

## Help for schizophrenia in the Montreal area

- *Herzl Family Practice Centre*  
*Adolescent Hotline: 514-340-8242*
- *PEPP-Montreal (Douglas Hospital): 514-761-6131*  
*Ext. 3381*
- *PsyMontreal: 514-337-2473*  
*www.psymontreal.com/index.htm#Top*
- *Montreal Children's Hospital Psychiatry Department:*  
**514-412-4449**  
**\*Referral needed** (call your local CLSC first. Dial 811 to find your local CLSC)
- *Head & Hands: 514-481-0277*  
*www.headandhands.ca*
- *Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868*  
*www.kidshelpphone.ca*

## To Learn More

### Websites:

- [www.amiquebec.org/schizophrenia/](http://www.amiquebec.org/schizophrenia/)  
Resources for schizophrenia
- [www.schizophrenia.ca/](http://www.schizophrenia.ca/)  
Information on schizophrenia
- <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/schizophrenia/index.shtml>  
Causes, symptoms, and treatment
- [www.helpguide.org/mental/schizophrenia\\_symptom.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/mental/schizophrenia_symptom.htm)  
Types of schizophrenia

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AMI-Québec has many programs to help families and people suffering from mental illness. If you recognize yourself or someone you care about in this pamphlet, please contact us and we will direct you to an appropriate resource.

(514) 486-1448

[www.amiquebec.org](http://www.amiquebec.org)

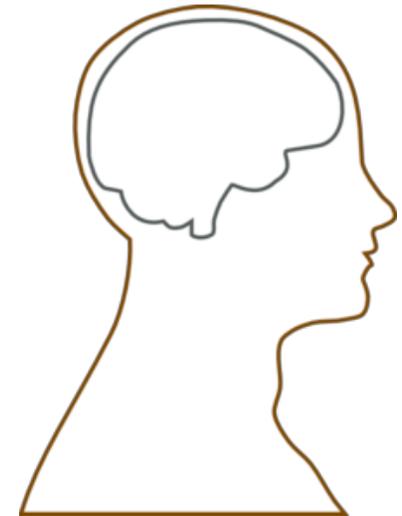
[outreach@amiquebec.org](mailto:outreach@amiquebec.org)

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# SCHIZOPHRENIA



## AMI-Quebec Action on Mental Illness

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## SCHIZOPHRENIA

*Sam was seventeen when he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. Soon after his seventeenth birthday his behavior changed dramatically and his parents became very concerned. He wouldn't eat... everything tasted strange and he thought that his mother was putting something in his food to make it taste that way. He a significant amount of weight during this period of barely eating. He also started to zone out for long periods of time. He wouldn't blink very often or change his expression. Sometimes he would sit and stare at his hands for hours; when asked what was wrong with them, he would say that they were different than they used to be. Sam's condition became worse. He was hearing voices, and thought that the walls had bugs on them.*

Sam was not going through a phase. Sam was experiencing the early symptoms of schizophrenia, a disorder of the brain that affects thinking, feeling and behavior. Schizophrenia is **not** a multiple or "split" personality. Schizophrenia usually strikes young people in their late teens or early twenties. For some people the illness advances so gradually that they and their family are not aware for a long time that they are ill. In some cases, schizophrenia strikes quickly and without warning. When people with schizophrenia lose touch with reality, they can experience what is called a psychotic episode (information on this is available in our psychosis brochure).

### Early warning signs for schizophrenia:

- Inability to sleep or oversleeping
- Social withdrawal, isolation, indifference
- Extreme & inappropriate reactions
- Inability to concentrate, make decisions
- Hostility, suspicion, fearfulness
- Deterioration in personal hygiene
- Flat, expressionless gaze
- Odd use of words or language structure
- Inappropriate crying or laughter
- Depression

***If these behaviours persist over a few weeks and present an obvious change from previous behaviours, then seek medical help.***

## SYMPTOMS

Positive symptoms (feelings and behaviours that weren't there before):

- Hallucinations – hearing and seeing things that do not exist
- Delusions – believing in events that are not really happening
- Paranoia – fear of being watched, followed, or spied on
- Disordered thoughts – jumbled thinking, disorganized or fragmented speech

Negative symptoms (abilities and functions that have been lost):

- Emotional withdrawal – losing interest in usual activities and personal relationships
- Lack of communication – avoiding eye contact, losing of conversational ability, inexpressive face
- Lacking energy and drive
- “Flat affect”

- Lack of pleasure in everyday life
- Lack of ability to plan/maintain daily activities

## TREATMENT

Medication, along with psychosocial intervention, is used to control the symptoms of schizophrenia. Education is extremely important in learning how to cope and live with the illness. Regular appointments with a psychiatrist and medication compliance are usually advised. It is important to build a strong support network that will provide recovery strategies and encouragement.

## GETTING HELP

If you or someone you know shows signs of schizophrenia then it is important to get help. Telling friends is not enough. It is important to **talk with an adult whom you trust**: a parent, guidance counselor, social worker, coach, or teacher. You can also visit a family doctor or a local CLSC and explain what you are experiencing.