

**ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET**

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

**School of Applied Social & Human Sciences**

**INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY OF HEALTH - 400136**

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TUTORIAL DAY: Wednesday AND TIME 9am.....

TUTOR: ANNE CULCHRIST.....

TUTORIAL DISCUSSION PAPER NO. 3.....

LENGTH: 745 words

DUE DATE: 19 / 10 / 05.....

DATE SUBMITTED: 19 / 10 / 05.....

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**DECLARATION:**

*I hold a copy of this assignment that I can produce if the original is lost or damaged. I hereby certify that this is my own work and that no part of this assignment has been copied from any other student's work or from any other source except where due acknowledgement is made in the assignment. No part of this assignment has been written for me by any other person. This assignment has not been submitted for another assessment in this or any other unit.*

Signature: Jennie Vira.....

**Note: This assignment will only be marked if the above declaration has been signed.**

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**Summarise the main causes and features of schizophrenia and discuss what it must be like to live with this mental illness.**

### **Introduction**

“Schizophrenia is a major psychiatric condition that is characterised by changes in either the way a person thinks, perceives, behaves and/or the way they emotionally respond to themselves, other people and the world around them” (MHA NSW, n.d. p.1). This essay begins by looking at mental illnesses, types of schizophrenia, symptoms and causes of the illness. A discussion of what it must be like to live with illness will conclude the paper.

### **Features**

“Schizophrenia is a mental illness which affects one person in every hundred” (DHAC-MHB n.d. b, p.2). In our tutorial, we discussed the various mental illnesses we were aware of. DHAC-MHB (n.d. a) divides mental illness into two groups – psychotic illnesses, which includes schizophrenia and non-psychotic illnesses, which includes depression, phobia and eating disorders. MHA NSW (n.d.) outlines various subtypes of schizophrenia. These are paranoid type, disorganised type, catatonic type, undifferentiated type and residual type.

There are various symptoms associated with schizophrenia. DHAC-MHB (n.d. b) outlines three major symptoms. Delusions for example are where sufferers may believe others are plotting against them. Hallucinations are where sufferers will hear voices and thought disorder is where the sufferer will

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jump from one thing to another and it becomes hard to follow what they are talking about. Other symptoms of the illness include loss of drive, blunted expression of emotions, social withdrawal, lack of insight or awareness of other conditions and thinking difficulties. (DHAC-MHB n.d. b p. 3) MHA NSW (n.d.) identifies symptoms as being either positive or negative. "Positive symptoms refer to an increased amount or distortion of normal behaviour. Negative symptoms refer to a decreased degree of otherwise normal behaviour" (MHA NSW n.d. p. 1)

### Causes

the Corry & McGrath (2001) discuss the various factors that may contribute to an individual developing schizophrenia. Factors include genetics, pregnancy and birth complications, place and season of birth, brain structure and function, substance abuse and stress. They discuss that it may not necessarily be just one factor that causes the illness in a person, but rather, that a combination of factors may increase the risk in vulnerable people. They discuss that it may be a chemical imbalance that may be the cause of developing schizophrenia, but that environmental factors, such as stress or drug use may be the triggers that result in the sufferer having their first episode.

*Some of the explanations of these would be helpful*

### Living with schizophrenia

Chadwick et al (2003) discusses what it is like to live with this illness. In our tutorials we looked at the similarities between each of the sufferers with regards to their symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of the illness. Common to many of the sufferers was the idea that they were not an integral part of

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society. Another commonality was that many of the sufferers had had suicide attempts prior to being diagnosed with schizophrenia. Symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions and paranoia were also common amongst the sufferers.

When comparing the diagnosis and treatment of the illness amongst the six sufferers, we noticed that again there were similarities amongst the cases. However, while many of the sufferers identified that the medication often had worse side effects than the illness, one sufferer discussed how the medication helps lead a productive life. Some side effects of the drugs prescribed for this illness as discussed by the six patients include weight gain, sleepiness, lethargy, incontinence, constipation and restlessness. (Chadwick et al 2003)

One idea that was discussed in our tutorials was that society in general is not very understanding when it comes to mental illness. We discussed how beliefs such as they should just get over it, or ideas that it is contagious make it harder for sufferers to discuss their illness. Chadwick et al (2003) also discusses how the sufferers of the illness found that misunderstandings within society made it hard to talk about their illness. Common to all sufferers was also the fact that remaining in full time employment was near impossible. Sufferers also discussed how helpful it was to be able to talk about their illness and many found attending group sessions with other sufferers helpful. Others talked about how it became necessary to learn to how to re-enter society once they had been diagnosed with the illness and treatment was keeping their symptoms under control.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, we have seen that schizophrenia is classified as a psychotic mental illness. This essay has identified the types of schizophrenia, outlined the symptoms and causes of the illness. Finally, we have seen an overview of what it must be like to live with this illness.

Good summary

Very good, clear work  
Jennie, well done

(5/5)

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**References**

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