

EARLY INTERVENTIONS IN PSYCHOSIS

Sally McManus
Fiona Barber



Psychosis – what is it?

Ideas from the group

Psychosis – what is it?

- The word psychosis is used to describe conditions which affect the mind, where there has been some loss of contact with reality. When people become unwell in this way it is called a psychotic episode.
- A key element of psychosis is the impairment of reality testing, a failure to distinguish between what is real and what is not.
- Not an exact science

Psychosis – who is at risk?

- Between 3 and 4 people in 100 will experience a psychosis in their lifetime
- Can be short-lived or single episodes followed by full recovery.
- More severe cases may be diagnosed as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder.
- Triggers can include stress, drug or alcohol use and some physical conditions.
- Increased likelihood of developing psychosis where close family history exists, also socio-economic and environmental factors.

Psychosis – what is it?

‘Positive’ symptoms – in addition to normal experience

- Hallucinations
- False beliefs/Delusions
- Thought disturbance

Predominant during the acute phase of a psychotic episode

Psychosis – what is it?

‘Negative’ symptoms

– cause a deficit in normal experience

“Restrictions in range and intensity of emotional expression, reduction in fluency and productivity of thought, speech and goal orientated behaviour”

Service user experiences (animated film)

Aims of Early Intervention in Psychosis

- Reduce Duration of Untreated Psychosis
- Reduce suicide rates
- Reduce hospital admissions
- Promote social recovery
- Minimise relapse rates

aspire referral checklist

Early Intervention in Psychosis

In assessment we are looking for

- Loss of motivation
- Reduced ability to initiate activities
- Lack of emotional responsiveness: little facial expression and flat speech (blunting)
- Social isolation
- Diminished capacity for experiencing pleasure.

= decline in social functioning

Early Interventions in Psychosis

- negative symptoms are the strongest early indicator of an emerging psychosis and it is important in Early Interventions to determine if a decline in functioning is present. This presentation before the onset of positive symptoms is called the Prodromal phase.
- If there is no decline it is unlikely we are seeing a psychosis unless there is a clear stress trigger.

The impact of substance use

- Drugs and alcohol are common features of modern life
- Link between street drugs and psychotic experiences: stimulants, hallucinogens, cannabis – often users are seeking these effects
- But can cause physical and psychological stress - prolonged hallucinogenic or paranoid experiences are often unwelcome.
- Variations in chemical composition and potency together with amount and frequency of use can affect impact
- Even those which may be viewed as not being addictive or harmful, such as cannabis, can be linked to increased risk of psychosis for young people with a certain genetic vulnerability.
- alcohol, cannabis and other substances can reduce the benefit received from prescribed medication, for example by affecting absorption rates

What aspire does

- provides assertive support for young people aged 14-35 with a first episode psychosis for up to 3 years
- works with individuals to understand what has happened
- works with families to minimise impact and increase understanding
- medical support
- CBT
- social recovery
- support people in accessing education/housing etc...
- peer support

ANY QUESTIONS?