



WHAT ARE THE EARLY SYMPTOMS?

Some feelings or behaviors listed here might indicate a brief reaction to stressful events. On the other hand, these changes could be early symptoms of a developing mental illness. It is important that the person in question be checked out by a professional, especially if the symptoms last longer than a few weeks, the changes in the person's behavior are sudden, or seem very out of character or bizarre (for example, fear of leaving the house, preoccupation with a particular theme, or a major drop in school or work performance or memory). Early symptoms or new experiences can occur on and off over time. **It is the combination of several symptoms rather than any one symptom that puts a person at risk.**

Feeling "something's not quite right"

- Feeling like your brain is just not working right
- Not able to do school work or one's usual job
- Uncharacteristic behavior
- Heightened sensitivity to sights, sounds, smells or touch

Hearing sounds/voices that are not there

- Feeling like your brain is playing tricks on you
- Any continuing sights or sounds that others can't see or hear
- Feeling like someone is putting thoughts in your brain

Jumbled thoughts and confusion

- Trouble with focus and attention
- Losing abilities in athletics or hobbies
- Difficulty reading or understanding long sentences
- Forgetting and getting lost
- Not understanding what people are saying

Declining interest in people, activities and self-care

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Loss of motivation or energy
- Dramatic changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Lack of interest in things you used to enjoy
- Just not caring about your appearance

Being fearful for no good reason

- Worrying that others are thinking bad thoughts about you
- Thinking others wish to harm you in some way
- Watching others with suspicion
- Fearful, uneasy feeling around people

Trouble speaking clearly

- Trouble with focus and attention
- Losing track of conversations
- Forgetting

THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS NEED IMMEDIATE ATTENTION:

- **Suicidal thoughts**
- **Dramatic change in sleep or appetite**
- **Hearing voices that no one else hears**
- **Seeing things that no one else sees**
- **Believing without reason that others are plotting against you**
- **Extreme fright in situations that do not warrant it**
- **Extreme unreasonable resentments or grudges**
- **Garbled speech or writing**

Don't ignore the early symptoms. The PIER Program is here to help. PIER is a treatment research program serving the Greater Portland area.



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