



Personality Disorders

Definition: When personality traits result in significant distress, social impairment, and/or occupational impairment. There are currently 10 recognized PDs.

Abnormal vs. Disordered?

- Generally not appealing to other people. People with PDs tend to struggle in relationships.
- Usually (but not always) come with personal distress, comorbid with depression and anxiety
- Exception is when PD is ego-syntonic (the person is comfortable with the traits)
- **Self-diagnostic reflex**
 - When people first learn of the disorders, they often suspect that they themselves or someone they know has the disorder
 - A few are right, most are not
 - Case studies will illustrate just how extreme the disorders really are
 - Recommend caution when using labels. They can sometimes be helpful, but more often hurtful

7 Case Studies

- These individuals display the characteristics of the disorders.
- We don't know if they have been diagnosed with the disorders. Cannot rule out the possibility that they are acting (very well).
- As we review them, note how they might rub people the wrong way...
- And yet take note of the personal suffering or emptiness that each feels



10 PDs in 3 Clusters

Cluster A: Bizarre
Paranoid, Schizoid, Schizotypal

Cluster B: Dramatic
Histrionic, Borderline, Narcissistic, Antisocial

Cluster C: Anxious
Avoidant, Dependent, Obsessive-compulsive

#1

Avoidant Personality Disorder

Cluster C

Definition: A pervasive pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation.

Features

1. **Low self-esteem.** Feel socially inept, personally unappealing, and/or inferior
2. **Fear of Rejection.** Preoccupation with, and sensitivity to, criticism or rejection, associated with distorted inference of others' thoughts and impressions.
3. **Avoidance.** Reluctance to pursue goals, take personal risks, or engage in new activities involving interpersonal contact.

Do you think that someone you know has this disorder?

- A. Definitely not
- B. Probably not
- C. Unsure
- D. Maybe
- E. Definitely



prevalence: 2%

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDRQzqPF28k>

#2

Dependent Personality Disorder

Cluster C

Definition: A pervasive and excessive need to be taken care of that leads to submissive and clinging behavior and fears of separation.

Features

1. **Dependence.** Difficulty making simple decisions without advice, needs other to take care of most aspects of their lives,
2. **Submissiveness.** Difficulty expressing disagreement (for fear of disapproval or rejection), goes to excessive lengths to gain approval from others
3. **Neediness.** Difficulty doing things on their own (due to lack in self-confidence), urgently seeks another relationship when one ends, unrealistically worried about being alone.



prevalence: 0.5%

#3

Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder

Cluster C

Definition: A pervasive pattern of preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism, and mental and interpersonal control, at the expense of flexibility, openness, and efficiency.

Features

1. **Perfectionism.** Preoccupied with standards, lists, and schedules to the point that the preoccupation interferes with task completion
2. **Rigid.** Dedicated to work/productivity to the exclusion of friendships and leisure, rigid on matters of morality, ethics, values. Won't delegate tasks unless they are done exactly as requested.
3. **Miser.** Won't spend money (need to hoard it for future catastrophes), won't discard old, broken objects when they have sentimental value



prevalence: 6%

#4

Paranoid Personality Disorder

Cluster A

Definition: A pervasive distrust and suspiciousness of others such that their motives are interpreted as malevolent.

Features

1. **Suspiciousness.** Preoccupied with suspicion, without sufficient basis, that others are exploiting, harming, or deceiving him or her.
2. **Over-reaching Inferences.** Reads hidden demeaning or threatening meanings into benign remarks or events. Perceives attacks on his or her character or reputation that are not apparent to others.
3. **Hostility.** Persistently bears grudges (i.e., is unforgiving of insults, injuries, or slights). Is quick to react angrily or to counterattack



prevalence: 1%

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MhC3wC8k>

This individual seems to have...

A. Paranoid Personality Disorder
 B. Delusional Disorder
 C. Paranoid Schizophrenia
 D. More than 1 of the above

Mildest kind of paranoia. Can still maintain relationships, jobs, etc.

One major delusion only. No other signs of mental illness.

Most severe kind of paranoia. Multiple strange, unfounded delusions and hallucinations. Poor overall functioning.


All of these involve paranoid delusions

#5 **Schizoid Personality Disorder** (think: negative features of Schizophrenia) Cluster A

Definition: A pervasive pattern of detachment from social relationships and a restricted range of expression of emotions in interpersonal settings.

Features

- Flat.** Shows emotional coldness, detachment, or flattened affectivity. Appears indifferent to the praise or criticism of others.
- Solitude.** Neither desires nor enjoys close relationships, including being part of a family. Almost always chooses solitary activities. Has little, if any, interest in having sexual experiences with another person.



prevalence: 4%


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gD7tsuJk>

#6 **Schizotypal Personality Disorder** (think: positive features of Schizophrenia) Cluster A

Definition: A pervasive pattern of social and interpersonal deficits marked by acute discomfort with, and reduced capacity for, close relationships as well as perceptual distortions and eccentricities of behavior.

Features

- Distortions.** Ideas of reference (innocuous events have personal significance), strange beliefs, magical thinking, abnormal perceptual experiences.
- Weirdness.** Strange appearance and behavior
- Anxiety.** Social anxiety stemming from negative judgments about the self, lack of close friends



prevalence: 3%


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=elad0pbms>

#7 **Histrionic Personality Disorder** Cluster B

Definition: A pervasive pattern of excessive emotionality and attention seeking.

Features

- Attention-seeking.** Needs to be the centre of attention, often uses physical appearance and sexuality to draw attention to self, dramatic way of speaking (often lacking in detail), dramatic, theatrical, exaggerated.
- Shallow.** Emotionally shallow. Rapid shifts from one emotion to another.
- Exaggerated sense of relationships.** Thinks relationships are closer than they actually are.



prevalence: 3%

#8

Borderline Personality Disorder

Cluster B

Definition: A pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affect, along with marked impulsivity.

Features

1. **Insecure.** Desperate efforts to avoid abandonment. Paranoia and even dissociation.
2. **Extremes.** Alternating patterns of extreme positive and extreme negative feelings towards relationship partners and in general. Often feels empty. Radically changing sense of self.
3. **Recklessness and Self-Harm.** Self-damaging impulsivity (e.g., sex, spending, binge eating). Suicidal thoughts, threats, and self-mutilation.



prevalence: 1%

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5GyGqPR0>

Can people with BPD be helped?

- A. I wish they could but I'm skeptical
- B. Yes, with medication
- C. Yes, with talk therapy



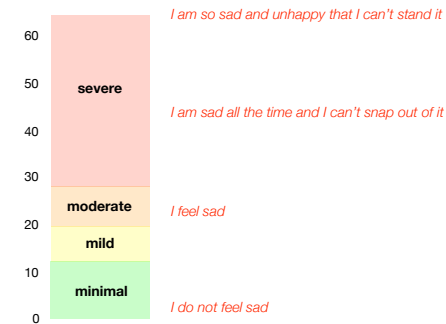
Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

A treatment often used for borderline personality disorder that incorporates both cognitive-behavioral and mindfulness elements.

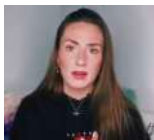
Cognitions: "Dialectical" means thinking in terms of shades of grey (not black/white, good/bad)

Behaviors: Developing skills to manage maladaptive tendencies (e.g., when feeling the need to self-harm, hold an ice cube).

Beck Depression Inventory examples



180 people with BPD



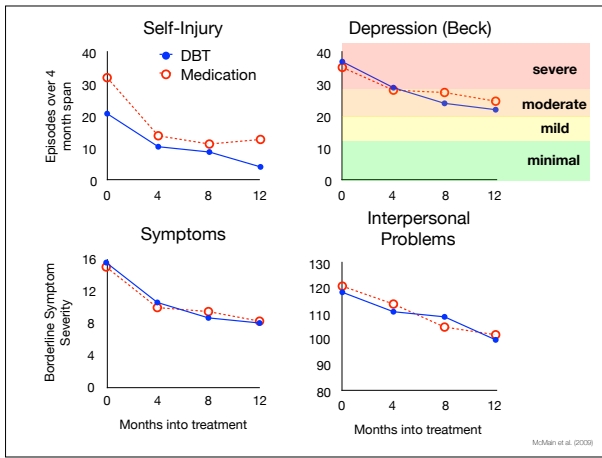
random assignment

medication for 1 year



Dialectical Behavioral Therapy for 1 year

McMan et al. 2008



#9 **Antisocial Personality Disorder** (AKA Psychopathy) Cluster B

Definition: A pervasive pattern of disregard and violation of the rights of others. These behaviors may be aggressive or destructive and may involve breaking laws or rules, deceit or theft.

Features

- Rule-Breaking.** Failure to conform to social norms and laws. Aggressiveness. Irritability. Repeated fights and assaults. Reckless disregard for the safety of others. Failure to plan ahead.
- Deceit.** Constant lying, conning, and manipulating.
- Unapologetic.** Indifference to the feelings of others. No remorse for transgressions.



prevalence: 2%

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVTEk_Yg1Sg8-09s

When do psychopaths experience empathy?


- Never because they can't
- When they choose to
- Usually or always (they harm others in spite of feeling empathy)



To find out: Have psychopaths watch empathy-inducing videos while their brains are scanned

- with no special instructions, or
- after asking them to try to empathize

fMRI



- 18 psychopaths from jail and 26 normal people watched videos in which someone experienced pain and sadness
- fMRI scanners monitored the empathy regions of the brain
- What would have made this especially difficult (logistically)?

OpenEnded iClicker

Empathy Activation in the Brain

Instructions	Psychopaths (Arbitrary Units)	Normal (Arbitrary Units)
None	-0.5	-0.1
Empathize	-0.2	-0.1

Legend

- normal > psychopath
- normal < psychopath

No Special Instructions

Empathy Instructions

Meffert et al. (2013)

an empathy switch

most people

psychopaths

by default
when desired

#10 **Narcissistic Personality Disorder** Cluster B

Definition: A pervasive pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration, and lack of empathy.

Features

1. **Egotistical.** Grandiose sense of self-importance. Exaggerates achievements and talents. Expects to be recognized as superior without actually having earned it. Beliefs that he/she is special. Sense of entitlement (expects especially favourable treatment from others)
2. **Self-centred.** Needs tons of attention and admiration from others. Lacks empathy. Unwilling to recognize the feelings of others.
3. **Fantastical.** Constantly fantasizing about having unlimited power, success, brilliance, beauty, or love.

prevalence: 1%

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5E1a2YmMUA>

If Trump exhibits traits consistent with NPD, and most people do not like people with NPD, then why does Trump remain popular?

discuss

OpenEnded iClicker

