

# First Episode Psychosis Guideline Checklist

## Behavioral Health Agency Level 2



## The current state of the issue

Psychosis involves a collection of symptoms that affect the mind, where there has been some loss of contact with reality. During an episode of psychosis, a person's thoughts and perceptions are disrupted and they may have difficulty recognizing what is real and what is not.<sup>[i]</sup> Psychosis affects approximately 3 in every 100 people at some point in their lives, with about 100,000 adults over the age of 21 experiencing it annually nationwide. <sup>[ii]</sup> However, only 10-15% of individuals experiencing their first episode of psychosis (FEP) receive care through an evidence-based, coordinated specialty care model. <sup>[iii]</sup> Early detection and intervention are critical for people living with the broad spectrum of psychotic disorders. The World Health Organization recommends intervention within 90 days of symptom onset. Coordinated Specialty Care (CSC) is the gold standard of early intervention for psychosis.<sup>[iv]</sup> Best practice is to begin treatment within the first three months, which has been shown to reduce the duration of psychosis, lower the probability of recurrence, decrease lifetime costs, and improve overall quality of life.

## Rapid Detection & Early Access

- A subset of people experiencing a first episode of psychosis may lack medical decisional capacity.** Many people with psychosis and active symptoms still have the ability to adequately weigh risks and benefits and have the capacity to make treatment decisions for themselves.
- Evaluation for decisional capacity is specific to a certain decision and at a certain point in time, it does not mean that the individual does not have capacity to decide other questions about treatment or that they will not have capacity for this decision in the future.
- It often varies based on psychiatric and cognitive symptoms at the time. Psychiatrists and other providers can assess decisional capacity.
- Consider consultation and using validated assessment tools (e.g., [MacArthur Competence Assessment Tool](#))** for evaluating decisional capacity. Consider input from the person's family/support system.
- Coordinate care with primary care provider and/or other providers**

## Resources

- The Bree Report on First Episode Psychosis is meant to supplement these resources.
- Full Bree Report on First Episode Psychosis:
- [WA HCA New Journeys and First Episode Psychosis](#)
- [New Journeys Washington](#)
- [Center for Excellence in Early Psychosis](#)
- [Scaling Coordinated Specialty Care for First-Episode Psychosis: Insights From a National Impact Model](#)
- [NAMI Psychosis](#)
- [NAMI Coverage of Coordinated Specialty Care \(CSC\) for Early or First-Episode Psychosis](#)
- [University of Washington Psychiatry Line](#)
- [Washington Partnership Access Line](#)
- [Evaluating Medical Decision-Making Capacity in Practice | AAFP](#)

**Read the full Bree Report First Episode Psychosis online by scanning the QR code:**



**Connect with the Bree Collaborative at [bree@qualityhealth.org](mailto:bree@qualityhealth.org)**

References: [i] National Institute of Mental Health. (2023). Understanding psychosis (NIH Publication No. 23-MH-8110). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/understanding-psychosis> [ii] National Institute of Mental Health. (2023). Understanding psychosis (NIH Publication No. 23-MH-8110). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/understanding-psychosis> [iii] National Institute of Mental Health. (2023). Understanding psychosis (NIH Publication No. 23-MH-8110). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/understanding-psychosis/> [iv] NAMI, McKinsey Health Institute, NASMHPD, National Council of Mental Wellbeing. (2024) Scaling Coordinated Specialty Care for First-Episode Psychosis: Insights From a National Impact Model. <https://www.nami.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Scaling-CSC-for-FEP-Insights-from-a-National-Impact-Model.pdf>