

Psychotic Disorders in Children and Young People

Patient Factsheet
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What is it?

Getting a diagnosis of a psychotic disorder will depend how long, how bad and in what ways are the child has any of the above symptoms. There are a lot of conditions which can look like a psychotic disorder (such as autism or bipolar) which need to be ruled out.

Psychosis happens when someone begins to have any of the following:

- Delusions (strange beliefs or paranoia)
- Hallucinations (seeing, hearing or feeling things which are not there)
- Disorganised thinking (keep jumping from topic to topic and do not make sense)
- Changes to the ability to move or use facial expressions. This can sometimes become catatonia where the person is unable to move at all
- 'Negative symptoms' (which can include low mood, low energy and not taking care of themselves)

What will my GP do now?

If your child has symptoms of psychosis, your GP may refer them to see a psychiatrist or to mental health services. Early assessment and treatment can be of significant benefit.

Your GP will support you through the process of diagnosis and starting any treatment needed. Your GP may wish to meet with you and your child a number of times during this process.

Your GP will want your child to come back so they can check how they are improving. If they are not improving, your GP may discuss other options to assist.

What can I do?

It is important to support your child in attending and engaging in treatment. Treatment can often take time.

Some of the things that you can do include:

- Getting treatment early
- Provide reassurance and support to your child
- Follow through with any referrals made by your GP, including counselling
- Look after yourself – you are the child's main support and it is easy to forget to maintain good self-care

Types of Psychotic Disorders

Delusional Disorder

Having one or more delusions for more than a month but otherwise fine

Brief Psychotic Disorder

Has one or more psychotic symptoms for less than a month

Schizophreniform Disorder

This has all the same symptoms as schizophrenia but lasts between 1-6 months

Schizoaffective Disorder

Psychotic symptoms that don't go away as well as a major mood disorder (depressive or manic)

Schizotypal Personality Disorder

Difficulty in making friends and understanding how they impact on others or why people do the things they do

Schizophrenia

Someone who has been having psychotic symptoms for at least six months (or less if treated) and it is making it hard to function

What questions could I ask my doctor?

- What can I do to help my child now?
- How quickly can I expect results?
- What can I do to help my child over time?
- What happens if my child gets worse?
- When should I make another appointment?



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What supports are available?

Public health and other free services

The [Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service \(ICAMHS\)](#) provides specialist treatment for children and young people up to 18 years of age. Talk to your GP about this service.

The [Primary and Community Health Psychology Service](#) provides free psychological assessment and treatment for children up to 12 years. Contact 8788 4200 and ask to speak to the psychology intake worker.

The SWSLHD Youth Health Service provides free counselling to youth aged 12-21 years. Contact one of their centres and ask to speak to their intake worker:

- [The Corner Youth Health Service \(Bankstown\)](#) on 9726 8633
- [The Fairfield Liverpool Youth Health Team \(FLYHT\)](#) on 8717 1717
- [Traxside \(Campbelltown\)](#) on 4625 2525

[Headspace](#) provides bulk-billed counselling services for young people aged 12-25. Contact one of their centres to make an appointment:

- Bankstown on 9393 9669
- Liverpool on 8785 3200
- Macarthur on 4627 9089

South Western Sydney PHN Mental Health Services provide two services to improve access to mental health services for children and young people. Star4kids is for children aged 3-12 years and You In Mind is for young people over the age of 12 years. Both services include criteria to be met and a GP referral. **Speak to your GP about this service and whether a referral would be beneficial.**

The [Raising Healthy Minds App](#) is a free app you can tailor to your child, family and interests. It answers your questions about child wellbeing and shares practical tips for your day-to-day family life.

Private options

There are many private specialist and allied health providers that can treat child anxiety. Speak to your GP about rebates for treatment.

Where can I learn more?

Bullying No Way - for children and parents: bullyingnoway.gov.au

Kids Help Line: kidshelpline.com.au

Raising Children Network: raisingchildren.net.au

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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