

# Family Members A National Survey

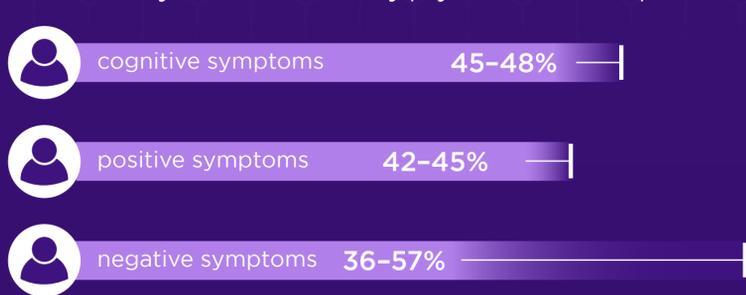
In the summer of 2021, the Schizophrenia Society of Canada undertook two national online surveys, supported by AbbVie. One survey was for people with lived experience of early psychosis or schizophrenia, one was for family members of people with lived experience of early psychosis or schizophrenia. There were 121 full completed surveys from family members (FM).

## Intent of the Survey

- ◆ to gain a current understanding of the impact that positive symptoms, negative symptoms, and cognitive symptoms have on quality of life.
- ◆ to consider the side effects of anti-psychotic medications that most impacted quality of life, and
- ◆ to better understand what helps and what hinders personal recovery journeys

## Symptoms

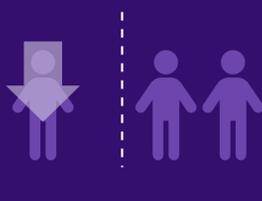
Over the year prior to the survey, FM reported that their family member with early psychosis or schizophrenia experienced



positive symptoms

negative symptoms

cognitive symptoms



**hallucinations** - 45%  
**disorganized behaviour** - 45%  
**delusions** - 42%

**reduced motivation** - 57%  
**social withdrawal** - 49%  
**loss of interest** - 43%  
**loss of productivity** - 42%

**general memory and difficulty understanding** - 48%  
**difficulty with attention and info memory** - 47%

All categories of symptoms observed by FM were reported to have moderately to greatly affected the quality of life of their family member over the year prior to the survey.

## Medication side effects

83%

of respondents indicated that their family members were taking medications for early psychosis or schizophrenia.

feeling sleepy or sedated

39%

weight gain

26%

feeling restless

24%



Respondents reported their family members experiencing

**Hypertension (15%)**

**Diabetes (13%),** or

**Cardiovascular problems (12%)**

since starting their anti-psychotic medications.



The degree to which side effects were reported by FM to affect their family member's quality of life over the year prior to the survey were rated between just less than moderately and greatly.

## Recovery

percentages of FM who considered where their family members were in their recovery journeys



Having a **safe and stable place to live** and making healthy decisions are the top-rated aspects of recovery.

FM respondents indicated that having the **support of family, doing activities that they enjoy, and reaching out for help** when they need it helped their family member most in their personal recovery journeys.



## What it all means

- ◆ Quality of life continues to be significantly impacted for people with early psychosis and schizophrenia.
- ◆ Managing symptoms and the side effects of medication is an ongoing process.
- ◆ Despite side effects and symptoms most respondents reported that their family members were progressing in recovery or were in full recovery.
- ◆ Further research and investment into evidence-based interventions that support recovery, and further study and development of antipsychotics that have fewer side effects for the individuals using them, are needed.