



WHAT ARE THE EARLY SYMPTOMS?



Some feelings or behaviors listed here might indicate a brief reaction to stressful events. On the other hand, these changes could be early symptoms of a developing mental illness. It is important that the person in question be assessed by a professional, especially if the symptoms last longer than a few weeks, the changes in the person's behavior are sudden, or seem very out of character or bizarre. Early symptoms or new experiences can occur on and off over time.

It is the combination of several symptoms rather than any one symptom that puts a person at risk.

Feeling "something's not quite right"

- Feeling like your brain is just not working right
- Not able to do school work or one's usual job
- Heightened sensitivity to sights, sounds, smells or touch

Hearing sounds/voices that are not there

- Feeling like your brain is playing tricks on you
- Intermittently hearing, seeing, smelling, and feeling things that others don't
- Somatic illusions

Jumbled thoughts and confusion

- Trouble with focus and attention
- Fear that others are putting thoughts in your brain or reading your mind
- Forgetfulness and getting lost
- Bizarre preoccupations or obsessional thoughts
- Having the sense that the world, other people, and/or you aren't real at times

Declining interest in people, activities and self-care

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of motivation and/or energy
- Dramatic changes in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Lack of interest in things you used to enjoy
- Not caring about your appearance

Experiencing fear for no good reason

- Worrying that others are thinking bad thoughts about you
- Thinking others wish to harm you or are watching and following you
- Feeling uneasy around people or suspicious of them

Having trouble communicating

- Losing track of conversations
- Difficulty speaking and/or understanding others
- Increased vagueness or focusing on small details in conversations
- Trouble with reading comprehension and writing

THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS NEED IMMEDIATE ATTENTION:

- **Suicidal or homicidal thoughts**
- **Dramatic change in sleep or appetite**
- **Hearing voices commanding you to do certain things**
- **Believing without reason that others are plotting against you**
- **Extreme unreasonable resentments or grudges**
- **Severely disorganized communication**