

Psychosocial therapies for psychoses and bipolar disorders

PSYCHOEDUCATION

Psychoeducational individual and group therapies for patients and their relatives are an important part of therapy for psychosis. Numerous studies have shown that relapse rates can be reduced by around 60% to 80% within one year by means of an active approach to a psychotic illness and a reliable medicinal therapy.

Psychoeducation focuses on:

- the clinical picture of psychotic disorders with plus and minus symptoms as well as emotional effects,
- the course of the different sub-groups in the illness with and without medicinal treatment,
- causes,
- recognition of individual early warning signs ,
- the medicinal, psychotherapeutic and sociotherapeutic treatment options for allowing patients and relatives to become active partners in the treatment process,
- exchanges in the group, in which the participants can find additional emotional support and relief.

Psychoeducation groups take place once or twice a week. Patient groups consist of six to eight participants, and relative groups consist of 12 to 15 participants. Psychoeducation patient and relative groups are offered in in-patient and out-patient environments in the psychiatric departments of clinics. Many psychiatric departments have institute out-patient clinics that also offer regular groups for patients and relatives.

Important information for people wishing to take part in a group:

- participate regularly in the groups, otherwise you will lose the "thread" and you could miss out on important information,
- if you do not understand something or see something a different way, speak up during the discussion phase or at the start of the next session - this is important as it relieves the load from you,
- ensure that you have a fixed contact person during the group process to relieve the load when you feel overburdened or to get active help when early symptoms occur.

To learn more:

- ask your neurologist or treating psychotherapist,
- enquire about a group at your hospital.

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Source: Fritz-Michael Sadre Chirazi-Stark, Fritz Bremer, Ingeborg Esterer: Wege aus dem Wahnsinn. Therapien, Begleitung, Selbsthilfe bei psychotischen Erkrankungen. Aktualisierte und erweiterte Neuauflage, Psychiatrie - Verlag, Bonn 2002.