Five of the Most Common Personality Disorders

Written by AZFoothills.com
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Mental health is one of the most important aspects of overall health and wellbeing. While mental health issues may not be as visible as physical injuries, mental health is just as important, if not more important, than physical health. Just like how physical health can be subject to a large variety of illnesses and injuries, [mental health](#) can also suffer due to a wide range of conditions. These can range in severity and presentation, but all mental health issues should be taken extremely seriously and treated by a mental health professional.

One of the most severe mental health issues a person can have is known as a personality disorder. Personality disorders are generally categorized as long-term patterns of behavior that deviate from the social norm. However, personality disorders are not the same as unique personality traits or quirks. Rather, personality disorders need to actively inhibit a person's ability to live an ordinary and happy life. Personality disorders usually affect either the way a person thinks of themselves and others, emotional regulation, empathy, or self-control.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5) recognizes ten distinct personality disorders, each with its own characteristics. These disorders, however, can be broadly categorized into three clusters: paranoid personality disorders, impulsive personality disorders, and anxious personality disorders. Each cluster manifests a different set of mental health issues that can ultimately detract from a person's quality of life. Here are the five most common personality disorders and how you can identify them in yourself or others.

Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder

Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, or OCD, is one of the most common personality disorders in the world. Unfortunately, it is also one of the least understood by mainstream audiences. While many people believe that OCD simply refers to being obsessively organized or having repetitive behaviors, in reality, OCD is much more severe than simply having the need to keep one's desk neat and tidy.

OCD manifests itself through obsessive thoughts that force a person into repetitive and compulsive actions. These thoughts typically bring a sense of impending dread or doom unless an action is performed to alleviate the anxiety attached to the thought. Most individuals with OCD can identify the fact that these obsessive thoughts and anxieties are not rational. However, that does nothing to actually alleviate the anxiety they feel. Individuals with OCD experience these obsessive thoughts and compulsive actions so severely that it interferes with their daily life, thus rendering it a mental health disorder.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Another common personality disorder is known as narcissistic personality disorder. Individuals with narcissistic personality disorder are characterized by an overinflated sense of ego, an extreme need for attention and admiration, and a lack of empathy. Those with narcissistic personality disorder tend to have very troubled relationships, as their behavioral tendencies make mutual affection and human connection difficult. However, it's important to note that narcissistic personality disorder is not the same thing as simply being arrogant or self-important.

Individuals with narcissistic personality disorder experience significant emotional distress at their inability to cultivate functioning relationships, compounded by their inherent need for attention and external validation. Narcissistic personality disorder can cause severe problems, not just in building relationships, but in cooperation and working with others at school or in the workplace. Individuals who suffer from narcissistic personality disorder tend to be unhappy and unsatisfied with their lives and should be referred to a mental health professional who can help them overcome this mental disorder.

Borderline Personality Disorder

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Borderline personality disorder, like narcissistic personality disorder, is another impulsive personality disorder. Individuals with borderline personality disorder are characterized by an intense fear of abandonment, unrealistic and unstable mental representations of relationships, such as idealizing someone and demonizing them moments later, a self-image that fluctuates rapidly, and impulsive and risky behavior, including suicidal thoughts.

Borderline personality disorder can also result in mood swings and intense feelings of anger. Individuals with borderline personality disorder often suffer extreme emotional distress as they tend to have unstable relationships and friendships, the loss of which is compounded by their fear and aversion to abandonment.

Antisocial Personality Disorder

Another common personality disorder found in media, antisocial personality disorder (also more commonly known as sociopathy) presents with a variety of mental symptoms including a disregard for morality, an inability to empathize with others, and a lack of guilt or remorse for inappropriate or offensive behavior.

Although antisocial personality disorder is sometimes depicted in the media as cruelty or malice towards others, this is usually not true. Rather, individuals who suffer from antisocial personality disorder genuinely cannot understand that their actions are hurting others. Due to this trait, they often don't even recognize that they're suffering from a mental disorder and usually do not seek help unless actively encouraged by another.

Paranoid Personality Disorder

Paranoid personality disorder, or PPD, is usually characterized by unconventional methods of thinking, as well as feelings of irrational paranoia, distrust, and suspicion. This intense feeling of doubt and mistrust can often result in poor relationships and even retaliation by others, further augmenting and justifying a person's initial feelings of paranoia. Individuals suffering from this mental disorder can find it difficult to live a regular life to their condition, and should seek support from a mental health professional.

Ultimately, for those who struggle with personality disorders, getting compassionate treatment is incredibly important to help ensure they can lead an optimal quality of life. By learning how to recognize and identify these five types of personality disorders, you can not only grow to better empathize with those who do may have them, but also take measures to seek out treatment if you suspect you may have one. And in turn, you can do your part in dismantling the stigma surrounding these disorders.

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