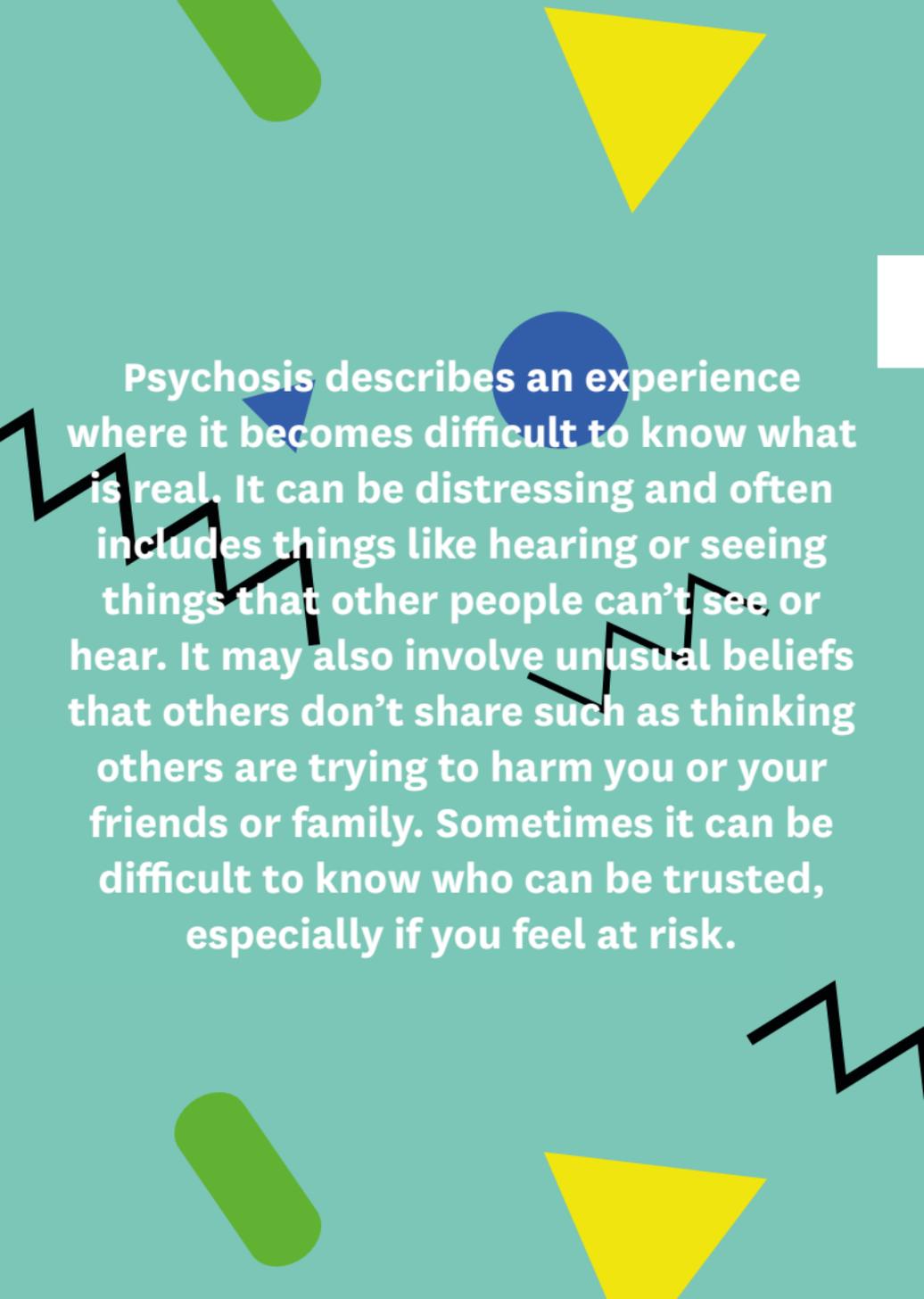


The background is a solid teal color. It is decorated with various abstract geometric shapes: a yellow triangle at the top center, a blue circle to its left, a white square to its right, a white circle at the bottom left, a green rounded rectangle on the right, a black zigzag line at the bottom right, and several other smaller shapes in green, blue, and black scattered around the edges.

Psychosis

OFF THE RECORD Bristol



Psychosis describes an experience where it becomes difficult to know what is real. It can be distressing and often includes things like hearing or seeing things that other people can't see or hear. It may also involve unusual beliefs that others don't share such as thinking others are trying to harm you or your friends or family. Sometimes it can be difficult to know who can be trusted, especially if you feel at risk.



EARLY SIGNS

Early signs of psychosis can be vague and will vary from person to person.

The sort of things you or someone you know might experience include:

- Feeling confused, irritable, anxious or depressed
- Feeling suspicious, tense or threatened
- Mood swings
- Problems with sleeping or changes in appetite
- Struggling to cope with work or study
- Difficulty in getting going or loss of interest in the things that you used to enjoy
- Less able to concentrate, work things out or remember things

Of course any of these changes could be a temporary reaction to stressful events like difficulties at school/college or work, or relationship break-ups. For some people recreational drug/alcohol use may trigger these difficulties too.

LATER SIGNS

Later signs are likely to be more obvious and can be very distressing.

The sort of things you might notice include:

- Things around you may seem strange and you might feel uneasy about seeing friends or going out. You may start preferring to spend time alone.
- Your thoughts seem jumbled, slowed down or sped up, or interfered with.
- You may feel like you are being taken over or changed in some way.
- It might seem like other people don't understand the things you say.
- Friends or family may tell you that you are saying strange things or acting oddly, or you may interpret things in a different way to people around you.
- You might think that other people are talking about you or watching you, so you feel suspicious or scared.

- You might hear or see things that seem very real to you but that no one else notices, or you might believe that there are special messages and signs for you in the things around you.

This sounds like me, what should I do?

If you are experiencing these problems you will probably be confused and scared. You may have felt like this for some time, but tried to ignore it or make sense of it somehow. It's not unusual to want to deny that there is a problem and be reluctant to get help, but it's a good idea to get these checked out so you know what is happening. This means that if a psychotic episode is developing any treatment needed can be started sooner and this increases the likelihood of making a full recovery.

Friends and relatives

As a friend, carer or relative you may be feeling the stresses yourself and not know what to do for the best. It can be hard to know what to do and who to talk to, but remember it could happen to anyone and it is important to talk about what's worrying you.

The good news is there's a dedicated team of people who can help.

Get in touch with the Bristol Early Intervention Service on 0117 919 2371