

Can my personality be a disorder?!

Chapter II- Personality Disorders

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A personality refers to a distinctive set of behavior patterns that make up our individuality.

Our personality consists of traits that vary based on the situation.

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Defining Personality

- *Personality disorders* are displayed in a wide range of social and personal contexts...are inflexible and cause significant impairment in functioning.
- People with personality disorders have a great difficulty dealing with other people.
  - They tend to be rigid, inflexible, and unable to respond to changes and demands of life.

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### Defining Personality Disorders

- The DSM IV defines 10 specific personality disorders, based on category. These disorders are different than most of the previously discussed disorders because they are classified as Axis II.
  - The DSM IV divides the personality disorders into 3 groups or clusters: A, B or C

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Cluster A- Odd or Eccentric Disorders:

- Paranoid- suspicious, distrustful, hostile attributions
- Schizoid- interpersonally and emotionally cut-off, constricted, unresponsive (the loner)
- Schizotypal- odd thoughts, feelings, behaviors, experiences, poor interpersonal functioning

Cluster B-Dramatic, Emotional or Erratic Disorders:

- Histrionic- dramatic, attention-seeking, emotionally shallow
- Narcissistic- inflated sense of self-importance, entitled, low empathy, hidden vulnerability
- Antisocial- pattern of behaviors that disregard laws and norms and rights of others
- Borderline- instability in thoughts, feelings, behavior and sense of self

Cluster C- Anxious or Fearful Disorders:

- Obsessive-Compulsive- rigid, controlled, perfectionistic
- Avoidant- fear of negative evaluation and abandonment
- Dependent- submissive, dependent on others for self-esteem, fear of abandonment

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### Prevalence

- Personality disorders are relatively common, found in 0.5% to 2.5% of the general population.
- What are some potential problems with diagnosing this type of disorder?
- The personality disorder forms as the personality itself is developing, making these maladaptive patterns ingrained into the sense of self.
  - Pinpointing the onset is also very difficult

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Cluster A Personality Disorders

- People with *paranoid personality disorder* are excessively mistrusting and suspicious of others without justification.
- They assume that people are out to trick or harm them, and they tend to not confide in others. Even events that have nothing to do with them are seen as personal attacks (Phillips & Gunderson, 2000).
- These people would view the neighbor's dog barking or a flight delay as a deliberate attempt to annoy them.

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Borderline Personality Disorder  
(Cluster B)

- *Borderline Personality Disorder* is characterized by a pervasive pattern of instability of personal relationships, self-image, affects, and control over impulses.
- People with this disorder are highly impulsive and have a fear of abandonment.



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Understanding BPD

- A person with BPD may experience intense bouts of anger, depression, and anxiety that may last only hours, or at most a day.
- BPD is one of the most common personality disorders; it is seen in every culture and affects 2-3% of the general population, mostly affecting young women (Gunderson, 2001).

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### “But, it’s a good pain...”

- People with BPD often engage in suicidal or self-mutilative behaviors:
  - Cutting, burning or punching themselves
  - Self-inflicted cigarette burns
  - Carving initials into their arm
- Self-injurious behaviors, like cutting are sometimes described as “tension-reducing” for those who report feeling empty (Bohus et al., 2000).

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### Self-Injury

- There is a high rate of self-injury without suicide intent, as well as a significant rate of suicide attempts and completed suicide in severe cases.
  - A significant proportion succeed at suicide- 6% (Stone, 1989).

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### Comorbidity

- BPD is often comorbid with many other mood disorders.
  - 24-74% have major depression
  - 4-20% have bipolar disorder
  - 25% of people with bulimia have BPD
  - And up to 67% of people with BPD are also diagnosed with at least one substance use disorder (Dulit, 1993).

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### A link to abuse?

- Studies show that many, but not all individuals with BPD report a history of abuse, neglect, or separation as young children.
  - 40-71% of BPD patients report having been sexually abused.
- Researchers believe that BPD results from a combination of vulnerability to environmental stress as young children and a series of events that trigger the onset of the disorder as young adults.

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### Always Onstage

- *Histrionic Personality Disorder* involves a pervasive pattern of excessive emotionality and attention-seeking.
- People with this disorder are overly dramatic and often seem like they are acting. Often expressing their emotions in an exaggerated fashion.
  - Hugging someone they have just met or crying uncontrollably at a sad movie.
- They also tend to be vain, self-centered, and uncomfortable when they are not in the limelight<sup>14</sup>

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### Is this disorder accurately diagnosed?

- There is a high rate of diagnosis among women, which has raised some questions about the nature of this disorder.
- Research has shown that there is some bias among psychologists and psychiatrists who tend to associate this disorder with women rather than men (Sprock, 2000).

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## “psychopath”

- *Antisocial personality disorder* is a condition in which people show a pervasive disregard for the law and the rights of others.
- People with antisocial personality disorder appear to care for no one but themselves.
  - They may be able to understand the emotions of others, but they don't suffer any shame or guilt about the pain they may be causing.
- People with antisocial personality disorder tend to lie or steal and often fail to fulfill job or parenting responsibilities. The terms are sometimes used to describe a person with antisocial personality disorder.

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Good Bye!!!



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