



## SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

June 2020

### What is post-traumatic stress disorder?

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders' (DSM-5) criteria for a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) includes having been exposed to a trauma via direct means (e.g. threats, experience, or witnessing), or indirect means (e.g. learning that a relative or close friend has been exposed to a trauma).

For a diagnosis of PTSD, symptoms must last for more than one month and create distress and functioning impairment such as an inability to work, go to school, or socialise. Symptoms include persistently re-experiencing the traumatic event via intrusive thoughts, nightmares, or flashbacks. These can be brought on with exposure to traumatic reminders and are associated with emotional distress. As a result, avoidance of trauma-related stimuli occurs. There is often an inability to recall key features of the trauma. Other symptoms include negative thoughts and assumptions about oneself or the world, exaggerated blame of self or others for causing the trauma, negative affect, decreased interest in activities, feelings of isolation, irritability or aggression, risky or destructive behavior, hypervigilance, heightened startle reaction, and difficulty concentrating and sleeping.

### What is the evidence for PTSD in people with schizophrenia?

Moderate quality evidence suggests the prevalence rate of PTSD in people with schizophrenia is around 12.3%. Following a first-episode of psychosis (up to 2.5 years), approximately 42% of patients experience PTSD symptoms and 30% are diagnosed with PTSD. Prevalence may be highest in patients with affective psychosis and in inpatient groups. Depression and anxiety may increase the risk of PTSD following a first episode of psychosis.

For more information see the technical table



*NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.*

*Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.*

*Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.*

*While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.*

### HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at [neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia](http://neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia).