

# Personality Disorders

## Defining characteristics:

- the personality itself makes up the disorder
- people have rigid, maladaptive patterns of behavior and ways of relating to others that make it difficult to adapt to social demands and life changes as well as making it difficult to have normal relationships
- many people with personality disorders don't think there is anything wrong with them and don't seek treatment

## Onset:

- usually in adolescence or early adulthood, then the maladaptive personality traits remain stable and cause distress or impairment

## Prevalence:

- about 9% of the U.S. population is said to have a personality disorder (any of the disorders below)

## Clusters:

- The personality disorders are arranged in 3 clusters depending on their defining behaviors
  - o Cluster A – odd, bizarre, eccentric
  - o Cluster B – dramatic, erratic, distorted self-image
  - o Cluster C – anxious, fearful

## CLUSTER A

- \* **Paranoid** – constant mistrust/suspicious of others, fear others are out to harm them
- \* **Schizoid** – distant/detached, often are loners who rarely express strong emotions
- \* **Schizotypal** – odd beliefs, very superstitious, may appear “weird” to others

## CLUSTER B

- \* **Antisocial** – “psychopath” “sociopath”, disregard for others, lack of remorse, sometimes aggressive behavior
- \* **Borderline** – impulsive behavior, unstable moods, chaotic relationships
- \* **Histrionic** – constantly seek attention, can be shallow, child-like, dramatic, overly-emotional
- \* **Narcissistic** – preoccupation with success/status, have an exaggerated sense of superiority

## CLUSTER C

- \* **Avoidant** – avoid social situations for fear of being judge/embarrassed (but want to be social)
- \* **Dependent** – pattern of submissive, clingy behavior with need to be taken care of
- \* **Obsessive-Compulsive** – inflexible, pattern of perfectionism, strong fear of making mistakes

## Causes

- little is known/ personality disorders are probably the most misunderstood
- some disorders seem to have a genetic link, but environment also seems to play a role

## Treatment

psychotherapy of various kinds

anti-depressants/anti-anxiety medications can help some people (like obsessive-compulsive or avoidant)

Disorder explanations paraphrased from: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/personality-disorders-overview>