

## Facts

There are ten different types of personality disorders. The most well-known is Borderline Personality Disorder. Personality disorders usually begin when people are teenagers or young adults and remain throughout life.

Personality disorders are chronic, enduring patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that affect a person's ability to function in everyday activities, especially work, family, and social life. There are biological and psychological parts to most personality disorders. The preferred treatment is psychotherapy, although medication may be needed to treat serious symptoms.

The ten personality disorders are currently grouped into three clusters based on similarities, although research is occurring on a dimensional perspective that personality disorders represent maladaptive variants of personality traits that merge into normality and into one another. Cluster A includes the Paranoid, Schizoid, and Schizotypal Personality Disorders. People with these disorders often appear odd or eccentric. Cluster B includes the Antisocial, Borderline, Histrionic, and Narcissistic Personality Disorders. Individuals with these disorders often appear dramatic, emotional or erratic. Cluster C includes the Avoidant, Dependent, and Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorders. People with these disorders often appear anxious or fearful. It is believed that 5.7% have Cluster A disorders, 1.5% have Cluster B disorders, and 6% have Cluster C disorders. It is estimated that about 15% of U.S. adults have at least one personality disorder.

## Signs & Symptoms

Each of the ten personality disorders has its own set of signs and symptoms, but, in general, a person with a personality disorder has a deeply rooted, inflexible pattern of thinking, relating,

and perceiving and has great difficulty dealing with other people. Often a person with a personality disorder has a narrow view of the world, and finds it difficult to participate in social activities. An individual with a personality disorder often sees nothing wrong with his or her behavior.

Personality disorders are most common during times of increased stress and interpersonal difficulties in one's life.

## Causes

The cause of borderline personality disorder is not yet clear, but research suggests that genetics, brain structure and function, and environmental, cultural, and social factors play a role, or may increase the risk for developing borderline personality disorder.

## Treatment

It is important that people with borderline personality disorder receive evidence-based, specialized treatment from an appropriately trained provider. Other types of treatment, or treatment provided by a doctor or therapist who is not appropriately trained, may not benefit the person.

Psychotherapy is the first-line treatment for people with borderline personality disorder. A therapist can provide one-on-one treatment between the therapist and patient, or treatment in a group setting. Therapist-led group sessions may help teach people with borderline personality disorder how to interact with others and how to effectively express themselves.

It is important that people in therapy get along with, and trust their therapist. The very nature of borderline personality disorder can make it difficult for people with the disorder to

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maintain a comfortable and trusting bond with their therapist.

Two examples of psychotherapies used to treat borderline personality disorder include:

- **Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT):** This type of therapy was developed for individuals with borderline personality disorder. DBT uses concepts of mindfulness and acceptance or being aware of and attentive to the current situation and emotional state. DBT also teaches skills that can help:

- Control intense emotions
- Reduce self-destructive behaviors
- Improve relationships

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** This type of therapy can help people with borderline personality disorder identify and change core beliefs and behaviors that underlie inaccurate perceptions of themselves and others, and problems interacting with others. CBT may help reduce a range of mood and anxiety symptoms and reduce the number of suicidal or self-harming behaviors.

### **Helping Someone Else**

If you are a friend or family member of a person with a personality disorder it is important to recognize that people who suffer from these disorders often have noticeable symptoms of them throughout their lives.

One way you can help is to learn as much as possible about the particular disorder. Understanding can help you cope, while obtaining information can help you learn methods to interact with the person in a helpful way. Take things slowly, step by step. The speed of progress is not as important as the direction.

#### *Sources:*

*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 5th Edition (DSM-5)*

*American Psychiatric Association*

*National Alliance on Mental Illness*

*Mental Health America*

### **For more information contact**

Northern Lakes Community Mental Health Authority  
1-800-337-8598  
(231) 922-4850

National Alliance on Mental Illness  
[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org), (800) 950-6264

National Institute of Mental Health  
[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)  
(800) 421-4211 (depression info)  
(888) 826-9438 (anxiety info)  
(301) 443-4513 (other info)

Mental Health America  
[www.nmha.org](http://www.nmha.org)  
(800) 969-6642

The Center for Mental Health Services  
[www.mentalhealth.org/cmhs/](http://www.mentalhealth.org/cmhs/)