

What to Do If a Brother or Sister Develops Psychosis

- ✓ *Know you are not alone.* 1-3% of the population develops a psychosis, and chances are at least one or two of your friends share this experience.
- ✓ *Seek out someone you trust* to talk to. Keep looking until you find someone.
- ✓ Know this is a *no-fault* illness. Your sibling does not choose to experience it.
- ✓ Maintain a *supportive, positive attitude*. Recovery is a one step at a time, and can be slow. Sometimes people aren't ready. Communicate to them what you value about them. Be honest.
- ✓ *Stay safe*, physically and emotionally. Let your parents and your sibling know if you do not feel safe, and insist on healthy boundaries.
- ✓ *Focus on your own strengths and goals*. Let your experience with the illness inform, not dominate your life.
- ✓ Seek counseling, especially if you have experienced traumatic situations. *Don't be ashamed to ask for help*. Many people whose siblings experience psychosis end up making different choices in career and relationships because of that experience. Be aware that these experiences are affecting you.
- ✓ Stay in touch with a *strong support network*- friends, mentors, youth groups, extracurricular activities, etc.
- ✓ *Don't try to act as a parent* or to solve the problem. You cannot. Just be yourself.
- ✓ *Don't feel guilty* for your own joy or for your own success. Celebrate those, and encourage your sibling to take his or her own risks.
- ✓ *Don't judge* your sibling's progress by where you think he/she should be. Psychosis makes normal things very difficult, and can stop a person in their tracks. People who choose to actively manage their condition can do very well in life, but may take a little time. Honor your sibling for the challenges he/she is facing, his/her persistence and courage, and the real strengths and talents you value.
- ✓ *Educate yourself* about the illness and how it affects you and your family members.