



# SCHIZO-AFFECTIVE DISORDER

*Understanding. Support. Hope.*

Schizo-affective disorder is a mental health condition that includes symptoms of both a mood disorder (depression or bipolar disorder) and schizophrenia. With the right treatment and support, many people can manage symptoms and live meaningful, fulfilling lives.

## WHAT IS SCHIZO-AFFECTIVE DISORDER?

Schizo-affective disorder involves periods of psychosis along with mood episodes. Symptoms can make daily life challenging, but you are not alone—and help is available.



Affects how you think, feel, and behave



Involves symptoms of both a mood disorder and schizophrenia



Different for everyone—symptoms can come and go

*You are more than your diagnosis.  
You are a whole person with strengths, goals, and dreams.*

## COMMON SYMPTOMS

### Psychotic Symptoms

- ♥ Hearing, seeing, or believing things others do not
- ♥ Unusual or disorganized thinking
- ♥ Suspiciousness or paranoia
- ♥ Difficulty focusing or expressing thoughts clearly
- ♥ Withdrawal from others

### Mood Symptoms

- ♥ Depression: persistent sadness, lack of interest, low energy, changes in sleep, feelings of worthlessness
- ♥ Bipolar (mania or hypomania): elevated mood, increased energy, reduced need for sleep, racing thoughts, impulsivity

Symptoms must include both psychotic symptoms and mood episodes, either at the same time or separately.

## POSSIBLE CAUSES & RISK FACTORS

- ♥ Differences in brain chemistry and structure
- ♥ Genetics and family history
- ♥ Stressful life events or trauma
- ♥ Substance use
- ♥ Other medical conditions

*It is not anyone's fault.  
Many factors can contribute to this condition.*

## HOW IT MAY AFFECT DAILY LIFE



Work or school performance



Relationships and social connections



Daily routines and responsibilities



Energy levels and motivation



Sleep and self-care



Thinking, memory, and focus

*There will be good days and hard days. Small steps forward still count.*

## TREATMENT CAN HELP

A combination of treatments is often most helpful.

- ♥ Medication: can help manage psychotic and mood symptoms
- ♥ Therapy: helps you understand your experiences and build coping skills
- ♥ Psychoeducation: learning about your condition empowers you
- ♥ Support: from loved ones, support groups, and mental health professionals
- ♥ Healthy habits: sleep, nutrition, movement, and stress management

## COPING STRATEGIES

- ♥ Stick to a routine
- ♥ Practice grounding and relaxation (breathing, mindfulness, meditation)
- ♥ Take medications as prescribed
- ♥ Talk about how you feel
- ♥ Limit alcohol and substance use
- ♥ Focus on your strengths and interests
- ♥ Break tasks into small, manageable steps
- ♥ Ask for help when you need it

## WHEN TO REACH OUT

It's important to reach out if you:

- ♥ Feel unsafe or have thoughts of harming yourself or others
- ♥ Notice a big change in mood, thinking, or behavior
- ♥ Are having trouble caring for yourself
- ♥ Feel overwhelmed or hopeless



*You don't have to face this alone.  
Reach out to your therapist, a trusted person, or a crisis line if you need support right away.*

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Living with schizo-affective disorder can feel isolating, but many people understand and care. Connection and support make a big difference.



You are worthy of support



Recovery is possible



Hope grows with help

## REMEMBER

- ♥ You are not your symptoms.
- ♥ There is no shame in asking for help.
- ♥ Healing is not linear.
- ♥ Every step forward is progress.
- ♥ You are allowed to have a good life.

## THINGS I CAN CONTROL

- My attitude and outlook
- The choices I make
- My self-care
- Who I spend time with
- How I ask for help
- One small step at a time

*Be patient with yourself.  
You are doing your best.*

*With the right support and treatment,  
you can manage symptoms and  
build a life that feels meaningful to you.*

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(580) 768-1634

www.kaleidoscopecounselingok.com

mirandabowman1@outlook.com

*You are not alone. You are not a burden. You matter.*

