1. WHAT IS SCHIZOPHRENIA?

Schizophrenia* is a **SERIOUS BUT TREATABLE** brain condition that causes a person to experience **SYMPTOMS** of psychosis which can affect how you:

**THINK**

**FEEL**

**ACT**

Being diagnosed with **SCHIZOPHRENIA** means that there is an explanation for the symptoms you have been experiencing.

* To be diagnosed with schizophrenia, an individual must experience more than one psychotic symptom during a one month period and continuous signs of disturbance for at least 6 months.1

**Symptoms of schizophrenia typically come and go in cycles.**

**Worsening periods are known as relapse or a psychotic episode.**

**Symptoms can improve or disappear completely during recovery.**

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION
2. WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF SCHIZOPHRENIA?
Schizophrenia affects everyone DIFFERENTLY and everyone’s experience will be different.

- Positive symptoms (something ADDED - hallucinations, delusions [false beliefs], disorganized thoughts and speech)
- Negative symptoms (something MISSING - apathy [lack of feeling emotion, interest, and concern], reduced socializing, restricted facial expression, change in rate of speech)
- Cognitive symptoms (something CHANGED - difficulties with attention, concentration, memory, planning and organization)

It is DIFFICULT TO PREDICT how long symptoms will last.
Some people will COMPLETELY RECOVER from symptoms.
Others will get better, but their SYMPTOMS MAY COME BACK again in the future.

3. HOW LONG WILL SYMPTOMS LAST?

4. HOW CAN I GET BETTER?
It is important to get on the right MEDICATION EARLY as this is a cornerstone of treatment. Specific to your needs, NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL treatment options will also be a part of your care.

- During the first 2 to 5 years of your illness is when the biological, psychological, and psychosocial contributors to psychotic illnesses are most amenable to change6
- A longer duration of untreated psychosis (DUP) may be neurotoxic7 and is a strong predictor of poor clinical and social outcomes8,9
- Early functional and clinical status at 2 years is a very strong predictor of outcome at 15 years10, strongly suggesting that there may be a clinical period for effective treatment in the early years following onset11
5. WHAT DOES MY FUTURE LOOK LIKE WITH TREATMENT?

- You can LIVE your life
- You can accomplish your GOALS
- With CONTINUOUS long-acting medication therapy you can:
  - Achieve a STEADY blood level
  - REMOVE the WORRY of taking a pill everyday
  - FOCUS on other aspects of TREATMENT such as managing stress, building positive personal relationships, and finding a job and appropriate housing

REFERENCES: