CBT for Psychosis

Symptoms of psychosis

Positive (something is added into the perceptual experience):
- Perceptual anomalies (hallucinations) Voices most common, over 80%
- Unusual beliefs (delusions)
- Depersonalisation and derealisation
- Bizarre behaviour
- Disorganised speech and thought disorder

Think about delusions as functional – person’s best way to interpret events at that time.

Example of the girl in an early intervention ward believing that she was in girls aloud – has a function and is a compensation measure as a result of ‘failure’

Negative (deficit to normal experiences):
- Symptoms that are deficits in normal thought, behaviour or emotions. (i.e. affective flattening, impoverished speech, lack of motivation/avolition, loss of pleasure/anhedonia, poor attention, catatonia)
- These deficits are beyond an acute episode
- Generally, more negative symptoms are associated with a poorer prognosis and if you think about a schizophrenia diagnosis.
- They may be primary or secondary (due to depression, medication, institutionalisation)

Cognitive (fit with negative symptoms):
- Poor attention
- Poor working memory and executive functioning

Causes of psychosis

Difficult in terms of first episode psychosis.

- Drugs & cannabis, 25% due to skunk use, 3x increase (Di Forti et al, 2015)
  - Van Os (2010) cannabis use "significantly" increased the risk of psychotic symptoms, even when other factors such as socio-economic status, use of different drugs and other psychiatric conditions were taken into account
- Higher prevalence in BAME groups
- Early migration
- Poor early social adjustment
- Early deprivations/traumas (Kelleher et al, 2013)
- Childhood neurological insults
- Perinatal insults
- Genetic factors

Psychological intervention

Psychological interventions are used because psychotic symptoms don’t always respond to medication (Curson et al., 1988) and there is poor compliance to medication. Additionally, anxiety and depression are common in psychosis, and there is high suicide risk (Malla and Payne, 2005)