



Mental Health Association of Northern Kentucky

A LEADER IN PROVIDING ADVOCACY, EDUCATION, AND SERVICES THAT PROMOTE MENTAL WELLNESS

EDUCATION AND SCREENING OUTREACH PARTNER FOR THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

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Summary of Personality Disorders

Personality disorders are deeply ingrained, inflexible, maladaptive patterns of relating, perceiving, and thinking that are of sufficient severity to cause either impairment in functioning or psychological distress. General diagnostic criteria include :

- A. An enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual's culture. This pattern is manifested in two or more of the following areas :
 - (1) *Cognition* - ways of perceiving and interpreting self, other people, & events
 - (2) *Affect* - the range, intensity, changeability and appropriateness of emotional responses
 - (3) *Interpersonal functioning*
 - (4) *Impulse control*
- B. The enduring pattern is inflexible and pervasive across a broad range of personal and social situations.
- C. The enduring pattern leads to clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.
- D. The pattern is stable, of long duration and its onset can be traced back at least to adolescence or early adulthood.
- E. The enduring pattern is not better accounted for as a manifestation or consequence of another mental health disorder.
- F. The enduring pattern is not due to direct physiological effects of substance (drug abuse or medication) or a general medical condition (head trauma).

Primary Personality Disorders and their Characteristics

Antisocial : pattern of disregard for and violation of the rights of others, indicated by three or more of the following - failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors (continually breaking the law) ; deceitfulness (repeated lying, use of aliases or conning others for personal gain) ; impulsivity or failure to plan ahead ; irritability & aggressiveness (repeated physical fights or assaults) ; reckless disregard for safety of self or others ; consistent irresponsibility (repeated failure to sustain consistent work or honor financial obligations) ; lack of remorse (indifferent to or rationalizing having mistreated someone).

Avoidant : pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation as indicated by four or more of the following - avoids occupational activities that involve

significant interpersonal contact because of fears of criticism ; is unwilling to get involved with people unless they are certain they will be liked ; shows restraint within intimate relationships due to fear of being ridiculed or shamed ; preoccupied with being criticized or rejected in social situations ; inhibited in new social situations because of feelings of inadequacy ; views self as socially unskilled, personally unappealing or inferior ; unusually reluctant to take personal risks or to engage in new activities due to fear of embarrassment.

Borderline : pattern of instability with interpersonal relationships, self-image & affect as well as marked impulsivity, indicated by five or more of the following - frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment ; unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation (seeing people as “all good” or “all bad”) ; identity disturbance (markedly & persistent unstable self-image or sense of self) ; impulsivity in at least two areas that are self-damaging (spending, substance abuse, reckless driving, binge eating) ; unstable moods due to extreme reactivity (intense episodic irritability, depression, anxiety) ; chronic feelings of emptiness ; inappropriate intense anger / difficulty controlling anger.

Dependent : a pervasive and excessive need to be taken care of that leads to submissive and clinging behavior and fears of separation as indicated by five or more of the following - difficulty making everyday decisions without an excessive amount of advice & reassurance ; needs others to assume responsibility for most major areas of their lives ; has difficulty expressing disagreement with others because of fear of loss of support or approval ; difficulty initiating projects or doing things on their own (because of lack of self confidence in judgment or abilities rather than a lack of motivation) ; goes to excessive lengths to obtain nurturance and support from others to the point of volunteering to do things that are unpleasant ; feels uncomfortable or helpless when alone because of exaggerated fears of being unable to care for themselves ; urgently seeks another relationship as a source of care & support when a close relationship ends ; is unrealistically preoccupied with fears of being left to take care of themselves.

Histrionic : pattern of excessive emotionality and attention seeking, indicated by five or more of the following - uncomfortable in situations in which they are not the center of attention ; interactions with others is often characterized by inappropriate seductive or provocative behavior ; displays rapidly shifting and shallow expression of emotions ; consistently uses physical appearance to draw attention to self ; style of speech that is excessively impressionistic and lacking in detail ; shows self-dramatization / exaggerated expression of emotion ; easily influenced by others or circumstances ; considers relationships to be more intimate than they actually are.

Narcissistic : pattern of grandiosity (in fantasy or behavior), need for admiration & has a lack of empathy indicated by five or more of the following - grandiose sense of self-importance ; preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, etc. ; believes that he or she is special and unique and can only be understood by or associate with other special high-status people ; requires excessive admiration ; has unreasonable expectations of especially favorable treatment ; takes advantage of others in order to get their needs met ; often envious of others or believes others are envious of them ; shows arrogant behaviors or attitudes.

Obsessive - Compulsive : pattern of preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism and mental and interpersonal control at the expense of flexibility, openness, and efficiency as indicated by four or more of the following - preoccupied with details, rules, lists, order, organization or schedules to the extent that the major point of the activity is lost ; shows perfectionism that interferes with task completion ; excessively devoted to work and productivity to the exclusion of leisure activities and friendships ; over-conscientious, scrupulous and inflexible about matters of morality, ethics or values ; is unable to discard

worn-out or worthless objects even when they have no sentimental value ; reluctant to delegate tasks or to work with others unless they submit to exactly their way of doing things ; adopts a miserly spending style toward both self and others (money is viewed as something to be hoarded for future catastrophes) ; shows rigidity and stubbornness.

Paranoid : serious distrust and suspicious of others such that they interpret others' motives as malicious, indicated by four or more of the following - may suspect that others are exploiting, harming or deceiving them ; preoccupied with doubts about the loyalty of friends or family ; reluctant to confide in others because of fear that the information may be used against them ; reads hidden demeaning or threatening meanings into remarks or events ; persistently bears grudges ; perceives attacks on their character / reputation and quickly react in anger or counterattack ; frequently suspicious about the fidelity of a spouse or partner.

Schizoid : pattern of detachment from social relationships & a restricted range of expression of emotions in interpersonal settings, indicated by four or more of the following - may not desire or enjoy close relationships (including being part of a family) ; almost always choose solitary activities ; takes pleasure in few, if any, activities ; lacks close friends other than first-degree relatives ; appears indifferent to the praise or criticism of others or shows emotional coldness, detachment.

Information compiled from diagnostic criteria in the DSM IV ; Diagnostic & Statistical Manual - Fourth Edition, published in 1994 by the American Psychiatric Association. Additional information sheets are available from the Mental Health Association of N. KY on the following personality disorders : Antisocial, Borderline, Histrionic, Dependent, Obsessive-Compulsive & Narcissistic.