

## Early intervention works

### What is psychosis?

**Psychosis** is a medical condition that affects the brain. It can make it difficult to think clearly. A person may hear, see or believe things that other people do not.

Research indicates that psychosis may be caused by vulnerabilities that people are born with. When that vulnerability is combined with a physical illness, a lot of stress, or drug use, it can trigger psychosis.

About 3 out of 100 people will have an episode at some stage of their life. Not everyone with psychosis experiences the same symptoms.

Research shows that early treatment of psychosis can help to prevent more serious problems from developing. If psychosis is left untreated, it is likely to get worse.

## Recovery is expected

- For many people, the first episode is also the last
- Treatment is most effective when started as soon as possible
- The key to successful recovery is early intervention

## How can a person get into the program?

**Anyone** in the community may refer to the EPI program including direct referrals from youth and young adults. Just give us a call @ 250-889-4284.

You can also see your **family physician or walk in doctor** and ask for a referral to EPI services.

### For more information:

Call the **EPI Information Line @ 250-889-4284** to speak with a clinician who will assess the situation and provide information and support to access EPI services.

### Recommended websites:

[www.earlypsychosis.ca](http://www.earlypsychosis.ca)

[www.mhrp.ca](http://www.mhrp.ca)

<https://foundrybc.ca/victoria/>

[www.schizophrenia.ca](http://www.schizophrenia.ca)



*Psychosis is treatable; don't be afraid to ask for help*

## Symptoms of Psychosis

- seeing, hearing or feeling things that are not there (Hallucinations)
- persistent, unusual thoughts or beliefs that can't be set aside regardless of what others believe (Delusions)
- feeling increasingly uneasy and suspicious of people (Paranoia)
- strong and inappropriate emotions or no emotions at all
- withdrawing from family or friends
- a sudden decline in self-care
- trouble thinking clearly or concentrating
- disorganized thoughts and speech

**Risk Factors** place people at a higher than average risk for psychosis. Examples include:

- a family history of mental health problems
- substance use, particularly cannabis use starting before the age of 25
- limited family, school or community connections leading to social isolation
- history of psychological trauma
- past head injury

## Early Psychosis Intervention (EPI) Program is designed to:

- allow for treatment to start as soon as possible
- enhance people's ability to recognize the early signs and symptoms
- educate the community about psychosis

## What does EPI provide?

People in the EPI program are connected with:

- a psychiatrist
  - to assess and medically treat psychosis
- a case manager
  - to provide emotional support and education about psychosis and its management.
  - To offer practical support with housing, work and school.
  - To recommend programs in the community for support
  - To provide education and support to families.

## Who is the EPI program for?

- People who are experiencing a first episode of psychosis and are between the ages of 13-35 years old.
- Our program bridges between youth and adult mental health services as well as between hospital and community

maybe things just don't seem right for you...  
maybe someone you know is not acting like they used to...

## it may be psychosis

Psychosis can be lonely, scary, confusing, and overwhelming and we can help. Psychosis can happen to anyone.

Our services are for individuals with psychosis and their families.

Our team is trained and experienced in supporting and treating people with first episode psychosis.

We aim to promote health, reduce social isolation, enhance positive coping skills and support you to do what is important to you.

## Education & training

Professionals (such as teachers and counsellors) and community agencies who work with young people play a key role in psychosis awareness, program referral and ongoing support

Our EPI program offers a direct contact for educational discussions, sharing of information about psychosis, early detection, referral and treatment. We also provide tools and resources for ongoing support.