

Schizophrenia and Religion

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This is a Definition of Schizophrenia and some of its symptoms.

Schizophrenia bears an uncanny resemblance to 'Christian fundamentalism'. These are not my own definitions; They are snipped from recognized medical sites and medical encyclopedia.

Definition

Any of a group of psychotic disorders usually characterized by withdrawal from reality, illogical patterns of thinking, delusions, and hallucinations, and accompanied in varying degrees by other emotional, behavioral, or intellectual disturbances. Schizophrenia is associated with dopamine imbalances in the brain and defects of the frontal lobe and is caused by genetic, other biological, and psychosocial factors.

Symptoms Delusions

Delusions are false beliefs that are deeply entrenched and clearly not based in reality and are not consistent with cultural beliefs or the persons' level of intelligence and life experiences. Persons cling to these beliefs even after the beliefs are shown to be false.

These false beliefs may be very difficult for family or friends to understand, since they do not make sense. Again, a delusion seems as real to the person as a belief grounded in reality.

Specific Delusions Bizarre delusions are hallucinations consisting of two or more voices conversing with each other or of a single voice affecting a person's behaviors or thoughts.

Unworthy Said: - "How do I know God has said anything? I have heard him speak in an audible voice".

Phoenix said: - "As I was going about my daily task, the Lord spoke to me...." **Hallucinations** People with schizophrenia may experience hallucinations. That is, they may hear, see, feel or smell things that are not there. Just as in a dream, where fantastic events can not be distinguished from real events, hallucinations can not be distinguished from real events. Thus, the hallucination of a voice talking is perceived in the brain just like a real person talking.

Discussions about their objective truth or plausibility of the hallucinations are not valuable. The experience is true and very

vivid to the patient and has to be accepted as such. Attempts to "set the person straight" result in resistance, tension, and bad feelings.

Hallucinations are false perceptions or unreal apparitions. They do not correspond to the stimuli that is present and have no basis in reality. You have to remember that what is an hallucination in one culture, is not in another.

'Ray of light' believes he can fly around outside of his physical body.

Disorganized speech or behavior

A person with schizophrenia may have disorganized speech or behavior; so that what they do or say does not make much sense.

Preoccupations

These are fixed ideas, not necessarily false (like delusions) but overvalued. That means they take on extraordinary importance and take up an inordinate amount of thought time.

One idea often returns and returns. Frequently it is a worry about doing the right thing or doing it well or doing it in time.

Characteristically, the worry grows and becomes unrealistic. A common sequence of events is for the worry to take up so much of a person's time that the "right thing" does not get done and its not being done is then attributed to the bad motives of others. Or it may be rationalized as God's wish.

These kinds of explanations sound odd to others but to the patient they seem warranted. He does not understand why others see them merely as "excuses." To him they explain the facts better than any other explanation he can think of.

Sometimes these preoccupations have a mystifying character to them.

They seem to require puzzling over and decoding. The schizophrenic patient spends much time in this kind of activity and that is why he thinks he has solved mysteries that others haven't, since they have spent no time at it.

Denial of illness Some individuals are able to admit to themselves that they could ever be deficient or vulnerable in any way. Most illnesses that start in late adolescence tend to be denied because adolescence is a time when deficiencies are hard to accept. The

problem of illness denial is that it makes treatment impossible. This is true of all illnesses that require treatment and is not specific for schizophrenia. Since lack of treatment in schizophrenia can have serious consequences, families need to be especially firm about this.

Schizophrenic Symptoms are continuous and persistent Secondary symptoms (Mechanisms patients may develop to cope with fundamental symptoms).