

## SCHIZOPHRENIA

Schizophrenia affects the way a person understands and interacts with the world around them. At the beginning of an episode, they may feel that things around them seem different or strange. They may experience problems concentrating, thinking or communicating clearly, or taking part in their usual activities. At the height of the episode, they may experience breaks from reality called psychosis. These could be hallucinations (sensations, like voices, that aren't real) and delusions (strong beliefs that aren't true, like the belief that they have superpowers). Some people feel 'flat' or numb.

## OCD

Obsessive-compulsive disorder is made up of two parts: obsessions and compulsions. Obsessions are unwanted and repetitive thoughts, urges, or images that don't go away and cause a lot of anxiety. For example, someone might worry about making people they love sick by bringing in germs. Compulsions are actions meant to reduce the anxiety caused by obsessions. For example, washing, cleaning, or ordering things in a certain way, counting things or repeating phrases. Compulsions are a way to cope with obsessions and someone with OCD may experience distress if they can't complete the compulsion.

## BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER

Characterized by a pattern of ongoing instability in moods, behaviour, self-image, and functioning. A person with BPD may go through intense episodes of anger, depression, and anxiety that last from a few hours to several days. They can experience an extreme fear of abandonment, dangerous behaviour, a feeling of emptiness, and self-harm.

## ANXIETY DISORDERS

THE most common mental health problem, anxiety disorders cause unexpected or unhelpful anxiety that seriously impacts people's lives, including how they think, feel, and act. They include phobias (an intense fear around a specific thing), panic disorder (which involves repeated and unexpected panic attacks), agoraphobia (the fear of being incapable of escaping or finding help), social anxiety disorder (an intense fear of being embarrassed or perceived negatively by others) and generalized anxiety disorder (an excessive worry around everyday problems over a long period of time).

# SOME COMMON MENTAL ILLNESSES

## PTSD

Post-traumatic stress disorder is a condition that can develop following a traumatic event, such as a sexual or physical assault, abuse in a relationship, the violent death of a loved one, or a natural disaster. People with PTSD often have lasting and frightening thoughts and memories of the event, and tend to be emotionally numb. PTSD causes intrusive symptoms such as re-experiencing the traumatic event. Many people have vivid nightmares, flashbacks, or thoughts of the event that seem to come from nowhere.

## DEPRESSION

Signs of depression include feeling sad, worthless, hopeless, guilty, or anxious a lot of the time. Some feel irritable or angry. People lose interest in things they used to enjoy and may withdraw from others. Depression can make it hard to focus on tasks and remember information. It impacts the way people think about themselves, relate to others, and interact with the world around them.

## BIPOLAR DISORDER

With bipolar disorder, people experience extreme swings between episodes of depression — similar to other types of depression — and episodes of mania. Mania is a state of abnormally high, energized mood during which people may feel hyperactive, with their thoughts racing, or extremely confident, happy, or powerful. This often affects sleep and may cause someone to act without thinking and do risky things. Most people with bipolar disorder spend more time with depressive symptoms than manic symptoms.