WHAT IS PERSONALITY DISORDER?

Personality disorder refers to a long-term pattern of thinking, behaviour and emotion that is extreme and inflexible. It causes distress and find it hard to adapt to different situations. They may have trouble forming positive relationships with others. Current thinking is that multiple trauma events in childhood are involved in its development.

People suffering from personality disorder also have high rates of coexisting mental health conditions such as depression and substance abuse.

SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF PERSONALITY DISORDER

- Frequent mood swings
- Extreme dependence on other people
- Social isolation
- Stormy personal relationships
- Poor impulse control
- Narcissism
- Angry outbursts
- Alcohol or substance abuse
- Suspicion and mistrust of others

TYPES OF PERSONALITY DISORDER

- **Borderline personality disorder**
  - Acting impulsively, taking huge risks, having fiery temper and experiencing significant distress.

- **Antisocial personality disorder**
  - Tendency to not care about others to the point of being aggressive and violent, or violating other people’s rights.

- **Avoidant personality disorder**
  - Feeling hypersensitive to rejection/criticism and experience shyness.

- **Narcissistic personality disorder**
  - Believing that you're better than everyone else, need for admiration and lack for empathy.

- **Histrionic personality disorder**
  - Pervasive pattern of excessive emotion and attention seeking.

- **Schizotypal personality disorder**
  - Not sympathetic to other people and having unusual thoughts and believing that you can influence people and events by your thoughts.
THE CAUSES OF PERSONALITY DISORDER

The causes of personality disorder are not obvious. However, there are certain factors that indicate whether a person has developed the disorder:

- Family history of personality disorder
- Chaotic family life during childhood
- Loss of parents through death/divorce during childhood
- Abuse or neglect during childhood

GETTING HELP

Treatment

Treatment is available for people with personality disorders, and psychotherapy can help them to develop insight into their condition, manage symptoms and relate more positively to others.

Seek a doctor or a mental health professional

Seeking help from a doctor or a mental health professional is vital and arrange a mental health assessment.

Support and Education

Family and friends of people with personality disorder can often feel confused and distressed. Support and education, as well as better community understanding are an important part of treatment.

For more information on personality disorders, contact:
Mental Health Foundation Australia
www.mhfa.org.au

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