

# Borderline Personality Disorder

Diagnostic Features of Borderline  
Personality Disorder

# Diagnostic Features of Borderline Personality Disorder

- Criterion 1
  - Essential feature is a pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships
  - Self-image and affects
  - Marked impulsivity beginning by early adulthood presenting in variety of contexts
  - Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment

# Diagnostic Features of Borderline Personality Disorder

- Criterion 2

- Have a pattern of unstable and intense relationships

## Criterion 3

- May be an identity disturbance characterized by markedly and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self

## Criterion 4

- Display impulsivity in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging

# Diagnostic Features of Borderline Personality Disorder

- Criterion 5

- Display recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures or threats, or self-mutilating behavior

## Criterion 6

May display affective instability that is due to a marked reactivity of mood (e.g., intense episodic dysphoria, irritability, or anxiety usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more than a few days)

# Diagnostic Features of Borderline Personality Disorder

- Criterion 7

- May be troubled by chronic feelings of emptiness

## Criterion 8

Frequently express inappropriate, intense anger or have difficulty controlling their anger

## Criterion 9

During periods of extreme stress, transient paranoid ideation or dissociative symptoms (e.g., depersonalization) may occur, but these are generally of insufficient severity or duration to warrant an additional diagnosis

# Diagnostic Criteria for Borderline Personality Disorder

- A pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image and affects and marked impulsivity beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:
  1. Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment. Note: Do not include suicidal or self-mutilating behavior covered in Criterion 5.
  2. A pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation.
  3. Identity disturbance: markedly and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self
  4. Impulsivity in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging (e.g., frequent displays of temper, constant anger, recurrent physical fights).
  5. Recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures or threats, or self-mutilating behavior.
  6. Affective instability due to a marked reactivity of mood (e.g., intense episodic dysphoria, irritability or anxiety usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more than a few days).
  7. Chronic feelings of emptiness.
  8. Inappropriate, intense anger or difficulty controlling anger (e.g., frequent displays of temper, constant anger, recurrent physical fights).
  9. Transient, stress-related paranoid ideation or severe dissociative symptoms.

Source: Reprinted with permission from DSM-IV-TR (APA 2000, pp. 706-708, 710).

# Advice to the Counselor: Counseling a Client with Borderline Personality Disorder

- Anticipate that client progress will be slow and uneven.
- Assess the risk of self-harm by asking about what is wrong, why now, whether the client has specific plans for suicide, past attempts, current feelings and protective factors.
- Maintain a positive but neutral professional relationship, avoid over-involvement in the client's perceptions and monitor the counseling process frequently with supervisors and colleagues.
- Set clear boundaries and expectations regarding limits and requirements in roles and behavior.
- Assist the client in developing skills (e.g., deep breathing, meditation, cognitive restructuring) to manage negative memories and emotions.