

ARC Young Adult Mental Health Information Series

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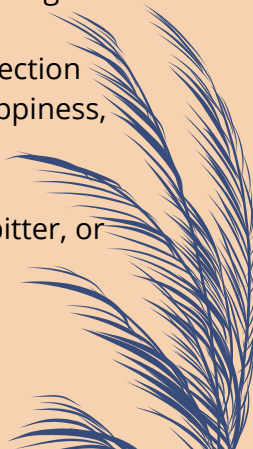
Borderline Personality Disorder

Borderline personality disorder is a mental health disorder that impacts the way you think and feel about yourself and others, causing problems functioning in everyday life. It includes self-image issues, difficulty managing emotions and behaviour, an intense fear of abandonment and difficulty tolerating being alone. Presentation can vary since a person needs to display 5 out of the 9 symptoms to receive a diagnosis. Borderline personality disorder usually begins by early adulthood. BPD affects around 1.6 % of people with about 75% of people diagnosed being female or assigned female at birth.



Symptoms

- An intense fear of abandonment, even going to extreme measures to avoid real or imagined separation or rejection.
- A pattern of unstable intense relationships, such as idealizing someone one moment and then suddenly believing the person doesn't care enough or is cruel.
- Rapid changes in self-identity and self-image that include shifting goals and values, and seeing yourself as bad or as if you don't exist at all.
- Periods of stress-related paranoia and loss of contact with reality, lasting from a few minutes to a few hours.
- Impulsive and risky behaviour, such as gambling, reckless driving, unsafe sex, spending sprees, binge eating or drug abuse, or sabotaging success by suddenly quitting a good job or ending a positive relationship.
- Suicidal threats or behaviour or self-injury, often in response to fear of separation or rejection
- Wide mood swings lasting from a few hours to a few days, which can include intense happiness, irritability, shame or anxiety.
- Ongoing feelings of emptiness.
- Inappropriate, intense anger, such as frequently losing your temper, being sarcastic or bitter, or having physical fights.





Causes

- Stressful childhood: many people with the disorder report being sexually or physically abused or neglected during childhood. Some people have lost or were separated from a parent or close caregiver when they were young or had parents or caregivers with substance misuse or other mental health issues. Others have been exposed to hostile conflict and unstable family relationships.
- Genetics: some studies of twins and families suggest that personality disorders may be inherited or strongly associated with other mental health disorders among family members.
- Brain abnormalities: some research has shown changes in certain areas of the brain involved in emotion regulation, impulsivity and aggression. In addition, certain brain chemicals that help regulate mood, such as serotonin, may not function properly.

Treatment

Specialized psychosocial treatment approaches are chosen to fit the goals of the client and the skills base of the clinician. These may include:

- dialectical behavioural therapy which uses concepts of mindfulness or awareness of one's present situation and emotional state. DBT also teaches skills to help people manage intense emotions, reduce self-destructive behaviours, and improve relationships.
- cognitive-behavioural therapy which may help people reduce mood swings and anxiety symptoms and may reduce the number of self-harming or suicidal behaviours.

Though there is no specific medication for BPD, medication may be prescribed to reduce the impact of specific symptoms. Though medication can reduce the severity of symptoms, it does not cure BPD and is not appropriate for everyone with this diagnosis.

Resources available

Aire Ouverte for youth 12-25 years of age. 5811 Taschereau Blvd., local 30, Brossard, QC J4Z 1A5
Drop-in services: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 1:00-8:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. By appointment from Monday to Friday. (450) 445-4474

BPD clinic at the Montreal Universite Centre Hospitalier – <https://muhc.ca/mental-health/page/borderline-personality-disorder>

AMI Quebec – Telephone: (514) 486-1448, www.amiquebec.org

Psychosocial support available at your local CLSC and through your primary care physician.

CLSC St-Hubert (450) 443-7400

CLSC Brossard (450) 445-4452

CLSC St-Jean-sur-Richelieu (450) 358-2572

CLSC Richelieu (450) 658-7561

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