

Borderline Support UK CIC Factsheet

What are the symptoms of Borderline Personality Disorder?

Experiences of living with borderline personality disorder (BPD) are unique to each person. You generally need to experience 5 of the following symptoms to be diagnosed with BPD:

- Extreme reactions to feeling abandoned – this may involve efforts to avoid being abandoned, or by cutting someone out before they can abandon and hurt you;
- Unstable relationships – you may find that you idealise someone and then quickly swing to intensely disliking them;
- Confused feelings about who you are – not sure who you are or what to think about yourself;
- Being impulsive in ways that could be damaging – for example, spending money, substance abuse and reckless driving, risky sexual behaviour, binge eating;
- Self-harm, suicidal thoughts and behaviours – talking or thinking about suicide, repeatedly harming yourself;
- Long-lasting feelings of emptiness and feeling abandoned – a feeling of being completely alone and abandoned, or feeling empty inside;
- Difficulty controlling emotions and anger – getting angry and being unable to control it, reacting out of proportion to the person who triggered the anger, or being unable to control anger resulting in physical fights or fits of rage;
- Overwhelming mood swings and intense emotions – experiencing intense emotional lows (depression) and highs (mania) – this can last anywhere between an hour and days;
- Paranoid thoughts when you're stressed – being suspicious of others around you, or having a feeling that someone is 'out to get you'. This may also include the feeling of being detached from your emotions or body.

Everyone is different, some people may only have a few symptoms and others may have them all. Severity differs between people, and some symptoms are worse for some people.

There are some internationally recognised symptoms, or criteria, that a specialist will look for. They may ask questions about your symptoms and how they affect you, such as:

- Do you have an intense fear of being left alone, which causes you to act in ways that, on reflection, seem out of the ordinary or extreme, such as constantly phoning somebody (but not including self-harming or suicidal behaviour)?
- Do you have a pattern of intense and unstable relationships with other people that switch between thinking you love that person and they're wonderful to hating that person and thinking they're terrible?

Borderline Support UK CIC

Registered office address: 483 Green Lanes, London, N13 4BS

www.borderlinesupport.org.uk | info@borderlinesupport.org.uk

- Do you ever feel you do not have a strong sense of your own self and are unclear about your self-image?
- Do you engage in impulsive activities in 2 areas that are potentially damaging, such as unsafe sex, drug misuse or reckless spending (but not including self-harming or suicidal behaviour)?
- Have you made repeated suicide threats or attempts in your past and engaged in self-harming?
- Do you have severe mood swings, such as feeling intensely depressed, anxious or irritable, which last from a few hours to a few days?
- Do you have long-term feelings of emptiness and loneliness?
- Do you have sudden and intense feelings of anger and aggression, and often find it difficult to control your anger?
- When you find yourself in stressful situations, do you have feelings of paranoia, or do you feel like you're disconnected from the world or from your own body, thoughts and behaviour?

The important thing to remember is that YOUR symptoms and feelings are valid for YOU. Don't compare yourself to others, everyone is different.

Borderline Support UK CIC
Registered office address: 483 Green Lanes, London, N13 4BS
www.borderlinesupport.org.uk | info@borderlinesupport.org.uk