

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!



SUPPORT



Group

News

Good News for Local Members!

We have been awarded a grant from Active Partners Trust for up to 15 people to participate in some kind of group physical activity. The aim is two-fold: (1) to allow our members to get together face to face as a form of bonding exercise, and (2) to encourage us to exercise.

After asking our members what type of activity they would prefer, we have decided to concentrate on Bowling and Adventure Golf.

Our members from both Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire will be eligible and it does not have to be the same 15 people each time.

The grant is for a total of 7 visits between September 2022 and March 2023 and 2 of these will be dedicated to members from our Parents/Carers/Family/Friends group.

If any eligible members would like to participate and has not yet been approached, please email Sue at:

derbyshireborderlinepd@gmail.com



Several months after our last meeting, a number of 'old' and new members, along with a P3 support worker, met up for coffee.



Monday
27 June 2022
Ilkeston



We hope it will be the first of many

XXXXXX

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**Vicky was a co-founder of the group and
my soulmate of 36 years. Sadly, she
passed away just before Christmas 2021.**

Sleep tight darling!

Sue xxx



Who we are...



Sue



John



Jodie



Ryan

We all have a connection with BPD

What we do...

Our aim is simple...we want everyone who is affected by BPD to have a safe space in which they can come together to relax, chat, swop stories and discuss coping skills. An official diagnosis is not necessary.

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

You do not have to live in Derbyshire to join our support groups

What we offer...

ZOOM Meetings

BPD - every other Sunday @ 4pm

Parent/Carer – monthly

Therapy

Group DBT Sessions
with a private therapist
at a reduced cost

WhatsApp

BPD chat group
Parent/Carer group

Website:

derbyshireborderlinepersonalitydisordersupportgroup.com



The Inner Child

There is often a painful dissociation between the inner child and behaviour and in those with BPD, we can see much of the inner child coming through the adult, by their behaviour. Those with BPD have a very difficult time even contemplating being vulnerable, and the result is that they end up denying their inner child over and over again. Some will take on the role of their past abusers or a caretaker who could not meet their developmental needs, and continually re-abuse themselves.

Much of this self-abuse is aimed at avoidance of the actual pain that sits under (often subconsciously) their experienced symptomology or pathology, the BPD itself.

Continuing to ignore this little aspect of you and all the pain and terror that sits inside of you will make change and healing virtually impossible. If you have not yet tapped into your inner child or inner children, you may be aware on some level of very young screaming pain that there are no words for. This is your inner child trying to get your attention.

Welcoming in your inner child will, over time, teach you ways through which you can learn to feel safe. You will come to better understand why you haven't felt safe for so many years.

Just imagine a 3-year-old, let loose on the side of a motorway. As he/she starts to cross, you would feel utter terror. You would know if you saw this that you would need to RUN to the aid of this lost little one. You would know that this 3-year-old does not have the ability to keep him/herself safe. When you are a child the 'faulty', or maladapted behaviours serve the purpose of keeping you safe and ensure that you continue to survive, albeit without the needs being met that you need to have met to be healthy. When you get older, as an adult, you are locked into these behaviours until you learn to make new choices and changes.

These behaviours then express your fear of love, your inability to say no, your shame, and your critical thinking in a patterned way that interferes with your ability to perform, and drastically affects your ability to form and to keep any measure of stable, consistent relationship. This is one of the key things about borderline behaviour that often escapes both the borderline and those around him/her. Much of the behaviour that borderlines continue to cycle through, over and over again, is not age-appropriate or situationally-appropriate.

Whether or not you yet realise or want to admit this, the behaviour that you continue to perpetuate that continues to hurt you and cause you to lose jobs and relationship (whether intimate or friendships) and keeps you effectively alienated from any sense of your true self, wants, likes, dislikes, beliefs etc. is a choice. You chose it years ago in the void that was a lack of what you needed in the in the first place. It will take an active decision on your part, now, in order for you to open up to the kind of change and new choices that will make healing from BPD possible.

The Importance of Self-Soothing

People with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) are frequently in states of extreme emotional distress. Their perception of other people's behaviours is often seriously skewed, they almost always fear abandonment from those closest to them, and they may suffer from debilitating self-hatred.

Living with these devastating feelings every day and having no ability to self-soothe can cause a person with BPD to act out in disturbing ways. When their emotions overwhelm them and cause them to feel out of control, they may attempt to control others in unhealthy ways or engage in self-harmful behaviours. For this reason, learning to self-soothe is a crucial skill for anyone with BPD to work on.

What Is Self-Soothing?

In very basic terms, self-soothing is the ability to calm yourself down when you are experiencing emotional distress. Most people do this regularly without even realising it. They know that the way they feel in the middle of emotional upheaval will not last forever. Some people may take a hot bath, go on a long walk, call a trusted friend or family member for moral support, put on music they enjoy, watch an escapist movie for distraction, or write in their journal about what happened that upset them. Usually, simple activities like these can lessen the intensity of their emotions and return them to a more stable state of mind. These are acceptable ways that people work through a disturbing event.

How People with BPD 'Self-Soothe'

The instinct in people with BPD to seek immediate relief from negative emotional states manifests in damaging and unhealthy activities that include substance abuse, depression and isolation, self-harming, and raging. They seek to unload or change the negative feelings they are experiencing but engaging in destructive behaviour simply serves to exacerbate emotional distress rather than relieve it.

Self-Soothing Skills

Learning self-soothing techniques and effectively implementing them is necessary for a successful recovery from BPD. For people with BPD, it may not be possible in times of great distress to imagine that their intense feelings will eventually pass.

While in BPD treatment, people are taught to de-escalate their emotions before those emotions take over and cause damage. Part of this process is learning to sit with a negative feeling and work through it instead of making frantic attempts to transfer that feeling to others.

BPD can cause people to constantly blame others and feel victimized by the people who are "making" them feel bad. In order to get past that dysfunctional perception, a person with BPD must take responsibility for their feelings and commit to *not* acting out.

Many people with BPD lack a solid sense of identity and struggle with feelings of emptiness, and they often feel unworthy of love. Adopting a more loving attitude toward themselves is quite difficult for them but it is something that can be successfully addressed through therapy. When someone with Borderline Personality Disorder can at last accept that they are deserving of love, care, and attention, they can then begin to give loving and caring attention to themselves instead of working themselves up into ever-increasing states of anxiety and pain that result from emotional dysregulation.

Like any new skill, it will take patience and dedication to turn self-soothing techniques into healthy habits. However, the achievement of gaining greater control of heightened emotional states is the key to a successful recovery from BPD.

Don't call me "Attention seeking"

Dr Karen M Wright

How many times do we hear those words... *"they're just attention seeking"* - or even worse: *"they're just attention seeking, ignore them"*? So, before I start your blood boiling, I would like us to think about the phrase *"attention seeking"* and turn it around, in a good way (honest).

Firstly, I need to come clean here. I have never used mental health services myself; I have worked in or with mental health services for around 40 years though. And in that time, I have seen and heard many things that have amazed me, and others that have troubled me. I have had the privilege of time and education that have enabled me to better understand people - whether they be on the receiving end of care, or whether they be the carers. Now as a Professor of Nursing in a city University I feel able to voice my opinion that any worker who calls a person who is reliant upon them for care 'attention seeking' neither understands them, nor has any concern for their relationship. I say 'relationship' because at the end of the day, any intervention in health care relies upon the relationship between the person seeking care and the carer. If that relationship is not built upon respect, trust, acceptance, and mutual understanding it is doomed.

Let me tell you a story. My granddaughter came to me and asked me could she please have a drink of Vimto? I said *I'm sorry you can't have a drink of Vimto, but you can have a drink of water or milk because that is what mummy said that you could have to drink*. She wasn't happy with this answer and said *but I'd really like some Vimto grandma*. Of course I repeated back *I'm sorry you can't have a drink of Vimto, but you can have a drink of milk or water*. Again, she was not happy with this answer so her voice got louder her feet started stamping and she said *but I really want Vimto* at which point I said (again), with the milk in my hand, *I'm sorry you can't have Vimto but you can have milk or water*. Of course, she was not happy with this, so she looked for her grandad and said *grandad please can I have some Vimto?* He said *Go and ask Grandma, she's in the kitchen*. You can probably guess what happened next and, yes, it did include some rolling about on the floor, tears, snot and screams.

As parents/ grandparents we recognise that children need to be shown kindness, consistency and nurturing. They are still learning how to be with other people, how to get their needs met, and how to express themselves, because they are still developing. However, not all children are blessed with loving and patient parents, many are neglected, exploited, abused, ignored and worse. How we are received and treated by others in our childhood causes us to create a system of beliefs about ourselves such as *I matter* or *I don't matter*, or, it could be that *people who love me hurt me* or it could be *saying what you think will get you into trouble*. Such beliefs about ourselves are spoken about by Jeff Young, an American psychologist as *schema*. Schemas are self-defeating beliefs and emotions that underpin the way we are, the decisions that we make and the situations that we find ourselves in. These develop in childhood, as that is when we learn to interact with the world and others. If the world and others treat us badly, then we come to expect that, and develop ways of survival. We might find that we struggle to trust other people, we may fear that we will be hurt by others, that people that we rely upon will abandon us, we might struggle with our own self-esteem, our self-worth and may have difficulty establishing good, lasting relationships with others. I won't bore you with a lesson on Jeff Young's theory! I merely wish to point out a couple of 'schemas' that I have often seen in people who I have had the privilege to help in the course of my clinical work, people who identify with the diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder.

Firstly, the schema of '*Emotional Deprivation*', where the person cannot rely upon others to meet their emotional needs of Nurturance, Empathy and Protection, which include a person's need from affection and warmth from others, to be protected from harm and to be heard and understood. This can develop when they have been denied such experiences of care, love and nurturing by their parents. Thus, in later life, they may feel that they need to test the security of a relationship and push the other person to prove that they love and care for them. Such characteristics can regularly be found in the person who experiences Borderline Personality Disorder.

Secondly, the schema of '*Abandonment/Instability*' which refers to a person's fear that those whom they become attached to will leave them and that close relationships will finish. There could be lots of reasons why this schema develops such as the death of a parent, or when parents have been inconsistent in the way that have looked after their children, or left them alone for long periods, especially if the child has not known when the parent might return.

The pain of separation and of loss might be felt at a time when the child or young person has no one else to turn to or trust, so they develop their own ways of coping and of seeking help. It isn't easy for any of us to deal with emotional pain, and sometimes we develop ways of coping that are not helpful to us.

These are referred to as 'maladaptive coping styles' or 'life traps'; I prefer the phrase 'life traps' as it does what is said on the tin, and is not jargonistic. They are 'life traps' because they happen because of how other people treated us and now hold us in ways that prevent us from having wholesome, healthy, mutual relationships with others. Examples are:

Feeling that you are defective and that nobody who really knows you will be able to love you

Putting the needs of others before yourself, even if that means that your own needs do not get met, and you are not even sure what your own needs are.

So, if you are not sure of your own needs, nor that others will meet those needs, it is incredibly difficult to express needs, especially emotional needs. The need for security, affection, care, compassion, and warmth are basic human needs, but are hard to ask for, at the best of times. Many people have others in their lives who love them enough to be able to tell when they need something, when they are sad, in pain, or need somebody to congratulate them on an achievement, without this being overtly brought to their attention. But what about those who rely upon workers, paid carers, or people with whom they only have a transient or mistrusting relationship? How do they meet their needs for comfort and recognition?

The answer is: they need to bring it to the attention of others. They need to actively seek attention BECAUSE THEY NEED ATTENTION/ CARE/ COMFORT/ HELP SUPPORT. But what if the person isn't listening? They are too busy? It's the end of their shift? There are others deemed to be more needy? They do not recognise the need?

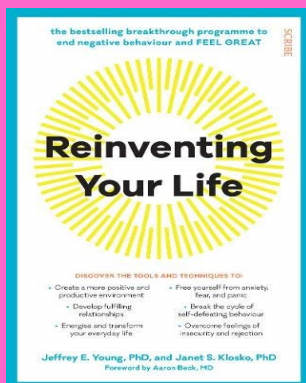
So, let us recognise that when a person is seeking attention, we have already failed to notice that they are in need. Let us recognise that the person with borderline personality disorder may not have developed the skills or the ability to trust others which will then enable them to express their needs in ways that are deemed acceptable to workers or carers. Let us recognise that 'attention seeking' is 'attention needing' and accept that we need to pay attention. Responses which are critical, dismissing, abrupt or judgement merely serve to keep the person trapped in their 'life trap'. What we do next, if we care, is to show respect, genuine, warmth and acceptance of the other person who needs our attention.

Dr Karen M Wright

Professor of Nursing, University of Central Lancashire, Nurse and Psychotherapist.

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Book Recommendation



Reinventing Your Life is a self-help book based on schema therapy, a fairly new type of psychotherapy which is mainly (though not exclusively) used to treat personality disorders. A schema is basically a set of related thoughts, beliefs and behaviours which can either be healthy or maladaptive. The authors discuss 11 common maladaptive schemas or "life-traps".

If you have a personality disorder or mental health difficulties that you think might be linked to a difficult childhood and you'd like to understand your issues better, I would strongly recommend this book. It's had a very influential and helpful effect on me.

(Review on Goodreads)

Discusses life-traps of:

- Abandonment
- Dependence
- Mistrust and Abuse
- Vulnerability
- Emotional deprivation
- Subjugation
- Social exclusion
- Entitlement

Life Affirmations

Try repeating these affirmations, designed to help you soothe your mind and develop a sense of calm

1. I let go of stress
2. I can feel a sense of calm moving through my body
3. My mind is quiet
4. Setting boundaries is healthy
5. I only need to take one step at a time
6. I deserve to rest
7. If I reach my capacity, I can stop
8. I am safe
9. I breathe out stress and breathe in peace
10. I speak to myself with kindness
11. If I need it, I can ask for help
12. It's OK to take a break
13. I deserve to feel at peace
14. I am not responsible for things I can't control
15. I invite joy into my life
16. I don't need to prove myself to anyone
17. I am doing the best I can
18. It's OK to say no
19. I will have a peaceful day
20. My anxious thoughts don't rule me
21. I let go of tension
22. I trust myself
23. I am grounded in this moment
24. I am capable
25. I let go of intrusive thoughts
26. I have the tools I need to face challenges that come my way
27. I am loved
28. External stress doesn't need to affect me
29. I deserve self-compassion
30. I am calm



Are you a 'doom-scroller'?

The news at the moment is... a lot, right? Both in the UK and globally there seems to be a terrible thing unfolding and it's easy to feel overwhelmed by it at times. The news is arguably easier for us to access than ever before. All it takes is a few clicks or swipes to find out what's going on across the world and keep up to date with it all day. If we're commuting, waiting, or relaxing, our phones aren't usually far from reach. By default, we might find ourselves turning to our phones if we're not fully occupied, making 'doom-scrolling' a natural by-product. Similarly, if a particularly emotive news story catches your attention, especially first thing in the morning, you may find yourself on high alert as your body goes into 'fight or flight' mode, increasing your temptation to refresh your newsfeed and keep up to date with the perceived threat in the news. So, what can we do instead of doom-scrolling for a calmer morning?



Read uplifting newsfeeds

It still involves reaching for your phone (so it doesn't feel too different to your beloved scrolling habit) but it's more intentional.

Scroll a happier feed

Social media *can* be a positive place to scroll, we just may need to do a little tweaking. Have an audit on who you're following and let go of those accounts that don't make you feel good. If you're on Twitter, why not make a list full of accounts that feel like sunshine? If you're on Instagram, organise your 'following' feed and head straight to the positive ones.

Read something beautiful

Sometimes we need to fill our brains with something beautiful to counteract the doom. Pick up a book of poetry or essays that helps you see the good in the world. Ross Gay's *Book of Delights* is the perfect antidote to doom-scrolling.

Meditate

When overwhelm creeps up, our minds crave space. Instead of filling it with fear by doom-scrolling, try opening up a little whitespace. Meditation can be a great tool for this, or even just taking a few slow breaths. This can calm our nervous system and give us a moment of pause before launching into our day.

Make something

Being creative and making something is a brilliant way to lift your mood. Boosting confidence and giving you a sense of achievement, making something mindfully can also help ease stress. Draw a pattern, add a stitch to your sewing project, write a piece of flash fiction, anything to get those creative juices flowing.

Answer these questions...

Getting your thoughts out onto paper can help you detangle them and leave them on the page. Here are some questions to journal on: How am I feeling right now? What's something I keep thinking about?

What do I need today?

How can I give myself what I need?

Reach out to a loved one

Connecting to others can often give us a big dose of perspective, reminding ourselves that we have people in our lives we care for and who care for us. When you reach for your phone, skip the news apps or Twitter and head to the message app instead and check in with a friend, arrange a coffee with your mum or call your colleague for a catch-up.

Take action

When the world feels full of tragedy and injustice, it's easy to feel powerless. Taking action, even in a small way can help you take that power back. Whether it's donating to a cause or charity close to your heart, signing petitions or encouraging others to make a stand.

Make a mindful cuppa

If you love to start your morning with a hot beverage, try making it a ritual by taking your time with it. Leave your phone in the other room and focus on the process. How does it feel, smell, sound, and taste? Take it all in and get absorbed. This sense of mindfulness helps to ground us in the present moment, helping to lower anxiety and overwhelm.

Move your body

Release that nervous energy and stress with some movement. Skip Twitter and go to your music library, play a song you love and shake your body or find a gentle playlist and enjoy some yoga. Head outside for a walk, dust off your bike or go for a dip, whatever helps you be in your body, not your anxiety.



Source: [10 things to do instead of doomscrolling \(happiful.com\)](https://happiful.com/10-things-to-do-instead-of-doomscrolling/)

Create your own Mindful Journal..... By Mark & Omar

The word mindfulness can have many meanings to individuals. It can be associated with how we picture environments such as the beach, the countryside even a warm evening relaxed listening to music while meditating in a relaxing spot and focusing on your breath.

When in mental health crisis Mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) techniques helps ground oneself to the place they are and decreases symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Mindfulness journaling can be practiced in many ways with the inclusion of written/ audio journals or emotional expressions in producing powerful art. Poetry can be a very effective in mindful journaling as this can help the poet be more mindful and have sensory perception towards their work.

It is therefore beneficial to develop a mindful journal with our individual preferences and interests. For example, Omar's Mindful journal consists of walking in the countryside and visiting his local lake recording audio/video journals about his experience.



Group members may have seen his videos, uploaded to the BPD WhatsApp group most days. Omar likes to focus on the beautiful colours of nature, the wildlife which appears on his journey to the lake and the refreshing noise of flowing water from a waterfall on his way back home. Additionally, imagining thoughts being transient and fluid, after this process he describes feeling relaxed, calm, and ready to start his day with positivity.



One way that mindful journaling can be utilized is through analysing your favourite film, especially by homing in on important scenes. Mark often likes to have a feelings wheel close by so that he can identify his own feelings and those that the characters might be feeling, too.

One of Mark's favourite films is Goodbye Charlie Bright, a coming-of-age story about two young men, Charlie (Paul Nicholls) and Justin (Roland Manookian). At the end of the film, Charlie is forced to reappraise his relationship with Justin, and his life in the future. A heart rendering scene ensues where Charlie and Justin say goodbye, knowing that their lives are about to move in very different directions. This scene inspired Mark to reflect more in his written journal about his own relationships, emotions and learning experiences.

Using film to mindfully explore our own experiences and emotions is a gentle and entertaining way of encouraging self-awareness and engaging with our emotions and feelings in a relaxed way.

Sources and further reading:

Desforges. (2020). Mindbody green. (2022, July 7). How To Start A Mindfulness Journal + 5 Prompts To Get You Started. <https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-25949/how-to-become-more-mindful-using-nothing-but-a-journal.html>. (Retrieved 08/07/2022).
Hofmann, S. G., & Gómez, A. F. (2017). Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Anxiety and Depression. The Psychiatric clinics of North America, 40(4), 739–749. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psc.2017.08.008>.

Mindfulness is, in effect, the opposite of Escapism, which is discussed on the next page. Both methods have merits, depending on the individual and their needs at a particular time.....

Escapism

It's likely that you've dabbled in escapism before, even if you didn't realise that you were doing it. Perhaps you find it when engrossed in a good movie, when scrolling through funny videos on TikTok, or flicking through a page-turner. Whatever it might be for you, escapism is that feeling you get when you lift yourself out of the 'here and now' to go somewhere else – somewhere that feels better for your mind. Whether it's the pandemic, social justice issues or worldwide tragedies, it's understandable that some of us feel the need to check out mentally from time to time.

Benefits of escapism:

It can help reduce stress

This is perhaps one of the most common reasons we turn to escapism. Getting lost in a favourite book, daydreaming while listening to a song or playing a video game can all help us switch off, release tension and reduce stress. When things get too much, a little escapism gives you the equivalent of a mental vacation, but it's important to remember this is only treating the symptoms of stress. To truly reduce stress, we need to identify the root cause.

It can inspire us

Creative pursuits can be a wonderful ticket to escapism. Doodling imaginary scenes, making music, watching films/TV that makes us think, writing stories... it can all inspire us to think more broadly and spark a fire within us. These forms of escapism can be considered productive and often leave us feeling pretty good.

It can keep us motivated

Sometimes we need to step back to recognise where we're going. Escapism can help us do that. Try daydreaming about a day in your 'ideal' life, from breakfast to bedtime, and ask yourself how it's different from your current life. What small steps could you take to bridge that gap? Holidays can also be considered a form of escapism, and these can offer the break in routine we all need to stay motivated when we get home.

Cons of escapism:

It can be a form of procrastination

Have you ever used escapism when you know you should be doing something else? Perhaps you're binge-watching a series to avoid family commitments or scrolling on social media instead of working on a deadline. Procrastination often comes up when we're feeling fearful of a task (maybe we doubt our abilities or feel anxious about it) and escapism can help to facilitate this.

It can lead to avoidance

Taking it one step further, sometimes we can use escapism as a way to avoid difficult emotions. I know I use social media scrolling as a numbing tool when I have an anxiety flare-up, for example. Maybe you shut yourself inside with video games when you're feeling low.

"Escapism is the opposite of mindfulness – that is living in the moment, of living mindfully. It may be that for you, facing reality is simply too terrifying. This is at the root of your anxiety, the fear of 'doing the living', becoming frightened of your own existence," psychotherapist Amanda Perl MSC explains in her article, *Anxiety and escapism: a post-traumatic stress disorder*.

It can be addictive

Escapism feels good – there's a reason we turn to it in tough times. But this can give it an addictive quality, encouraging us to lean on escapism as a coping mechanism. The more passive types of escapism especially (like scrolling or watching TV) can become a crutch and start interfering with our overall wellbeing.

Questions to ask yourself about escapism and mental health

As we can see, things aren't clear-cut with escapism, and there are many pros and cons. So, how can we determine if the way we're using escapism is good or bad for our mental health? Here are some questions to consider:

What am I escaping from?

Bringing a little self-awareness to your escapism habits can help you dig a little deeper into what may be going on for you. Consider what it is you're escaping from and whether or not there's more you can do to address the underlying issue.

How do I feel after using escapism?

If you come away from your escapism activity feeling creative, inspired or simply more relaxed, then that's great. If you notice you feel low, numb or even afraid to return to 'real life' it could be worth seeking support.

Is escapism affecting my everyday life?

How much time is escapism taking up day-to-day? Is it stopping you from functioning? If it's having an impact on your everyday life, it is worth taking a closer look at why you need it so much and how you can cope with what it is you're escaping.

Source: [Is escapism good for your mental health? \(happiful.com\)](https://happiful.com/is-escapism-good-for-your-mental-health/)

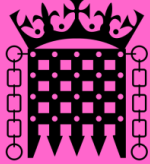
A day in Parliament

Thank you to Rethink Mental Illness

for inviting me to their 50th anniversary event at the House of Commons

and for allowing me to speak about, and raise awareness of, BPD

Sue Wheatcroft



Jeff Smith MP
will host a reception
on behalf of Rethink Mental Illness
in the Terrace Pavilion at the House of Commons
on Monday 11 July from 2pm – 4pm
and requests the pleasure of your company.

The event will celebrate Rethink Mental Illness' 50th anniversary.

Speakers:

Secretary of State for Health, Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP • Shadow Minister for Mental Health,
Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP • Expert by experience, Sue Wheatcroft • Rethink Mental Illness Chief Executive, Mark
Winstanley

Refreshments provided.

Entrance via Cromwell Green visitors' entrance.

Entrance closes at 10:00pm weekdays when either House is sitting and 8:00pm at all other times, incl. weekends.

Please allow up to 30 minutes to clear security • Smoking/e-cigarettes not permitted • No parking facilities available

Admittance upon presentation of invitation only • Guests are advised to bring personal photo identification.



Sajid Javid resigned shortly before the event and was replaced by Secretary of State for Care and Mental Health, Gillian Keegan MP.

Unfortunately, the Shadow Minister for Mental Health, Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP was taken to hospital shortly before the event and was unable to attend.

Speaker of the House of Commons, Sir Lindsay Hoyle, attended the event along with several other MPs.

A number of attendees approached me after my speech to talk about someone they knew who has BPD



Mark Winstanley, CEO of
RETHINK Mental Illness



Raising awareness of BPD



With Secretary of State for Care
and Mental Health
Gillian Keegan

Do You Keep Beating Yourself Up?

What an idiot, I'm such a nightmare!

How have I made the same mistake, again?!

I should know better than this!"

Do any of these comments seem familiar to you? Do you say or think such thoughts to yourself? If you do, that's okay, we all do or have done at one point or another.

In the moment, in the split second of time that it takes for those thoughts and comments to pass through our minds, unconsciously and flippantly, we can think so little of it. In fact, much of the time, they can go completely unnoticed by us.

What if we take a moment to consider what the impact is, of having these repetitive thoughts. They are reinforcing some old programmes within us, they are playing the same old record, over and over again. A time will inevitably come when we begin to get bored of that record and not want to listen to it anymore. We want to play a new set of beliefs, perhaps something kinder to hear!

We recognise that if we re-read those comments and ask ourselves if we would ever say those things to a friend, the answer for all of us, would be a resounding no.

This isn't an invitation to further feel bad about ourselves by the way, it is an invitation to lean into self-compassion right now, before you continue reading further. Because what is it that feels so difficult or uncomfortable about practicing self-compassion and how do we begin with this practise?

So much of the time, a lack of self-compassion will go unnoticed. It can feel so natural to beat ourselves up with our thoughts that we actually feel safe with this familiar pattern of self-deprecation. Despite the fact that deep down, we know that speaking unkindly to ourselves only serves to keep us playing small in the world.

The power lies in starting to take notice and noticing what you notice. Our ability to begin observing our negative thoughts and self-talk for what they are – old records playing inharmonious music that you no longer wish to dance to. So how can we change that record?

1. Increase your self-awareness

Bring your awareness to actively noticing these thoughts throughout your day or week; each time, taking a moment to pause with them. It can be helpful to label them or visualise them in some way; perhaps viewing them as a story book, something tangible you can take from a shelf, choose not to open and return to the shelf, alternatively, seeing a negative thought as a rabbit hole, one that the rabbit is welcome to go down, but that you're choosing not to follow it in today.

It can also be a conversation, saying to yourself "that's an interesting thought but I know that I am not my thoughts" – the mere fact that you can have this conversation with yourself is proof that you are indeed, not your thoughts. Thoughts are all different parts of ego showing you a subconscious programme derived from the past. They are not who you are now.

2. Ask yourself, what would I say to a friend?

When you start to notice and raise awareness of your thoughts, over time it will become second nature, just to notice. Taking some deep breathes, connecting with the now, being in the moment and taking it further to ask yourself, 'if my friend said the same about themselves, what would I say to them? In what tone would I say it? What words would I use?' – would life feel easier if you could redirect the kindness you afford to others towards yourself?

3. Remember, self-compassion is not selfish

Be safe in the knowledge that it is not selfish to have self-compassion. We have a choice to play the old record which no longer serves us, or to rewrite our thoughts to something more neutral or to something kinder. To something that actually serves us, because rationally, what would hold us back from choosing to do that?

Practicing self-compassion is a game changer because it begins to allow you the space and energy for the things you really want to be, do and have, away from carrying around the old broken records.

[Dr Kristin Neff](#) has a website dedicated to self-compassion resources and practices which if this article triggered something in you, would be an amazing place to explore.

Marilyn Monroe

The 'serious mental illness' that plagued the 'blonde bombshell'

The "blonde bombshell" who quickly shot to fame in the 1950s and 1960s was a top-billed actress for a decade, with her films grossing \$200 million by the time of her death in 1962. Remaining an icon within popular culture, behind the scenes Monroe suffered from numerous health issues. Having suffered from severe abandonment trauma as a child, Monroe carried self-image issues and insecurities into her adulthood. It was due to these numerous and complex mental health issues that science journalist Claudia Kalb concluded that Monroe suffered from **borderline personality disorder**.

Writing in her 2016 book Kalb stated: "What is clear is that Monroe suffered from severe mental distress. "Her symptoms included a feeling of emptiness, a split or confused identity, extreme emotional volatility, unstable relationships, and an impulsivity that drove her to drug addiction and suicide - all textbook characteristics of a condition called borderline personality disorder."

It has also been stated that Monroe had more than five of the nine symptoms required for a borderline personality disorder diagnosis. In fact, the media at the time of Monroe's death hinted at the fact that the star's mental struggles were well known. It read: "The golden girl received 5,000 fan letters a week and to those fans she never let any of her personal problems dim her screen glamour."

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a serious mental illness marked by unstable moods, behaviour, and relationships. Because some people with severe BPD have brief psychotic episodes, experts originally thought of this illness as atypical, or borderline, versions of other mental disorders. While mental health experts now generally agree that the name 'borderline personality disorder' is misleading, a more accurate term does not exist yet.

For Monroe specifically, BPD manifested in the following ways:

1. Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment
2. A pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterised by extremes between Idealisation and devaluation (also known as "splitting")
3. Identity disturbance: Markedly or persistently unstable self-image or sense of self
4. Impulsive behaviour in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging (e.g. spending, sex, substance abuse, reckless driving, binge eating)
5. Recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, or threats, or self-harming behaviour
6. Emotional instability in reaction to day-to-day events (e.g. intense episodic sadness, irritability, or anxiety usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more than a few days)
7. It is reported that towards the end of her life, Monroe's psychiatrist Dr Ralph Greenson suggested to his colleagues that the film star also may have had schizophrenia, although at this time, it may have been confused with BPD.



The NHS explains that someone with a personality disorder will differ significantly from an average person in terms of how they think, perceive, feel or relate to others.

The causes of the condition remain unclear, but with most mental disorders, it tends to appear as a result of a combination of both genetic and environmental factors. People with this disorder also have high rates of co-occurring disorders, such as depression, anxiety disorders, substance abuse, and eating disorders, along with self-harm and suicidal behaviours.

For Monroe, after expressing that she was struggling with some mental health difficulties, she was admitted to Payne Whitney Psychiatric Clinic in New York. Spending four days at the institution, it was reported that Monroe was kept within a padded cell and told she was a "very sick girl."

In a published letter written by the star shortly after coming out of the Clinic, she writes: "I said to them 'If you are going to treat me like a nut I'll act like a nut.' "He told me I was a very, very sick girl and had been a very, very sick girl for many years. "It had a very bad effect - they asked me after putting me in a 'cell' (I mean cement blocks and all) for very disturbed depressed patients except I felt I was in some kind of prison for a crime I hadn't committed."

Sadly in Monroe's case, her mental health struggles were never resolved, but for many in modern times, medical professionals can help those suffering with BPD. Treatment may involve a range of individual and group psychological therapies (psychotherapy) carried out by trained professionals working with a community mental health team.

With effective treatment for around a year, many people with BPD overcome their symptoms and recover. Additional treatment is recommended for people whose symptoms return.

Source: Lauren Russell, [Marilyn Monroe: The 'serious mental illness' that plagued the 'blonde bombshell'](https://www.msn.com/en-gb/entertainment/marilyn-monroe-the-serious-mental-illness-that-plagued-the-blonde-bombshell) (msn.com)

From Crisis to Hope: a BPD Survival Guide... by Omar

Introduction

It has been noted through history and philosophy that crisis has been mentioned numerous times. The existentialist philosopher Soren Kierkegaard experienced extreme dread and fear described anxiety and crisis as a feeling of complete angst and despair. Humanistic psychologists such as Albert Ellis (1994) have adapted therapies such as rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT) to help alleviate secondary mental health disorders of a BPD crisis, these include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and anxiety.

During a BPD crisis, a person struggles to think clearly and access any emotional intelligence or wellness tools they have towards adverse events and can often end up in emergency departments. The idea of this survival guide is to understand borderline personality disorder (BPD) crisis and to work towards strategies which encourage hope and resilience.

Understanding the crisis

How would the person want to be supported in a BPD crisis that is the most important question? It would appear from many experiences with people who have BPD that validation of their true self and the person they really are, the pain they feel towards their crisis is of most importance. A famous quote epitomises this idea when Carl Rogers in his book a way of being (1980) explains that the eye moistens when the individual is heard. He further describes that the person has gratitude that somebody knows what it feels like to be them, additionally he says that rarely do we show empathy when we listen to the problems others face.

A much deeper understanding of validation is needed to create a therapeutic model in which individuals would feel comfortable in expressing their deepest and scariest fears. This validation happens with either unconditional positive regard (UPR) to be not judged by another person or the development of unconditional self-acceptance (USA) to totally accept oneself with compassion towards the mistakes and challenges faced during adversity.

Having acceptance of making mistakes and being fallible as a human being is important in improving physical and psychological symptoms during crisis. Mentalization based therapy (MBT) offers the client to mentalize their thoughts while dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) helps regulate emotions.

Regulating emotions during the therapy of DBT is often described as riding the wave to encourage the strong sensations to dissipate. At that moment, the person in crisis can find all this unpleasant as they may feel overwhelmed. It is therefore important to be aware that these strong sensations will pass, and they can be validated by another person if they have an awareness and understanding of how certain triggers can create fear, despair, and lead to mental health crisis. It could not be beneficial to push these feelings away as acceptance and commitment therapy encourages to accept thoughts regardless how fearful they are and to look at them mindfully and compassionately which will not lead to acting out on them.

Accepting the crisis

Learning to live with crisis will be part of persons life who has BPD; therefore, it is essential not to be naive as it will happen at some point. To be able to accept the crisis is to fully understand one's own reasons why a person will fall into calamity and to know there is meaning in the automatic negative thoughts (ANTs) and irrational beliefs which are thought processes associated with mental health crisis.

According to the ancient Greek philosopher Epictetus, pain and suffering are an unfortunate part of life, it is not always the event which disturbs us but the way we view it. Often attributed with a crisis is the embarrassment and shame which is after the event. The person with BPD will judge themselves and look for external validation from others how they are perceived if they have a panic attack (PA).

Furthermore, Panic disorder (PD) has been related to BPD and a connection to individuals who will attempt suicide. The person with BPD may feel judged and tend to overthink an event as paranoia is a symptom in mental health crisis. It is necessary to create hope and the belief that they can be supported with reassurance that their experience was validated, they were heard, and that adverse event does not define who they are as an individual. As stated, if the person could unconditionally accept themselves when things are not going well then, a crisis would be more like a difficult challenge and more manageable.

Marcus Aurelius in his famous work The Meditations (2002) approached the challenge of accepting crisis with a stoic attitude. His works are used today as a wellness tool or mental aid to build rationality and resilience towards difficult situations. Aurelius quotes that everything depends on how we interpret it. When a person with BPD is in crisis their view of the current event is often distorted and magnified. It is only understanding that panic, fear, and rage will often come and go, and that calm will set in eventually as feelings, emotions and thoughts change quickly in BPD.

Believing in hope

As mentioned previously calm will set in and the physical symptoms of panic will dissipate. A crisis cannot last forever only a short period of time. Within that time of this unfortunate event there is an opportunity to write down thoughts or express therapeutic art emotions and feelings as they happen which can help create not just hope but future awareness when crisis occurs again. The nature of language is important when feeling strong emotions as negative connotations will lead on to maladaptive thoughts, and behaviours. If we can challenge negative self-talk then hope and resilience will always be a massive part of mental health recovery. The question is how do we develop hope during difficult times?

The first step to acquire hope in a mental health crisis is to trust and cooperate with the services which are available, this cannot always be easy as people must wait to access them on certain occasions and for someone with BPD may feel abandoned and find it hard to trust a health professional. Therefore, it is patience, connection and developing a belief system which can adopt these ideas that mental wellbeing will improve in time, not being so hard on oneself as a crisis happens, rather learning to use REBT techniques for individuals with personality disorders and to eventually accept the misfortune of a crisis. In hindsight this method maybe easier said than done after the experience but self-awareness of how to relieve symptoms will help this process. Each person will have a very individual perspective and way of developing hope and resilience.

Conclusion

In concluding, this idea on BPD crisis to hope has offered suggestions and for people who will be struggling with their mental health. It has described different therapies which can alleviate symptoms while looking at the barriers which lead to employment issues and prevent employees with personality disorders from maintaining engagement with services to improve mental wellbeing.

As stated, the intention of this BPD survival guide is to create awareness and hope that symptoms of BPD are not all negative and can be certainly modified and changed. While writing this I am feeling positive that there is much optimism for people who are in crisis currently and in the future can gain support with the introduction of new therapies. My aim is to encourage individuals with BPD to express how they are feeling and for societies perceptions to change with better understanding and awareness workshops to be presented about mental health crisis. I personally hope that this BPD survival guide opens many questions on how we as a collective community can support people who have personality disorders.

Sources

There are many sources used by Omar in writing the above; too many to list here. If anyone would like to see the list for further reading, please email us at: derbyshireborderlinepd@gmail.com

Two famous quotes from the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius from his famous work 'The meditations', to help build resilience in difficult times, added by Omar

On worrying about what other people think about you:

Do not waste the rest of your time here worrying about other people—unless it affects the common good. It will keep you from doing anything useful. You will be too preoccupied with what so-and-so is doing, and why, and what they are saying, and what they are thinking, and what they are up to, and all the other things that throw you off and keep you from focusing on your own mind

When faced with a problem or an obstacle:

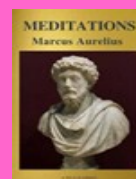
You do not have to turn this into something. It does not have to upset you. Things cannot shape our decisions by themselves.

Sources: Aurelius, M. (2002). The Meditations. Random House.

YouTube video of the full audio version of 'Meditations'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hu0xDtK3g3Q&t=566s>.

<https://susanrushton.net/2019/05/27/20-quotes-from-meditations-by-marcus-aurelius/comment-page-1/>



Evidence suggests that there are five steps you can take to help to improve your emotional and mental health

Connect - spend time developing and nurturing relationships with friends, family, neighbours and colleagues.

Befriending services are available that can help support you if you are feeling lonely and isolated.

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/befriendingservice

Be active - try to find an activity that you enjoy, and that keeps you active, such as walking, swimming, cycling or playing football. Evidence shows that an improvement in your physical health can help improve your mental health.

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/healthylifestyles

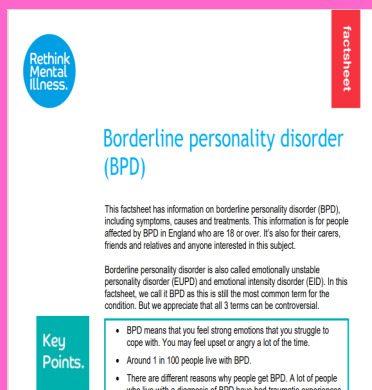
Keep learning - learning new skills can boost confidence and give you a sense of achievement.

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/adulteducation

Give to others - helping others, saying thank you, or giving someone a smile can help to improve your self-esteem and improve your emotional health. Volunteering is a way to help in your community, build up new social networks, and giving you experience if you're looking for a job.: www.derbyshire.gov.uk/volunteerpassport

Take notice - being more aware of the present moment, the world around you and your own feelings and thoughts, can help you to positively change how you feel about life.

Where to find more information on BPD—Rethink.org



What is borderline personality disorder (BPD)?

What are the symptoms of BPD?

What causes BPD?

How can I get help if I think I have BPD?

What treatments should the NHS offer me?

What treatment should I get if I am in crisis?

What risks and complications can BPD cause?

What if I am not happy with my treatment?

What can I do to manage my symptoms?

Information for carers, friends and relatives

Free Benefits Advice for Derbyshire Residents



Our very own
(treasurer)

John Jarvis
is one of the
Chesterfield
volunteers

We offer drop-in advice sessions at several locations around Derbyshire. Please check that your nearest office is open as some of our outreach venues have been closed since the Pandemic. These sessions operate on a first come, first served basis, offering advice, help with forms, and challenging adverse decisions regarding your benefits and credits. We are also a gateway to other services, so if we can't help you with what you need, we will put you in touch with someone who can!

Website: [Nearest Office - DUWC - Your Voice](#)



BPD is a disorder of the emotions...

Reason cannot defeat emotion,
an emotion can only be
displaced or overcome by a
stronger emotion.

Baruch Spinoza

Building up your self-esteem
means coming to the realization
that other people's opinions of
you are none of your business.

**Amy Leigh Mercree, *The Mood Book:
Crystals, Oils, and Rituals to Elevate***

Emotions have immense power.
This power can propel you
towards your dreams and goals,
or sabotage and ruin your life.
Choose wisely how to use the
power of your emotions.

**Stan Jacobs, *The Dusk And Dawn
Master***

Unexpressed emotions will
never die. They are buried alive
and will come forth later in
uglier ways.

Sigmund Freud

The emotion that can break
your heart is sometimes the
very one that heals it.

Nicholas Sparks

Never apologize for showing
your feelings. When you do,
you are apologizing for the
truth.

José N. Harris

One can be the master of what one
does, but never of what one feels.

Gustave Flaubertwa

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...

CLINKS

**Supporting the voluntary sector
working in the criminal justice system**