

If you are the person experiencing these problems, you will probably be confused and scared. You may have felt like this for some time, but tried to ignore it or make sense of it somehow. It's not unusual to want to deny that there is a problem and be reluctant to get help.

Friends and relatives

As a friend or relative you may be feeling the stresses yourself and not know what to do for the best. It can be hard to know what to do and who to talk to, but remember it could happen to anyone and it is important to talk about your concerns.

Help is available

In most cases, help can be given at home to help recovery from psychosis. An initial meeting is arranged to discuss the situation and decide the sort of help required. This is likely to include treatment advice as well as practical assistance. Information and support can be offered to family and friends.

To get **help** you could initially talk to a relative, youth worker, teacher or school/college/occupational health nurse or counsellor.

For more information about psychosis contact your local GP or the Early Intervention Service.

If you contact the Early Intervention Service, you will be able to speak to someone or leave a message.

You can contact the service if you are the person experiencing psychosis. You can also contact us if you are a friend or relative concerned about someone.

You will be able to discuss your concerns and receive help in getting an assessment.

Follow us on:

- Facebook - <http://www.facebook.com/RealityCheckNHS/info>
- Twitter - <http://twitter.com/RealityCheckNHS>
- www.awp.nhs.uk/services/community/early-intervention/

To make a comment, raise a concern or make a complaint, please contact the Trust's Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

Tel: 01225 362900
Free phone: 0800 073 1778
Email: awp.pals@nhs.net

Other formats and languages

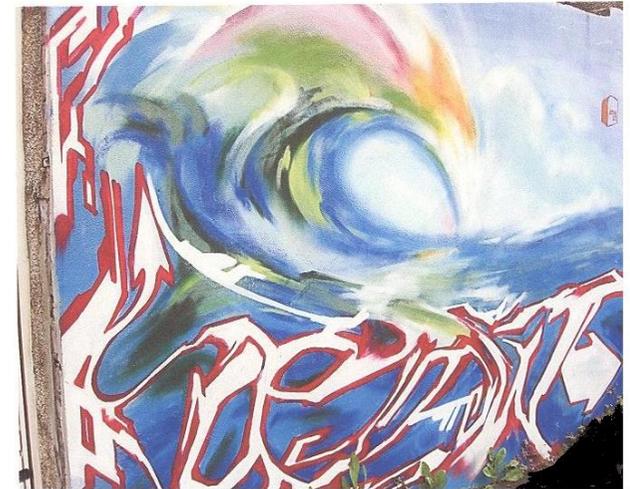
If you need this information in other formats (such as large print, audio, Braille) or in another language, please call the PALS number.

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NHS

Avon and Wiltshire
Mental Health Partnership
NHS Trust

Bristol Early Intervention for Psychosis Service



(Photo of street art taken by Sally Dean)

Bristol Early Intervention Service
1 Colston Fort, Montague Place,
Kingsdown, Bristol BS6 5UB
Telephone: **0117 9192371**

You matter, we care

In Bristol between 60 and 70 young people will have their first episode of psychosis each year. Like other problems it can be treated and most people recover.

The Bristol Team specialises in working with people between the ages 14 and 35 in the early stages of psychosis along with their families

A psychotic experience or episode can be distressing and often includes things like hearing or seeing things that other people can't see or hear. It may also involve unusual beliefs that others don't share such as thinking others are trying to harm you or your friends or family. Sometimes it can be difficult to know who can be trusted, especially if you feel at risk.

There are many different cultural and individual ways of understanding experiences of psychosis. It is important to understand each person's beliefs about these experiences to enable working together to achieve the best outcome.

Useful websites

www.iris-initiative.org.uk

www.rethink.org

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.mind.org.uk

www.psychosissucks.ca

Early signs of psychosis can be vague and will vary from person to person. The sort of things you or someone you know might experience are:

- Feeling confused, irritable, anxious or depressed
- Feeling suspicious, tense or threatened
- Mood swings
- Problems with sleeping or changes in appetite
- Struggling to cope with work or study
- Difficulty in getting going or loss of interest in the things that you used to enjoy
- Less able to concentrate, work things out or remember things.

Of course any of these changes could be a temporary reaction to stressful events such as difficulties at school / college / work, relationship break-ups, or the process of changing roles. For some people recreational drug and /or alcohol use may trigger these difficulties.

It is a good idea to get these checked out so you know what is happening. This means that if a psychotic episode is developing, any treatment needed can be started sooner rather than later. You may feel uncomfortable about needing help but remember it could happen to anyone.

Later signs are likely to be obvious and can be very distressing.

The sort of things you might notice are:

- Things around you may seem strange and you might feel uneasy about seeing friends or going out and start preferring to spend time alone.
- Thoughts seem jumbled, slowed down or speeded up, or interfered with.
- Feeling like you are being taken over or changed in some way.
- It might seem like other people don't understand the things you say.
- Friends or family may say that you are saying strange things or acting oddly, or you may interpret things in a different way from people around you.
- You might think that other people are talking about you or watching you and so you feel suspicious or scared.
- You might hear or see things that seem very real to you but that no one else notices
- You might believe that there are special messages and signs for you in the things around you.