



# First Episode Psychosis (FEP) Fact Sheet

## The Facts

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As a mental disorder, schizophrenia and psychosis involve symptoms of delusions, hallucinations, disorganized thinking, impaired motor skills, lack of emotional expression, and a decreased ability to engage in day-to-day activities. While psychosis can be experienced at any age, most onset between the ages of 16 and 30.<sup>1</sup>

## The Warning Signs

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- Hallucinations: hearing, seeing, tasting or believing things that others don't
- Delusions: persistent, unusual thoughts or beliefs that can't be set aside
- Suspiciousness or extreme uneasiness with others
- Strong and inappropriate emotions or no emotions at all
- Withdrawing from family or friends
- A sudden decline in self-care
- Difficulty concentrating<sup>2</sup>

## Support & Treatment

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Whatever the cause, early diagnosis and treatment provide the best hope for recovery. The most effective treatment for early psychosis is Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC). The earlier a person experiencing psychosis receives CSC, the better his or her quality of life. CSC uses a team-based approach with shared decision-making that focuses on working with individuals to reach their recovery goals. Programs that provide CSC are often called first-episode psychosis or FEP programs.<sup>3</sup>

### Key Components of CSC include:

- Case management
- Family support and education
- Psychotherapy
- Medication management
- Supported education and employment
- Peer support



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<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *National Effort Addresses Early Psychosis*, April 1, 2016. Retrieved from:

<https://newsletter.samhsa.gov/2016/04/01/national-effort-addresses-early-psychosis/>

<sup>2</sup> Giliberti, J.D., Mary (March 13, 2017) National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), *First Episode Psychosis: A Call to Arms*, retrieved from <http://www.nami.org/Blogs/From-the-CEO/March-2017/First-Episode-Psychosis-A-Call-to-Arms>

<sup>3</sup> National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 2016. Retrieved from: <http://www.nami.org/getattachment/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Early-Psychosis-and-Psychosis/NAMI-Early-Psychosis.pdf>