicious, persecuted, or grandiose, or experiences a combination of these emotions.

Disorganized schizophrenia – a person is often incoherent in speech and thought, but may not have delusions.

Catatonic schizophrenia – a person is withdrawn, mute, negative and often assumes very unusual body positions.

Residual schizophrenia – a person is no longer experiencing delusions or hallucinations, but has no motivation or interest in life.

Schizoaffective disorder – a person has symptoms of both schizophrenia and a major mood disorder such as depression.

While no cure for schizophrenia exists, a number of treatments and treatment combinations can promote recovery. Most treatment plans are constructed to correct the chemical imbalance, reduce life stress and promote functionality.