



Schizophrenia: A Very Short Introduction

Chris Frith , Eve C. Johnstone

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The schizophrenic patient presented to the public in sensational press reports and lurid films bears little resemblance to reality of the illness. This book describes what schizophrenia is really like, how the illness progresses, and the treatments that have been applied. It also summarizes the most up-to-date knowledge available about the biological bases of this disorder. Finally it attempts to give some idea of what it is like to have schizophrenia and what this disorder tells us about the relationship between mind and brain.

Schizophrenia: A Very Short Introduction Details

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From Reader Review Schizophrenia: A Very Short Introduction for online ebook

Thomas Brown says

I haven't always gotten on with the Very Short Introductions series. It's a great series of 100 page introductions to different subjects, but they always choose a noted academic to write about the subject in question. Which makes sense, get someone incredibly knowledgeable and respected to write a brief intro to something he's spent most of his adult life learning about. Ronseal job.

But some academics are terrible writers, which can kill some incredibly interesting subjects dead. But the Schizophrenia guide is very well written, concise and informative without being patronising. Really interesting because I did psychology as an a-level from 1999 to 2001, and the amount of progress that psychologists have made since then is phenomenal.

Favourite chapter was about genius and madness, looking at the incidence of mental illness in brilliant people. Conclusion seems to be that manic or depressive people can be brilliant, and that their brilliance may be partially because of their illness, but if you're properly schizophrenic you can't focus on anything enough to write a novel or whatever.

James Joyce's daughter suffered from severe schizophrenia, and Joyce (a manic depressive) took her to see Carl Jung, convinced that she was gifted like him: "Jung concluded that father and daughter were like two people going to the bottom of the sea, 'one falling and one diving'. Joyce was in control of his ideas and could use them creatively; Lucia's ideas were out of control and could not be used. Lucia spent most of her life in mental hospitals."

Matt says

An interesting and thorough elucidation of a complicated and mysterious disease ... especially for a book that is "a very short introduction."

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Schizophrenia: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions #89), Chris Frith, Eve C. Johnstone

The schizophrenic patient presented to the public in sensational press reports and lurid films bears little resemblance to reality of the illness. This book describes what schizophrenia is really like, how the illness progresses, and the treatments that have been applied. It also summarizes the most up-to-date knowledge available about the biological bases of this disorder. Finally it attempts to give some idea of what it is like to have schizophrenia and what this disorder tells us about the relationship between mind and brain.

Jacquie Bryant says

This book was an objective and at times clinical discussion examining this illness. Having this illness in my family I wanted to know all I could. I was most interested to learn the essence of mental disorder, even the original meaning of the term schizophrenia helps me to accept and understand those afflicted. I have bought into misperceptions, I realize now.

This quote explains what I misunderstood, "Unfortunately, most people do not know that the term 'schizophrenia' was intended to capture the idea of a split between the components of one mind (knowledge, emotion, and will) rather than the idea of one mind splitting into several minds."

But, the most I got out of this book was reasoning for having grace towards people afflicted rather than blame. "It's easy to understand why accounts of this illness elicit fear, but, rather they should elicit sympathy. To quote again from the first case in this chapter: "I cannot picture anything more frightening than for a well-endowed cultivated human being to live through his own gradual deterioration fully aware of it all the time."

I would get other introductions such as this, it's a valuable resource.

Vince says

I thoroughly enjoyed Chris Frith's book, *Making Up the Mind*. Given his years of research into Schizophrenia, I thought I'd give this a read.

At 169 pages of content in small-format handbook form, *A Very Short Introduction to Schizophrenia* is a quick read. Frith and Johnstone provide a concise tour through the history of treatment, issues surrounding definition, learnings from drug therapy, discoveries regarding biological indicators, and public health implications.

The text offers first-hand accounts of the disease. The authors also work to dispell myths surrounding the disease and accounts of violence.

Frith and Johnstone conclude that the brain/mind interface suggests the most promising model leading to both phsychological and biological treaments. Their approach understands schizophrenic symptoms as foul-ups between the brain's aggregation of data and its sharing of "constructed reality" with the mind. For a fuller explication, see Frith's *Making Up the Mind*.

Quick and enlightening. If you're interested in exploring current thinking about Schizophrenia, you'll enjoy this book.

Amber says

I feel I have an infinitely better grasp on understanding schizophrenia now than I did before. All I really knew about it before was that people had hallucinations and heard voices. This book was published like 8 year ago though, so *a lot* of advances have been made in that time in the genetics/what causes

schizophrenia area. Also, they never quite said (though I am sure it varies a lot from to patient to patient) whether schizophrenia is something someone suffers from continually (experiencing symptoms *all the time*) or whether it comes and goes. They sort of said it comes and goes, but that doesn't really make sense with my impression of the disease. Maybe the episodes just come really close together? And when someone is between episodes, do they recognize that they had previously been suffering from delusions and acting "crazy"? I wish there had been more interviews with people who were (mostly?) recovered or between episodes.

Overall worth reading though if you just want an understanding of a disease that is mentioned frequently in the popular media but never given much of an explanation.

Giovani Oliani says

One of the best nonfiction books I've read.

Eleanor Catherine says

For a 'very short introduction' this had a lot to get your head around but i found it very interesting especially the section concerning John Nash, Virginia Woolf & the links between Genius and Madness, which it states- there is not.

Joseph Masters says

Great book. A nice balance of the historical perspectives on the disease and current thinking on the biological causes of the condition and explanations of symptoms.

Anthony says

A concise and informative look at what we know about schizophrenia and what the limitations of our knowledge are. Thoughtfully presented, not dumbed down at all, but also brief enough to read in a day or two. I will definitely check out more from this series. It's a great way to learn all the stuff you have always wondered about a subject without having to tackle some 500 page tome.

Lauren says

I am by no means a doctor of Psychology or anything as such, I am just extremely interested in this topic, and I have to say this book was a very nice way for me to further my knowledge of Schizophrenia as well as spark interest in new topics, such as manic-depressive disorder. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Matt says

Short and concise, this book does a very good job of introducing the challenges schizophrenia poses. It takes the reader through a history of the establishment of schizophrenia as an illness, forms of treatment and what are some of the techniques used to study and improve treatments.

When the book goes through early institutions, and it can seem very dark. Some of the treatments, such as coma therapy are scary. There are quite a few studies addressed, and the conclusions that can be obtained using such studies.

This book also covers many of the pitfalls involved in psychology research. One important fact that the authors address repeatedly is the cause of a problem. If researchers can find a correlation between people who suffer from an ailment, how can that be distinguished from the treatment. This is especially true for schizophrenia, where the authors state that it is unethical to not treat people who suffer from schizophrenia with drugs. So now anytime they look at a common aspect of patients they have to be sure that the drug treatment is not creating that aspect.

I learned a lot from this book. Both about schizophrenia and about psychology research. I can say that my appreciation for psychology research has increased tremendously. It has almost repaired the damage caused by my dumb-ass room-mate who studied quantitative psychology.

Puri Kencana Putri says

It took time for me to read until the end of the book. Yet, the book is one of the foremost readings in 2017.

The book is quite short and concise, but the process to digested all forms of treatments, to define schizophrenia as part of illness, all the medication, techniques that has been used in order to improve the treatments were really consuming my time. Nevertheless, it's all worth to go process as for me, a beginner reader in science department and caregiver should understand about this kind of illness.

The book covers many things that is strongly related to the preliminary establishment of schizophrenia institutions in Europe. Some treatments were in fact dreary; especially when the medical team used coma therapy toward the patients, located them in longterm sanatorium wouldn't change anything. While the authors strongly agree that the drug treatment is one of the optimum ways to improve the schizophrenia conditions.

I personally learned that "the existence of madness reminds us how fragile this certainty is. The idea of madness is frightening because it reminds us that our minds are essentially alone in an uncertain world."

Surely I would like to revisit this book in the future.

Mrigank says

Another excellent vsi. Does justice to the topic. Explains every facet from history to neurophysiology extensively.
