

Treatment

The treatment of psychosis and psychosis susceptibility depends on the cause. If drugs are the cause, it will often be enough to **stop using drugs**, and then the psychotic disorder will have to disappear by itself. For other forms of psychosis, **medication** is often necessary to calm the brain. This medication ensures that the chemicals in the brain regain balance. These are so-called antipsychotics. If the patient does not start taking medication, he or she may continue experiencing psychotic episodes, sometimes even chronically. Living a normal life is then almost impossible.

Once the psychotic episode has ended, it must be examined what can be done to reduce the chance of a new psychotic episode. If psychotic episodes keep recurring, it is often advisable to use maintenance medication: the lowest possible dose of antipsychotics to prevent new psychotic episodes. Also, things that can increase the chance of a psychotic episode should be avoided as much as possible. Examples of this kind of risk factors are:

- **Sleep deprivation**
- **Stress**
- **Drug misuse**

Usually, it is possible to get rid of psychosis and to find a way to minimize the chance of a new psychotic episode. This often requires treatment by different professionals, such as a combination of a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a nurse.

More information

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PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS

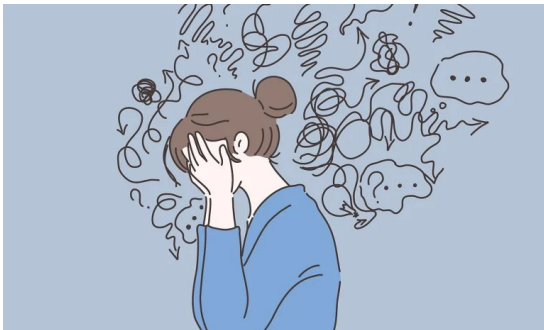
General information



Psychotic Disorders

Psychotic disorders are quite common, also in Aruba. Psychosis is actually a symptom of an underlying problem. Sometimes we know what that underlying problem is, sometimes we do not. Someone having psychosis is very sick and almost always needs to be treated quickly.

When someone has psychosis, there is a problem in the brain. Because certain chemicals are out of balance, all kinds of disorders occur in the normal brain functions. Imagine that the brain is an incredibly powerful organ that determines what we feel, what we think and what we do. If this organ gets out of balance, all kinds of things can go wrong.



Symptoms

Common symptoms of psychosis are:

- **Hallucinations:** the brain mistakenly thinks that our senses perceive something. The person hears sounds (often voices), sees things, feels things or can even smell things. However, all these things are not really there. This person cannot distinguish these perceptions from reality.
- **Delusions:** due to difficulty thinking, hallucinations and problems in distinguishing what is real and what is not, people can have a distorted view of reality. For example, people are convinced that they are being followed, that people want to hurt them or that certain news items are meant especially for them. Delusions can take any form you can think of, from something suspicious to incredibly bizarre. But all such delusions feel real to the patient.
- **Disorganized thinking:** because the brain is no longer able to properly control the patient's thoughts and to concentrate, all kinds of thoughts and impulses get mixed up, his or her thoughts become disorganized. Because of this, the patient can no longer think properly, he or she has a busy mind and has a confused way of speaking.

Cause

As mentioned earlier, psychosis is actually a symptom of an underlying condition. A number of common causes of psychosis are:

- **Schizophrenia:** this term is actually old-fashioned and is increasingly rarely used. We now prefer to speak of **psychosis susceptibility**, which actually indicates that this person can quickly develop psychotic symptoms. In case of classical schizophrenia, a person suffers from recurring psychotic episodes besides having little energy, lack of motivation to do things and less interest in things. People often become slow and withdrawn. This is a chronic disorder, which can even worsen. If someone only suffers from psychosis susceptibility (and therefore no schizophrenia), then it does not always worsen over time, and in some cases it may even go away.
- **Drug misuse:** under the influence of most drugs, people can become psychotic. How easily you become psychotic depends on your predisposition.
- **Bipolar disorder:** when people with bipolar disorder become manic, they can also develop psychotic symptoms at the peak of their mania. This is not actually referred to as psychosis but as mania with psychotic features.