



An Overview of Schizophrenia and Psychosis

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CENTER OF
EXCELLENCE
FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
IN NURSING FACILITIES

Today's Event Host

Nikki Harris, MA, CBHC-BS

COE-NF TRAINING AND EDUCATION LEAD

For the past 20 years, Nikki has provided program implementation, development, management, external and internal trainings, policy development, quality assurance, and managed training coordination and technical support throughout the southeast region.

Previously, she served as the program manager for the Division of Behavioral Health and Substance Use Services within the South Carolina Department of Corrections.

She has a B.A. in Psychology from the University of South Carolina, a M.A. in Counseling from Webster University and is a Certified Behavioral Specialist.



Today's Presenter

Bryan G. Stephens, MA, MBA, CPCS, LPC

CEO, TALKFORWARD

Bryan is a licensed professional counselor and the founder and CEO of TalkForward, which provides psychotherapy and executive consulting services. Bryan has practiced in behavioral health for the past 30 years.

With 20 years of executive management experience, Bryan served as a chief executive officer in a public behavioral health agency, with over 450 employees and an annual budget of \$27 million.

A specialist in clinical supervision, Bryan began training therapists in small and large groups, while serving as ethics chair for the Board of the Licensed Professional Counselors Association of Georgia (LPCA). He currently serves as the president of LPCA which has over 8000 members.

Bryan has an executive MBA from Kennesaw State University and both a master's and bachelor's degree in psychology.



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Learning Objectives

- Participants will gain an understanding of schizophrenia and psychosis
- Participants will be able to recognize and understand signs and symptoms schizophrenia
- Participants will learn appropriate responses of engagement

Schizophrenia

- Schizophrenia is a serious mental disorder that affects how a person thinks, feels, and behaves.
- Classified as a Thought Disorder
- Life-long disorder
- Most common onset is usually in late teens or early 20s
 - Males tend to have a younger onset
 - Women have a secondary onset in middle age around menopause
 - **Late life onset is uncommon and psychosis in late life usually has other causes**

What is Psychosis?

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Defines Psychosis as:

Psychosis refers to a collection of symptoms that affect the mind, where there has been some loss of contact with reality. During an episode of psychosis, a person's thoughts and perceptions are disrupted and they may have difficulty recognizing what is real and what is not.

Who Develops Psychosis?

Psychosis is a symptom of schizophrenia, but not all people with psychosis have schizophrenia.

Psychosis often begins in young adulthood when a person is in their late teens to mid-20s. However, people can experience a psychotic episode at younger and older ages and as a part of many disorders and illnesses. **For instance, older adults with neurological disorders may be at higher risk for psychosis.**

For older adults, psychotic symptoms can be part of a physical or mental illness that emerges later in life. **Psychosis can also be a symptom of some diseases of older age, including Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and related dementias.**

-National Institute of Mental Health

Symptoms of Schizophrenia

- **Positive symptoms**

- Hallucinations
- Delusions
- Disordered thoughts

- **Negative symptoms**

- Flat affect (immobile facial expression, monotonous voice)
- Diminished ability to initiate and sustain planned activity
- Speaking infrequently, even when forced to interact

- **Cognitive symptoms**

- Poor ability to absorb and interpret information and make decisions based on that information
- Inability to sustain attention
- Difficulty remembering and following instructions

Observable Behaviors Seen in Nursing Facilities

- Appears to be responding to hallucinations
 - Talks to self due to hearing voices
 - Appears to be listening to someone else during conversations
 - Staring intensely into empty space
 - Responding to odors that are not present
- Hyper focused on details
- Unable to process normal social cues

Observable Behaviors Seen in Nursing Facilities (cont.)

- Disorganized speech and/or behavior
- Unable or slow to process information or instructions
- Inability to provide historical information
- May appear paranoid
- Can behave in unpredictable ways

Ways to Support Residents Experiencing Symptoms

- Be patient
- Speak slowly with clear instructions
- Do not make multiple requests
- Avoid confrontation
 - Do not deny hallucinations
 - Do not deny delusions
 - Go with the perceived reality when possible, while ensuring safety first
- Assure the resident that he or she is safe
- Listen to what the resident is saying

Treatment of Schizophrenia

A full assessment from an MD is needed when residents show signs of psychosis. The MD may order such things as:

- Antipsychotic medications in the short term or for ongoing care
- Test to rule out other medical conditions
- Treatment of other medical conditions may clear psychosis (e.g. UTI)

Note on Use of Atypical Antipsychotics

It is important to note that medications labeled atypical antipsychotic are often used for treatment of things **other** than psychosis. A client taking one of these medications may not have schizophrenia or any other illness that causes psychosis. We cannot assume any diagnosis by the use of these medications.

Non-pharmacological Interventions

Non-pharmacological interventions can be used to improve the resident's activities of daily living.

Psychosocial Interventions:

- Social skills training
- Coping skills
- Coaching (problem & symptom focused interventions)
- Talk therapy (cognitive behavioral therapy)

What You Can Do Today

Educate

- Train your assessment team on proper schizophrenia diagnostic criteria (Physicians, Nurses, Social Workers)
- Train staff at all levels on the signs, symptoms and supportive responses when working with residents with a schizophrenia diagnosis.

Psychiatric care

- Ensure that residents with a diagnosis of schizophrenia get the appropriate level of counseling and psychiatric care in your facility.

Interdisciplinary Team

- Ensure that resident's treatment and symptoms are communicated with staff at all levels.

What You Can Do Today

Assess the stimuli in the nursing facility environment

- Residents with a diagnosis of schizophrenia will benefit from a predictable routine and a calm, stable environment.

Therapeutic activities

- Encourage activities that promote mental stimulation, social interaction, and emotional well-being.
 - These may include art therapy, music therapy, cognitive exercises, or group activities.
 - Tailor the activities to the resident's skills, needs, abilities and preferences (person centered care)
 - Ensure the choices are a part of the resident's care plan

COE-NF Resources on Schizophrenia

1. **Understanding Schizophrenia -**
https://nursinghomebehavioralhealth.org/news-events/site_resources/understanding-schizophrenia/
2. **Schizophrenia and Antipsychotics Bite-sized Learning -**
https://nursinghomebehavioralhealth.org/news-events/site_resources/schizophrenia-and-antipsychotics-bite-sized-learning/
3. **Recognizing and Treating Schizophrenia In Nursing Facilities: Learning Module -**
https://nursinghomebehavioralhealth.org/news-events/site_resources/recognizing-and-treating-schizophrenia-in-nursing-facilities-learning-module/
4. **Schizophrenia in Nursing Facilities: Validating Diagnosis and Planning for Appropriate Care -**
https://nursinghomebehavioralhealth.org/news-events/site_resources/schizophrenia-in-nursing-facilities-validating-diagnosis-and-planning-for-appropriate-care/
5. **Ten Ways You Can Support a Resident with a Schizophrenia Diagnosis -** https://nursinghomebehavioralhealth.org/news-events/site_resources/ten-ways-you-can-support-a-resident-with-a-schizophrenia-diagnosis/
6. **Schizophrenia Fact Sheet -**
https://nursinghomebehavioralhealth.org/news-events/site_resources/schizophrenia-fact-sheet/



Schizophrenia Facts

What is Schizophrenia?
Schizophrenia is a complex mental health condition with a range of symptoms that affect a person's thoughts, emotions, and behavior. It is a lifelong brain disorder that interferes with a person's ability to live independently.
With treatment, the positive symptoms of schizophrenia may reduce substantially and stay reduced for long periods. The risk of self-harm and of violence to others is greatest when the mental health condition is untreated.
Most people with schizophrenia are not violent. Overall, people with schizophrenia are more likely than those without the mental health condition to be harmed by others.

Diagnosis
Diagnosis should be made by a qualified health professional.
People with schizophrenia are usually first diagnosed between the ages of 16 and 30. The steps to determine a diagnosis of schizophrenia include:

- **A physical exam:** to rule out medical problems or other mental health conditions.
- **Tests and screenings:** These may include screening for substance use and bloodwork. The doctor may also order MRI or CT scans.
- **Psychiatric evaluation:** A doctor conducts a thorough review of the person's medical, psychiatric, and family history as well as observation of the resident.

Common Symptoms of Schizophrenia
Schizophrenia symptoms can differ from person to person. Many of these symptoms are shared with other mental and physical disorders. Symptoms of schizophrenia are categorized in three ways: positive, negative, and cognitive

- **Positive symptoms, also known as psychosis:** include delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized thinking.
- **Negative symptoms:** include detachment, withdrawal, inability to express emotions, apathy (lack of motivation).
- **Cognitive symptoms:** include problems with attention, concentration, and memory.



Older adults rarely have a new diagnosis of schizophrenia. To learn more about the risks of antipsychotic drugs for older adults with dementia-related psychosis, review the [FDA black box warning](#).

Sources: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), World Health Organization (WHO), and the American Psychiatric Association

For Help and More Information

- For comprehensive on-demand training on schizophrenia and additional resources visit www.nursinghomebehavioralhealth.org.
- Information is also available in [Appendix PP of the State Operations Manual \(F-tags 658, 740, and 758\)](#) and the [Minimum Data Set 3.0 Resident Assessment Instrument Manual](#).

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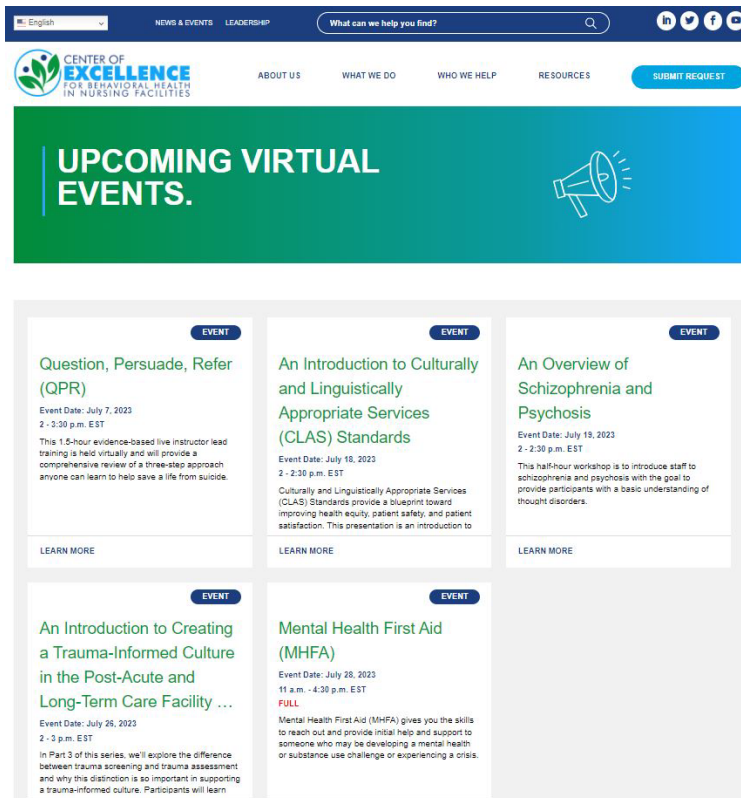
Web Sites:

www.talkforward.com

www.talkforwardcounseling.com

Stay Up-to-date and Register for our Next Event!

<https://nursinghomebehavioralhealth.org/upcoming-events/>



The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo and navigation menu. Below the header is a green banner with the text "UPCOMING VIRTUAL EVENTS." and a megaphone icon. The main content area displays a grid of event cards. Each card includes the event title, date, time, and a brief description. The events listed are:

- Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)**: Event Date: July 7, 2023, 2 - 3:30 p.m. EST. Description: This 1.5-hour evidence-based live instructor lead training is held virtually and will provide a comprehensive review of a three-step approach anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide.
- An Introduction to Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards**: Event Date: July 18, 2023, 2 - 2:30 p.m. EST. Description: Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards provide a blueprint toward improving health equity, patient safety, and patient satisfaction. This presentation is an introduction to...
- An Overview of Schizophrenia and Psychosis**: Event Date: July 19, 2023, 2 - 2:30 p.m. EST. Description: This half-hour workshop is to introduce staff to schizophrenia and psychosis with the goal to provide participants with a basic understanding of thought disorders.
- An Introduction to Creating a Trauma-Informed Culture in the Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Facility ...**: Event Date: July 26, 2023, 2 - 3 p.m. EST. Description: In Part 3 of this series, we'll explore the difference between trauma screening and trauma assessment and why this distinction is so important in supporting a trauma-informed culture. Participants will learn...
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)**: Event Date: July 26, 2023, 11 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. EST. Description: Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) gives you the skills to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use challenge or experiencing a crisis.

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Contact us:

For more information or to request assistance, we can be reached by phone at **1-844-314-1433** or by email at coeinfo@allianthealth.org.

Visit the website:

nursinghomebehavioralhealth.org

References

National Institute of Mental Health

- <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/understanding-psychois#:~:text=Psychosis%20often%20begins%20in%20young,at%20higher%20risk%20for%20psychois.>

Thank You!

