PSYCHOSIS

What is psychosis?
Psychosis is an illness which affects and person's mind and impairs their sense of reality. During an episode of psychosis, a person's thoughts and perceptions are disrupted, so they may have difficulty recognising what is real and what is not.[i]

Symptoms of psychosis can occur in several other mental health disorders, such as bipolar disorder, drug-induced psychosis, psychotic depression, and schizophrenia. In schizophrenia, there are also other residual 'negative' symptoms, such as apathy and social withdrawal.

Psychotic episodes often occur in three phases: prodrome, acute phase, and recovery phase. The length of each phase varies for each individual and depends upon the treatment they receive.

Symptoms
Psychosis symptoms vary for each person and may change overtime.

Common symptoms include:

- ***Hallucinations*** (e.g. hearing voices).
- ***Delusions*** (e.g. extreme paranoia).
- ***Disorganised speech*** (e.g. speaking incoherently, saying illogical things, responding to questions with unrelated answers).
- ***Disorganised behaviour*** (e.g. behaviour that ranges from childlike and silly, to violent and aggressive).

PSYCHOSIS

What can impact psychosis?
Psychotic episodes can be triggered by alcohol and recreational drug use, so it's important to avoid them. People who have experienced psychosis tend to be particularly sensitive to the effects of drugs and can experience negative effects, even at very low levels of use.[ii]

Ways to manage and treat psychosis
Identifying the best treatment options will depend on factors such as personal preference, the cause of the symptoms, the severity of the symptoms, and how long they have been present. It's important that treatment plans are tailored to an individual's needs and specific situation. However, psychosis treatment generally requires a holistic approach, comprising individual counselling, family support, and psychosocial treatments (different types of psychological and social support, such as therapy, CBT or social skills training).

References
[i] https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/understanding-psychosis
[ii]https://ndarc.med.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/ndarc/resources/NDARC_PYCHOSIS_FINAL.pdf