

## OUR MISSION

To improve the quality of life of those affected by schizophrenia and psychosis through education, support programs, public policy and research

# PSYCHOSIS & SUBSTANCE USE

### In collaboration with:

The Sunlife Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health, IWK Health Centre, and Dalhousie University



A REASON TO HOPE. THE MEANS TO COPE.  
SCHIZOPHRENIA SOCIETY OF CANADA  
SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE LA SCHIZOPHRÉNIE  
UNE SOURCE D'ESPOIR, DE SOUTIEN ET D'ENTRAIDE.

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## Notes

# **PSYCHOSIS & SUBSTANCE USE**

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# IS THERE ANY TREATMENT?

## **YES!**

Because people with psychosis may have interlinked problems with substance use problems, treatment that combines both mental health and addiction services into one program is best.

ALSO - integrating treatment for psychosis and substance abuse into one program is an effective way to help both problems at the same time.

### **Treatment programs include:**

- Improving quality of life including belief in the possibility of recovery.
- Going beyond just eliminating symptoms of psychosis and substance use and emphasizing social and other supports.
- Motivation support to help you set and accomplish your goals.
- Taking medications as prescribed

# Will YOU RECOVER?

**RECOVERY CAN BE A CHALLENGE BUT IT IS POSSIBLE!!**



However, the recovery process can be very long and relapse is more likely if you use drugs or alcohol.

## **WHAT IS RELAPSE?**

Relapse happens when someone in recovery re-experiences problems or symptoms associated with the disorder.

A relapse with substance use disorders means the person's problem with substance abuse has returned after a period of abstinence or controlled use.

A relapse of a mental illness like psychosis means the symptoms have returned, such as psychosis.

Relapse will often require more intensive treatment, but with access to integrated treatment and psychological services, along with community supports and self-help groups, most people can and do recover over time.

# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!** Find out as much as you can about psychosis, substance use and recovery.
- Get the help you need. There are service providers, self-help groups, such as Double-Trouble, Alateen, NA.
- Talk to family members and friends about developing an action plan to help prevent relapse of symptoms of substance use and psychosis.
- Learn stress coping strategies, such as:
  - Exercise daily
  - Relax and have fun
  - Take part in social activities
  - Eat a healthy balanced diet
  - Get 8-10 hours of sleep a night



## CHECK THESE OUT:

[www.schizophrenia.ca](http://www.schizophrenia.ca)  
[www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org)  
[www.psychosissucks.ca](http://www.psychosissucks.ca)  
[www.mindyourmind.ca](http://www.mindyourmind.ca)

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# HOW CAN USING SUBSTANCES AFFECT YOU IF YOU HAVE PSYCHOSIS?

At first, the effects of drugs and alcohol may provide relief from or cover up some of the symptoms of psychosis and other psychotic disorders. BUT symptoms can get worse when people are active users, and withdrawal from the substances almost always makes symptoms worse!

## PSYCHOSIS & SUBSTANCE USE INTERACT IN A BAD WAY!

What happens to people with psychosis who take drugs or abuse alcohol? <sup>4</sup>

They are more likely to....

- end up in hospital or jail
- experience relapse
- be unsuccessful in following through with treatment
- have greater problems with physical health
- have difficulties with school, and relationships
- have more suicidal thoughts
- become aggressive, hostile and volatile

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# WHAT CAME FIRST: THE MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEM OR THE SUBSTANCE USE PROBLEM?

Actually they are both independent problems that interact with each other.<sup>2</sup> They should be seen as individual disorders. BUT they should be treated at the same time.

Psychosis and substance use interact to make each condition worse, with serious and negative effects on many areas of people's lives, including school, relationships, health and safety.<sup>3</sup>

## WHY DO PEOPLE WITH PSYCHOSIS USE DRUGS & ALCOHOL?

For the same reasons as everyone else!

- to feel better
- relax
- have fun
- relieve stress
- be part of a group
- curiosity
- boredom
- experimentation
- cope with a mental illness

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## WHERE CAN YOU FIND HELP?



- Visit [www.schizophrenia.ca](http://www.schizophrenia.ca)
- A local mental health centre
- A local addictions treatment facility
- A local Schizophrenia Society Chapter
- CMHA branches across Canada

## MAKING GOALS & REACHING THEM HELPS PEOPLE RECOVER!

1 Green, A. & Sherwood Brown, E. Comorbid Schizophrenia and Substance Abuse. J Clin Psychiatry (67(9) 2006

2 Concurrent Substance use and Mental Health Disorders: An Information Guide, CAMH, 2004

3 Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia: Understanding Dual Diagnosis: Mental Illness and Substance Use

4 Drake, R. Ten-year recovery outcomes for clients with co-occurring Schizophrenia and Substance Use Disorders. Schizophrenia Bulletin, July 2006

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# Notes

## DID YOU KNOW...

⇒ Many people with psychosis abuse substances at some point in their lives.

⇒ Half of all people with psychosis also have problems with drugs and alcohol.

⇒ Up to 90% of people with psychosis are addicted to nicotine.

⇒ Recent research suggests that heavy use of cannabis may increase the risk of psychosis in some young people

## WHAT SUBSTANCES ARE BEING USED BY PEOPLE WITH PSYCHOSIS?

People with psychotic disorders tend to use substances that are affordable, easily accessible and readily available.

Such as:

- Alcohol
- Cannabis
- Nicotine
- Pain medicines
- Sleep medication<sup>1</sup>