What is the disability?

Schizophrenia is a condition that affects how people think, feel and behave. The symptoms of schizophrenia are characterized as:

- Positive: psychotic symptoms that emerge.
- Negative: normal behaviors or feelings that are absent or decrease.

Facts:

- Most people are diagnosed between the ages of 15-35.
- For every 5 people with schizophrenia:

o 1 will get better within 5 years of onset.

o 3 will get better but will have times where they are ill again.

o 1 will have troublesome symptoms for long periods of time.

- There is no research that states schizophrenics are violent. Voices are more likely to suggest that the individual harms themselves rather than others.

Where can I find out more?

- www.mind.org.uk
- www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Where to get help in College?

If you have this diagnosis or have experienced the symptoms described above for a while you can get advice and support from:

• Community, Wellbeing and Student Outreach by emailing welfare@rhul.ac.uk.

• The University counselling service in FW 171, call in or email counselling@rhul.ac.uk to arrange an appointment.

• The Disability and Dyslexia Service in FW 149 and 143, call in or email disability-dyslexia@rhul.ac.uk to arrange an appointment.

• The Clarence Medical Centre in FE, call their reception on 01784 443131 or call in to book an appointment.

Please note these services are open between 9:00am – 5:00pm Monday-Friday during term time.

Useful numbers:

Royal Holloway Security: 01784 443063

NHS: 111

Out of Hours medical care: 01753 865773

Samaritans: 08457 909090

Surrey Police (non-emergency): 101

The information and quotes in this flyer are from mind.org.uk and www.rcpsych.ac.uk.

Schizophrenia and Psychotic Disorders

Almost 3% of students registered with the DDS have been diagnosed with Schizophrenia or Psychosis.

"For me, the paranoia is the worst. It is very real and frightening."

Mind.org.uk

Disability and Dyslexia Services

Founder's West 143

01784 443966

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

"What was real and what was not? I couldn't tell the difference any longer and it was exhausting."

Mind.org.uk

Symptoms

Positive symptoms:

- Hallucinations: This is when people hear, see, feel, taste or smell something that is not there.
- Delusions: Strong false beliefs which are often obsessive (not subject to reason or logic). For example, a student may believe everyone is "staring at them". This is a common belief with people who suffer from paranoia.

Negative symptoms:

- Social withdrawal: they do not wish to be in the company of others.
- Apathy and loss of motivation, interest or energy. Difficulty enjoying even their favourite activities or foods.
- Lack of self-care. E.g. Poor cleanliness.
- Changes in sleeping pattern.
- Poor concentration.

Not everyone will experience all these symptoms.

Effects on life as a student:

- The medication used to treat these conditions can have strong side effects such as drowsiness, weight gain, tremors and lack of sex drive.
- Hallucinations can make it difficult to focus, concentrate and recognise who is speaking.
- Social withdrawal can affect attendance.
- Isolation from peers can occur if the individual's behaviour appears bizarre, often when the psychotic symptoms are not well-managed.
- Their lack of interest and motivation can impact the student's attendance and ability to pursue their studies.

Tips for support

1. Where appropriate try to provide lecture materials in advance and allow students to record lectures.

2. Ask the Disability & Dyslexia Services what can trigger delusions or hallucinations. It is likely to be a different trigger for each person. Try to minimise these distractions in lectures.

3. Allow extra time for the student to talk and write as communication can often become difficult.

4. Avoid situations where a student is likely to fail, break their self-fulfilling prophecy.

5. Try to minimise stress, as this is often a trigger.

6. Try to ensure you do not to draw attention to this individual.

7. Research has shown that a computer can often help a person who is hearing voices. Try typing your message if they are finding it hard to focus.

8. Be understanding, the voices can become overwhelming, allow the student a moment alone or time to process the information.

9. Group projects and class debate can be hard to follow if a student hears voices, perhaps allow the students to use a voice recorder during these sessions.

10. Be aware that attendance is likely to be affected during psychotic episodes.

11. Talk about something other than mental health, try to make a connection – We are all human.