

CHAPTER 12: PERSONALITY DISORDERS

KEY TERMS

Attention deficits

See Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Antisocial personality disorder (APD)

A personality disorder, the main features of which are an enduring disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others. It is characterized by impulsive behaviour and lack of remorse, and is closely linked with adult criminal behaviour.

Anxious/fearful personality disorders

The exhibition of persistent anxious and fearful behaviour which is not usually linked to a specific trigger experience or life event.

Avoidant personality disorder

A personality disorder the features of which are avoidance of a wide range of social situations, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation and criticism.

Bipolar disorder spectrum

A proposed spectrum of disorder encompassing both bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder.

Borderline personality disorder (BPD)

A personality disorder, the main features of which are instability in personal relationships, a lack of well-defined and stable self-image, regular and unpredictable changes in moods and impulsive behaviour.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)

An intervention for changing both thoughts and behaviour. CBT represents an umbrella term for many different therapies that share the common aim of changing both cognitions and behaviour.

Conduct disorder (CD)

A pattern of behaviour during childhood in which the child exhibits a range of behavioural problems, including fighting, lying, running away from home, vandalism and truancy.

Dangerous people with severe personality disorders

A term introduced in 1999 in a report by the UK Home Office and the Department of Health to describe individuals who are diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder and who have, in addition, a diagnosis of at least one other type of personality disorder.

Dependent personality disorder

A personality disorder characterized by a pervasive and excessive need to be taken care of, submissive and clinging behaviour, and difficulty making everyday decisions without advice from others.

Dialectical behaviour therapy

A client-centred therapy for personality disorder that attempts to provide clients with insight into their dysfunctional ways of thinking about the world.

Dopamine

A compound that exists in the body as a neurotransmitter and as a precursor of other substances including adrenalin.

Dramatic/emotional personality disorders

Personality disorders grouped in Cluster B, including (1) antisocial personality disorder (APD), (2) borderline personality disorder (BPD), (3) narcissistic personality disorder and (4) histrionic personality disorder.

Dysfunctional schemas

In personality disorders, a set of dysfunctional beliefs that are hypothesized to maintain problematic behaviour characteristic of a number of personality disorders (e.g. antisocial personality disorder and borderline personality disorder).

Histrionic personality disorder

A personality disorder in which an individual is attention-seeking and uncomfortable or unhappy when not the centre of attention.

Level of personality functioning

Disturbances in self and interpersonal functioning are at the core of personality disorders, with the severity of impairment indicating whether the individual may have more than one personality disorder.

Narcissistic personality disorder

A personality disorder in which individuals overestimate their abilities, inflate their accomplishments, have a pervasive need for admiration and show a lack of empathy with the feelings of others.

Object-relations psychotherapy

A form of psychodynamic treatment which attempts to strengthen the individual's weak ego so that they are able to address issues in their life without constantly flipping from one extreme view to another.

Object-relations theory

Argues that individuals with borderline personality disorder (BPD) have received inadequate support and love from important others (such as parents) and this results in an insecure ego, which is likely to lead to lack of self-esteem and fear of rejection.

Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCPD)

A personality disorder in which individuals show exceptionally perfectionist tendencies including a preoccupation with orderliness and control at the expense of flexibility, efficiency and productivity.

Odd/eccentric personality disorders

Personality disorders grouped in Cluster A, the three sub-types of which are (1) paranoid personality disorder, (2) schizotypal personality disorder and (3) schizoid personality disorder.

Paranoid personality disorder

A personality disorder characterized by an enduring pattern of distrust and suspiciousness of others.

Personality disorders

A group of disorders marked by persistent, inflexible, maladaptive patterns of thought and behaviour that develop in adolescence or early adulthood and significantly impair an individual's ability to function.

Personality disorder types

Each of six personality disorder traits has its own diagnostic criteria based on ratings achieved on the first step (impairment) and on the second step (personality traits).

Personality trait domains

In the classification of personality disorders, there are 5 personality trait domains covering negative affectivity, detachment, antagonism, disinhibition, and psychoticism.

Psychopath

A term often used to describe individuals diagnosed with antisocial personality disorder.

Schema-focussed cognitive therapy

In the treatment of personality disorders, a specially developed cognitive therapy which is used to address dysfunctional ways of thinking and maladaptive cognitive schema.

Schemata therapy

Central to this approach is the concept of early maladaptive schemas (EMSs) that are thought to develop during childhood and result in dysfunctional beliefs and behaviours during adulthood.

Schizoid personality disorder

A personality disorder in which individuals are often described as 'loners' who fail to express a normal range of emotions and appear to get little reward from any activities.

Schizotypal personality disorder

A personality disorder characterized by 'eccentric' behaviour marked by odd patterns of thinking and communication.

Social anxiety spectrum

A spectrum of disorder proposed to include both avoidant personality disorder and social phobia.

Sociopath

A person with a personality disorder manifesting itself in extreme antisocial attitudes and behaviour.

Splitting

An element of object relations theory which argues that individuals with weak egos engage in a defence mechanism by which they evaluate people, events or things in a completely black or white way, often judging people as either good or bad with no shades of grey.