

# Borderline Derbyshire

Newsletter of the  
Derbyshire Borderline Personality Disorder  
Support Group



For anyone affected by  
Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)  
also known as  
Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (EUPD)



For those in Derbyshire and beyond!



# Who we are...



**Sue**

**Vicky**

**John**

**Jodie**

**Ryan**

In 2017, the five of us established the first BPD support group, in Chesterfield. Between then and the first lockdown in 2020, we opened groups in three other venues around Derbyshire. Since lockdown, we have been operating solely on zoom and, as a result, our membership has extended to areas all over the UK, and beyond, to India and Switzerland.

As the lockdown comes to an end, we are looking to re-open some of our face-to-face groups. We are also committed to continuing our zoom sessions, every other Sunday @ 4pm.

Our meetings are also open to those who would like to know more about BPD, including students and support workers.

Sue Wheatcroft

# Derbyshire Borderline Personality Disorder

**SUPPORT**



**Group**

**News**

## **Therapeutic Writing Session**

Thank you to Katie Watson for delivering an intensive training session on therapeutic writing. Sixteen of our members participated and it proved to be an enormous help in discovering different ways to manage their thoughts and emotions. A BIG thank you to DRPSS for funding this introductory session. Further sessions will be available to members at a reduced cost.

## **Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)**

Private group therapy sessions of DBT have been available to our members for some time, at a reduced cost, and have proved to be popular and successful.

## **The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Community**

Members from the BAME community are vastly under-represented at our groups. We aim to make a concerted effort to put this right. More in the next issue.

A big thank you to **Andy Willis** for giving us his view on what's on offer for those with a personality disorder in Northants.



The group is fantastic! I meet new friends, have a laugh and get lots of information.



I'm Bryony's mum, and I enjoy the support and friendship of the group.

## DERBYSHIRE

# BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER SUPPORT GROUPS

Information & chat for anyone affected by BPD, including friends, family members, support workers etc

**Now solely on zoom until further notice**

**Sundays at 4pm**



I get the support I need at the group. It makes me feel comfortable and safe.

Jodie



I'm Jodie's partner. I get a better understanding of what BPD is and make new friends in the same position.

Ryan

If you would like to know more, please email Sue on [derbyshireborderlinepd@gmail.com](mailto:derbyshireborderlinepd@gmail.com),

# Information

## The new COVID—related Debt Relief Scheme

The debt respite scheme (Breathing Space) that came into force on 4th May 2021 will give some people in financial difficulty the right to legal protection from their creditors. There are two schemes:

The Standard Breathing Space scheme is available to anyone with problem debt.

It gives them legal protections from creditor action for up to 60 days. The protections include pausing most enforcement action and contact from creditors, and freezing most interest and charges on their debts.

The Mental Health Crisis Breathing Space scheme is only available to someone who is receiving mental health crisis treatment. It lasts as long as the person's mental health crisis treatment, plus 30 days (no matter how long the crisis treatment lasts). The definition of 'mental health crisis' is quite broad and, in effect, means people in inpatient care, in care of a Crisis Resolution Home Treatment Team, or in a Community Mental Health Team.

*For this, and other debt problems, contact your local Citizen's Advice*

## Rhubarb Farm...

...offers work placements, training and volunteering opportunities to people with long-term issues, or people who want to learn about growing their own fruit and vegetables. They offer support to people who are ex-offenders, have mental ill health, physical ill health, learning disability, physical disability, dementia, are school students struggling with their behaviour at school, are recovering drug or alcohol misusers, or are ex-service personnel with PTSD. Although the premises are not totally wheelchair-accessible because of rough ground, several wheelchair-users do visit the site, and are not deterred by this.

Rhubarb Farm accepts people whatever their support needs, and abilities, and provide group or one-to-one support depending on need. Everyone who goes to Rhubarb Farm is a volunteer, no matter what their needs or abilities - everyone can make a contribution.

*Tel: 01623 741210*

*Email: [enquiries@rhubarbfarm.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@rhubarbfarm.co.uk)*

# Learning how to be kind to yourself

## Manage your Expectations

Understand that societies' expectations of you, and others, are an unrealistic standard that can never be met. Rid yourself of the idea that you have to be perfect.

&

Embrace the fact that you can't control everything: life isn't about trying to control everything, it is about how you react to it.

## Check in with Yourself Emotionally

Find a chair, grab a coffee and ask yourself what is going on with you today. How are you feeling?

Learning to actually think about your feelings instead of brushing them under the rug is the best way forward.

## Face Your Negative Thoughts

Are they true? Are they helpful? Are they kind? Before you say anything negative, ask yourself, does this benefit me in any way? Does it make me better in some way? Or is it just rude, belittling and cruel. One of the most important keys to happiness is to stop the internal torture. Only use supportive and positive language in your head

## **Tighten Your Circle**

Your social circle affects your whole life. You are an accumulation of the people you hang out with, so have a look at who that is. Who are they? Are they positive? Loving? Supportive? Or are they negative, rude and abusive? You don't owe anyone anything so if someone is dragging you down like a really negative friend, an insulting boyfriend, a rather opinionated, overbearing relative, 'friends' on facebook....ditch them, avoid them, move on. It is your life.

## **But remember...**

We have BPD, we don't always read the situation correctly, so make sure it's them and not you!

## **Be Proud of Who You Are**

You have been through a lot and you have come through it, getting stronger and stronger every time.

## **Try Minimalism**

True happiness and love isn't found in stuff, it is found in appreciating what you have and in experiences.

## **Learn Continuously**

Learn, read, experiment... find what works for you. Try many things. Pick one of these things and practice them.

Happiness isn't a switch, it is a daily practice.

We asked **Andy Willis**, a person with BPD/EUPD, to tell us about his experience of the mental health services where he lives, in Northamptonshire. Andy acknowledges that the system is not perfect. However, for us living in Derbyshire, it's a service that we can only dream of...

## Northamptonshire's Personality Disorder Hub

I was given the opportunity to join the Northants PD Hub's Lived Experience Advisory Panel (LEAP) in January 2018 and was immediately struck by the both the inclusive way staff worked with members of the LEAP group and the commitment of the staff to ensure that every aspect of their development work was Co-Produced. It was also clear that they saw the use of "lived experience" as an ideal vehicle to continually challenge the prejudice, stigma and myths that all too often exist and are faced by those with a Personality Disorder diagnosis in both community settings and within services.

The first Co-Developed and Co-Presented event that I was involved in, with other members of the LEAP group, came in the Spring of 2018 and was a day long awareness event designed primarily to capture the views and voice of clinicians, carers, service users and members of the public in relation to the current services supporting those with a personality disorder. The aim was to gather patient and carer experience, positive and negative, as a starting point from which a newly formed and Co-Produced Personality Disorder Governance Group could seek to address gaps that were identified and seek to develop improvements that needed to be made based on the statements that had been collected from the feedback from this awareness event.

The Director of Mental Health sits on the PD Governance Group alongside members of the PD LEAP group and the working sub groups that report to this forum, such as the inpatient or community pathway groups that are also Co-Produced. The staff of the PD Hub are thoroughly committed to the principles of Co-Production and the added value that lived experience brings to service changes and the related staff training; in an ongoing desire to better meet the needs of those with a personality disorder diagnosis within Northants. The current PD LEAP group consists of some eight members who meet on a regular basis every two months with selected staff in attendance. Each member of the LEAP takes it in turns to chair the meeting.

All training that is delivered by the PD Hub whether that be the EUPD Awareness Recovery College Course, similar related training to staff in the emergency department of the local acute hospitals, the SCM staff training within NHFT or the developing diagnosis training; is Co-Produced and Co-Delivered with those with lived experience of a Personality Disorder. Members of the LEAP group also provide lived experience peer support inputs to some DBT and SCM group therapy sessions as well as occasional training inputs provided to local higher educational institutions and GP training. The LEAP group is encouraged to work on Co-Produced initiatives of their own with a recent example being a recovery pack of resources to help support service users in DBT and SCM, which is approaching the pilot stage.

Some of the developments that have taken place over the past three years, directly in response to the views and information gathered at the awareness event, include the Countywide expansion of community based SCM therapy, designated Personality Disorder Inpatient link workers to support shorter term goal focussed admissions and an expansion of the Understanding and Managing Emotions Groups for those not currently meeting the criteria for DBT or SCM. At the awareness day a service gap was identified linked to the challenges of transition from CAMHS to adult services. Over the past couple of years a DBT (Adolescent) therapeutic intervention has been developed as part of the PD Hub alongside a Family Connections Course to better support those caring for those struggling with Personality Disorder. These new developments are similarly Co-Produced with a new DBT (A) LEAP group now also taking shape which will form mutual working connections with the longer established PD LEAP group.

The PD LEAP are made to feel like valued members of the PD Hub team and, certainly from my point of view, I have been grateful for the opportunities I've been given to make lived experience contributions within both the PD Hub and other areas of NHFT mental health provision. These contributions have helped me to sustain my recovery and rebuild my life after my last prolonged period of severe mental illness. This positive impact is clearly shown by the fact that two former PD Hub LEAP members are now employed by NHFT as substantive staff; one working for the Personality Disorder Team and the other in an inpatient setting. There is no doubt in my mind that this commitment to lived experience through Co-Production has done much to help change the culture within the Trust, in relation to those with a personality disorder diagnosis. It has helped challenge some of the stigma and myths and has also helped to show that EUPD is a mental illness from which recovery to a much better place for the individual is possible.

Andy Willis, June 2021

**Do you have a story to  
tell about the  
Derbyshire Community  
Mental Health Service  
(CMHS)?**

**Good or Bad**

**We are compiling a  
report and would love to  
hear of your lived  
experience!**

**Contact: Sue**  
[\*\*derbyshireborderlinepd@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:derbyshireborderlinepd@gmail.com)

# What every health professional should know, about BPD/EUPD

## What it means to be 'Emotional', for those with BPD

Individuals with BPD aren't just genetically vulnerable to emotions; they've also grown up in an invalidating environment. So, they might never have learned how to regulate their emotions, or their emotions were continuously ignored or dismissed.

*We struggle to control our emotions!*

But being emotional isn't just a lack of control; it has more to do with three separate tendencies, that cause emotional arousal in different ways.

### 1. Emotional Sensitivity

Loved ones aren't the only ones confused when someone with BPD has an emotional reaction seemingly out of nowhere. People with BPD may be unaware of the trigger, too. But they still have a strong reaction.

*We don't always know why we react the way we do!*

Emotional sensitivity wires people to react to cues and to respond to their reactions. To understand emotional sensitivity, think of the person with BPD as being 'raw.' His or her emotional nerve endings are exposed, and so he is acutely affected by anything emotional.

### 2. Emotional Reactivity

A person with BPD reacts with extreme emotion. What would be sadness in most becomes overwhelming despair.

What would be anger becomes rage, but their behaviour is also intense and doesn't fit the situation. They might sleep for days, scream in public, or self-harm. Emotional reactivity doesn't have to be self-indulgent or manipulative, which is an unfortunate myth attached to BPD. Instead, research has suggested that people with BPD have a higher emotional baseline.

If most people's emotional baseline is 20, then people with BPD are continuously at 80. What can intensify their reactions are the secondary emotions of shame and guilt because they know their emotions are out of control. Let's say something has made you angry. On top of the original anger, these secondary emotions feel intolerable, and the fear of all this emotion, ironically, tends to fire off another series of emotions—perhaps anger that is now shifted to someone else for not helping you, or for some other, unexpressed reason.

*We know we're extreme, but we don't know how to stop it!*

### 3. Slow Return to Baseline

People with BPD also have a hard time calming down and stay upset longer than others without the disorder. And there's interesting evidence to back this up.

*If people listened to the evidence, there would not be so much stigma associated with BPD!*

In a person with average emotional intensity, an emotion fires in the brain for around 12 seconds. There is evidence that in people with BPD, emotions fire for 20 percent longer.

Source: Shari Y. Manning, Ph.D, *Loving Someone with Borderline Personality Disorder*

# What your BPD Brain is telling you

BPD is a collection of lies that your brain is telling you. The central lie you are hearing is that you are not worthy, that there is something wrong with you.

You may have experienced abuse and neglect in your earliest years. You may have developed deep rooted feelings of being unwanted, of being bad. If so, you may have memories from a very young age of all these powerful and painful things that reinforce the idea, the feeling that there is something wrong with you.

Your brain floods you with overly intense emotional messages, making things feel way more intense than they are. Your feelings are lying to you, telling you what's happening is worse than it really is. It's really difficult for you to come down from these feelings.

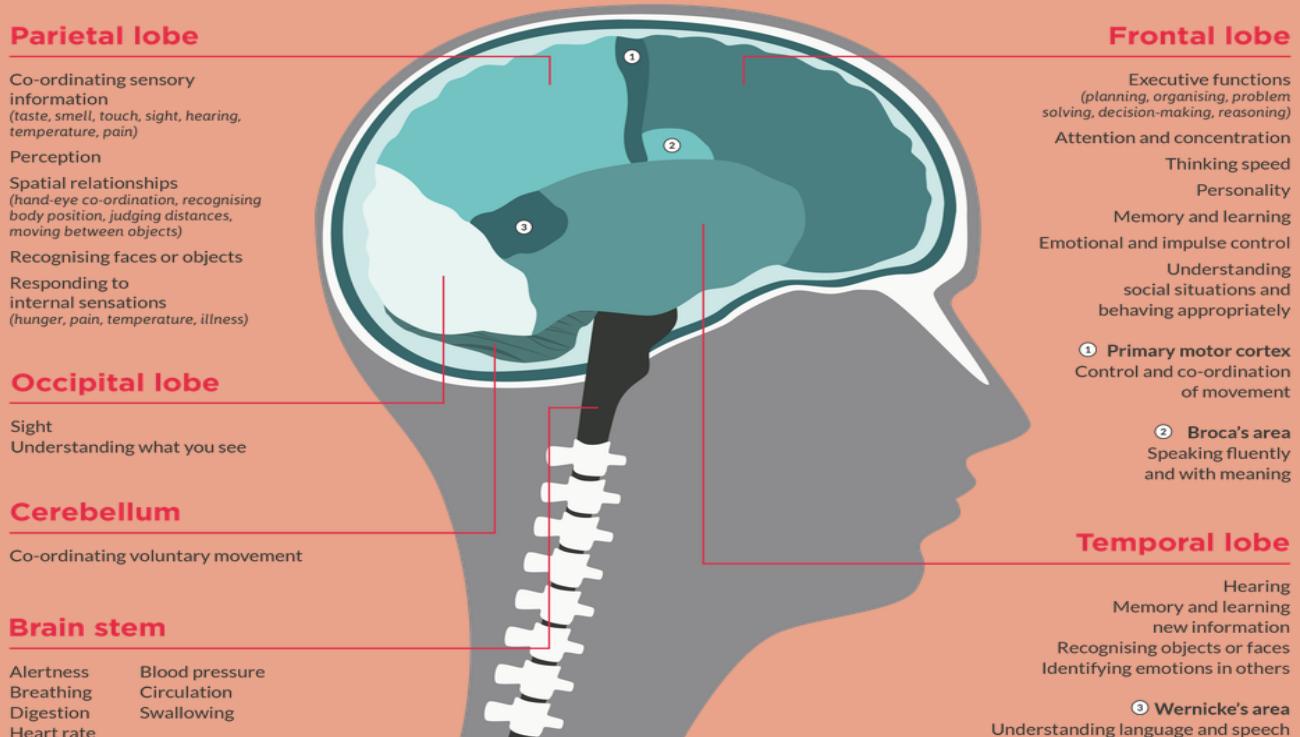
Painful memories and insecurities that were formed at a very young age leads to a body chemistry that can generate overly intense emotions. You will have received little or no training on how to effectively process these thoughts and feelings, and more likely receive harmful training. Your brain is poorly prepared to deal with all this. When you are flooded with negativity and insecurity, you don't see what is happening within you and around you clearly, so you respond in ways that don't make sense, that don't help, that are harmful.

But you ARE worthy. At the centre of the swirling mosaic that is you, is a beautiful, loving person. You want to love and be loved. But you keep getting this message that you are not worthy, that there is something horribly wrong. It is the conflict between your true and worthy self, and the damaged insecure self that is the core of BPD behaviour.

Adapted from *What is BPD?*, Jeff Kelley, Quora.com

## The Frontal Lobe and BPD

The frontal lobe is a very important part of our brain. It's involved in motor function, problem solving, spontaneity, memory, language, initiation, judgement, impulse control, and social and sexual behaviour. It's pretty much the "control panel" of our personality and our ability to communicate. Damage to the frontal lobe can cause increased irritability, a change in mood, and an inability to regulate behaviours properly. Scientific studies have shown that subjects with BPD had a significantly smaller frontal lobe compared to a healthy control group.



**Supported by...**

**Public Health**

**North Derbyshire CCG**

**Derbyshire County Council**

**Derbyshire Dales District Council**

**Foundation Derbyshire**

**Derbyshire Recovery and Peer Support Service**

**Derbyshire Voluntary Action**

**Lloyds Bank**

**We welcome ex-offenders, and are proud to be a member of...**

