Schizophrenia

*Schizo* means fractured or broken into lots of parts

*Phrenos* means the brain or the mind

Information about schizophrenia for Deaf and hard of hearing consumers and carers
This booklet has been developed by the Deafness and Mental Health Service (2011) and other stakeholders to be used as a resource in educating people about schizophrenia.

Information comes from:

- National Mental Health Strategy Literature.

The illustrations used within this resource are from:

- Clipart


- Joanna R. Atkinson, K Gleeson, J Cromwell, S O'Rourke in study ‘Exploring the perceptual characteristics of voice-hallucinations in Deaf People, 2007.'
What’s in this booklet?

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What is schizophrenia?

- It is a mental illness that interferes with the mental (brain) function of a person.

- It affects 1% of the population (one person in every 100)
Happens when, how?

- Usually first starts in teens or early adulthood

- May last short time (acute)

  Few months

- Or for life (chronic)

  Full life

- May happen quickly over several weeks

  Happen illness come fast

- Or may slowly over a few months

  Happen illness come slow over few months
Some early signs

Person often withdraws

Gets depressed

Gets anxious

Develops extreme *fears* or *obsessions*

e.g. checking things or writing lots of notes about things
Symptoms

- **Delusions** - false beliefs

- **Hallucinations** - of different senses

- **Thought Disorder** - may cause speech to be jumbled, disjointed, slow or fast

- Little motivation to do things

- Blunted expression of emotions

- Social withdrawal

- Lack of insight

- Thinking difficulties
Delusions

Delusions are **false beliefs**.

You believe true, but really not true.

- **King or Queen**
- **Rich**
- **Someone watching me**
- **Someone try to poison me**
Delusions

TV talk to me

Me God

They want to hurt me

They’re talking about me
Hallucinations

- **Hearing voices** that no other person hears

- **Seeing visions** or things that other people do not see

- **Feeling** things on your body, but nothing is there

- **Smelling** something that other people do not smell

- **Tasting** something different to what you are eating e.g. eat chocolate but taste awful
Hallucinations

When I have voices I can **taste** a strange taste.

When the voice starts I feel vibrations.

When I have voices I **smell** a strange smell.

I can see the hands/lips of the voice but they are unclear.

Hear voices – other people can’t hear

Feeling things – but nothing there

See things – but nothing there
Thought disorder

Confused – can’t think properly

Lots of thoughts / fast thinking

Can’t concentrate

Think fast – Talk fast

Thoughts taken from mind
Other symptoms

No interest in things you normally enjoy – no motivation

Socially isolated – want to stay alone

Lack of insight – Talk rubbish but think nothing wrong with you

Blunted affect – Don’t show emotion on face
Schizophrenia happen – why?

Possible causes include:

- Genetic factors
- Biochemical factors
- Illegal Drugs
- Environmental factors
Genetic factors

- General population 1%
- If one parent has schizophrenia - child has a 10% chance of developing it
- If both parents have schizophrenia – child has up to 40% chance
Biochemical factors

- Certain substances (neurotransmitters) in the brain may cause a chemical imbalance
  - e.g. Maybe brain has too much or not enough of the neurotransmitter called ‘dopamine’

- Medications can help fix this problem
Drug use

- Cannabis
- LSD
- Other illegal drugs
Environment

Stressful events, although not really a cause, may make worse

Cause or result of illness?? Not sure!
What treatment can help?

- Medication
- Regular contact with health professionals
- Counselling / Talk Therapies
- Support for person to help organise and do important things
Medication

Medication can include:

- Tablets
- Capsules
- Wafers
- Injections
- Liquid
Professional help / Counselling

- Regular contact with professionals
  - Doctor
  - Psychologist
  - Mental Health workers

- Counselling / Talk Therapies
Other supports

- Good friends
- Family
- Pastor or Priest at church
- Community Supports e.g. Deaf Society, Centrelink, Lifeline
Remember

- Schizophrenia can happen to anyone
- It can be treated
- Effective treatment can assist the person in leading a productive life
If you need help

- Talk with your doctor
- Ask someone at the local community mental health centre

You can contact the Deafness and Mental Health Service on the details listed below.

- Office: 519 Kessels Road
  MacGregor, Queensland
- Phone: (07) 3167 8430
- SMS: 0419 023 883
- TTY: (07) 3167 8488
- Fax: (07) 3167 8377
- Email: deafness_mhs@health.qld.gov.au