

Schizophrenia Diagnostic Criteria

- Schizophrenia is a psychotic disorder characterized by a combination of specific *positive and negative symptoms*.
 - *Positive Symptoms:*
 - Hallucinations: something a person experiences that other people do not experience
 - Most common are **Auditory & Visual**
 - Auditory hallucinations are often threatening & critical (“you’re fat and stupid”)
 - *It is important to consider a person’s culture because some cultures it is maybe appropriate or part of a grieving process.*
 - Delusions: a false believes that does not change despite being presented with facts.
 - Common examples are paranoia, thinking they are famous/important (“I’m the president”), or believing people are imposters (“you’re not my mom, you’re an imposter”).
 - It is important not to argue about the delusions because these are the person’s reality—you can make the person agitated.
 - Severe impairment in speech & thought process
 - Common examples are severe tangents, not being able to describe a thought, or random words put together without meaning.
 - Facial expressions that do not fit the situation
 - Example: Telling someone that a relative died while laughing.
 - Inability to shower, brush teeth, changing clothing without assistance or promptings.
 - *Negative Symptoms:*
 - Severely restricted or no observable facial emotions.
 - Example: lack of smiling, lack of crying, etc.
 - Loss of willpower and decisiveness
 - Example: not going out with friends, lack of interests in activities, sitting in the house for many hours of the day doing nothing.
 - Ability to communicate is impaired
 - Example: Not able to think of simple words to describe something
 - Speech is limited and contains little to no meaningful information
 - Speech contains little of no meaningful information
 - Loss of ability to experience pleasure
- Individuals must show signs of disorder for a minimum of 6 months.



Treatments:

- The most common treatment for schizophrenia is anti-psychotic medication. Below is a list of the medications that you might see (most common are in *italics*).
 - *Clozaril*
 - *Zyprexa*
 - *Seroquel*
 - *Geodon*
 - *Abilify*
 - *Risperdal*
 - *Haldol*
 - *Prolixin*
 - Thorazine
 - Droperidol
 - Stelazine
 - Loxapine
 - Moban
 - Loxitane
 - Trilafon
 - Navane
 - Mellaril
 - Serentil
- Other treatments include:
 - Social skills training
 - Education about the disorder
 - Therapy (group, individual, family)



Quick Facts About Schizophrenia

- Causes:
 - Research indicates that there are environmental and biological factors associated with schizophrenia.
 - Research states that schizophrenia is associated with a chemical imbalance in the brain. The medications are designed to help that chemical imbalance.
 - It is interesting to note, that the Diagnostic Criteria for Psychiatric Disorders Manual indicates that there is no known etiology of schizophrenia found at this time. Meaning, there has not been a direct finding of the cause of the illness.
- Onset:
 - Onset typically occurs in late adolescence of early adulthood. Although it is rare, early onset can occur during late childhood and early adolescence.



Community Resources

- Support Groups:
 - Visions of Hope Peer Support Groups (various locations within Phoenix)
 - <http://phxhope.org/support-groups>
 - NAMI Connection
 - <http://www.namisa.org>
 - NAMI has a lot of different support groups and services available throughout the state.
- Community Information and Referral Services
 - <http://www.cir.org/>
 - Online directory to various agencies that can help with anything from adoption, to mental health, transportation needs.
- Book:
 - “Surviving Schizophrenia: A manual for families, patients, and provider”
 - Author: E. Fuller Torrey
 - I have not read this book yet, but from what I understand, the book is comprehensive, easy to read, and a valuable resource.

