



SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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What are token economies?

A token economy is a behavioural therapy utilising non-monetary, non-consumable 'tokens' as a reward to reinforce target behaviours. These tokens have no intrinsic value but can be exchanged for various goods or privileges. Token economies were used widely for schizophrenia in the 1960's and 1970's, targeted specifically at negative symptoms such as poor motivation or attention, and social withdrawal. More recently token therapies have largely been replaced by social and life skills training, and cognitive skills training.

What is the evidence for token economies?

Low quality evidence is unable to determine the benefit of token therapy. Review authors conclude that the token economy approach may have good effects for negative symptoms but it is unclear if these results are reproducible, clinically meaningful, or maintained beyond the treatment programme.

For further information see the technical table

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