

PERSONALITY DISORDERS

PERSONALITY DISORDERS

A **Personality Disorder** is identified by a pervasive pattern of experience and behavior that is abnormal with respect to any two of the following: thinking, mood, personal relations, and the control of impulses.

- ⦿ They view their own behaviour to be perfectly normal, but it is not.
- ⦿ It is difficult for sufferers to relate to others and hold a job.
- ⦿ Individuals may lie, break laws, be loners or be highly suspicious and mistrustful.

Facts:

- Many individuals with **personality disorders** do not believe that they have a problem.
- **10 to 15 percent of the population** are affected by personality disorders.
- **Usually develop in childhood or adolescence** and become apparent by adulthood.
- Personality disorders tend to **occur frequently with other illnesses** (eg., substance use disorders, mood disorders, anxiety disorders).

- ① The character of every person is shown through his or her personality, by the way an individual **thinks, feels, and behaves**.
- ① When the behaviour is **inflexible, maladaptive, and antisocial**, then that individual is diagnosed with a personality disorder.
- ① Most personality disorders begin as problems in **personal development and character**, which peak during adolescence and then are defined as personality disorders

- ⦿ Personality disorders are not illnesses in a strict sense, as **they do not disrupt emotional, intellectual, or perceptual functioning.**
- ⦿ However, those with personality disorders suffer **a life that is not positive, proactive, or fulfilling.**
- ⦿ Not surprisingly, personality disorders are also associated with **failures to reach potential.**

- Currently, there are 10 distinct personality disorders identified in the DSM-V, broken down into three clusters:

1.) Dramatic, Emotional, Erratic

- Antisocial
- Borderline
- Histrionic
- Narcissistic

2) Anxious, Fearful

- ⦿ Avoidant
- ⦿ Dependent
- ⦿ Obsessive-Compulsive (similar to obsessive-compulsive anxiety disorder)

3.) Odd, Eccentric

- ⦿ Paranoid
- ⦿ Schizoid
- ⦿ Schizotypal

- According to Dr. Sam Vaknin, author of *Malignant Self-Love: Narcissism Revisited*, individuals with personality disorders have many things in common:

- ◉ **Self-centeredness** that manifests itself through a me-first, self-preoccupied attitude
- ◉ **Lack of individual accountability** that results in a victim mentality and blaming others, society, and the universe for their problems.
- ◉ **Lack of perspective-taking and empathy**
- ◉ **Manipulative and exploitive behavior**
- ◉ **Unhappiness**, suffering from depression and other mood and anxiety disorders
- ◉ **Vulnerability to other mental disorders**, such as obsessive-compulsive tendencies and panic attacks
- ◉ Distorted or superficial understanding of self and others' perceptions, being **unable to see his or her objectionable, unacceptable, disagreeable, or self-destructive behaviours** or the issues that may have contributed to the personality disorder
- ◉ **Socially maladaptive**, changing the rules of the game, introducing new variables, or otherwise **influencing the external world to conform to their own needs.**
- ◉ No hallucinations, delusions, or thought disorders (except for the brief psychotic episodes of Borderline Personality Disorder)

PERSONALITY DISORDERS

Psychopaths

- ◎ Individuals with a *psychopathic* personality disorder show **a total disregard for the rights and well-being of others**. They do not feel remorse or guilt. Psychopathic personalities are thought to be a result of both nature and nurture.

PERSONALITY DISORDERS

Antisocial Personality Disorder

- disorder in which the person (usually male) **exhibits a lack of conscience for wrongdoing**, even toward friends and family members
- may be aggressive and ruthless or a clever con artist

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

- ⦿ Individuals with this personality disorder have an **excessive sense of how important they are.**
- ⦿ They **demand and expect to be admired and praised** by others and are **limited in their capacity to appreciate others' perspectives.**
- ⦿ A pervasive pattern of **grandiosity** (in fantasy or behaviour), **need for admiration, and lack of empathy**, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

indicated by five (or more) of the following:

- ① 1.) has a **grandiose sense of self-importance** (eg., exaggerates achievements and talents, expects to be recognized as superior without commensurate achievements)
- ② 2.) is **preoccupied with fantasies** of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love
- ③ 3.) **believes that he or she is “special” and unique** and can only be understood by, or should associate with, other special or high-status people (or institutions)
- ④ 4.) **requires excessive admiration**
- ⑤ 5.) **has a sense of entitlement** (eg., unreasonable expectations of especially favourable treatment or automatic compliance with his or her expectations)
- ⑥ 6.) **is interpersonally exploitative** (eg., takes advantage of others to achieve his or her own ends)
- ⑦ 7.) **lacks empathy**: is unwilling to recognize or identify with the feeling and needs of others
- ⑧ 8.) **is often envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her**
- ⑨ 9.) **shows arrogant, haughty behaviours or attitudes**

Sound familiar?



Treatment

- ◎ Dr. David B. Adams of Atlanta Medical Psychology says that **therapists have the most difficulties with those suffering from personality disorders.** “They are difficult to please, block effective communication, avoid development of a trusting relationship, and cannot be relied upon for accurate history regarding problems or how problems arose.”

Treatment

- Most treatments fall under two general categories, **psychosocial** (therapy, CBT, etc.) and **pharmacological** (medication.) Moreover, the combination of the two - known as **multimodal therapy** – can sometimes be even more effective than each individually.

Treatment

- when individuals choose to be in control of their lives and are committed to changing their lives, healing is possible. Therapy and medications can help, but **it is the individual's decision to take accountability for his or her own life that makes the difference.**

Treatment

- To heal, **individuals must first have the desire to change** in order to break through that enduring pattern of a personality disorder. Individuals need to wait to gain insight into and face their inner experience and behaviour. (These issues may concern severe or repeated trauma during childhood, such as abuse.)
- This involves **changing their thinking**--about themselves, their relationships, and the world.
- This also involves **changing their behaviour**, for that which is not acted upon is not learned.
- Then, with a support system made up of therapy, self-help groups, friends, family, and medication, they can free themselves from their imprisoned life