Personality

What is a personality?

Personality is defined as a pattern of relatively permanent traits and unique characteristics that give both consistency and individuality to a person’s behavior.

- Traits contribute to individual differences in behavior, consistency of behavior over time, and the stability of behavior across situations. Patterns of these traits are unique with each individual.

- Characteristics are unique qualities of an individual that include temperament, physique, and intelligence.
Personality Disorders

A heterogeneous group of disorders that are coded on Axis II of the DSM-IV and are regarded as longstanding, permanent, and inflexible patterns of behavior and mental experience that deviate from the expectations of a person’s culture and that impair social and occupational functioning and may cause emotional distress.
What you should know:

- All personality disorders are coded on Axis II of the DSM-IVTR.
- Comprise, as a group, the single biggest group of disorders in the DSM!
- These disorders, regardless of one’s orientation, are notoriously difficult to treat. These are enduring and relatively unchangeable traits.
Three Clusters:

- Odd/Eccentric – Cluster A
  - Paranoid
  - Schizoid
  - Schizotypal

- Dramatic/Erratic – Cluster B
  - Borderline
  - Histrionic
  - Narcissistic
  - Antisocial

- Anxious/Fearful – Cluster C
  - Avoidant
  - Dependent
  - Obsessive compulsive

- Other (not in the DSM-IV)
  - Passive-Aggressive Personality Disorder
  - Sadistic Personality Disorder
  - Masochistic Personality Disorder
  - Cyclothymic Personality Disorder
Paranoid Personality Disorder

- Presence of four or more of the following and not occurring exclusively during a course of schizophrenia, psychotic depression, or as part of a pervasive developmental disorder; also not due to a general medical condition:
  - Pervasive suspiciousness of being harmed, deceived or exploited
  - Unwarranted doubts about the loyalty or trustworthiness of friends or associates
  - Reluctance to confide in others because of preceding criterion
  - Hidden meanings read into the innocuous actions of others
  - Grudges for perceived wrongs
  - Angry reactions to perceived attacks or character or reputation
  - Akin to first two criteria, unwarranted suspiciousness of the fidelity of spouse or other sexual partner
Schizoid Personality Disorder

- Presence of four or more of the following not exclusively during a course of schizophrenia, psychotic depression, or as part of a pervasive developmental disorder; also not due to a general medical condition.
  - Lack of desire or enjoyment of close relationships
  - Almost exclusive preference for solitude
  - Little interest in sex with others
  - Few if any pleasures
  - Lack of friends
  - Indifference to praise or criticism from others
  - Flat affect, emotional detachment
Schizotypal Personality Disorder

- Presence of four or more of the following not exclusively during a course of schizophrenia, psychotic depression, or as part of a pervasive developmental disorder; also not due to a general medical condition.
  - Ideas of reference
  - Peculiar beliefs or magical thinking, e.g., belief in extrasensory perception
  - Unusual perceptions, e.g., distorted beliefs about one’s body
  - Peculiar patterns of speech
  - Extreme suspiciousness, paranoia
  - Inappropriate affect
  - Odd behavior or appearance
  - Lack of close friends
  - Extreme discomfort and sometimes extreme anxiety around other people
Borderline Personality Disorder

- Presence of five or more of the following:
  - Frantic efforts to avoid abandonment, both real or imagined
  - Instability and extreme intensity in interpersonal relationships, marked by splitting, that is, idealizing others in one moment and reviling them in the next
  - Unstable sense of self
  - Impulsive behavior including, reckless spending and sexual promiscuity
  - Recurrent suicidal (gestures as well as genuine attempts) and self-mutilating behavior
  - Extreme emotional lability
  - Chronic feelings of emptiness
  - Extreme problems controlling anger
  - Paranoid thinking and dissociative symptoms triggered by stress
Histrionic Personality Disorders

- Presence of five or more of the following
  - Strong need to be the center of attention
  - Inappropriately sexual seductive behavior
  - Rapid shifting expressions of emotions
  - Use of physical appearance to draw attention to self
  - Speech excessively impressionistic, passionately held opinions lacking detail
  - Exaggerated, theatrical emotional expression
  - Overly suggestible
  - Misreads relationships as being more intimate than they actually are
Narcissistic Personality Disorder

- Presence of five or more of the following:
  - Grandiose view of one’s importance, arrogance
  - Preoccupation with one’s success, brilliance, beauty, or love
  - Extreme need for admiration
  - Strong sense of entitlement
  - Tendency to exploit others
  - Envy of others
Antisocial Personality Disorder

- Pervasive pattern of disregard for the rights of others since the age of 15 and at least three of the characteristics 1 through 7 plus 8 through 10.
  - Repeated law-breaking
  - Deceitfulness, lying
  - Impulsivity
  - Irritableness and aggressiveness
  - Reckless disregard for own safety and that of others
  - Irresponsibility as seen in unreliable employment history or not meeting financial obligations
  - Lack of remorse
  - Age of at least 18
  - Evidence of conduct disorder before the age of 15
  - Antisocial behavior not occurring exclusively during episodes of schizophrenia or mania
Avoidant Personality Disorder

- Presence of at least four of the following:
  - Avoidance of interpersonal contacts because of fears of criticism or rejection
  - Unwillingness to get involved with others unless certain of being liked
  - Restraint in intimate relationships for fear of being shamed or ridiculed
  - Preoccupation about being criticized or rejected
  - Feelings of inadequacy
  - Feelings of inferiority
  - Extreme reluctance to try new things for fear of being embarrassed
Dependent Personality Disorder

- Presence of at least five of the following:
  - Difficulty making decisions without excessive advice and reassurance from others
  - Need for others to take responsibility for most major areas of life
  - Difficulty disagreeing with others for fear of losing their support
  - Difficulty doing things on own because of lack of self-confidence
  - Doing unpleasant things as a way to obtain the approval and support of others
  - Feelings of helplessness when alone because of lack of confidence in ability to handle things without the intervention of others
  - Urgently seeking of new relationships when present one ends
  - Preoccupation with fears of having to take care of self
Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder

- Presence of at least four of the following:
  - Preoccupation with rules and details to the extent that the major point of an activity is lost
  - Extreme perfectionism to the degree that projects are seldom completed
  - Excessive devotion to work to the exclusion of leisure and friendships
  - Inflexibility about morals
  - Difficulty discarding worthless items
  - Reluctance to delegate unless others conform to one’s standards
  - Miserliness
  - Rigidity and stubbornness
Passive-aggressive Personality Disorder *

- Passively resists fulfilling routine social and occupational tasks
- Complains of being misunderstood and unappreciated by others
- Is sullen and argumentative
- Unreasonably criticizes and scorns authority
- Expresses envy and resentment toward those apparently more fortunate
- Voices exaggerated and persistent complaints of personal misfortune
- Alternates between hostility defiance and contrition
- And, procrastinates, dilatoriness at work, obstructionist behavior, resents suggestions, “forgets” obligations, unaware of being incompetent
Sadistic Personality Disorder *

- Has used physical cruelty or violence for the purpose of establishing dominance in a relationship (not merely to achieve some non-interpersonal goal, such as striking someone in order to rob him or her)
- Humiliates or demeans people in the presence of others
- Has treated or disciplined someone under his or her control unusually harshly (e.g., like a child, student, patient, or prisoner)
- Is amused by, or takes pleasure in, the psychological or physical suffering of others (including animals)
- Has lied for the purpose of harming or inflicting pain on others (not merely to achieve some other goal)
- Gets other people to do what he or she wants by frightening them (through intimidation or even terror)
- Restricts the autonomy of people with whom he or she has a close relationship (e.g., will not let spouse leave the house unaccompanied or permit teenager to attend social functions)
- Is fascinated by violence, weapons, martial arts, injury, or torture
Masochistic Personality Disorder *

- Chooses people and situations that lead to disappointment, failure, or mistreatment even when better options are clearly available.
- Rejects or renders ineffective the attempts of others to help him or her.
- Following a positive personal event (e.g., some new achievement), responds with depression, guilt, or a behavior that produces pain (e.g., an accident).
- Incites angry or rejecting response from others and then feels hurt, defeated, or humiliated (e.g., makes fun of a spouse in public, provoking an angry retort, then feels devastated).
- Rejects opportunities for pleasure, or is reluctant to acknowledge enjoying himself or herself (despite having adequate social skills and the capacity for pleasure).
- Fails to accomplish tasks crucial to his or her personal objectives despite demonstrated ability to do so (e.g., helps fellow students write papers, but is unable to write his or her own).
- Is uninterested in or rejects people who consistently treat him or her well (e.g., is unattracted to caring sexual partners).
- Engages in excessive self-sacrifice that is unsolicited by the intended recipients of the sacrifice.
Cyclothymic Personality Disorder *

- Has depressive periods (both manic and depressive bouts)
- Becomes excessively involved in pleasurable activities with lack of concern for the high potential of painful consequences and alternating with restriction of activities and guilt over the past
- Alternate periods of over-optimism and excess pessimism about the past and future
- Alternates between being over-talkative and withdrawal, high self-esteem and lacking self-confidence, sharpened thinking and dullness, extroverted toward others then introverted
- Changes jobs, areas of study, interests, and future plans
- Engages in occasional financial extravagances
- May be promiscuous with repeated conjugal or romantic failures
- Has explosive angry outbursts toward loved ones that tends to alienate them
- Moves around both from house to house, as well as geographically