Symptoms of Psychosis

Anyone can develop psychosis. Psychosis is common and treatable. It affects 3 in 100 people, and usually occurs for the first time between the ages of 15 and 30.
The following questions are phrased in a way most likely to help you elicit psychosis if present.

Delusions of reference

Sometimes people have experiences that other people can't really understand. For example, that the radio or TV are referring to you, that there are hidden messages in things around you, or that things around you are strange in some other way.

Is this happening for you?

Hallucinations

Sometimes people hear noises or voices when no one is speaking and there is nothing to explain what they are hearing.

Do you ever have something like that happening?

If yes, do they seem to be having a conversation among themselves about you?

Do they comment on what you are doing?

Persecutory ideas

Do you believe someone is trying to hurt you or plot against you?

Or that there are any conspiracies that involve you? Are you frightened?

Thought alienation / thought broadcasting

Is anything interfering with your thinking?

Some people feel as if thoughts are being put into their heads that are not their own.

Do you ever have that happen, or feel your thoughts are broadcast so that other people can hear what you are thinking?

Referral Process

A patient with any **yes** responses to the above questions OR with suspected psychosis based on your clinical intuition may benefit from a second opinion from your local community mental health service provider. Publicly-funded mental health services are available to anyone who is Medicaid-eligible.

If you believe a youth would benefit from mental health services, contact the Regional Support Network in your area. Contact information for the RSNs can be found here: www.dshs.wa.gov/dbhr/rsn.shtml or by calling the Recovery Helpline, toll free at 866-789-1511.

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DSHS 22-1627 (9/15)

Symptoms of "At Risk"

It it more difficult to identify the "at risk" (prodromal) symptoms of psychosis because "at risk" symptoms could be linked to many other disorders other than psychosis. Some guide questions for common "at risk" symptoms are:

Unusual ideas / suspiciousness

Have you felt that things happening around you have a special meaning just for you?
Have you ever found yourself feeling mistrustful or suspicious of other people?
Do you sense something strange might be happening?

Perceptual abnormalities

Do you ever feel that your mind is playing tricks on you?
For instance, do you ever think you hear sounds and then realize that there is probably nothing there?

Social withdrawal

Do you usually prefer to be alone or with others?
What do you usually do with your free time?
Has there been a change in your socializing?

Deterioration in school / work / self

Does your work take more effort than it used to?
Have you been doing worse in school or at work?
Are you having a harder time getting normal daily activities done?

Concentration

Have you had difficulty concentrating or being able to focus on a task like reading or watching TV?
Is this getting worse than it was before?

Suicidal thinking

Have you had thoughts of harming yourself or ending your life?
Have you ever attempted suicide?
Have you had thoughts of harming anyone else?

Referral Process

If you are wondering whether one of your young patients (18 and under) has psychosis, one of your options is to call the Partnership Access Line (PAL) and discuss your concerns with a child psychiatrist consultant.

1-866-599-7257 PAL WASHINGTON
Partnership Access Line

If the symptoms are persistent and unexplained or involve suicidal thinking, refer for a specialist opinion through your local community mental health provider.