



MOOD DISORDERS ASSOCIATION OF MANITOBA INC.

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BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER

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WHAT IS BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER?

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a pattern of unstable relationships, self-image, moods and impulsivity. This disorder begins in early adulthood when a person shows at least five of nine symptoms. Symptoms can be remembered by using the word **PRAISE**, where each letter indicates one or more of the nine symptoms:

Paranoid Ideas. During periods of extreme stress, you may distrust and be suspicious of others. During these stressful times, you may also feel like you are looking at your own body from outside. People around you may seem articial, flat and dull.

Relationships tend to be stormy and intense, and you may have difficulty appreciating that most people – including yourself – posses good and bad to qualities at the same time. You tend to look up to people and may get angry if you feel that they have to let you down in some way.

Abandonment. You fear abandonment and do not like to be alone for long periods of time.

Anger. You may have difficulty controlling your anger, and after an angry outburst, you often feel ashamed and guilty.

Affects (or moods) tend to be very unstable, and you are often extremely sensitive to changes in your environment. Your depressed mood may be complicated by feelings of anger, panic and despair.

Impulsivity. You tend to be impulsive and may gamble, overspend your money, binge eat, abuse substances, engage in unsafe sex or drive recklessly.

Identity disturbance. You often feel confused about your goals, values, friends, sexual orientation and career plans.

Suicidal behavior. You may feel like hurting yourself. Suicide threats and attempts are very common in this disorder.

Emptiness. You may be troubled by chronic feelings of emptiness. You may also be easily bored and constantly seeking something to do.

GENERAL INFORMATION

BPD occurs in 2% to 3% of the general population and seems to be more common in women than in men. It is believed that BPD can be partly inherited, but life experiences (especially early childhood trauma) do play a major role in the development of this disorder.

The main form of treatment for BPD is psychotherapy, which helps you to understand and overcome this condition. Psychotherapy is a term used to describe several different “talk therapies” used to treat psychological problems. Your therapist will help you understand how your thoughts and feelings determine your actions and he or she will focus on the present rather than the past, especially early in treatment. Your therapist will also help you to reduce and then get rid of your self-destructive behaviors. Medication may be prescribed to help ease some symptoms. Hospitalization (when necessary) must be as short as possible, as you will tend to get worse the longer you stay.

At first, you may feel totally overwhelmed by your condition, but don't give up. Most BPD patients have good lives after they conquer their difficult and stormy periods.