**Managing Psychosis at Home**



If you or a loved one are experiencing psychosis, there are several things you can do to improve your wellbeing. Bear in mind that it is best to discuss these with your doctor or therapist.

***Self-monitoring***

A technique taught in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for psychosis (CBTp) is known as self-monitoring. This involves regularly tracking your symptoms. You can do this using a **template** or a **diary**: anywhere where you can reflect on how you have been feeling. The idea behind self-monitoring is to identify **early warning signs**: when your symptoms might be getting worse and what could have triggered them. This can also be used to track what is helpful for you. By being mindful of your symptoms and when they appear worse, you can notice when you may be becoming unwell and reach out for help.

***Medication monitoring***

If you are taking medication, it is important to take the prescribed amount. **Research** has found that relapse in psychosis is unfortunately common, particularly if you stop taking your medication. Some practical steps you can take are:

* Setting reminders on your phone for the time you need to take your medication
* Downloading a medication tracking app
* Having a family member remind you
* Marking off on your calendar when you have taken your medication

***Look after your general wellbeing***

Sadly****, **anxiety** and **depression** often happen alongside psychosis, so you may want to practise anxiety management techniques to help manage your emotions. These can include:

**Distractions:** to break the cycle of anxious thoughts and feelings, we can distract ourselves. You can use the *54321* technique: name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can touch, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste. You can find distractions that work for you, such as watching your favourite film or going on a nature walk.

**Regulated breathing:** physical symptoms of anxiety include rapid breathing and your heart beating fast. Try breathing steadily in through the nose and out through the mouth. This helps regulate the oxygen flow around your body to return to a calm state. You can use counting (ie breathe in for 4, hold for 2, out for 4) or follow an animation.

**Progressive muscle relaxation:** when we are anxious, our bodies are often very tense. Try squeezing the muscles in your body for 5 seconds and then fully releasing them. You can do this all around your body to notice and reduce the tension.

Practising ***self-care*** can help you feel better. Taking time for **relaxation** and activities you enjoy can boost your mood and reduce stress. Looking after your **physical health** can also help combat low mood. **Exercise**, such as a daily walk or yoga, releases endorphins that influence your brain chemistry to make you feel happier. Combining this with a healthy, nutritious diet can keep you feeling good.

***Utilising your support network***

Research has shown the importance of **education** for carers and loved ones of people with psychosis. **Family psychoeducation** has been shown to be an effective tool in psychosis management. If you feel comfortable, speak to family members about how you feel. You can show them **this resource** or ask for information to signpost them to a carers group. It may be helpful to share your **safety or crisis plan**, so that they are aware of your needs if you become unwell. **Research** has also suggested that carers of people with psychosis can struggle with their mental health too. Involving trusted loved ones in your self-monitoring may help them become aware of your early warning signs, so they can help you as best they can and better understand what you are going through.

Remember you can reach out to your healthcare professional if you are struggling, or call Slough CMHT on 01753 690950. If you would like more tips on how to deal with low mood or anxiety, please take a look at our series on [Managing Depression and Anxiety](https://www.enablingtownslough.com/educational-material/managing-depression-and-anxiety/). We also have [a course on Ways to Wellbeing](https://www.enablingtownslough.com/courses/ways-to-wellbeing/) that you may find useful. Additionally, you can visit the Mind website [here](https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/psychosis/self-care/) for more advice on managing psychosis, or learn more via the links below. As you can see, support is out there to help you or your loved ones deal with psychosis, so please don’t feel you have to handle it alone. We are stronger together!

References (referencing the work summarised above)

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Useful websites

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/psychosis/causes/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/psychosis/>

https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/psychosis.htm