What is schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a mental health condition that makes it hard for a person to:

* Think clearly
* Make decisions
* Tell the difference between what is real or not
* Relate to others
* Manage feelings

People with schizophrenia do not have “split” or “multiple personalities” and are not typically violent. The likely onset for men is late teens and early 20s, for women the late 20s to early 30s.

**What does it mean to have schizophrenia?**

People with schizophrenia usually have three types of symptoms that can be mild to severe.

**Positive symptoms**—meaning they have symptoms others don’t

* Hallucinations: hear voices or sounds, see, feel, smell, or taste things that others don’t
* Delusions: strongly believe things that aren’t based in reality (e.g., believe there is a plot against them, or someone is reading their mind)
* Confused thoughts and disorganized speech
* Movement disorders- agitated body movements

**Negative symptoms**—meaning they lack some typical reactions

* Show little emotion or show emotion that seems “off” for situation (e.g., laugh at sad event)

Reference: National Institute of Mental Health, Schizophrenia. Retrieved on June 25, 2019. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/index.shtml>

* Flat affect
* Dull speaking, monotone
* Reduced speech
* Withdraw from people
* Stop taking care of their bodies (e.g., bathing)
* Little or no interest in life or relationships
* Low motivation (can’t get going)

**Cognitive symptoms**—meaning they may have trouble with their thinking

* Trouble focusing or paying attention
* Difficulty understanding information and using it for decision-making
* Disorganized thinking, thoughts, and speech
* Difficulties with memory
* Lack of insight—no awareness of suffering from the illness or believe they don’t need help

**Are there other problems from schizophrenia?**

Yes. Some people with schizophrenia turn to nicotine, alcohol and/or drug addiction because they feel temporarily better. Using alcohol and drugs tends to make symptoms worse. Schizophrenia can also affect mood and many people become depressed or have mood problems that need to be treated.

**How can I help myself if I have schizophrenia?**

In Job Corps our goal is to help you understand and manage your condition so you can make progress toward employability. It includes medication, brief therapy on center or more intense therapy off center.

* Talk to your counselor and health and wellness staff
* Ask for reasonable accommodations, if needed
* Find and encourage your talents
* Limit the use of digital technologies and connect in positive ways
* Keep good sleep practices
* Develop heathy eating habits
* Know your stressors and learn healthy ways to relax
* Stick to treatment
* Stay on your medication
* Avoid breaking medical appointments, skipping medicine dosages or abruptly stopping medication
* Ask a close friend to help you stick with your treatment
* Schedule for an earlier medical appointment If signs or symptoms worsen
* See your health and wellness staff if your medication is making you feel strange or not good
* Participate in groups and activities

**I know someone who has Schizophrenia. What can I do?**

* If they are thinking about hurting them self or someone else get help immediately
* Do not leave the person alone
* Let the nearest Job Corps staff member know NOW!
* If not able to find a staff member quickly, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room
* Access the Job Corps Safety Hotline (844-JC1-SAFE) via text, email, phone, mobile app or web site
* Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
  (800) 273–TALK (8255)  
  TTY (800) 799–4TTY