

Borderline personality disorder

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One point six percent of adults in America are diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder in any given year (“The Numbers Count...”). Borderline Personality Disorder can also be referred to as Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder, which is exactly what people with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) are.

Psychologists classify BPD as a disorder in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). “Borderline Personality Disorder is a deeply ingrained and enduring behaviour pattern, manifesting as an inflexible response to a broad range of personal and social situations” (Long). Borderline Personality Disorder is a personality disorder that causes people to act impulsively, unpredictably, and frantically, and is often misdiagnosed as Bipolar Disorder. A personality disorder is a type of mental disorder in which you have a rigid and unhealthy pattern of thinking, functioning, and behaving (Mayo Clinic Staff). Personality disorders are grouped into “clusters”.

The three clusters are, “Cluster A (the “odd, eccentric” cluster); Cluster B (the “dramatic, emotional, erratic” cluster); and Cluster C (the “anxious, fearful” cluster)” (Hoermann, Zupanick, and Dombeck). BPD is classified in Cluster B. Personality disorders have negative effects on relationships. The symptoms of various personality disorders are inflexible and deeply ingrained. They often result in extreme thoughts, impulsive behavior, and other behavioral issues.

These disorders can cause distress and other mental problems such as depression, bipolar, and suicidal thoughts or actions. “Emotionally unstable

[borderline] personality disorder is characterized by a definite tendency to act impulsively and without consideration of the consequences; the mood is unpredictable and capricious.” (Long). People with BPD are extremely impulsive with self-damaging results. They are constantly worried about being abandoned, whether the fear is real or imagined, and try to avoid it at all costs.

Chronic feelings of emptiness and suicidal tendencies are common and serious. Relationships with others and themselves suffer greatly and because of the lack of close relationships, symptoms often worsen. “ Disorder is only diagnosed if: (1) it begins no later than early adulthood, (2) these behaviors occur at home, work, and in the community, and (3) these behaviors lead to clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.” (Long). Intense anger and irritability are common.

People with BPD have problems with substance abuse, sexual activity, and reckless driving or spending. Their unstable self-image causes low self-esteem and can result in eating disorders, self-harm, depression, or anxiety. More often than not, people with BPD are misdiagnosed with Bipolar Disorder. Although similar in behavior, there are also large differences between the two. Kregner defines Bipolar: Bipolar disorder causes dramatic mood swings, from overly “ high” and/or irritable to sad and hopeless, and then back again, often with periods of normal mood in between.

Severe changes in energy and behavior go along with these changes in mood. The periods of highs and lows are called episodes of mania and

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depression. Bipolar is also an anxiety disorder, not a personality disorder. Some people with BPD show symptoms of bipolar and are treated with medication to lessen the highs and lows experienced with bipolar. Getting mood stabilizing medication is often beneficial for people with BPD, but therapy is often needed to help control the symptoms not affected by medication.

If psychiatrists do not recognize BPD early on and start getting treatments for the patient, symptoms may worsen and become untreatable. Many Americans struggle with Borderline Personality disorder every year. Research and development of personality disorders has made it easier to diagnose and treat. Many who are diagnosed early on and seek proper help, starting with themselves, can often learn how to control their symptoms. People with Borderline Personality Disorder are often mistaken for having Bipolar Disorder and suffer from impulsive, and often dangerous, actions, depression and suicidal thoughts, but can live normal, productive lives if properly treated.

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