



## Personality Disorders

### Psychology 311 Abnormal Psychology

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#### Overview

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- Personality
  - Is a characteristic way of responding
  - Personality traits need to be adaptive

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#### Personality Disorders

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- 10-15% of general population have some disorder
- Are long-standing maladaptive inflexible ways of relating to the environment.
- Usually begin to see problems in early adolescence
  - Individuals have a rigid and narrow way of responding to stressors

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#### Problems

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- Classification of Disorders is difficult
  - Little is known about origins and development
  - Little research is done on personality disorders
  - Disorders are usually not dramatic or incapacitating so people do not seek help.

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#### Major Characteristics

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- Personality styles are ingrained, deeply rooted, and firmly established.
- Most individuals do not raise questions about their habitual ways of functioning

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#### Diagnostic Issues

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- Personality disorders are diagnosed on Axis II of DSM-IV
- Diagnosis can only be made when a person's inflexible, long-lasting behavior pattern causes important social problems or job problems
- Note: Mental Retardation is also diagnosed on Axis II
  - Reason. Both disorders have lifetime or near-lifetime duration and stability
  - Not likely to be periods of improvement or change

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### Comparison of Axis I with Axis II Disorders

- Axis I disorders
  - People usually see their problems are the symptoms of some disorder and seek treatment
- Axis II Disorders
  - People are more likely to say their problems are caused by family or co-workers
  - Thus, they do not need to seek treatment

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### Often Persons have both Axis I and II Problems

- No one knows why
- Tend to see a mix of problems
  - Difficult to determine which problem came first
  - Was a stressor precipitating the disorder?
- Result, makes it difficult to diagnose

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### Reason

- If a person needs 4 of seven characteristics
  - You could have two persons show different sets of symptoms
  - Prototypical approach
    - How reliable is it?

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### Disorders are Presented in Three Groups

- Odd or Eccentric
- Dramatic, Emotional, Erratic
- Anxious and Fearful

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### Odd or Eccentric

- Types
  - Paranoid Personality Disorders
  - Schizoid Personality Disorder
  - Schizotypal Personality Disorder
- Behavior
  - Odd, eccentric, reclusive, suspicious behavior
  - May read hidden meanings in things,
  - Are detached from social relations
  - Are withdrawn, cold, irrational

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### Paranoid Personality Disorders

- Overview
  - Have unwarranted suspicion of others
  - Mistrust others
  - Are hypersensitive
    - Neighbor parks their car on the street just to annoy THEM
  - Person rarely seeks help
  - Cannot take criticism
  - Often are cold, humor less, devious, scheming

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### Must have 4 of following 7 symptoms

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- Perceives attacks from others
- Questions loyalty and trust
- Expects to be exploited
- Reads hidden meanings
- Holds grudges
- Are reluctant to confide in others
- Have recurrent suspicion of infidelity

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### Schizoid Personality Disorder

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#### Overview

- Are reserved
- Socially withdrawn
- Seclusive
- Prefer to be alone in work and play
- Lack capacity for warm, close relationships
- Have poor social skills
- Lack humor
- Are detached from the environment
- Have flat and cold emotional responses
- May have problems at work because of contact required by others
- Are not concerned with relationships with others
- Are poor prospects for therapy

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### Need 4 of 7 Symptoms

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- No desire for relationships
- Always choose solitary activities
- Get pleasure from few activities
- Have little desire for sex
- Are indifferent to praise or criticism
- Have no close friends
- Show emotional coldness

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### Schizotypal Personality Disorder

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- Many researchers consider this disorder to be a precursor to schizophrenia
- Symptoms
  - Have oddities of thinking, perceiving, communicating and behavior
  - Not as extreme as schizophrenia
    - Clinicians will try to rule out hearing voices

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### Some Symptoms

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- Are difficult to understand
  - Use thoughts and words that are common in uncommon ways
  - Express ideas unclearly
- Under stress
  - Thinking deteriorates
  - May appear delusional

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### Dramatic, Emotional, Erratic Behavior Group

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- Not like the first group
- This group seeks attention, are highly noticeable, are very unpredictable
- Disorders
  - Histrionic Personality Disorder
  - Narcissistic Personality Disorder
  - Borderline Personality Disorder
  - Antisocial Personality Disorder

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### Histrionic Personality Disorder

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- Occurs in more women than men
- Overview
  - Are dramatic
    - Have exaggerated emotional displays
  - Are self-centered
  - Want constant attention
  - Cannot focus on questions
  - Gives feelings and expressions, not information
  - Use physical qualities for attention
  - Attempt to be very seductive

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### Etiology

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- Possibly begins in childhood
- Co morbid with Borderline Disorders

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### Need 5 of 8 for Diagnosis

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- Have shallow emotional expression
- Over concern with physical appearance
- Inappropriate sexual seduction
- Discomfort when not the center of attention
- Intolerance for situations that do not work out
- Relations are more intimate than actually are
- Exaggerated emotional responses

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### Narcissistic Personality Disorder

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- Developed from classical Greek Myth
- Narcissus falls in love with his reflection
  - Could not grasp his image
  - Dies in anguish

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### Overview

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- Have a grandiose view of themselves and their abilities
- Require constant attention
- Desire/seek excessive admiration
- Have excessive self-concern
- Have inflated sense of self
- No empathy for others feelings
- Commonly occurs with Borderline Disorders

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### Need 5 or More

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- Have a grandiose view of one's importance
- Preoccupation with one's success, brilliance, beauty
- Extreme need for admiration
- Have a strong sense of self-entitlement
- Exploit others
- Envy others

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### Borderline Disorders

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- Key Features
  - Impulsivity or instable relations and moody
  - Are argumentative, irritable
  - Sarcastic, quick to take offense
  - Have gambling, spending, sex, substance abuse, and eating sprees
  - Not clear of self, loyalties, values career
  - Cannot bear to be alone
  - Have a fear of isolation
  - Depression

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### Overall

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- Are intense, clinging, dependent
- Are angry at others if they get desired attention
- Manipulate others by
  - physical symptoms
  - Suicide
  - Mutilation

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### Biological Etiology

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- Some data suggest impaired frontal lobe damage
  - Is thought to play a role in impulsive behavior
- Some believe genetic vulnerabilities

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### Antisocial Personality Disorder

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- Identified with crime, violence, delinquency after age 15
- Diagnosis is not given until age 18
- 60% of children with conduct problems are antisocial
- Higher rates in men
- More common in low socioeconomic status
- Is common with substance abuse disorders too
- Typically see this disorder in people who have committed crimes.

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### Some symptoms

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- Irresponsible
- Physically aggressive
- Law Breaking
- Irritable
- Default on loans
- Reckless
- Impulsive

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### Key Symptom

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- Lack of sympathy for victims
- Have no guilt
- No remorse

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### Etiology

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- Genetic Predisposition?
  - Encourages parent to give
    - More discipline
    - Be harsh
    - Lack warmth
  - Result
    - Antisocial blooms
- Etiology
  - Can be seen as environmental, physical, genetic, temperament

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### Therapy

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- Not usually successful
  - Lack of empathy and social responsibilities are detriments in building rapport
- Current focus
  - Prevention for at-risk children

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### Etiology

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- Begins in adolescence or early adulthood
- Occurs mostly in women
- Co morbidity with
  - substance abuse
  - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
  - Eating Disorders
- Treatment is not very successful
  - Therapist is harping

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### Anxious or Fearful Behavior Group

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- Always nervous or dependent on others
- Disorders
  - Avoidant Personality Disorder
  - Dependent Personality Disorder

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### Avoidant Personality Disorder

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- Overview and symptoms
  - Have low self esteem
  - Have a fear of negative evaluations
  - Have a fear of rejection
  - Are reluctant to enter into relationships
    - Limit activities to avoid new people and situations
    - Are scared of social situations
  - Afraid to try anything new
  - Unwilling to get involved unless they are reassured they will be liked

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### Others

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- Has co morbidity with dependent personality disorders and borderline disorder
- To cope, individuals constantly scan the environment looking for signs to interpret
- Lives are controlled by a fear of looking foolish or being embarrassed
- Usually individuals have poorer social skills than those with social phobias

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### Dependent Personality Disorders

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- Individuals view themselves as weak and others as strong
- Have a strong need to be taken care of
- Allow others to make decisions for them
- Lack confidence
- Fear separation
  - Are submissive and clinging
- Try to make themselves very pleasing

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### Others

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- Found more in Japan and India
  - More dependent cultures
- Found more in women than men
- Co morbidity with all other disorders
  
- Therapy best if it includes assertiveness training

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### Conclusions

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- Many types of disorders
- Often are not considered disorders by the person
- Treatment is often limited

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