

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**
- ◆ **Hypervigilant**
- ◆ **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**
- ◆ **Irresponsibility**
- ◆ **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**

Personality Disorders Characterized by Anxious or Fearful Behaviors

◆ 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

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