

Psychosis

Psychosis describes a range of psychological symptoms that impact on a person's understanding or perception of reality.

People can experience psychosis for some time before they respond to treatment or support. This time is known as an 'episode' of psychosis. Some people will experience only a single episode of psychosis; others may have many episodes during their lifetime.

Symptoms of psychosis include:

- unusual ideas or beliefs about yourself or the world, some of which may be frightening
- hearing sounds or voices that other people can't hear, or seeing images that others can't see (known as 'hallucinations')
- the feeling that others might be in control of your body or thoughts
- trouble with thoughts getting jumbled, so that it may be hard to make sense of what others are saying or to express yourself clearly to other people
- behaviour that seems odd or that other people might find strange
- having increasing difficulties with schoolwork, not participating in activities they enjoy and isolating themselves from family and friends.



What treatment is available for your child?

Psychosis is usually diagnosed by a mental health professional after observing and talking to your child about their experiences. The mental health professional will be able to refer your child to professional support.

Getting early help is important when treating psychosis because early treatment increases the chances of a good recovery.

Treatments may include; medications, psychological therapies, advice on lifestyle changes and practical support to improve general health, reduce stress and lesson symptoms.

How can I support my child after leaving the Emergency Department?

1. **Follow through with the Discharge and Safety Plan** recommendations provided by Emergency Department staff. If you are not clear on details, ask staff to write them down.
2. **Inform your child's school** before they return to school. Explain the Discharge and Safety Plan recommendations you received at the Emergency Department. The school will be able to put additional supports in place to help keep your child safe.
3. **Watch out for signs** that your child may be experiencing further 'episodes' of psychosis (see above)
4. **Seek professional support** for longer term care and support. A general practitioner or school counsellor can discuss options or call the Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511.
5. **Acknowledging your own feelings**, consider talking to somebody supportive.

For advice and support contact:

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 **Suicide Call Back Service:** 1300 659 467

**If you have immediate concerns about your child's safety:
call 000 or take them to the Emergency Department**

Things that can help at school

By informing and keeping the school up to date you can help your child adjust back into school life and keep on track with their education. Your child's school will communicate and work with you, your child and support services to support your child in school. This may include:

- school specific safety planning
- return to school planning
- identifying a support person
- consideration of reasonable adjustments to the student's program
- ongoing monitoring and support
- accessing specialist support services.

Regular communication between school and parents and carers is essential to ensure that your child is receiving the best care and support.



Things that can help at home

- **Use your child's Safety Plan**, including the list of supportive people your child can talk to.
- **Remain calm and supportive**, your child needs a caring space and the support of family.
- **Be open to listening to your child** if they want to talk about their thoughts and feelings, encourage strategies they could use to manage these thoughts and feelings.
- **Find ways to enhance your child's self-esteem** and acknowledge their positive qualities.
- **Keep occupied** to keep your child's mind off stress. Plan things to do together to occupy free time.
- **Restrict access to items** that can be used to injure such as sharp objects and medications.
- **Try deep breathing** and relaxation exercises, to help you and your child feel relaxed and reduce the focus on strong emotions.
- **Ask for help** if you have any concerns about your or your child's safety.

For more information

This sheet is for education purposes only, please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure that this information is right for your child.

Reachout



<https://au.reachout.com/>

Project Air



<https://www.uow.edu.au/project-air/>

Lifeline



<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

Need an Interpreter? Interpreters are available if you need help to communicate with staff. The service is free and confidential. We will book the interpreter for you. You can also call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 if you need to speak to someone before your appointment.

Need an Aboriginal Health Worker? An Aboriginal Health Worker (AHW) advocates for the needs of consumers who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. They can provide support and information to help you. Tell staff you would like to speak to an AHW, or let them know if there is an AHW you would like us to contact.