



DWP

# Dealing with Psychosis

*A toolkit for moving forward with your life*

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# About This Toolkit

Psychosis can be a disruptive, confusing, and frightening experience. Hearing voices or thinking unusual or disturbing thoughts is common in psychosis. Having psychosis makes it difficult to figure out what is really happening and what may be a trick of the mind. Psychosis often prevents people from doing the things they used to do—such as going to work or school and enjoying time with friends and family.

*The good news is that psychosis is a treatable condition.*

Treatment for psychosis is provided by health professionals and involves a number of different approaches, including medication. This toolkit is not meant to be a substitute for the treatments provided by your health professionals. Instead, the toolkit is to be used *along with* treatment by professionals.

**This toolkit is meant to help you learn skills you can use to:**

- 1. Manage symptoms of psychosis**
- 2. Move forward and enjoy your life**

Learning new skills is not easy. It's important that you have somebody who can support you in the learning process. This is your **Support Person**.

**Think of who might best be able to help support you in learning these skills.**



*Support  
Person*

Your Support Person might be a:

- Health professional
- Family member
- Close friend

Pick someone you feel comfortable with and can trust. You may choose to have a few different people support you. Some of the skills in this toolkit will be easier to learn and practice if you have more than one Support Person.



*Understanding*

If you don't have a Support Person, you can still use this toolkit and learn new skills. Some people who have used the toolkit alone said that they found it useful but felt it would be even better having a Support Person available.

A later section of this guide is specifically for the Support Person. Feel free to look through the *For the Support Person* section on page 85 if you are curious.

## Using This Toolkit

*There are many ways to use this toolkit.  
You can start in any section and work  
through the toolkit in any order.*

The Table of Contents shows what the toolkit covers.  
Some of the topics may be more useful to you than others.  
Pick and choose what parts you want to work on.

There are many activities in this toolkit.  
Some of the activities are challenging.  
Give yourself time and be patient.  
Learning new skills takes time.

**Plan on reading and using this toolkit a little bit at a time.**



# Monitoring Your Progress

At first glance, this *Dealing with Psychosis* toolkit can look pretty long and complex. It may even be intimidating. Here are some suggestions for how to track your progress and pay attention to the effects of doing the exercises as you work through the different sections.

One simple approach is to make use of a “day planner” or calendar where hours, days, or weeks are blocked off to represent time spent working on various toolkit sections. For example, it could be your plan to work on the *Setting Goals and Moving Forward* section for two weeks—perhaps two times a week for 30 minutes each time. Many people find it gratifying to look in their day planner and be able to cross off items on their list of goals as they are completed.

This toolkit has quite a few worksheets and forms to complete. You may want to fill out some of the worksheets more than once. This could occur, for example, when a new problem arises, and you want to do the problem-solving worksheet again to work on the new problem. Or, it might happen when you change or add to your list of goals.

Other times, a worksheet can be used to track strategies from the toolkit as you try them out. For example, in the *Understanding Cognition* section, a number of different strategies are listed in the *What Can I Do?* sub-sections. Writing down which strategies you try can help keep track of your choices.

Finally, it is important to know how well a strategy is working and whether a problem area is getting any better. One thing that can help is to create a *Progress Form* like the sample on the next page. The guideline for rating your problems uses a scale of 0 to 10. A score of 0 means “no problem,” and a 10 means “this is a huge problem every day that has negative effects on my functioning.”



Rating

In the first example below, the “Rating Before” for item one, *Memory – missing appointments*, is a 7. The strategy of using a day planner every day seems to be effective, because after two weeks the same problem has gone down from a 7 to a 6. After four weeks the rating has dropped another point down to a 5.

PROGRESS FORM				
AREA TO RATE	RATING BEFORE	STRATEGY USED	RATING AFTER 2 WEEKS	RATING AFTER 4 WEEKS
Memory – missing appointments	7	Used day planner every day	6	5
Social connections				
Relaxing	9	Deep breathing every day for 15 minutes	7	8 – Stopped doing the exercises after 2 weeks

**Rating scale:**      1 = No problem                      5 = Definitely an issue                      10 = Huge problem