

In mental health, the word 'personality' refers to the collection of characteristics or traits that we have developed as we have grown up and which make each of us an individual. These include the ways that we think, behave and feel.

## Types of Personality Disorder

Cluster A

### 'Odd or Eccentric'

- Paranoia eg. being suspicious and feeling easily rejected
- Schizoid eg. disliking contact with other people
- Schizotypal eg. difficulties with thinking/ lack of emotion

Cluster B

### 'Borderline or Emotionally Unstable'

- Antisocial or dissocial eg. easily getting frustrated or tending to be aggressive
- Borderline, or Emotionally Unstable eg. impulsive or finding it hard to control emotions
- Histrionic eg. over-dramatising events
- Narcissistic eg. having a strong sense of self-importance or taking advantage of other people

Cluster C

### 'Anxious and Fearful'

- Obsessive-Compulsive eg. worrying and doubting a lot, sticking to routines
- Dependent eg. relying on others to make decisions

b  
e  
think  
a  
v  
feel

People with a Personality Disorder may find it difficult to:

- make or keep close relationships
- get on with people at work
- get on with friends and family
- keep out of trouble
- control your feelings or behaviour
- listen to other people

... which can make the person feel unhappy, distressed and/or upset or harm other people.



Recent research makes it clear that mental health services **can**, and **should** help people with personality disorders.

How many people have a Personality Disorder?

**1 in 20**

UK study in 2006 suggested that, at any given time, about 1 in 20 people will have a personality disorder.

## Causes of a Personality Disorder

### 1. Upbringing

Sometimes, but not always, people with personality disorder have experienced:

- physical or sexual abuse in childhood
- violence in the family
- parents who drink too much

### 2. Early problems

Severe aggression, disobedience, and repeated temper tantrums in childhood.

### 3. Brain problems

Some people with antisocial personality disorder have very slight differences in the structure of their brains, and in the way some chemicals work in their brains. However, there is no brain scan or blood test that can diagnose a personality disorder. It can also be caused by an acquired brain injury (including: stroke, meningitis, other traumas)

### 4. Triggers

- using a lot of drugs or alcohol
- problems getting on with family or partner
- money problems
- anxiety, depression or other mental health problems
- stressful situations
- loss, such as death of a loved one
- important events

# Mental Health: Personality Disorder

## Treatment

### 1. Psychological: talking treatments or therapies

- Mentalisation Based Therapy
- Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy
- Schema Focused Therapy
- Transference Focused Therapy
- Dynamic Psychotherapy
- Treatment in a community
- Cognitive Analytical Therapy

### 2. Physical Medication

- Antipsychotic drugs - can reduce the suspiciousness of the three Cluster A personality disorders
- Antidepressants - can help with the mood and emotional difficulties that people with Cluster B personality disorders
- Mood stabilisers
- Sedatives

Prescribing medication for Personality Disorders is not advised by the National Institute for Care and Health Excellence.



There are **8** main types of psychological treatment

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