

Treating Schizophrenia



The symptoms of schizophrenia are severe and ongoing. They can disrupt the lives of both the person with the illness and their family and friends. Schizophrenia symptoms can cause a great deal of suffering. But treatment may help ease many of these symptoms. Treatment is most often life-long. It includes both medicine and counseling (psychotherapy). Treatment may also involve help with social, work, and life skills.

Medicines

Medicine is a key part of treatment for schizophrenia. Medicines known as antipsychotics can help ease symptoms. They also may prevent future problems. These medicines can have side effects. Some people may even stop taking their medicines to avoid side effects. But this can cause their symptoms to come back. If your loved one has problems with medicine, tell their healthcare provider. Changing the dose or type of medicine may help. Your support and caring can also help a loved one stick with treatment.

Counseling (psychotherapy)

A therapist can help your loved one deal with problems caused by schizophrenia. Therapy may focus on healing relationships or coping with the disorder. A therapist can also provide emotional support. Therapists can offer individual, group, and family counseling. Which one depends on their specialty and provider license.



Coordinated specialty care

Coordinated specialty care is a treatment that focuses on easing symptoms. It seeks to improve the quality of life for the person with schizophrenia. Treatment includes integrated care from different types of specialists. Integrated treatment can include medicines, psychosocial therapies, and case management. Treatment can also include family involvement. It can offer education and help with finding a job. Ask your healthcare providers if this type of treatment model is available in your area.

Social services

Some people with schizophrenia may not be able to work. They also may lack basic life skills. For instance, they may not know how to shop or manage money. Some may not be able to care for themselves. Fortunately, there are providers who can help them learn these skills. There are special places your loved one can live if you can't care for them. These include halfway houses and group homes. They are safe places for your loved one to start building a new life. There are also agencies that can help with needs such as improving life skills and finding housing.

Looking ahead

Research into schizophrenia is ongoing. This may lead to improved treatments in the future. There is always hope for a better life.

To learn more

- [National Institute of Mental Health at www.nimh.nih.gov](https://www.nimh.nih.gov) or 866-615-6464
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness at www.nami.org](https://www.nami.org) or 800-950-NAMI (800-950-6264)
- [Mental Health America at www.nmha.org](https://www.nmha.org) or 800-969-6642

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