

Schizophrenia

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson will cover the topic of schizophrenia. Our discussion breaks down as follows:

1. Schizophrenia
2. Symptoms of Schizophrenia
3. Types of Schizophrenia

1. Schizophrenia

The most recognized type of psychotic disorder is **schizophrenia**. Schizophrenia is a psychotic disorder that is characterized specifically by disorganized or inconsistent thoughts, emotions, and behavior. This is why it's sometimes referred to as a thought disorder as opposed to a mood disorder.

Schizophrenia is not the same as multiple or split personality disorder. These two disorders are frequently confused with each other, but they are completely different in terms of psychology. Schizophrenia has a prevalence of about 0.3 to 0.7% within the American population; while it is a very recognized disorder, it isn't very common within the population itself.

Schizophrenia often develops during the teen years when a person has their first psychotic break from reality. It's related to both heredity and environmental factors. While there is a genetic aspect, it is related to certain environmental factors like family life.

This disorder involves the neurotransmitter of dopamine, which is why a lot of antipsychotic drugs used to treat this disorder work to block dopamine uptake within the brain.



TERM TO KNOW

Schizophrenia

A psychotic disorder characterized by disorganized or inconsistent thoughts, emotions, and behavior

2. Symptoms of Schizophrenia

There are certain major symptoms that are characteristic of schizophrenia in general. The actual symptoms

that are displayed by the person can vary depending on the type of schizophrenia that they have. The general symptoms are:

- *Hallucinations and delusions.* These are characteristic of any psychotic disorder.
- *Disorganized speech.* The words that are being said don't seem to make sense to anybody besides the person. This is an outward projection of the disorganized thoughts that often occur with schizophrenia.



DID YOU KNOW

Many people have speculated that this disorganized speech and thought has a lot to do with problems in selective attention within people with schizophrenia. People with this disorder can't focus on one thing at a time. It's like all the floodgates are open, so literally *all* thoughts--and as a consequence, all speech--are constantly coming out of that person.

- *Negative symptoms.* These are characteristics that you expect to see within a person but don't actually see exhibited. Those with schizophrenia can have a lack of emotion or a lack of appropriate emotions, to be specific.



EXAMPLE A person might not display emotions or they might display the wrong emotion for a certain situation. If they receive bad news, for instance, they might start laughing hysterically.

Other negative symptoms within schizophrenia include speaking less, moving less, and even becoming catatonic.

3. Types of Schizophrenia

Researchers and commissions had noticed that there are certain groups of seemingly different symptoms that occur under the blanket disorder of schizophrenia. Because a lot of these symptoms occur together, they've been grouped together into specific categories. We will discuss four of these categories:

- **Disorganized schizophrenia.** This is when a person is very disoriented or incoherent. They can have bizarre thoughts, as well as a lack of emotion, especially appropriate emotion.
- **Catatonic schizophrenia.** This is characterized by a long period of rigidity or inactivity. The person essentially freezes, and this can be interspersed with periods of sudden agitated bursts of activity where they become very active and potentially very aggressive.
- **Paranoid schizophrenia.** This is characterized by delusions of paranoia and grandeur. The person constantly feels like someone's out to get them. They feel like they're being persecuted in some way by others, when in fact, they're not. These delusions can occur along with hallucinations, such as hearing voices in the head.



DID YOU KNOW

Much of the time in popular media, paranoid schizophrenics are characterized as being very violent, which isn't necessarily true. In fact, they're not any more violent than anyone else in the general population. The only time that they're especially violent might be when they're in the middle of a psychotic break, where they're having especially strong or vivid hallucinations or delusions. Therefore, it is important to differentiate this behavior from the way that it is displayed in media.

- **Undifferentiated schizophrenia.** These include instances of schizophrenia that have some symptoms of one type or another, but not all of them. This is essentially the "catchall" category.

➦ **EXAMPLE** A person may be displaying clear symptoms of schizophrenia, such as hallucinations or delusions, that are interspersed with periods of a catatonic state, where they are inactive. As you can see, the symptoms don't necessarily fit into one category or the other.



TERMS TO KNOW

Disorganized Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia where a person shows very disordered and incoherent and bizarre thought as well as lack of or inappropriate emotion

Catatonic Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia marked by long periods of rigidity and inactivity, where the person “freezes up”, and by sudden, agitated bursts of activity

Paranoid Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia characterized by delusions of paranoia and grandeur, along with hallucinations, like voices in ones head

Undifferentiated Schizophrenia

Instances of schizophrenia that have some symptoms but not all of another type

As you can see, there are many different aspects to schizophrenia, which is why it's important to avoid characterizing it in an inaccurate or inappropriate way, in order to represent the people with this disorder to the best of our abilities.



SUMMARY

Schizophrenia is a widely known form of psychotic disorder. It is caused by genetic and environmental factors and usually develops in the teen years. Generally, a person may experience **symptoms of schizophrenia** such as delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized speech. They may also have negative symptoms, which are characteristics that you expect to see within a person but don't actually see exhibited, like appropriate emotions. There are several different **types of schizophrenia**: disorganized schizophrenia, catatonic schizophrenia, paranoid schizophrenia, and undifferentiated schizophrenia.

Good luck!

Source: THIS WORK IS ADAPTED FROM SOPHIA AUTHOR ERICK TAGGART.



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Schizophrenia

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