Chapter Twelve: Personality Disorders

PSY 440: Abnormal Psychology
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Personality Disorders

Personality Disorder

- Excessively rigid patterns of behavior or ways of relating to others
- Prevents people from adjusting to external demands
- Beginnings are present in childhood
Personality Disorders

- Three clusters:
  - Cluster A: People who are perceived as odd or eccentric
  - Cluster B: People whose behavior is overly dramatic, emotional, and erratic
  - Cluster C: People who appear fearful or anxious
Personality Disorders Characterized by Odd or Eccentric Behavior

Paranoid Personality Disorder

- Diagnostic Criteria
  - Pervasive suspiciousness
  - Excessive mistrust of others
  - No delusional thinking

- Associated Features
  - Overly sensitive to criticism
  - Easily angered
Personality Disorders Characterized by Odd or Eccentric Behavior

- Hold grudges
- Unlikely to confide in others
- Question sincerity and trustfulness of others
- Suspect infidelity
- Hypervigilent
- Deny blame for misdeeds
- Argumentative
- Litigious
- Perceived as aloof, cold, scheming, devious, and humorless
Personality Disorders Characterized by Odd or Eccentric Behavior

- **Prevalence rate**
  - 0.5-1%

- **Schizoid Personality Disorder**
  - **Diagnostic Criteria**
    - Social isolation
    - Lacks interest in social relationships
    - Emotions seem blunted or shallow

- **Associated features**
  - Indifferent to criticism or praise
Personality Disorders Characterized by Odd or Eccentric Behavior

- Wrapped up in abstract ideas
  - Usually recognized by early adulthood

Schizotypal Personality Disorder

- Diagnostic Criteria
  - Difficulties forming close relationships
  - Behavior, mannerisms and thought patterns are odd, but not odd enough to warrant a diagnosis of schizophrenia
  - Wider range of behaviors, beliefs, and preoccupations than Schizoid PD
Personality Disorders Characterized by Odd or Eccentric Behavior

- **Associated Features**
  - Anxious in social settings
- **Usually evident by early adulthood**
- **Prevalence rate**
- **Etiology**
  - genetic
Personality Disorders Characterized by Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior

Antisocial Personality Disorder

- Diagnostic Criteria
  - A pattern of irresponsible and antisocial behavior in which the rights of others or major social norms are violated
  - Must be 18 years old and have been diagnosed with Conduct Disorder before the age of 15
  - Aggressive and impulsive behaviors
Personality Disorders Characterized by Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior

- Criminal behavior
- Lack of emotional commitment

Associated Features
- Impulsivity
- Lack of guilt/remorse
- Superficial charm
- Egocentricity
- Manipulative
- Callousness toward others
Personality Disorders Characterized by Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior

- Failure to conform
- Irresponsible
- Aimlessness and lack of long-term goals
- Substance abuse
- Disregard for the truth
- Interpret others’ behaviors as more threatening than they are

- Two components:
  - Personality
  - Behavior
Personality Disorders Characterized by Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior

- Prevalence
- APD and criminal behavior
- Etiology
  - Learning theories
    - Ullman & Krasner
    - Bandura
  - Family Perspectives
  - Genetic
Personality Disorders Characterized by Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior

◆ Borderline Personality Disorder

- **Diagnostic Criteria**
  - Pervasive pattern of instability of relationships, self-image, and mood, and a lack of control over impulses
  - Uncertain about personal identities
  - Nagging feeling of boredom and emptiness
  - Cannot tolerate being alone
Personality Disorders Characterized by Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior

- **Instability of moods**

  - Associated Features
    - Impulsive
    - Self-mutilation
    - Suicide attempts
    - Trouble familial relationships
    - View relationships as problematic
    - Difficult to work with in psychotherapy

- **Prevalence Rate**
Personality Disorders Characterized by Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior

- **Etiology**
  - Psychodynamic Perspective
    - Otto Kernberg
  - Family Perspective
  - Genetic

- **Histrionic Personality Disorder**
  - **Diagnostic Criteria**
    - Excessive emotionality and an overwhelming need to be the center of attention
Personality Disorders Characterized by Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior

- Tendency to be dramatic and emotional

**Associated Features**
- Demand that others meet their need for attention
- Self-centered and intolerant
- Grow restless with routine and crave novelty and stimulation
- Flirtatious and seductive
- Use physical appearance as a means of drawing attention to themselves
Personality Disorders Characterized by Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior

- Lack in self-esteem
  - Prevalence Rate
  - Etiology
    - Learning Perspectives
      - Theodore Millon

◆ Narcissistic Personality Disorder
  - Diagnostic Features
    - Inflated or grandiose sense of self and extreme need for admiration
Personality Disorders Characterized by Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior

- Enjoy basking in the light of adulation

**Associated Features**

- Self-absorbed
- Lack empathy
- Preoccupied with fantasies of success and power, ideal love, or recognition
- Gravitate to careers where they can be the center of attention
- Envious of those who have greater success
Personality Disorders Characterized by Dramatic, Emotional, or Erratic Behavior

- Insatiable ambition
- Strained interpersonal relationships

- Prevalence Rate
- Etiology
  - Psychodynamic Perspective
    - Hans Kohut
Personality Disorders Characterized by Anxious or Fearful Behaviors

Avoidant Personality Disorder

- Diagnostic Criteria
  - Terrified of rejection and criticism
  - Unwilling to enter into a relationship unless there are strong reassurances of acceptance
  - Avoid group occupational or recreational activities
  - Prefer to spend time alone
Personality Disorders Characterized by Anxious or Fearful Behaviors

- Have an interest in social relationships but are paralyzed

  - Associated Features
    - Social isolation
    - Fear public embarrassment
    - Stay with usual routines

  - Prevalence Rate
Dependant Personality Disorder

- **Diagnostic Criteria**
  - Excessive need to be taken care of by others
  - Overly submissive
  - Extremely fearful of separation

- **Associated Features**
  - Find it difficult to do things on their own
  - Very reliant on others for support and guidance
Personality Disorders Characterized by Anxious or Fearful Behaviors

- Avoid positions of responsibility
- Overly sensitive to criticism
- Preoccupied with fears of rejection and abandonment
- Higher rate of “oral” behaviors

- Prevalence Rate
- Comorbid Disorders
  - Psychological
  - Physical
Personality Disorders Characterized by Anxious or Fearful Behaviors

- **Etiology**
  - Psychodynamic
  - Learning
  - Family

**Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder**

- **Diagnostic Criteria**
  - Excessive degree of orderliness, perfectionism, and rigidity
Personality Disorders Characterized by Anxious or Fearful Behaviors

- Difficulty coping with ambiguity
- Difficulty expressing feeling
- Meticulousness in work habits
- No obsessions or compulsions

- Associated Features
  - Cannot complete things in a timely fashion
  - Focus on details rather than wholes
  - Impaired social relationships
Personality Disorders Characterized by Anxious or Fearful Behaviors

- Do not participate in social or leisure activities
- Stingy with money
- Difficulties making decisions
- Overly rigid in terms of morality

- Prevalence Rate
- Etiology
  - Learning
    - Theodore Millon
Problems with the Classification of Personality Disorders

- Undetermined reliability and validity
- Problems distinguishing between Axis I and Axis II disorders
- Overlap among disorders
- Problems distinguishing between normal and abnormal behavior
Problems with the Classification of Personality Disorders

- Sexist bias
- Confusing labels with explanations
Treatment

- **Personality Disorders are difficult to treat**

- **Psychodynamic Approaches**
  - Help people become more aware of the root of the disorder and deal adaptively with the problem
  - Some success
Treatment

**Behavioral Approach**

- Focus on changing clients’ behaviors, not personality structures
- CBT has been successful
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy also is successful at treating BPD
  - CBT and supportive therapy combined
Treatment

- Biological Approaches
  - Not successful
References