**WHAT TYPES OF PERSONALITY DISORDER ARE THERE** Currently psychiatrists tend to use a system of diagnosis which identifies ten types of personality disorder. These are grouped into three categories.

**Suspicious:**

Paranoid personality disorder

Schizoid personality disorder

Schizotypal personality disorder

**Emotional and impulsive:**

Antisocial personality disorder (ASPD)

Borderline personality disorder (BPD)

Histrionic personality disorder

Narcissistic personality disorder

**Anxious:**

Avoidant personality disorder

Dependent personality disorder

Obsessive compulsive personality disorder (OCPD)

**Borderline personality disorder (BPD)**

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is also known as an emotionally unstable personality disorder (EUPD).

We can all experience difficulties with our relationships, self-image, and emotions. But you might get a diagnosis of BPD/EUPD if these feel consistently unstable or intense and cause you significant problems in daily life.

You may:

* feel very worried about people abandoning you, and either does anything to stop that happening or push them away
* have very intense emotions that can change quickly (for example, from feeling very happy and confident in the morning to feeling low and sad in the afternoon)
* not have a strong sense of who you are or what you want from life, with your ideas about this changing significantly depending on who you're with
* find it very hard to make and keep stable relationships or friendships
* act impulsively and do things that could harm you (such as binge eating, using drugs, or driving dangerously)
* have suicidal thoughts
* self-harm
* feel empty and lonely a lot of the time
* get very angry, and struggle to control your anger
* struggle to trust other people
* Experience other mental health problems alongside BPD, including anxiety, depression, eating problems and post-traumatic stress disorder.

When very stressed, sometimes you might:

* feel paranoid
* have psychotic experiences, such as seeing or hearing things that other people don't
* feel numb or 'checked out' and not remember things very well after they've happened (known as dissociation).

BPD is currently the most commonly diagnosed personality disorder. You can read more about it on our pages on borderline personality disorder (BPD).

**SPLIT PERSONALITY DISORDER**

A split personality refers to dissociative identity disorder (DID), a mental disorder where a person has two or more distinct personalities. The thoughts, actions, and behaviors of each personality may be completely different.

A split personality is a popular term for DID. In the past, DID was known as multiple personality disorder.

People with DID have two or more distinct personalities. They do not present as simple changes in traits or moods. A person with DID expresses significant differences between these alternate identities, which can also be referred to as alters.

Often, these personalities are completely different from each other. These fragmented personalities take control of the person’s identity for some time.

A person also maintains their primary or host identity, which is their original personality, and will answer to their given name. Their primary identity is generally more passive and they may be unaware of the other personalities.

When a personality change happens, the new personality will have a distinct history, a new identity, and different behaviors.

These split personalities, or alters, often have their own distinct:

* name
* age
* gender
* moods
* memories
* vocabulary

Causes

The exact cause of DID is not fully understood. However, there is a strong link between the condition and trauma. This may be particularly true for trauma or abuse during childhood.

The condition represents someone who struggles to integrate and assimilate certain aspects of their own identity, which become disjointed over time.

Signs and symptoms

The signs of DID may vary, but they include a change between two or more separate personalities.

Symptoms include:

Experiencing two or more separate personalities, each with their own self-identity and perceptions.

A notable change in a person’s sense of self.

Frequent gaps in memory and personal history, which are not due to normal forgetfulness, including loss of memories, and forgetting everyday events.

When these other personalities take over, they often talk with a different vocabulary, and gesture differently. In some cases, one personality may also pick up certain habits that the other does not, such as smoking, or becoming violent.

In the shift from one personality to another, a person may experience other symptoms. Some people can have anxiety, as they may be afraid of the personality change. Some may become very angry or violent. Others may not notice or remember these transitions at all, although another person may notice them.

Specific personalities may appear in response to certain situations. These symptoms can cause a person significant distress, and disrupt their ability to live their life normally.

Other symptoms may include:

* amnesia
* losing sense of time
* going into a trance-like state
* out-of-body experiences, or depersonalization
* engaging in behaviors that are unusual for the person
* sleep disturbances

A person with DID may also experience symptoms of other conditions, such as self-harm. One study notes that more than 70% of people with DID have attempted suicide.

Risk factors

Trauma often triggers DID as a psychological response, so it is a strong risk factor, especially in childhood. This trauma can stem from:

* physical abuse
* sexual abuse
* emotional neglect
* psychological abuse

In some cases, a child may not experience a clear form of abuse, but may not grow up in a safe home environment. For example, they may live with highly unpredictable parents, and start to dissociate in response to the stress that comes with this.

Dissociative identity disorder may appear alongside other disorders. This means that several mental health disorders could arise from the same cause.

Other common disorders that can occur alongside DID include:

* borderline personality disorder
* depression
* substance use disorder
* post-traumatic stress disorder
* eating disorders
* anxiety
* obsessive-compulsive disorder