



Supporting a Loved One with Schizophrenia

Caring for someone with a chronic illness is very challenging, and schizophrenia is a particularly difficult disease to manage. Your loved one needs constant support, and as a caregiver, it can be very tough to stay physically and mentally well.

Luckily, there are many resources available that can help you manage your journey as a caregiver:

Educational Resources

People with schizophrenia can experience a variety of symptoms, like hallucinations, delusions, depressed mood, memory problems, and disorganized thoughts. Available resources may help you learn more about this condition.

National Alliance on Mental Illness nami.org	Online information aimed at helping you better understand schizophrenia and your role as a caregiver
National Institute of Mental Health nimh.nih.gov	Downloadable resource to help you better understand what psychosis looks like and how it is treated
Brain, Behavior, and Research Foundation bbrfoundation.org	Helpful information on symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment options, and the latest research on schizophrenia

Virtual and In-Person Support Groups

There are many different types of support available for people just like you. You can connect with other caregivers in-person or virtually.

Mental Health America inspire.com/groups/mental-health-america/topic/schizophrenia/	The Mental Health America support group and discussion community through the Inspire program connects caregivers through an online forum
Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance sczaction.org/find-a-support-group/	The Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance provides a locator to find in-person and virtual meetings for patients and families
NAMI Family Support Group nami.org/findsupport	The NAMI Family Support Group has available classes and programs at sites across the US

Crisis Planning

People with schizophrenia may require emergency help at times, so it's important to be prepared.

- Create an action plan that includes:
 - Phone numbers of your loved one's doctors and therapists/counselors
 - Current medications
 - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK [8255])
 - Locations of nearby emergency rooms
 - Information for any other contacts that can support you

Information and Resources

- In Crisis? Call the Lifeline 1-800-273-8255
- Don't want to talk? Text "HOME" to 741-741

- In the case of a possible crisis:
 - Determine whether their symptoms require immediate help or may be handled by speaking to a doctor on the phone
 - Stay calm, ask what your loved one needs, and give them space
 - Call 911 and provide the emergency workers with information about your loved one and their history
 - Leave the location if you don't feel safe
 - Don't hesitate to go straight to the emergency room if your loved one is a danger to themselves or others

Taking Care of Yourself

It can be easy to forget about your own health when caring for your loved one. However, many caregivers experience burnout, which impacts mental and physical health. Remember that you need to stay healthy before helping anyone else!

- Try to get enough sleep every night
- Exercise daily when you can
- Eat a healthy diet
- Use relaxation techniques
- Avoid using alcohol or other substances

Supporting a loved one with schizophrenia is a full-time job. Don't forget to take care of yourself too!