

WHAT CAUSES PSYCHOSIS?



There is not one single cause of psychosis. Research shows it can develop through a combination of factors, including genetics and environmental influences.



GENES

Genes are a part of our DNA, which is passed from our parents to us. They control how we are made, for example how tall we are or our eye colour. Genes also contribute to how our brain is made, and what kinds of chemicals we have working in our brains. We are born with our genes and we cannot change them.

Some people have a higher risk of developing psychosis because of their genes. Because families share genes, someone with a family member who has experienced psychosis is at higher risk of developing psychosis themselves.

However, having a family history of psychosis doesn't mean someone will develop psychosis for sure. It increases their risk, but other factors need to be present for psychosis to develop. Some people who experience psychosis don't have any family history of it, which shows us that genes alone don't cause psychosis.

ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

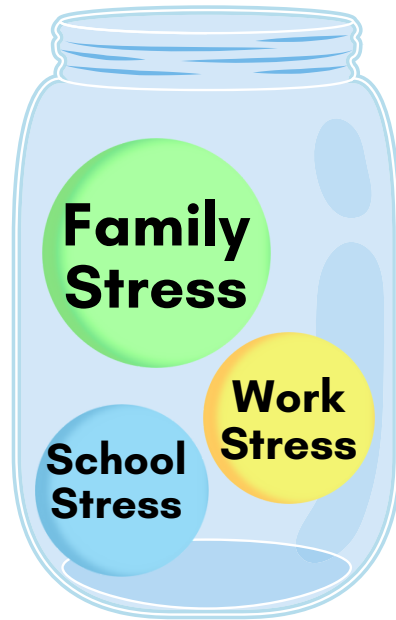


Many factors besides genetics can increase a person's risk for psychosis. These include stressful or traumatic life events, substance use (such as cannabis or amphetamines), complications during birth (like an emergency C-section), immigration, and living in a city or urban environment.



One risk factor on its own may not be enough to cause psychosis. For example, only having a family history, or going through a stressful event. However, when several risk factors are present together, the chance of developing psychosis can increase. Some risk factors, like stress or substance use, can be managed or changed. While other factors, like genetics or past events, are outside our control. Focusing on what we can influence helps support recovery and prevention.

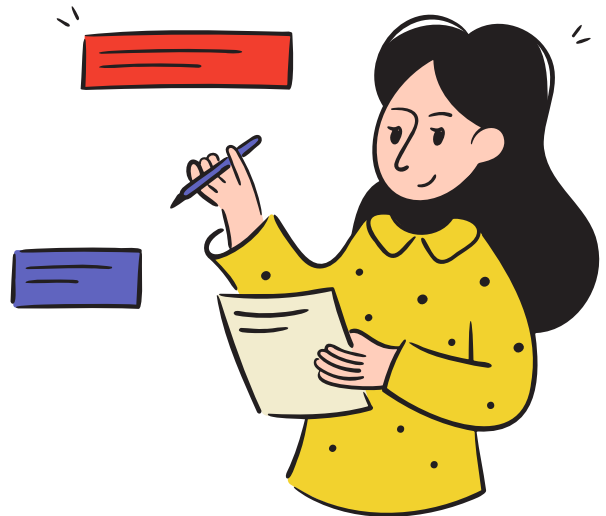
WHAT'S IN YOUR JAR?



Imagine your risk for psychosis as a jar, and each risk factor—like stress, genetics, or substance use—as a ball added to the jar. The more balls that fill the jar, the higher your overall risk becomes. When the jar gets too full, it can overflow—this represents the point where psychosis may develop

Can you identify some of the risk factors that might have impacted you?

e.g. stress from a new job



Remember: Psychosis is not caused by any one factor. Just because some risk factors involve your choices (example: the choice to use substances) it does not mean that you **caused** your psychosis. We can control some of our risk factors. It is helpful to understand what makes us more or less at risk, so that we can lower the risk of having future episodes of psychosis.