

# The Student who is Severely Disoriented or Psychotic

## Facts about Psychotic Thinking

The main feature of psychotic thinking is poor reality testing or “being disconnected from reality”.

## Symptoms of anxiety include:

- Disorganized speech and behavior
- Extremely odd or eccentric behavior
- Inappropriate or complete lack of emotion
- Bizarre behavior that could indicate hallucinations
- Strange beliefs that involve a serious misinterpretation of reality
- Social withdrawal
- Inability to connect with or track normal communication

Psychological illnesses that involve psychotic features often have an onset between the late teens and early 30s.

## What You Can Do

- Consult with a professional in University Health Services’ Counseling and Consultation Services (608-265-5600 – option 9) to assess the student’s level of dysfunction.
- Speak to the student in a direct and concrete manner regarding your plan for getting him/her to a safe environment.
- Walk the student to University Health Services’ Counseling and Consultation Services or arrange for a police escort (911) to a local hospital’s emergency room if the student is highly impaired.
- Contact the Dean of Students Office at 6028-263-5700 to update them about the student. Remember that UHS cannot disclose this information to anyone else without permission from the student, so they cannot inform other offices or the student’s faculty.
- Recognize that psychotic states can involve extreme emotion or lack of emotion and intense fear to the point of paranoia.

## Avoid

- Assuming the student will be able to care for him/herself.
- Agitating the student.
- Arguing with unrealistic thoughts.
- Assuming the student understands you.
- Allowing friends to care for the student without getting professional advice.
- Getting locked into one way of dealing with the student. Be flexible.