

DON'T DELAY

If you're worried that someone has psychosis, try not to panic and don't put off talking to them about your concerns. This might delay them getting the help they need which will make it harder for them to recover. Always remember that getting the person the right kind of support as soon as possible will help them to recover from the experience so try to act quickly if you have any concerns.

TALK ABOUT IT

If you are worried, the first thing to think about is talking to the person directly about your concerns. Before you speak with them, think about how they might be feeling. Always keep in mind that they might feel frightened, ashamed, angry or confused about what's happening to them, and avoid words and phrases that might make them feel like you are blaming or criticising them.

You might also be feeling frightened, worried and confused which will make it harder to talk to the person. If that's the case, it's important to choose a time when you feel calm enough to talk to the person about your concerns without expressing any of the fear or upset you might actually be feeling. When you talk to the person:

- Choose a time when they seem relaxed and try to talk to them as calmly as possible.
- Ask them how they're feeling and then let them know you are worried that they're not ok.
- Depending on how they react, you can check with them if they have been having any unusual or strange experiences that they can't make sense of. Try to do this calmly and not to react in a shocked way if they do tell you that they have been experiencing any hallucinations, delusions or other unusual experiences. If they sense you are frightened or uncomfortable about what they say, it may make it harder for them to share what they are experiencing and how they are feeling with you.
- If the person tells you about any unusual or paranoid beliefs they have, don't try to convince them that they're wrong. It's ok to let them know that you don't share their views but try to do this in a neutral way so they don't feel judged by you or think you don't believe them.
- Let them know you understand that they think and feel the way they do and acknowledge how scary or confusing those experiences must be for them.
- Encourage the person to get some help and talk with them about what kind of help they might like. It's important that the person doesn't feel that you are putting them under pressure so try to make sure they feel that they have a say in what will happen.
- Explore how you might be able to support them in getting the help they need and try to keep them as involved as possible in any plans to connect with professional support.
- Reassure them that mental health problems are common and that, with the right kind of support, most people recover from these kinds of difficulties.

If the person doesn't accept your concerns or believes that there is nothing wrong with their mental health, you may need to take action without them being involved. If that happens, write or make an appointment with the person's General Practitioner (GP) to let them know about your concerns. If possible, try to meet with the GP in person to talk through the specific signs and symptoms you are worried about and how best to help the person get the kind of help they need.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about the signs of psychosis and how to get help, you can check out the rest of the Factsheets in this series at www.rcsi.ie/perl. PERL: The Psychiatric Epidemiology Research across the Lifespan Group, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland