11.1: Introduction

Learning Objectives

• Compare and contrast delirium and schizophrenia
• Apply the nursing process to clients with psychosis
• Describe nursing assessments related to psychosis, delirium, and schizophrenia
• Identify common nursing problems/diagnoses related to psychosis
• Establish a safe environment
• Apply evidence-based practice when planning and implementing nursing care
• Describe common treatments for psychosis and schizophrenia
• Identify appropriate referrals to community resources
• Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
• Provide patient education to clients and their family members

Have you ever cared for a client who was confused, disoriented, had a change in mental status, or was experiencing delirium? These are considered “altered thought processes.” There are several potential medical causes of altered thought processes referred to as delirium, such as a urinary tract infection in an elderly patient, hyperglycemia, or alcohol intoxication. There are also mental health disorders that can cause altered thought processes, such as schizophrenia. This chapter will discuss psychosis, delirium, and schizophrenia and explain how to care for clients experiencing hallucinations, delusions, and other symptoms of altered thought processes.