UNDERSTANDING SCHIZOPHRENIA

Symptoms
Schizophrenia is a mental illness, characterized by profound disruptions in thinking, affecting language, perception and sense of self.

Typically begin between the ages of 15 and 30.

Psychosis such as hearing voices or delusions.

Difficulty concentrating, paranoid behaviour and unusual outbursts.

Altered perception of themselves, others and the world around them.

Disruption in thinking.

Withdrawal from friends or family and seemingly depressed.

Lack of energy and being unable to sleep.

Affected language.

Impact on Caregivers
Although there are many reported benefits for both caregivers and care recipients, without the right supports, caregiving can be challenging.

67% of caregivers who responded to a National Survey of Schizophrenia Society of Canada members reported that caregiving had negatively impacted their emotional health.

75% of the respondents expressed some difficulties coping with their caregiving role, with one in ten expressing regularly feeling overwhelmed and stressed out.

Proposed Risk Factors Include:
- Having a family history of schizophrenia.
- Increased immune system activation, resulting from conditions such as inflammation or autoimmune disease.
- Some pregnancy and birth complications that may impact brain development.
- Taking mind-altering (psychotic or psychotropic) drugs during teen years and young adulthood.

There is help people can and do get better with the help of:
- Family and friends.
- Community-based services, social and peer supports, counselling and crisis services.
- Doctors, medications and hospitals.
- Healthy lifestyle, exercise and healthy eating.
- Employment and education.
- Supportive housing.

Did You Know?
- Schizophrenia is a treatable mental illness. Access to timely treatments and supports can help people live full and healthy lives, including paid or volunteer work, fulfilling relationships and good mental health. When people have challenges accessing the care they need or experience stigma, their risks for poor mental health increase.
- 4X more likely to be victims of violent crimes.
- 20% shorter lifespan.
- Often report hostility, fearful attitudes, stereotypes and insensitivity from others.
- 15% are employed in Canada, often paid less and held fewer full-time positions.
- Many young people have to discontinue their education.

One in 100
Schizophrenia can affect people of all races, cultures, socio-economic groups and occurs equally in men and women.

For more information, please contact the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario at 1-800-449-6367 or visit schizophrenia.on.ca

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