

What Are Aggressive Behaviors?

People with passive-aggressive behaviors show hostility and aggression in passive ways. Their aim is to resist job and social demands, using the common excuse that they "forgot" while demonstrating a negative attitude as to why they were late. Criticizing authority figures and failing to do their share of the work or not doing it at all are common behaviors of this disorder. This person isn't aware of their own self-defeating behaviors because they are simply a part of their personality. He or she often feels others make unreasonable demands of them, but believes that they are doing a much better job than the credit they are given. Aggressive behavior or passive-aggressive behavior is displayed in varying degrees, and there are common signs of the personality disorder that help identify the behaviors.

The most common signs of passive-aggressive personality disorder occur repeatedly, such as ambiguity, blaming others, chronic dilatory nature, forgetfulness, complaining, making excuses, lying, procrastination, resentment, sarcasm, and stubbornness, and inability to express anger or hostility openly. These are only the most identifiable behaviors, and all of them may not be present, just as other traits may be, such as avoiding responsibility or fear of intimacy. How aggressive behaviors change over time is influenced by the stability of the home and the strength of or conversely the lack of cohesiveness throughout the interpersonal relationships within the family unit. According to the famous child psychologist, Dr. Spock, infants are born with instincts for self-preservation that show up as what we label as aggressive behaviors. They may cry angrily when they are hungry or uncomfortable, and as they grow and mature they learn to channel these feelings constructively; it's when children don't learn to manage their emotions well that passive-aggressive behaviors can emerge.

Treatment of this disorder can be difficult because of the patient's reluctance to comply with recommendations, and the presence of passive resistance in general. People with passive-aggressive behaviors often are not aware of the impact their behavior has on others, and when confronted with it, they become dismayed and fail to see how they could have provoked such a negative response from their friends or family members. The goal of individual therapy is convince the patient that their unconscious feelings of negativity are being expressed passively onto everyone around us. The level of success reached through treatment varies for each individual because it's greatly dependent on the effectiveness of the therapies used. For more information on personality disorders visit the National Alliance on Mental Illness at www.nami.org.