

Information about Brief Psychotic Disorder

Psychosis is a condition which distorts a person's sense of reality. With brief psychotic disorder a person experiences this condition for less than one month.

Some possible symptoms may include:

- Confused or disjointed everyday thoughts making communication with others difficult.
- Beliefs like thoughts are being put into their mind, they have special powers or they are being spied on.
- Hallucinations where they hear, see or otherwise perceive things others do not. Hearing voices is very typical of psychosis and can be extremely distressing.
- Things seem to speed up or slow down.
- Colours or sounds may take on a different quality from normal.
- Loss of motivation.
- Withdrawal from others and mood changes like depression, extreme elation, uncontrollable laughter, crying or 'flattened' emotions where they may feel completely cut off from feelings.
- Neglect personal care or dress.
- They do not realise that their experiences are the result of being unwell.

A psychotic episode can happen after a significant stress of some kind, (like the loss of a loved one), or a traumatic event (like an assault). It may also happen after the birth of a child. It is important to be open about any history of illicit drug use, as this can also cause brief episodes of psychotic symptoms.

Treatment of a brief psychotic episode often involves medication. A psychiatrist determines if this is needed. Non-medical treatments should include the opportunity for the person and their whanau/family to learn about the disorder, to have professional help with communicating effectively, solving problems, dealing with stress and making a plan for staying well. The person may also benefit from personal counselling or psychological therapy.

Ways staff can assist:

- Create an environment where students are encouraged to disclose their needs and seek appropriate support as required.
- Provide a clear structure for the course with explicit information about assessment, dates, and resources.
- Provide a safety net for students unable to attend or concentrate on lectures by making lecture material available on Cecil or in the Department.
- Flexible assignments (provide students with a range of ways to show their understanding and grasp of material).
- Flexible deadlines, or a system for extensions which reduces the amount of self-advocacy that the students need to undertake (with documentation of the impairment and possibly for the life of the subject).
- Know relevant support services on campus and in the community, and where appropriate, seek advice from them or encourage students to ask for help.

The University of Auckland encourages partnerships between Faculties, student services and students, to support students achieve their academic potential.

Disclosure is voluntary

Students may choose not to disclose their disability because they:

- Don't want special treatment, or want to see if they can cope alone.
- Fear discrimination.
- Feel embarrassed about asking for help.
- Want to get to know staff first, and then decide whether to disclose.

Information has been sourced from:

- Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand: www.mentalhealth.org.nz

CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION OR SUPPORT

Student Disability Services

Room 036 Basement
ClockTower Building
22 Princes Street
Auckland
Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 82936
Fax: 09 308 2354
www.eo.auckland.ac.nz
www.disability.auckland.ac.nz
disabilities@auckland.ac.nz

University Medical Services

City Campus Clinic
Level 3, Student Commons Building
2 Alfred Street
Ph: 373 7599 ext 87681

Grafton Campus Clinic
The "White House"
151 Park Rd
Ph: 373 7599 ext 86962

Tamaki Campus Clinic (Registered Nurse Clinic only)
Building 730.110
Morrin Road
Ph: 373 7599 ext 86677

Epsom Campus Clinic
R Block, Gate 4
60 Epsom Avenue, Epsom
Ph: 373 7599 ext 48526

Student Learning Services

Ph: +64 9 373 7599 ext 88850
sls@auckland.ac.nz

Mind NZ

www.mindnz.co.nz

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