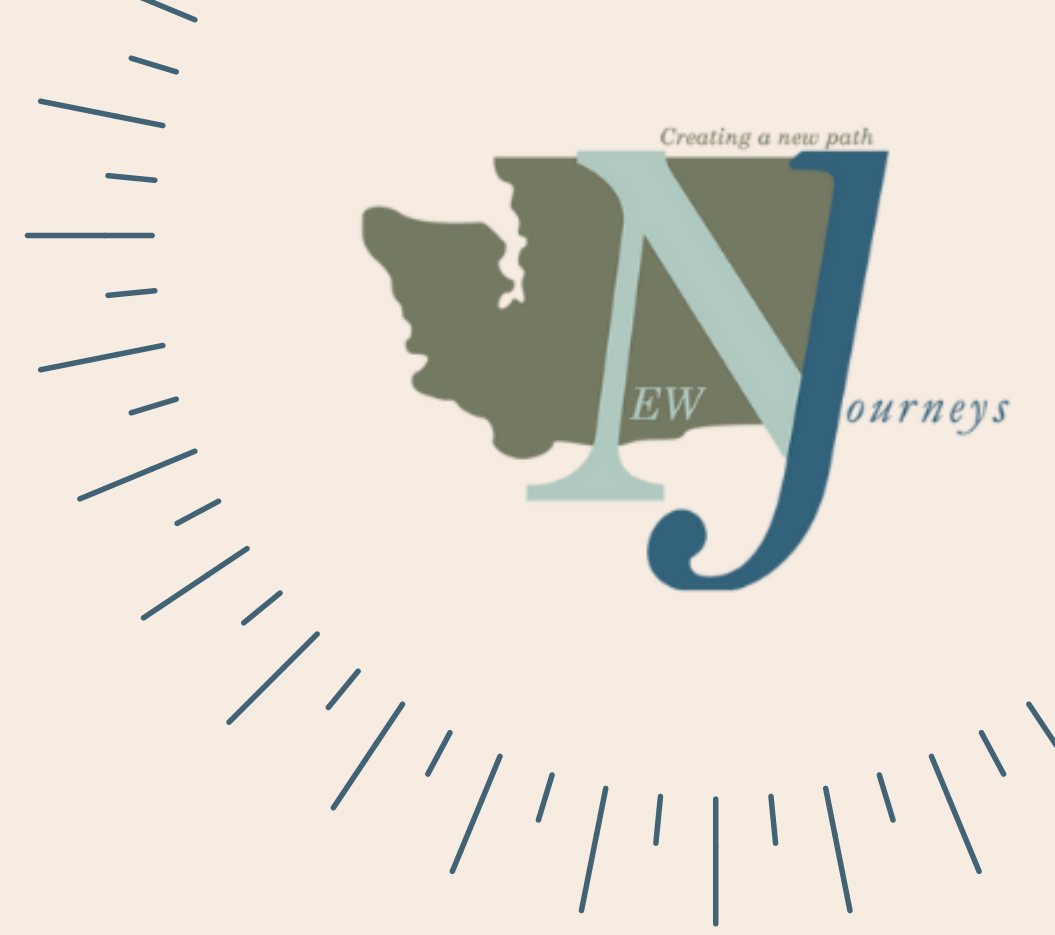


12 Myths and Facts about Psychosis



Myth - Psychosis means that someone has a "split personality"



Psychosis does not mean someone has a "split personality". The term psychosis describes conditions that affect the mind, causing a loss of contact with reality or trouble deciding what is real and what is not real. Psychosis is a cluster of symptoms, not a diagnosis.

Fact - Coordinated specialty care is more effective than typical care for individuals who experience first episode psychosis

Research shows that individuals who are enrolled in treatment, like New Journeys, are more likely to stay in treatment longer and experience greater improvement in their symptoms, interpersonal relationships, and quality of life.



Fact - A first episode of psychosis usually occurs in adolescence or early adult life

Psychosis often begins in young adulthood when a person is in their late teens to mid-20s. However, people can experience a psychotic episode at younger and older ages and as a part of many disorders and illnesses. For instance, older adults with neurological disorders may be at higher risk for psychosis.



Fact - When psychosis happens it can be intense and interfere with a young person's life

Many symptoms of psychosis can be confusing and even frightening and often can disrupt and individuals daily functioning, including their ability to engage with their friends, family, and continue with work or school. However, there is hope! Early intervention aims to help people get back on track with what is most important to them!





Fact - Psychosis may have several causes. It may last only a short period of time or it may continue sporadically for weeks, months or even years, unless the young person receives an evaluation that helps to determine the cause and/or proper treatment.

Temporary psychotic symptoms can be caused by sleep deprivation, drug use, and other factors. Psychosis can also be caused by medical illnesses, severe stress or trauma, drug reactions, and genetic predisposition. If symptoms of psychosis are observed, the individual may need a medical evaluation to rule out these causes.

Fact - There may be a desire to deny or be secretive about what is happening because of the fear of being different.

The range of symptoms that an individual may experience can be confusing and even startling. Individuals may choose not to disclose their experiences for fear of not being believed. Various symptoms of psychosis may also impact an individual's willingness to share their experiences with others and may lead to isolation.

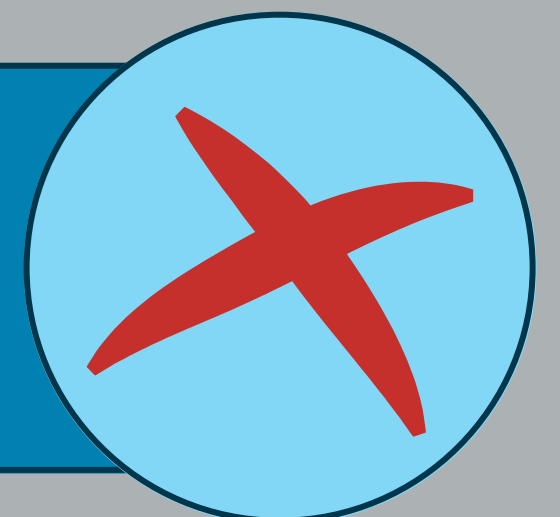


Myth - When someone is experiencing psychosis, they are just being eccentric or going through a phase.

People with psychosis may experience a range of symptoms that impact their daily functioning. Individuals typically experience delusions (false beliefs, for example, that people on television are sending them special messages or that others are trying to hurt them) and hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that others do not, such as hearing voices telling them to do something or criticizing them). Other symptoms can include incoherent or nonsense speech and behavior that is inappropriate for the situation.

Myth - Psychosis is caused by bad parenting or poverty.

Anyone can develop psychosis. It occurs across cultures and all levels of social status.



Fact - Psychosis is not the result of any personal failure of the individual.

Psychosis is no one's fault. Anyone can develop psychosis. Psychosis is common and treatable. Temporary psychotic symptoms can be caused by sleep deprivation, drug use, and other factors. Psychosis can also be caused by medical illnesses, severe stress or trauma, drug reactions, and genetic predisposition. If symptoms of psychosis are observed, the individual may need a medical evaluation to rule out these causes.



Myth - Psychosis is the same as having violent or “psychopathic” behavior.

A common misconception that contributes to the stigma surrounding psychosis is that it is synonymous with violent or "psychopathic" behavior. Most people who experience psychosis do not act out aggressively or commit crimes. Similarly, the majority of people who commit violent acts are not psychotic. Anger, substance use, and access to firearms are far more highly correlated with violence than psychosis (Skeem et al., 2015).

In fact, numerous studies have indicated that people experiencing mental health challenges are far more likely to be victims of violent crimes than perpetrators (Appleby et al., 2001; Hiday et al., 1999).

In the majority of cases where psychosis has been associated with violence, the psychotic symptoms are caused or exacerbated by substance use. Drugs such as meth are responsible for much higher violent incident rates than mental health conditions like schizophrenia (Skeem et al., 2011).

However, people with psychosis are at increased risk for harm to themselves.



Myth - Psychosis is untreatable.

Psychosis is treatable, and recovery is expected with early identification and intervention.

Myth - Having symptoms of psychosis means that someone has Schizophrenia.

Psychosis and psychotic like experiences can arise for various reasons; including substance use, medication side effects, trauma, certain medical conditions, and can be present in multiple mental health conditions.

