



## PSYCHOSIS FACT SHEET FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

### What is Psychosis?

Psychosis is a term used to describe a condition affecting the mind when there has been some loss of contact with reality. It affects the brain's ability to process information. Many things can cause psychosis, including going days without sleep, taking certain drugs, and some medical conditions. That is why it is so important to contact your medical professional or call the Early Assessment and Support Alliance (EASA) team as soon as possible to rule out an underlying medical disorder.

### Can the Young Person in my Life develop Psychosis?

Anyone can develop psychosis. It is most likely to occur during young adulthood, between the ages of 15 - 30. 3 out of every 100 individuals experience a psychotic episode. Most fully recover. If you are a parent or a family member you may feel as if you are responsible for the illness. You are not responsible.

### What are the Symptoms?

Symptoms can emerge gradually. They can be things like confused thinking, false beliefs about reality that are held onto despite evidence to the contrary. They can be hallucinations, like hearing or seeing things that aren't there. Symptoms can also include changes in a person's behavior, such as withdrawal from social activities or doing things that don't make sense in the situation.

### Can Psychosis be Treated?

Psychosis episodes are common and treatable. It is possible to recover. With the right help many people never experience another episode. Getting help early is the key! The longer the illness goes untreated, the longer the person's life is disrupted and other problems may develop such as unemployment, school truancy, substance abuse or depression.

### How the Early Assessment and Support Alliance can help

Our program is modeled after the successful EAST program run by Mid-Valley Behavioral Healthcare Network. We have a team of professionals that includes everything from medical staff to mental health therapists to vocational and occupational therapists.

- Assessment and Diagnosis • Low-dose medication and medication monitoring to prevent troubling side effects
  - Individual Counseling • Multi-family educational groups • Occupational therapy • Vocational training
  - Link with community resources • Education about Psychosis and Treatment • Life Skills Coaching
  - 24/7 crisis services •

### How Can I Help a Young Person who is Ill?

The support system of a young person's family and friends is an essential part of treatment and recovery. Youth with family and friends who are involved in their treatment tend to stay more engaged in the process and recover more quickly. So the best thing you can do is be part of the treatment team. Remember that although the person may be acting differently, he or she is still the same person you know. Talk to the EASA team about how you can support your son, daughter or friend in his/her recovery.

Call the EASA team at **503-988-3272** if you have questions or for referral to the program.

