

Schizoid personality disorder

Overview

Schizoid personality disorder is a condition where a person shows very little, if any, interest and ability to form relationships with other people. It's very hard for the person to express a full range of emotions.

If you have schizoid personality disorder, you may be seen as keeping to yourself or rejecting others. You may not be interested in or able to form close friendships or romantic relationships. Because you do not tend to show emotion, it may appear that you do not care about others or what's going on around you.

Schizoid personality disorder is less common than other personality disorders, but it's much more common than schizophrenia. The cause is not known. Some symptoms of schizoid personality disorder are similar to autism spectrum disorders, other personality disorders — especially avoidant personality disorder — and early symptoms of schizophrenia.

Talk therapy, also called psychotherapy, can help those who know they need to improve relationships with others. But it's common to feel unsure about change. Medicines are mainly used to treat mental health conditions that occur along with schizoid personality disorder, rather than the disorder itself.

Symptoms

If you have schizoid personality disorder, it's likely that you:

- Want to be alone and do activities alone.
- Do not want or enjoy close relationships.
- Feel little if any desire for sexual relationships.
- Take pleasure in few activities, if any.
- Find it hard to express your emotions and react.
- May lack humor or not be interested in others. Or you may be cold toward others.
- May lack the drive that makes you want to reach goals.
- Do not react to praise or criticism from others.

People may view you as odd or unusual.

Schizoid personality disorder most often begins when a person is a young adult. But some symptoms might be noticed during childhood. These symptoms may make it hard to do well in school, at work, in social situations or in other areas of life. But the person may do well if the job can be done by mostly working alone.

Schizoid personality disorder and schizophrenia

Although the names may sound alike, schizoid personality disorder, schizotypal personality disorder and schizophrenia spectrum disorders are all different types of mental health conditions. But they can have similar symptoms, such as not being able to make social connections or show a full range of emotions.

In contrast to schizotypal personality disorder and schizophrenia, people with schizoid personality disorder:

- Are in touch with reality.
- Are not likely to feel paranoid, hold bizarre beliefs or hallucinate.
- Make sense when speaking. Although the tone may not be lively, the content of the person's speech is not strange or hard to follow.

When to see a doctor

People with schizoid personality disorder typically only seek treatment for a related problem, such as depression.

If someone close to you has urged you to seek help for symptoms common to schizoid personality disorder, make an appointment with a doctor or another health care professional, or a mental health professional. If you suspect a loved one may have schizoid personality disorder, gently suggest that the person seek help. You can offer to go along to the first appointment.

Causes

Personality is the blend of thoughts, emotions and behaviors that makes you special. It's the way you view, understand and relate to the outside world. It's also how you see yourself. Personality forms when you're a child. It's shaped through a blend of your surroundings and genes passed down from your parents.

Children typically learn over time to properly understand social cues and take action. What causes schizoid personality disorder to happen is not known. But a blend of your surroundings and genes passed down to you may play a role in developing the disorder.

Risk factors

Factors that raise your risk of schizoid personality disorder include:

- Having a parent or another relative who has schizoid personality disorder, schizotypal personality disorder or schizophrenia.
- Having a parent who was cold, did not properly care for you and did not take action to help you emotionally.

Complications

People with schizoid personality disorder are at higher risk of:

- Schizotypal personality disorder or schizophrenia.
- Other personality disorders.
- Major depression.
- Anxiety disorders.

Diagnosis

- You may have a physical exam to rule out other medical health problems. Then your primary care doctor may suggest that you see a mental health professional.
- To find out if you have schizoid personality disorder, your mental health professional will talk with you about your symptoms and ask several questions. Also, your mental health professional likely will go over your medical and personal history.

Treatment

If you have schizoid personality disorder, you may want to go your own way and not talk to others, including your doctor or other health care professionals. You may be so used to a life of not being close to anyone emotionally that you're not sure you want to change — or that you can.

You might agree to start treatment only when a relative or friend who is concerned about you urges you to do so. But working with a mental health professional who knows how to treat schizoid personality disorder can make your life much better.

Treatment options include:

- **Talk therapy.** If you'd like to build closer relationships, forms of cognitive behavioral therapy may help you change the beliefs and behaviors that cause problems in your relationships. A therapist knows that you need support to explore your relationships and how hard it can be to open up about your inner life. Therapists listen to you and help you work toward goals that you identify for yourself.
- **Group therapy.** In a group setting, you can learn how to talk with others who are also learning and practicing new social skills. In time, group therapy may provide the support needed to make your social skills better.