

mood and psychosis

If you have depression or bipolar disorder and are experiencing some of these symptoms, it is important to tell your doctor about them.

Hearing voices and seeing things that others don't.

Feeling suspicious and paranoid.

Feeling and behaving in ways that are not yourself.

Having difficulty thinking and organizing your thoughts.

What is psychosis? Paranoia, hallucinations and delusions are a group of symptoms that together are called 'psychosis'. If you have depression or bipolar disorder and are experiencing some of these things, it is important to tell your physician about them. While not common, psychotic symptoms can be a part of some mental illnesses.

What is normal? It is in the normal range of human experience for people to very occasionally have symptoms such as hearing voices or having visual hallucinations, especially on the edge of sleep or waking, or if you have not slept or eaten for a long time. Sometimes people hallucinate when they have a high fever, for example. However, if you have these types of symptoms often or persistently, then it's time to talk to your physician or clinician.

What mental illnesses sometimes have psychosis symptoms?

While schizophrenia is usually thought of as the main mental illness that has psychotic symptoms, there are several mental illnesses that can have psychotic symptoms connected with them.

Other mental illnesses that sometimes have psychotic symptoms are bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, depression and post partum depression.

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Bipolar disorder

Bipolar is a mental disorder where a person has periods of elation and depression. When a person with bipolar disorder also has psychosis symptoms, they tend to fit in with the person's mood. For example a person who is depressed might hear voices telling them to commit suicide, or a person with mania might believe they have special supernatural powers.

Schizoaffective disorder

A person with this mental disorder has a mood disorder and psychosis symptoms. Their voices, hallucinations or false beliefs are less connected to what is going on with their mood, and may be present even if their mood is stable.

Depression

A person who is depressed may hear voices telling them things that go with the depression.

What to do

If you are already receiving treatment for your mood disorder, talking to your physician or care team about these other symptoms is a good place to start. Your medications may have to be adjusted or you might need some extra support.

If you are not yet receiving treatment for your mood disorder and have noticed these symptoms, here are some suggestions:

Call a mental health clinic (call 811 to get the number of the clinic for your area) and ask to speak to someone about intake.

Go talk to your physician.

For more information

B.C. Schizophrenia Society
www.bcscs.org

Mood Disorders Association of B.C.
www.mdabc.net

You don't have to deal with this alone. Help is available.