



PIER Program

Psychosis-risk Intervention,
Education, and Research

Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences
University of Iowa

WHAT IS EARLY PSYCHOSIS?

Early psychosis refers to symptoms of psychosis that have started recently and are distressing, impact behavior, or impact functioning in daily life.

The term *psychosis* refers to a range of symptoms in which a person's thoughts, beliefs, and experiences are altered. Symptoms of a psychotic episode can include hallucinations and delusions.

Hallucinations are when a person sees, hears, smells, feels, or tastes something that is not actually there. They may hear voices that no one else can hear or see things that other people cannot.

Delusions are strongly held beliefs that are not true. This can involve thinking that strangers are talking about them, or believing that they have magical powers.

WHAT CAUSES PSYCHOSIS?

We are still learning different factors that may lead to psychosis. Psychosis may be a symptom of another disorder like schizophrenia and bipolar disorder although a person may experience psychosis and never be diagnosed with a mental illness.

Psychosis is thought to be triggered by a mix of both genetic and psychosocial factors or "stressors" such as substance use, traumatic experiences, and physical illness.

Psychosis can happen at any age although it often begins when a person is in their late teens to early twenties.



WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF PSYCHOSIS?

- A drop in grades or performance in school or work
- Difficulty telling reality from fantasy
 - e.g., feeling like your mind is playing tricks on you
 - e.g., hearing/seeing things that other people cannot hear or see
- Trouble thinking or concentrating
- Withdrawing socially, or spending much more time alone
- Decline in self-care or personal hygiene

TREATMENT FOR PSYCHOSIS

Identifying and treating psychosis early leads to the best outcomes.

Treatment for psychosis may involve a combination of psychotherapy, medication, case management, and family support and education.

At the University of Iowa PIER Program, we aim to connect individuals in the Iowa City/Johnson County area experiencing early warning signs of psychosis with the most effective treatment options available.