



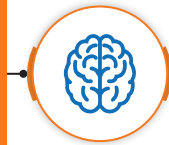
Schizophrenia

Caring with Understanding

Understanding Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia^{1,2}

is a medical condition that affects how a person thinks, feels, and behaves. Many people live stable lives with treatment.



Possible causes^{1,2}

- ◆ Genetic factors
- ◆ Person's surroundings and life experiences
- ◆ Minor brain injury before, during, or after birth

Symptoms of Schizophrenia

Early signs of Schizophrenia can be mild and easy to overlook.³

Poor personal hygiene or self-care

Neglect of daily responsibilities



Mood changes or unusual emotional reactions

Reduced social contact

If you notice these changes in someone, talking to a psychiatrist early can help you understand what is happening and what to do next for them.^{2,3}

Symptoms can differ from person to person and are generally categorized as follows:^{1,2}



Positive symptoms (improve with medications)

- ◆ Feeling suspicious or worried that others may harm them
- ◆ Having strange beliefs (delusions) and speaking in ways that sound strange
- ◆ Hearing voices and seeing things that are not there (hallucinations)



Negative symptoms (things that unusually stop happening)



- ◆ Difficulty planning or carrying out routine activities
- ◆ Reduced speech (not talking much) or a dull/flat voice
- ◆ Social withdrawal or avoiding interactions



Associated cognitive (brain-related) and emotional symptoms

- ◆ Poor concentration, forgetfulness, difficulty making decisions
- ◆ Anxiety, low confidence, and feelings of worthlessness

Separating Schizophrenia myths from facts

 Myth	Fact 
Schizophrenia means someone has split personalities. ⁴	Schizophrenia affects how a person thinks and understands reality; it is not a case of multiple personalities. ^{5,6}
Those with Schizophrenia are dangerous to be around. ⁴	On the contrary, they are more likely to be victims of violence or experience self-harm. ⁴
Schizophrenia is untreatable. ⁴	It is manageable with medication, therapy, and social support. ⁴
Someone with Schizophrenia cannot work for a living. ⁴	With the right treatment and support, they can work successfully in roles matched to their abilities. ⁵

Understanding treatment of Schizophrenia

With the right treatment, people with Schizophrenia can improve significantly and lead fulfilling lives. The treatment includes:^{1,7}



Medications

- ◆ Help manage symptoms by affecting brain chemicals
- ◆ Their dosages require gradual adjustments as per response and side-effects, under a psychiatrist's guidance



Psychological counseling

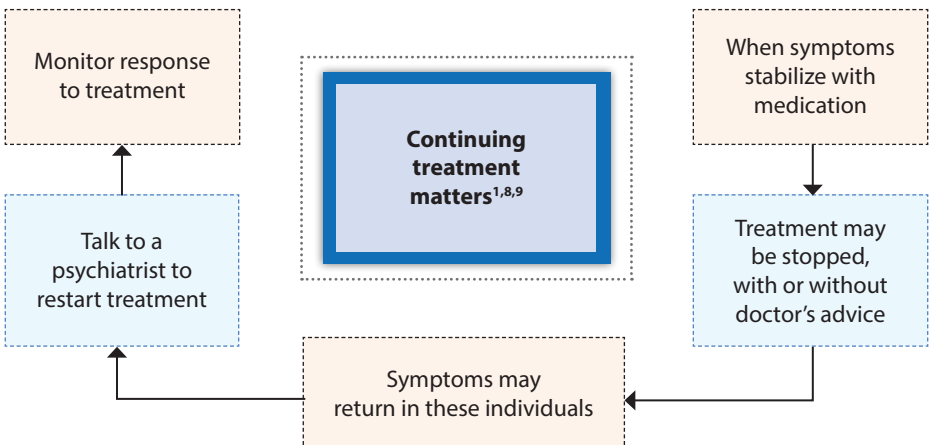
- ◆ To help those with Schizophrenia and their families learn and understand the condition and manage it



Support for daily needs

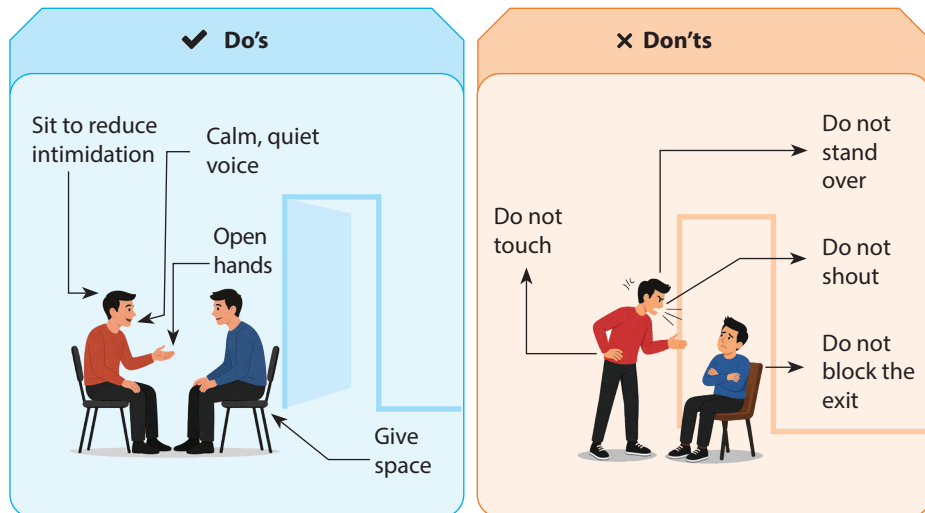
- ◆ To pursue education and employment goals

Regular treatment lowers the chances of symptoms returning



Understanding acute episodes and managing crisis in Schizophrenia

Sometimes, symptoms may appear stronger and the person may seem very restless, upset, or behave differently than usual.¹⁰⁻¹² During such acute episodes, caregivers and family members need to calmly stabilize the situation and get help fast.⁷



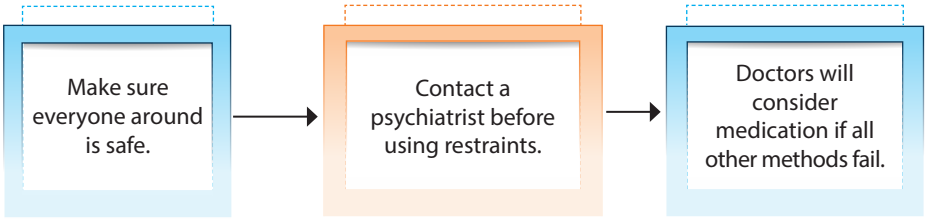
General measures to follow during acute episodes

Some examples of acute episodes include:


- ◆ **Agitation:** This is an emotional state of excitement or restlessness that may result from triggers such as noise, crowd, changes in routines or fears.¹⁰




- ◆ **Aggressive behavior:** Sometimes their words or actions may cause harm to other people.¹¹



- ◆ **Self-harm:** Identify when someone may be at risk of self-harm or seems suicidal.¹²

 **Warning signs of self-harm include¹²**

- ◆ Hopelessness, personal losses, suicidal talk, sudden mood shifts, or messages, notes, and art about death

What to do if you notice these signs?¹² 

- ◆ Stay close and keep an eye on them after any major loss
- ◆ If a person talks about feeling hopeless or mentions self-harm, it is important to talk to a psychiatrist promptly.

Your role as a caregiver

It can be confusing to know exactly how to help someone with a mental illness.² Caregivers should show support, build trust, make shared decisions and arrange help fast when needed.¹³



Creating supportive and positive home environment^{7,14}

- ◆ Talk to individuals with Schizophrenia with empathy and understand them without judgement
- ◆ Learn more about the illness
- ◆ Ask how they are feeling emotionally
- ◆ Understand what makes them comfortable or uncomfortable
- ◆ Talk about their goals and progress and encourage their strengths
- ◆ Involve them in activities, boost confidence, and appreciate them
- ◆ Provide moral and material assistance to keep them motivated
- ◆ Keep emergency contact numbers and the psychiatrist's number handy
- ◆ Keep details of the prescribed medicines and their schedule handy



Helping with lifestyle modifications^{15,16}

- ◆ Encourage them to take care of themselves, as it can help reduce their stress, low mood, and tiredness.
- ◆ Help them follow healthy habits such as eating balanced meals, staying physically active, and healthy sleeping.
- ◆ Guide them to take their medications regularly and correctly as prescribed, and ensure they do not stop taking them without advice.
- ◆ Encourage them to stop smoking and avoid alcohol/drug use.

Self-care tips for a caregiver¹³

- ◆ Divide all tasks among more people so that you find time for personal tasks.
- ◆ Use healthy ways for stress relief (meditation, yoga, walks).
- ◆ Talk, connect, and share your feelings with others.
- ◆ Keep support information handy.



Dealing with stigma: Actionable steps to overcome it¹⁷

- ◆ **Use respectful words:** Do not describe people with Schizophrenia with words that are hurtful or shameful.
- ◆ **Correct wrong beliefs:** Challenge and correct misunderstandings about Schizophrenia.
- ◆ **Share positive examples:** Talk about people doing well with treatment. Normalize care and help-seeking for Schizophrenia.
- ◆ **Openly talk about it and show support:** Do not hide the condition. Open conversations can reduce fear and shame.

Medication planner

Patient: _____ **Doctor:** _____

Medicines with dosage	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1. _____							
Morning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Night	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. _____							
Morning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Night	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. _____							
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Night	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. _____							
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Afternoon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Night	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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