

## Psychosocial Treatments

In order to help individuals to overcome the psychological, social and occupational issues associated with this disorder, there are a variety of rehabilitation programs available including :

- Money management skills
- Social skills training
- Support groups
- Job training
- Family education

### What can I do to help my loved one cope with this disease?

Educate yourself - learn to recognize the symptoms of a relapse

Help your loved one get medical help if needed. Ensure that medical treatment continues even after hospitalization

Provide support and try and remain positive

If possible, help the individual to increase their independence gradually

Get support for yourself and the other family members – ***remember that you will be no good to your loved one if you do not take care of yourself first***

Here are some useful organizations if you want to learn more :

Schizophrenia Society of Canada  
<http://www.schizophrenia.ca/>

National Alliance on Mental Illness  
[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

BC Schizophrenia Society  
[www.bcscs.org](http://www.bcscs.org)

Fraser Health Authority  
Early Psychosis Intervention  
Program

<http://www.psychosissucks.ca/epi/>

### References

British Columbia Schizophrenia Society. (n.d). Basic Facts about Schizophrenia. Retrieved November 19, 2005, from <http://www.mentalhealth.com/book/p40-sc02.html>

Frisch, L. & Frisch, N. (2002). Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Delmar : Albany, NY.

Schizophrenia Society of Canada. (n.d). What is Schizophrenia?. Retrieved November 19, 2005 from [http://www.schizophrenia.ca/files/What\\_Is\\_Schizophrenia.pdf](http://www.schizophrenia.ca/files/What_Is_Schizophrenia.pdf)

# Understanding



# Schizophrenia

## A Loved One's Guide to understanding schizophrenia

## What is Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is an extremely complex mental disorder that is believed to be caused by a biochemical imbalance in the brain.

Some important facts are :

- Usually appears between the ages of 15 and 25 (males generally show signs at an earlier age)
- The cause of schizophrenia remains unknown, although genes are believed to play a role
- In Canada, approximately 1 in 100 people will be diagnosed with schizophrenia



## What are the signs and symptoms that our loved one may exhibit?

**Positive signs** : Include those symptoms that are added to an individual's personality.  
Including :

Delusions  
Hallucinations  
Disorganized behaviour  
Increased sensitivity to stimuli

**Negative symptoms** : Are those symptoms which are considered to be taken away from an individual.  
These may include :

Speaking less  
Social Withdrawal  
Inability to express emotions  
Lack of motivation and energy  
Loss of enjoyment in activities

## What exactly are hallucinations and delusions?

**Hallucinations** occur when the individual hears, sees or smells something that is not actually there (ex. hearing voices)

**Delusions** occur when the individual has a fixed belief that they can not be persuaded is untrue (ex. believing they are the queen of England)

## What are the treatment options for this disease?

### Medication :

#### **Novel antipsychotics**

The new generation of antipsychotics, these medications have been proven to work well to reduce both the positive and negative symptoms of schizophrenia. Some of the more common of these medications include clozapine, olanzapine, quetiapine and risperidone.

#### **Standard antipsychotics**

While these medications are slowly being replaced by the newer novel antipsychotics, these medications are still widely used to treat the positive symptoms of schizophrenia. The more common of these medications are haloperidol and loxapine.

