SCHIZOPHRENIA

An estimated 1% of the American population is affected by Schizophrenia, which is over 3 million people.

SCHIZOPHRENIA IS A CHRONIC AND SEVERE MENTAL DISORDER

IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU FALL IN AND OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY, WHICH HAS HAD A DEBILITATING IMPACT ON HOW YOU THINK, FEEL, AND BEHAVE

YOU MAY BE SUFFERING FROM SCHIZOPHRENIA.
What is Schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a serious disorder which affects how a person thinks, feels and acts.

Someone with schizophrenia may have difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is imaginary.

Some may be unresponsive or withdrawn.

Some may have difficulty expressing normal emotions in social situations.

What are risk factors of Schizophrenia?

Researchers have not found a single cause of Schizophrenia but multiple factors are to be considered.

- **Genes and Environment**
  - Scientists have long known that schizophrenia sometimes runs in families. Scientists believe that many different genes may increase the risk of schizophrenia, but that no single gene causes the disorder by itself.
  - Scientists also think that interactions between genes and aspects of the individual's environment are necessary for schizophrenia to develop. Including exposure to viruses, malnutrition before birth, problems during birth, psycho-social factors.

- **Brain Chemistry and Structure**
  - Scientists think that an imbalance in the complex, interrelated chemical reactions of the brain involving the neurotransmitters (chemical signals) dopamine and glutamate, and/or others, plays a role in schizophrenia.
  - Changes in brain development before birth may lead to faulty connections. The brain also undergoes major changes during puberty, and these changes could trigger psychotic symptoms in people who are vulnerable due to genetics or brain differences.

Common Myths about Schizophrenia

"Schizophrenia means you have split or multiple personalities"
"All Schizophrenics are violent and dangerous"
"Poor parenting and bad childhoods causes it"

Each of these statements are popularly held yet incorrect beliefs.
What are the early signs of Schizophrenia?

**Emotional Symptoms**
- A constant feeling of being watched
- Feeling indifferent to very important situations
- Hearing or seeing something that isn’t there
- A change in personality
- Extreme preoccupation with religion or the occult
- Increasing withdrawal from social situations

**Physical Symptoms**
- Peculiar or nonsensical way of speaking or writing
- Strange body positioning
- A change in personal hygiene and appearance
- Inability to sleep or concentrate
- Inappropriate or bizarre behavior
- Irrational, angry or fearful response to loved ones

**What are the treatment options for general mood disorder?**

**Medications**
Medications are often used to help control the symptoms of schizophrenia. They help to reduce the biochemical imbalances that cause schizophrenia and decrease the likelihood of relapse. Like all medications, however, anti-psychotic medications should be taken only under the supervision of a mental health professional.

**Recovery and Rehabilitation**
Recovery is possible through a variety of services, including medication and rehabilitation programs. Rehabilitation can help a person recover the confidence and skills needed to live a productive and independent life in the community. Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) has been found to be especially effective in improving outcomes for people after they experience their first episode of psychosis.

**MHA Georgia’s Tips and Tricks to Mental Health Wellness!**
1. **Know Your Triggers and Early Warning Signs of an Episode**
2. **Create Your Emergency Action Plan with Contacts, Medications and Preferred Treatment Plan**
3. **Don’t Isolate! Join a Support Group or Build New Relationships for Face to Face Connection**
4. **Develop an Active Daily Routine with Healthy Lifestyle Choices**
5. **Keep Stress to a Minimum by using Relaxation Techniques and making Leisure Time a Priority**
6. **Watch what you put in your body by avoiding harmful substances and eating right!**
For Immediate Access to Routine or Crisis Services

Georgia Crisis & Access Line
1-800-715-4225
mygcal.com

This information was provided by the National Institute of Mental Health. For additional information, please visit www.nimh.gov