Positive and Negative Symptoms of Schizophrenia

**Positive +** presence of problematic behaviors

- Hallucinations (illusory perceptions), especially auditory
- Delusions (illusory beliefs), especially persecutory
- Disorganized thought and nonsensical speech
- Bizarre behaviors

**Negative -** absence of healthy behaviors

- Flat affect (no emotion showing in the face)
- Reduced social interaction
- Anhedonia (no feeling of enjoyment)
- Avolition (less motivation, initiative, focus on tasks)
- Alogia (speaking less)
- Catatonia (moving less)
Disorganized & Delusional Thinking

“This morning when I was at Hillside [Hospital], I was making a movie. I was surrounded by movie stars ... I'm Marry Poppins. Is this room painted blue to get me upset? My grandmother died four weeks after my eighteenth birthday.”  

(Sheehan, 1982)

This monologue illustrates fragmented, bizarre thinking with distorted beliefs - example of delusions ("I'm Mary Poppins").
Heather
Disorganized & Delusional Thinking

Many psychologists believe disorganized thoughts occur because of selective attention failure (fragmented and bizarre thoughts).

Irrelevant and minute stimuli easily distract them. (grooves of a brick or the inflection of a voice distracts their attention from a whole scene of from the speaker’s meaning.)
Positive Symptoms of Schizophrenia

Disorganized & Delusional Thinking

- **Schizophrenia** - commonly referred to as *word salad*, is characterized by an apparently confused usage of words with no apparent meaning or relationship attached to them.

- **Example:** Q: “Why do people believe in God?”
  
  A: "Because He makes a twirl in life, my box is broken help me blue elephant. Isn't lettuce brave? I like electrons, hello."

- **DSM-V** - no specific code for this disorder although they include it as a symptom under the diagnosis of schizophrenia
Word Salad
The lion will have to change from dogs into cats until I can meet my father and mother and we dispart some rats. I live on the front of Whitton's head. You have to work hard if you don’t get into bed...It’s all over for squab true tray and there ain’t no squabs, there ain’t no men, there ain’t no music, there ain’t no nothing besides my mother and father who stand alone upon the Island of Capri where is no ice. Well it’s my suitcase sir.
Positive Symptoms of Schizophrenia

Disturbed Perceptions

- People with schizophrenia often experience **hallucinations**, that is, sensory experiences without sensory stimulation (not experienced by others.)
- The most common form of hallucination is hearing **voices** that no one else hears, often with upsetting (e.g. shaming) content.
- **Voices**: offer a commentary on the individual's behavior "he is eating his dinner." *make disparaging remarks* about him "he eats like a pig"; *give him commands* like "put the knife on the plate".
- '**Voices**' may be a distortion of environmental noises (fridge or radiator noises interpreted as whispering.)
Disturbed Perceptions

- Hallucinations can also be visual, olfactory/smells, tactile/touch, or gustatory/taste.
- **Visual:** The images can appear to be clear, distorted or strange to the patient, and can also be frightening.
- **Somatic** e.g. experience of electric shocks to the fingertips.

Positive Symptoms of Schizophrenia
Jani – Tormented by hallucinations
Delusions (false beliefs)
(Beliefs which individuals are firmly convinced are true, regardless of evidence to the contrary).

- Delusions of Persecution
  The belief that individuals or groups are conspiring against him or her.
  “someone is following me”

- Delusions of Grandeur
  “I am a king”
  The belief that the individual is someone important or powerful.

Positive Symptoms of Schizophrenia
Hallucinations and delusions often co-exist

Quite often the hallucinations coincide with delusions which the schizophrenic is also experiencing.

- For example, if a schizophrenic man has the delusion that aliens have invaded his home, he may hear voices which he believes are aliens talking to him or about him.
- He may believe he sees them moving about and having a dance party in his home, or smell odd odors which he attributes to their presence.
Negative Symptoms of Schizophrenia

Inappropriate Emotions

- Absence of appropriate behaviors/responses.

Emotional Disturbance

- a) **Blunting**: apparent indifference to events which would normally provoke a strong emotional reaction.
- b) **Inappropriate Affect**: e.g. laughing when told bad news, reacting angrily if offered a gift.
- c) **Flattened Affect**: absence of emotional expression, speech is in monotone, no mobility of facial features, vacant gaze.

Inappropriate Actions/Behavior

The schizophrenic body exhibits symptoms such as:

- repetitive behaviors such as rocking and rubbing.
- **catatonia**, such as sitting motionless and unresponsive for hours.
Schizophrenia - Simulation