



Peer Support Team Newsletter

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Peer Support Teams are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week



Serve – Protect – Support – Surpass

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Personality and Personality Disorders

What is *personality*? We often use this word to describe someone, as in “Jamie has a pleasant personality.” But what does this mean? To what are we referring? The American Psychological Association defines personality as “the enduring configuration of characteristics and behavior that comprises an individual’s unique adjustment to life, including major traits, interests, drives, values, self-concept, abilities, and emotional patterns.” Clearly, personality is a complex concept, seemingly more easily understood by perception and interpretation than by definition. Another way of saying this is that regardless of definition, we soon develop a sense of whether we like someone, want to spend time with them, etc. Perhaps this sense is based upon their “enduring configuration of characteristics and behavior.” In short, their personality.

Are there pathological personalities? Within the field of psychology, the answer is yes. In modern terms, persons that meet specified diagnostic criteria are said to have a *personality disorder* (PD). The general concept of personality disorder predates the publication of the American-developed Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (1952) (DSM-I). However, DSM-I formalized the classification of *personality disorder* and defined it as “developmental defects or pathological trends in the personality structure, with minimal subjective anxiety, and little or no sense of distress.” This meant that a person diagnosed with a personality disorder was not particularly troubled by it. DSM-I divided personality disorders into *pattern disturbances* and *trait disturbances*. Pattern disturbances included the inadequate, cyclothymic, and schizoid personalities. Trait disturbances included the emotionally unstable, passive-aggressive, and compulsive personalities. Of these, only schizoid personality disorder remains a designated diagnosis.

The current DSM, DSM-5-TR (2022) defines personality disorder as “an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the norms and expectations of the individual’s culture, is pervasive and inflexible, has an onset in adolescence or early adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment.” The key phrase here is “leads to distress or impairment.” And the distress or impairment must be “clinically significant.” Without clinically significant distress or impairment, there is no personality disorder. DSM-5-TR includes the following specified personality disorders and their brief descriptors. The personality disorders of DSM-5-TR are grouped into three clusters: A, B, and C. Paranoid personality disorder is a pattern of distrust and suspiciousness such that others’ motives are interpreted as malevolent. (paranoid, schizoid, and schizotypal PDs comprise cluster A - persons often appear odd or eccentric)

Schizoid personality disorder is a pattern of detachment from social relationships and a restricted range of emotional expression.

Schizotypal personality disorder is a pattern of acute discomfort in close relationships, cognitive or perceptual distortions, and eccentricities of behavior.

Antisocial personality disorder is a pattern of disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others, criminality, impulsivity, and a failure to learn from experience.

Borderline personality disorder is a pattern of instability in interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects, and marked impulsivity. (antisocial, borderline, histrionic, and narcissistic PDs comprise cluster B - persons often appear dramatic, emotional, or erratic)

Histrionic personality disorder is a pattern of excessive emotionality and attention seeking.

Narcissistic personality disorder is a pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy.

Avoidant personality disorder is a pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation. (avoidant, dependent, and obsessive-compulsive PDs are in cluster C - persons often appear anxious or fearful)

Dependent personality disorder is a pattern of submissive and clinging behavior related to an excessive need to be taken care of. (Note: DSM-5-TR also includes “other specified” and “unspecified” personality disorder diagnoses)

Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder is a pattern of preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism, and control.

The notion of personality, its composition, dimensions, traits, and assessment, still evokes much discussion and some disagreement among psychologists. As mentioned, it is a complex concept. This makes some differences in conception and classification inevitable. And what about you? Do you think you see yourself in any of the above descriptors? More than one? Does it help to know that everyone has characteristics/traits that, if exaggerated might become a component of a personality disorder? Avoid the urge to self-diagnose. Diagnosing a personality disorder is a specialized skill and must be left to appropriately trained mental health professionals. You do not have obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, and certainly not *obsessive-compulsive disorder* (OCD), simply because you prefer an orderly desk...JAD

New Confidentiality Statute for Colorado Peer Support Teams

House Bill 25-1087 was signed into law on May 31, 2025. This bill created Colorado Revised Statute (CRS) 12-30-125 *Peer support team members- disclosure of confidential information - not regulated by division - definitions*. CRS 12-30-125 is subject-matter related to CRS 13-90-107 *Who may not testify without consent*. Subsection (m) of CRS 13-90-107(m) provides recipients of peer support with specified confidentiality within the Colorado court system. CRS 13-90-107(m) was enacted into law in 2005. It has been amended several times since, most recently in 2024.

CRS 12-30-125 provides recipients of peer support with specified confidentiality within Colorado but outside of the Colorado court system. Prior to CRS 12-30-125, peer support teams relied upon agency policy to provide some degree of out-of-court system confidentiality of peer support interactions.

CRS 12-30-125 and CRS 13-90-107(m) work in tandem to provide recipients of peer support with best-practices peer support confidentiality. CRS 12-30-125 becomes effective on August 6, 2025.

The Danger of Stupidity

“Stupidity is a more dangerous enemy of the good than malice. One may protest against evil; it can be exposed and, if need be, prevented by use of force. Evil always carries within itself the germ of its own subversion in that it leaves behind in human beings at least a sense of unease. Against stupidity we are defenseless. Neither protests nor the use of force accomplish anything here; reasons fall on deaf ears; facts that contradict one’s prejudgment simply need not be believed - in such moments the stupid person even becomes critical - and when facts are irrefutable they are just pushed aside as inconsequential, as incidental. In all this the stupid person, in contrast to the malicious one, is utterly self satisfied and, being easily irritated, becomes dangerous by going on the attack. For that reason, greater caution is called for when dealing with a stupid person than with a malicious one. Never again will we try to persuade the stupid person with reasons, for it is senseless and dangerous.”

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer: born 1906 - hanged within the Flossenbürg (Bavaria) concentration camp by Nazi authorities on April 9, 1945.

Marriage Minute from Gottman: Self-sacrifice

Constantly putting your partner’s needs ahead of your own may seem loving, but over time, it can erode your sense of self and weaken your connection.

When you always defer—letting them pick the movie, choose the restaurant, or lead the conversation—you may feel like you’re keeping the peace. They might feel good in the moment, but in reality, you’re limiting intimacy and authenticity in your relationship.

True connection happens when both partners show up as their full, authentic selves. If you always say “yes” to please your partner, they never get the chance to know and love the real you.

To break the cycle, start by voicing your preferences, even in small ways. Share your thoughts, set boundaries, and recognize that your needs matter just as much as theirs. Healthy relationships are built on mutual respect, not one-sided sacrifice. (The Gottman Institute: www.gottman.com)

On the Science Scene The Curious World of Particle Physics

Particle physics is the study of the universe at the smallest scale possible – the most elementary particles and forces that, when combined, make up everything. You – along with every other living thing, every speck of dust and every star in the sky – are all made of atoms. Atoms are not indivisible. They are made up of protons, neutrons and electrons. The number of protons, neutrons and electrons determine how the atom interacts with other atoms. Protons (positive charge) are clustered within the atom’s neutrons (neutral charge) to make up the nucleus of the atom. Orbiting the positively charged nucleus are electrons, tiny particles with a negative charge. Protons and neutrons are made of even tinier elemental particles called quarks. There are six “flavors” (types) of quarks: up, down, charm, strange, top, and bottom. There are also leptons. These elementary particles are similar to quarks, but unlike quarks, leptons don’t have “strong interactions.” Electrons are a type of lepton, along with muons, tau leptons and neutrinos. Muons and tau leptons are unstable and decay into electrons. Neutrinos are leptons with no electric charge. Quarks and leptons are fermions – the elementary particles that make up matter. Another group of particles, known as bosons, act as “force carriers.” Types of bosons include photons; gluons (which help bind particles together); Z bosons; W bosons; and the mysterious Higgs boson. Curious indeed. (www.livescience.com).