



Our Mental Health

Len McCulloch

Understanding schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a major mental illness which is said to affect approximately 1 out of 100 people in the world's population. People who suffer from schizophrenia are characterized by having a psychosis.

A psychosis is a severe difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is unreal. Although this problem defines the disorder, there are several associated symptoms typically present which cause marked social and occupational dysfunction.

Characteristic symptoms involve a range of problems in thinking, feeling, behaving, and communicating. Delusions and hallucinations are hallmark signs of the disorder.

A delusion is an erroneous belief which involves misinterpreting the words and actions of others. Delusions can take on many forms but the most commonly seen are persecutory delusions. In these, the individual believes he or she is being tormented, followed, tricked, spied on, etc.

Hallucinations are erroneous perceptions through the senses. These can be auditory, visual, taste, smell, and tactile or bodily sensations. The most common hallucinations are auditory in which the person hears voices, outside their own thoughts, which often command them to perform certain actions or degrade them with remarks that they are ugly, stupid, etc.

Problematic language and communication can occur in which the individual's speech is illogical, very loosely connected, jumping from one topic to another. Or conversely, language can become very impoverished and the individual will withdraw interest in expressing him or herself at all.

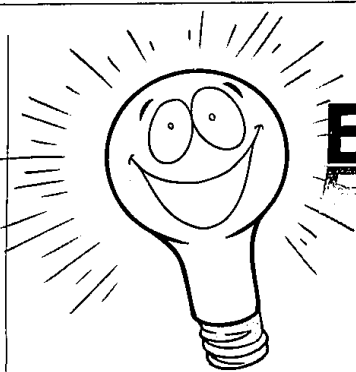
Additional common symptoms are a decline in self-monitoring hygiene and grooming, trouble initiating activities, and disordered sleep, eating, and poorly focused attention. An inability to enjoy any aspect of life usually occurs and there is an "out of sync" quality to emotional expression.

The onset of schizophrenia is from late adolescence until mid thirties with the most common onset in the early twenties. Rarely does the disorder strike before adolescence or in later life. However, no one is immune from the disorder and given enough extreme stress, anyone can develop mild, moderate, or severe symptoms either abruptly or gradually. The disorder does tend to be chronic and to come and go in varying intensity for years after it begins.

There are subtypes of schizophrenia with the most common being the Paranoid Type wherein the individual is grossly suspicious of others, unable to trust, fearful, and holding on strongly to beliefs that he or she is in danger. In this, condition the schizophrenic's dilemma is "a life of terror."

One of the myths of this disorder is that it equates with dangerousness. However, studies have shown that there is no more violence exhibited in the schizophrenic population than in the general population. Also, life expectancy for a person with schizophrenia is less than a healthy person due to the high rate of suicide (10%) and the higher health risks from lifestyles of

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BRIGHT IDEAS

At Dunckel's Camp Invention, messes inspire creativity

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Camp Invention, held for the first time this year at Dunckel Middle School in Farmington Hills, gave kids a week to let their imaginations go wild.

Messes are welcome in this program for girls and boys entering grades 2-6.

"This is all very science oriented," said Christine Diebold, the director for the summer program. She's a teacher at Dunckel Middle School during the regular school year.

Diebold chose other area teachers to help from among "those who were interested in having a good time and making a mess," she said.

Adult "buddies" who are employed by Ford also helped out. They included Julia Voutyras, a Farmington Hills resident, who works in the patent division and Doug Cinzori, an engineer from Dearborn.

Voutyras enrolled her daughters Anna, 11, a Dunckel Middle School student, and Samantha, 8, a Woodcreek Elementary fourth grader.

"I want them to be creative and learn what it means to be an inventor," Voutyras said. Aaron Brown and James Brazovich, both of Farmington Hills, constructed a small, rudimentary water slide. Two aluminum containers one at the top and one at the bottom were used.

"This is a bilge pump from my Dad's boat," Aaron said.

James explained how the water is recycled continuously up a tube and then out again.

Parents of the 115 participants received a daily newsletter which told them about activities at five stations, including:

■ **Take Apart** — Campers took apart items they brought from home. They talked about simple machines and looked at their take apart items to see if they could find these simple machines. The teacher was Chuck Mullen of Harrison High.

■ **I Can Invent** — Campers designed inventions using the parts from their take apart items. They made "amazing" bubble blowers and wacky inventions called Chindogs. The inventions served a purpose but were too silly to be real. The teacher was Stefan Terpach, an elementary teacher in the Clarenceville School district.

■ **Spills & Chills** — Campers learned Newton's law that an object in motion tends to stay in motion. They brainstormed ideas to make a

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"Professor" Chuck Mullen helps seven-year-old Jay Rashid of Farmington Hills tear apart an old VCR at Camp Invention.



PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH CARNEGIE | OBSERVER

Nine-year-old Laura Bremer (foreground) reaches for a balloon in a race with her partner, Erica Osp, age 11. The two participated in Camp Invention.

'I want them to be creative and learn what it means to be an inventor.'

Julia Voutyras
Camp Invention 'Adult buddy' and Farmington Hills resident

EWI provides support for women in business

BY CHRISTINE BRODA
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills resident Tracy Muscat is a model for today's working woman.

After putting in a full day as director of major gifts for Hospice of Michigan, she comes home to a husband and a two-year-old.

As with many professional businesswomen, Muscat's busy schedule is challenging but rewarding.

So how does she balance her professional and personal life?

"Thanks to an organization known as Executive Women International, Muscat has found the inspiration to succeed in her diverse roles."

"It's one of this community's best kept secrets," she said of EWI.

Billed as the premier organization for networking and leadership development for today's businesswomen and their firms, EWI addresses women's quest for personal achievement and drive for professional

development through monthly meetings, conferences and philanthropic activities.

In addition to bringing together professional businesswomen who share common goals, EWI also contributes to several local agencies that provide services to women in transition.

As a professional, Muscat enjoys the opportunity to be a part of a group of women she describes as "very service-oriented...high-energy people."

"(EWI) is comprised of some unbelievable people," she said. "These are women who are absolutely amazing."

Since its establishment in California in 1938, the organization has grown to include more than 80 chapters chartered in the United States, Canada and Europe.

Muscat is a member of the Detroit-Windsor chapter, which boasts some 50 member firms and more than 70 representatives in the Detroit and Windsor, Ontario, areas.

Participation in EWI is unique in that membership is by firm and not individual.

And the range of companies represented in the Detroit-Windsor chapter alone is very diverse — from the design and construction company of Barton Malow, to the banking firm of Comerica.

Incorporated, to the office support and staffing company of the KPM Group, EWI's member firms span the spectrum of today's business market.

"Our organization is comprised of all kinds of enterprises," former Detroit-Windsor Chapter President Martha Grier said.

She explained how, despite the diversity of member firms, representatives are able to come together to achieve common goals.

"I think it's the nature of our environment today," the Farmington Hills resident said. "We have to think globally — outside of our own neighborhoods and backyards."

According to Grier, who serves as assistant to the chancellor of the Wayne County

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