



Early psychosis in students

a guide for school professionals

More common than we may think, ‘psychosis’ is not an illness but a broad clinical term that embodies a range of symptoms in which thoughts, perceptions, behaviors or feelings become disrupted. Psychosis can trigger misinterpretation or confusion when interacting with the world, which can feel disorienting and cause distress.

There are many common misconceptions about people who experience psychosis. It is important to know that it is no one’s fault. Experiencing psychosis may feel scary and isolating, but recovery is possible. The earlier people connect to care, the better the chances they will get back on track and achieve their life goals.

Know the Signs

Students may report, or you may notice, the following, which may indicate experiences of psychosis:



- Hallucinations such as hearing or seeing things that others don't
- Unusual or delusional thinking like believing things that are not true
- Withdrawing socially, seeming more isolated or disengaged from peers and/or teachers
- Cognitive disorganization, like appearing or feeling puzzled or confused, or talking in a way that is difficult for others to follow
- A decline in school performance, such as lower grades, missed assignments, decreasing class participation, or unexplained absences

Learn When and Where to Refer



Reference your school’s policies and guidelines on how and when to connect with the student and/or family members. Your school’s counselors and nursing/medical staff are great resources for this information.

- School-based counseling services
- Specialized Coordinated Specialty Care programs
- Emergency Services

Know How to Accommodate



Students experiencing psychosis may benefit from additional accommodations in the school setting.

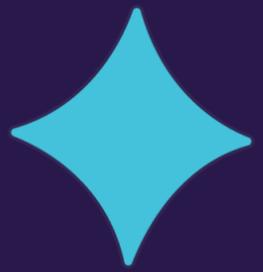
- IDEA, IEP & 504
- RTI “Response to Intervention”
- Transitions from Hospital to School Plan

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