Connection Learning Healthcare System (CLHS)
Maryland and Pennsylvania

Psychosis: A Quick Guide For Families From Families

When our loved ones experienced psychosis we felt alone, and we figure you might too. Yet you are not alone, many families experience this. Resources and support are available. You can still experience joy and connections!

1 The Basics

It Is a Medical Condition:
Not a choice, a character flaw, or the result of parenting.

It Is Common:
Usually first appears in young adulthood.

Recovery Is Possible:
Early support leads to the best long-term recovery. Many living with serious mental illness go on to live meaningful, productive, and happy lives.

What to Look For:
Psychosis affects how the brain processes reality. Hearing voices, expressing unusual fears, feeling extremely confused, and/or withdrawing socially.

2 How to Help

Stay Calm
Use a soft voice and short, simple sentences.

Listen, Don't Debate
You don't have to agree with their reality, but don't try to "fix" it with logic.

Validate
Say, "I can see you're scared/overwhelmed, and I'm right here with you."

Create a Calm Environment
Less noise, fewer people, and simple conversations can make a big difference.

Understand Anosognosia
Your loved one may have no understanding that they are ill.

3 Your Next Steps

1. Call a Specialist
Contact a local Early Psychosis (EPI) team or your doctor.

2. Safety First
If safety becomes a concern, it's okay to ask for help. Go to the ER, or you can call:

- 911 – Ask that they send a mental health crisis team
- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

3. Self-Care
You cannot pour from an empty cup. You don't have to handle this alone. There are support groups, family education programs, and professionals who specialize in early psychosis.

A Note for You

Remember, you are the expert; you know your loved one better than anyone! Your observations and intuition are the most valuable tools in their recovery. Ask your young adult to sign a consent form so that you can work with the team to support them.

A Place to Start

Seizingpsych.org
Sczaction.org
Nami.org
Hopeforschizophrenia.com
TAC.org
Mhanational.org

I Am Not Sick. I Don't Need Help! by Xavier Amador
Surviving Schizophrenia, A Family Manual by E. Fuller Torrey
Three Moms in the Trenches Podcast (podcast platforms, YouTube)