

# Schizophrenia

## Quick Facts

Schizophrenia is a medical illness that causes a person to think, feel, and act strangely. This disorder affects about 1 percent of the population. It is uncommon in young children – usually appearing between the ages of 16 and 25. Schizophrenia usually comes on gradually and can be difficult to recognize in its early phases.

### Effects of schizophrenia

People with schizophrenia may experience anxiety and fearfulness so severe that it prevents them from participating in normal, everyday activities. People with schizophrenia may have difficulties in making and keeping friends.

### Treatment

Although the cause is still unclear, research has shown that it is likely that people with schizophrenia have abnormalities in brain structure and/or function. Medication and other therapies can help many people who have schizophrenia manage their symptoms and live productive and enjoyable lives.

### Schizophrenia in the media

Unlike what many TV shows and newspapers portray, schizophrenia is not “multiple personalities.” People with disorders such as schizophrenia are often shown as violent and “crazy.” In fact, most violent crimes are not committed by persons with schizophrenia, and most persons with schizophrenia do not commit violent crimes. Actually, a person with schizophrenia is more likely to appear withdrawn and many tend to keep to themselves.

*If you have questions about schizophrenia, talk to a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult. Help is available—visit [www.macmh.org](http://www.macmh.org) for a list of disorder-specific resources.*



### Common symptoms of schizophrenia:

- Seeing things that are not there
- Hearing voices that are not real
- Confused thinking
- Feelings that people are “out to get them”
- Odd behavior
- Behavior resembling a younger child
- Vivid and bizarre thoughts and ideas
- Appearing unresponsive or withdrawn

Have an idea for a story, poem, painting, drawing, poster, or photograph that has to do with mental health? **Open•Up**, a literary and visual art magazine created by and for youth ages 5 -21, is now accepting submissions! Go to [www.macmh.org](http://www.macmh.org) for submission guidelines.

