

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

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, swap stories and discuss coping skills. An official diagnosis is not necessary.

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

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You do not have to live in Derbyshire to join

SUPPORT

Group



News

Our parent/carer/family/friend WhatsApp group is going from strength to strength and providing much needed support. Thank you everyone for welcoming new members and making them feel welcome and supported. The following quote is from Jo, one of the group members:

I find the group a tremendous source of support. It gives me great comfort to share a space with supportive people and I feel much less alone and isolated.

xxx

**Thank you to Mark
for running the monthly parent/carer zoom meetings!**



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



What we offer...

Attachment Group

For those who struggle with severe attachments to others

Run by email with optional zoom meetings

You do not need to have BPD to join this group

Meet-Ups



WhatsApp groups



BPD chat

Positivity

Virtual walking

Men with BPD

Parents with BPD

Parent/Carer/Family/Friend

Crisis Card

Zoom meetings

Website:

derbyshireborderlinepersonalitydisordersupportgroup.com

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Enjoy the read!



Mentalisation-Based therapy (MBT)

MBT is a type of long-term psychotherapy that can be used to treat BPD, and is based on the concept that people with BPD have a poor capacity to mentalise.

Mentalisation is the ability to think about thinking. This means examining your own thoughts and beliefs, and assessing whether they're useful, realistic and based on reality.

For example, many people with BPD will have a sudden urge to self-harm and then fulfil that urge without questioning it. They lack the ability to "step back" from that urge and say to themselves: "That's not a healthy way of thinking and I'm only thinking this way because I'm upset."⁶

Another important part of mentalisation is to recognise that other people have their own thoughts, emotions, beliefs, wishes and needs, and your interpretation of other people's mental states may not necessarily be correct. In addition, you need to be aware of the potential impact your actions will have on other people's mental states.

The goal of MBT is to improve your ability to recognise your own and others' mental states, learn to "step back" from your thoughts about yourself and others and examine them to see if they're valid.

MBT was designed to be a highly structured, manualized therapy to treat difficulties associated with borderline personality disorder by working within the context of attachment theory. Because people with BPD are characterized by insecure attachment, the improvement in mentalizing helps them develop healthy internal representations and improve psychological wellbeing.

While MBT and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) are both effective at treating borderline personality disorder and have similar roots in CBT and goals of emotional regulation, there are some key differences between the two treatments.

MBT is a simple, common-sense approach that has practical advantages over DBT. Practitioners who use MBT need little formal training, whereas DBT requires skills coaching and a curriculum with handouts, worksheets, weekly individual therapy, and a consultation team to support therapists.



6 unusual ways to unleash your creative nature

Whether creativity is part of your job or a hobby, we can all get stuck sometimes. When the well of inspiration runs dry, it's time to take a creative approach to creativity...

1. Seek out the colour blue

According to colour psychology, blue can stimulate creative thinking, encouraging us to try new things, while also having a calming effect. Surround yourself with the colour next time you need a creative boost – head outside and take in the blue sky, visit the seaside to marvel at the ocean, or simply add bluer decor to your environment. You could even try wearing bluer and see how you feel.

2. Read/watch/listen outside of your genre

Do you tend to stick to the same genres when reading books, watching TV, or listening to music and podcasts? Feed your curiosity by exploring genres you would never normally try. Love a romance novel? Why not see what fantasy has to offer? Huge rock music fan? Try dipping your toe into the world of RnB. Want to listen to a podcast unlike anything else? Try 'Everything is Alive'.



3. Tap into your inner child

Kids are naturally creative, so who better to draw inspiration from? Dust off your bike and go for a ride, find an adult-sized ball pit, get your colouring books out, or build a Lego masterpiece. These all help to stem overthinking, encouraging you to experience the world in a more child-like and curious way.

4. Spend more time with creative people

Who we spend time with can make an impact on our worldview. So, if you want to be more creative, try spending more time with fellow creatives. This could be in-person at events or meet-ups, or online.

5. Take silent breaks

The world can be a noisy place at times, and this can colour our thinking. Try to incorporate some silent breaks in your day where there's no music, podcasts, TV. Allow yourself to sit in silence and give your own thoughts space.



6. Keep a dream journal

Our dreams are about as weird and wacky as they come and could be a source of inspiration. Keep a notepad and pen by your bed and grab it when you wake up to write about your dream. The key here is to be quick; trying to remember a dream is like trying to catch water in a net... tricky! Later you can look back and revel in the absurd.



Source:

[6 unusual ways to unleash your creative nature \(happiful.com\)](http://happiful.com)

Did you know...?

Mental Health Service Survivor is now a well-used term

Did you know that the following statements are true for some survivors of trauma?

*Finding it difficult to accept
compliments is a sign of past trauma*

Watching the same programme over and over is a sign of trauma

Psychiatric Hospital Left Me Suicidal and Homeless:

We Need a Human Rights-Based Approach to Mental Health Care

by

Jennifer Reese (a survivor of UK Psychiatry)

Trigger Warning

[Psychiatric Hospital Left Me Suicidal and Homeless – We Need a Human Rights-Based Approach to Mental Health Care - NSUN website](http://www.nsun.org)





Four experiences of health & justice by Claire (group member)

6 years ago, I moved into my current flat and my neighbour was immediately very aggressive towards me, before he had even met me! His intimidation and aggression continued and got worse. I was frightened of him. I reported him to the housing association, I even had photos of his van parked directly behind my car so that I couldn't get my car out. He denied everything, until the housing officer showed him my photos, whereby he made up lies to cover his sorry ass. Anyway, the housing started placing the blame on me saying that because of my PTSD I was being oversensitive and that he was harmless! He eventually lost his flat as he assaulted a woman and got sent to prison for a year for it. **He was a known drug dealer, burglar, violent person, everyone in Matlock knew of him.....yet I was the one blamed of overreacting.**

About 4 months ago, the MH services thought I had taken a huge overdose. Fair enough, I have a long history of self-harming. An ambulance was called, and they didn't believe me. At Chesterfield Royal A&E the sister on duty accused me of being rolling drunk, and despite my stating I have been sober for 16 years and showed her my sobriety app on my phone showing this, she was very offensive towards me. '*We know you're lying; we can smell it on you*', and '*we know you're lying like you're lying about having not taken an overdose*'. I kept trying to explain to them, '*actually this is what a severe chronic fatigue syndrome crash looks like*'. But they were not listening, judge and jury had already made their mind up. I said '*well, the blood tests will exonerate me*', and I ignored them. The blood tests showed no overdose, no poisons. I insisted they breathalyse me too, and when the nurse saw the zero reading, she didn't even tell me the reading, but the expression on her face was priceless! Not one word of apology was uttered, she just stormed out of my cubicle. Shortly after, another nurse came and said I was free to leave. My repeated insistence that all my presenting symptoms was a CFS crash were ignored. It was the first time I had been in the brand-new A&E department at Chesterfield Royal. I later commented that I had been in their brand spanking new department, **but it was a shame they hadn't also invested in brand spanking new attitudes while they were at it...!**

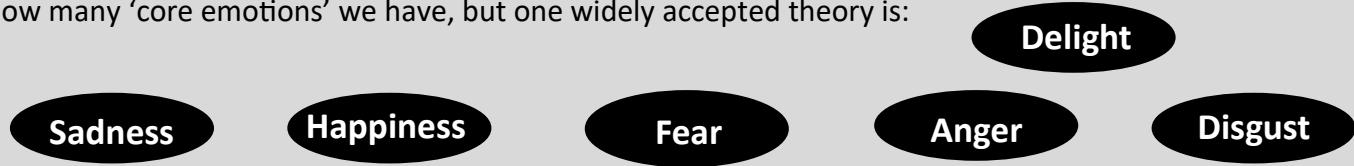
A month ago, I was in agony, with what in the end they treated as suspected meningitis. However, the paramedics that scooped me up clearly had an attitude towards me as soon as they arrived and several comments were made about the perils of addiction to painkillers, and a sarcastic reaction when I said I was 16 years in recovery from alcoholism, and that they didn't need to tell me about what addiction can do. As we arrived in A&E, they said, '*you won't get any morphine you know*'. '*What?*' I said, '*I've never mentioned morphine*' Due to my pain and exhaustion and brain fog I didn't make sense of these comments until later. The penny dropped...oh, they were accusing me of being a drug seeker! That it was all an act. If I had realised, I've had said I'm simply not that good an actress! Anyway **at least this time in A&E they took me seriously.**

I have **CPTSD** and sept 11th is my 'trauma-versary' day. I was badly triggered in the morning as I had received a photo to my phone of a birthday cake saying Happy Death Day, with a bloody knife plunged into it. It turned out to be innocent, but I saw it as a very real death threat as my abuser threatened to kill me and is also currently serving life for murder. Later on, I was relaxing in the lounge when suddenly I heard an almighty THUMP! like an explosion. I rushed to my patio doors and saw this enormous machinery just inches from my back fence. In my already triggered state, my assumption was it was about to roll down my garden, through my doors and kill me. Terrified, I yelled and swore at this farmer, whilst dialling 999. I started filming the farmer, telling him I was recording everything for evidence. Later on, I got a call inviting me to a safeguarding interview at Matlock police station the day after. I was scared. Was I going to be arrested? In the event, the officer was incredibly kind, he listened to all my concerns, and investigated both situations thoroughly for me. **This hour spent with me, of someone's quality time, validating my fears, treating me respectfully, no doubt saved future countless hours of police time, and costs to myself no doubt, through self-harming.**

What are our key feelings, and how can accepting them enhance our lives?

The vast spectrum of emotions can be a minefield. It can be hard to know how to express the things we're feeling, in part because being 'in touch' with our own emotions doesn't always come naturally, especially if we put our feelings aside in favour of agreeableness.

The task of getting in-tune with our feelings can feel like a mammoth one, but the first step in doing so could lie in identifying our primary emotions, and going from there. The thinking varies slightly on precisely how many 'core emotions' we have, but one widely accepted theory is:



Emotions are a process, a particular kind of automatic appraisal influenced by our evolutionary and personal past, in which we sense that something important to our welfare is occurring, and a set of psychological changes and emotional behaviours [sic] begins to deal with the situation.

When put like that, it sounds quite simple. Emotions are just things that happen to us, for the ultimate purpose of survival. Even so, many of us will be familiar with the experience of being ruled by them, as much as being out of touch with them. But does it have to be that way?

Getting to the heart of it...

Humans have a primal need for safety – when we don't feel safe, we cannot function fully and healthily. Our emotions are there to keep us alive, to alert us to things that aren't safe, and it's for that reason that getting to know our core emotions, learning our individual signs, and our triggers, can set us free.

Dealing with negative emotions towards others

Next time you feel a perceived 'negative' emotion towards someone else, try saying the following lines to yourself:

1. Yes, I'm angry with them. I believe they let me down. That makes me feel bad and now I feel a pain in my chest as I think about what they did. I am not ready to forgive them.
2. However, I accept all of this. I accept that I feel bad, that I feel angry. I accept that my chest hurts. I accept it all without judgement – how I'm feeling is not right or wrong, it's not good or bad – it just is. How I'm feeling right now is just how I'm feeling. All feelings and sensations are welcome.
3. In accepting these feelings and sensations, I accept who I am and I let myself be who I am.
4. I can love all the parts of myself that are talking to me right now. I can be with myself and love myself. I am OK.

Finally, find acceptance

All these practices can lead towards that magic ingredient: the bliss of acceptance. Just to be clear, acceptance is not the same as forgiveness. If someone has hurt you, you may not be ready or able to forgive or forget. Acceptance is about accepting that all aspects of the experience are real and OK. In the moments when you're rooted to the spot by your emotions, or when the pursuit of the 'right' emotions prevents you from being present, seeing your emotions as a survival tool, and detaching them from 'right or wrong' is freeing.

Source: 4 ways to connect with your core emotions and enhance your life (happiful.com)



Beware of Narcissists



Ever had a chat that made you feel down or just plain exhausted? It happens, right? But sometimes, it's not about someone having an off day. Sometimes, it's because you're dealing with a narcissist.

Narcissists, they think they're the bee's knees and crave constant attention. They've got a knack for using words to control folks and boost their own egos. And they're pros at bringing down your happiness a notch without you even noticing!

Let's look at 9 sneaky phrases narcissists often use to mess with your happiness – on purpose.

1. “You’re too sensitive.”

One of the go-to phrases in a narcissist's handbook is telling you that you're too sensitive. This is a classic move used to invalidate your feelings and thoughts. Think about it, when someone tells you that you're too sensitive, it makes you question your reaction to a situation. You start wondering if maybe they're right. Maybe you are overreacting? Narcissists use this phrase to deflect attention from their own behavior and make you the 'problem'. It's their subtle way of saying, "Hey, it's not me. It's you." So next time someone tells you that you're too sensitive, take a step back and think: is this a fair comment or just a clever move to make you doubt yourself?

2. “I was just joking.”

Now, here's another phrase narcissists love to use: "I was just joking." Sounds innocent enough, right? But it's not always as simple as it seems. Imagine someone makes a mean comment about you and then, when they see you're hurt, they quickly say, "I was just joking." This is a tactic narcissists' use to disguise their hurtful words as humour. It's like they've found a loophole to say whatever they want, and if you react negatively, it's because you can't take a joke. The problem is jokes are supposed to be funny. If you're feeling hurt, belittled, or upset, that's not a joke – that's an insult. Don't let them off the hook so easily. If someone hurts your feelings and then brushes it off as a joke, remember that it's okay to call them out on it.

3. “No one else has a problem with it.”

Personally, I come across far too often: "No one else has a problem with it." I remember this one time when a friend constantly showed up late for our plans. I finally gathered the courage to tell them how it made me feel disrespected and undervalued. Their response? "No one else has a problem with it." This phrase is a favourite among narcissists because it serves two purposes. First, it dismisses your feelings as unimportant and second, it isolates you by implying that you're alone in your thinking. The truth is, if something bothers you, you have every right to voice it. Don't let anyone make you believe otherwise!

4. “You’re just jealous.”

Narcissists love to assume that you're just jealous when you voice any kind of disagreement or criticism. It's their way of deflecting blame and turning the tables on you. In fact, a [study found](#) that narcissists are more likely to accuse others of the traits they themselves possess. So, when a narcissist accuses you of being "jealous," it might just be because they're projecting their own feelings onto you! This phrase is not only dismissive, but it also distracts from the real issue at hand. This phrase is a favourite among narcissists because it serves two purposes. First, it dismisses your feelings as unimportant and second, it isolates you by implying that you're alone in your thinking. The truth is, if something bothers you, you have every right to voice it. Don't let anyone make you believe otherwise!

Continued...

5. “You’ll never find someone like me.”

This phrase can be one of the hardest to hear, especially if it comes from someone you care about. Narcissists often use this line to make you feel like they’re the best you could ever do, making the thought of leaving them seem scary and uncertain. But here’s the truth: everyone deserves to be in a relationship where they feel valued, respected, and loved. If someone is constantly undermining your happiness, making you feel small or guilty, then maybe finding ‘someone like them’ isn’t what you need. Don’t let anyone convince you that they’re your only option.

6. “I don’t remember that.”

This is one phrase that used to drive me up the wall: “I don’t remember that.” It’s a classic move narcissists use when they want to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. I recall a time when a former coworker promised to complete a part of our shared project but ended up not doing it. When I confronted them about it, they simply shrugged and said, “I don’t remember that.” It was frustrating because their forgetfulness cost me extra hours of work. Narcissists use this phrase as a get-out-of-jail-free card. By claiming they don’t remember, they dodge accountability for their actions or words. It’s a manipulative tactic, plain and simple.

7. “You’re overreacting.”

Here’s a phrase that can really sting: “You’re overreacting.” It’s like a slap in the face when you’re trying to express your feelings, and the person you’re speaking to just brushes you off like you’re making a mountain out of a molehill. Let’s be real here. This isn’t about you being dramatic or blowing things out of proportion. This is about them trying to minimize your feelings to avoid taking responsibility for their actions. When someone tells you that you’re overreacting, it’s a way for them to undermine your feelings and make you question your own judgment.

8. “You’re not remembering correctly.”

This phrase is another classic narcissist trick, and it’s part of a manipulative tactic known as gaslighting. When they tell you that you’re not remembering things correctly, they’re making you question your own perception and memory. Did you know term ‘gaslighting’ comes from a 1938 play called ‘Gas Light’, in which a husband manipulates his wife into believing she’s losing her sanity? And that’s exactly what narcissists are doing when they tell you that your memory is wrong – they’re trying to control your sense of reality.

9. “If you loved me, you’d do this.”

This is a manipulative tactic that a narcissist close to me used all too often: “If you loved me, you’d do this.” The first time I heard it, I was taken aback. I found myself bending over backward to prove my love, only to realize that no matter what I did, it was never enough. It felt like my love was being measured by how much I was willing to sacrifice for them. Narcissists use this phrase to guilt-trip you into doing what they want. It’s a manipulative way of saying, “Your feelings are less important than mine.” But I went on to learn that love is not about giving up your happiness for someone else. It’s not about constantly proving your worth.



So, if someone uses your love as a bargaining chip, remember that it’s not a reflection of your love for them, but their lack of respect for you.

[9 phrases narcissists use to undermine your happiness \(ideapod.com\)](http://ideapod.com)

How to ground yourself after seeing distressing news

If you feel distressed or anxious by the events that we're seeing in the news, you may find the following helpful in keeping yourself grounded:

1. Acknowledge your emotions

Before taking steps to try to calm ourselves, it's important to recognise and come to terms with how we're feeling. Understanding that it's normal to feel anxious, stressed, overwhelmed or angry can be a useful first step in knowing what we need to do to manage these emotions.

2. Manage your social media usage

There are several ways you can limit your exposure to the news through social media. You could set yourself limits so you only check it at certain times of the day, mute notifications and consider who you're following. If you're finding that things keep cropping up in your feed, unfollowing certain people or pages can help reduce your exposure to it.

3. Focus on the facts

Make sure that the information you're digesting is from trusted, reliable sources and is based on fact, not hearsay. This doesn't mean that the facts are going to be any easier to process, but you can arm yourself with information that can be substantiated, rather than worrying about events that may be untrue.

4. Seek out positive news stories

It's easy to let negative stories cloud the positives but try to remember that there is always something good happening in the world.

5. Focus on what you can control

This might feel difficult, given that many of the events we're witnessing are out of our hands. Making a list of things you can control (such as managing your social media use) and those you can't can be a helpful way to process how you're feeling. If you feel up to it, you could help in other ways, such as by volunteering or making a donation to a charity in need. Even actions that seem small can help make a big difference. Gov.UK has some practical information on how you can do this safely.

6. Choose how to respond

Learning about an upsetting event in the news can sometimes leave you feeling isolated. There are several ways that you can respond, including:

- talking to someone you trust
- try mindfulness or meditation
- do some physical activity such as going for a walk
- get involved with your local community



7. Look after your mental and physical wellbeing

In the midst of uncertainty, it's important to continue to look after your physical and mental health. Try to eat a balanced diet, exercise where you can and engage in self-care activities – whatever that might look like for you.

In recent years, it's perhaps felt that the news has brought with it more discomfort than positivity. The world has witnessed natural disasters, political upheaval, a pandemic, climate concerns, a cost of living crisis and wars. Nowadays, with the rise of social media and 24/7 streaming, it can feel like it's impossible to escape the complex reality. Whilst keeping informed with the news can be helpful, and in some cases empowering, seemingly endless bouts of uncertainty can take its toll on our mental health.

It's completely natural to feel a mix of emotions during periods of unrest. You may feel:

- anxious or worried
- sad and upset
- hopeless
- angry
- confused
- overwhelmed
- scared, afraid or unsafe

It's important to remember that the news affects each of us and the way that we feel differently. Some people might choose to keep up to date with stories as they unfold, but you shouldn't feel pressured to do so or guilty for taking that step aside to protect your wellbeing.

What is news anxiety?

We can encounter news even when we're not actively looking for it. Whether it's on our TVs, a notification on our phones or we stumble across it on our social media feed, it can make it difficult to switch off from the headlines. In order to be armed with the appropriate knowledge to effectively digest the events we're told about, we need to be prepared to manage the potential stress it can cause. When we're continuously exposed to these stories, with little time to process them properly, this exacerbates the stress we're more likely to feel. Learning about negative news can increase levels of cortisol in the body (our stress hormone). This information overload can cause us to become anxious, often having an adverse effect. Rather than avoiding it, we can become so consumed by the news that we develop unhealthy habits such as:

- Doom-scrolling
- checking our phones every few minutes



Grounding techniques to calm distressing thoughts

5-4-3-2-1 method: Notice five things you hear, four things you see, three things you can touch, two things you can smell and one thing you can taste.

Imagine yourself boxing up your feelings: Picture your feelings in a bundle and visualise yourself boxing them up. You can also imagine your feelings are a TV show that you dislike and you're just turning down the volume. This isn't about suppressing your feelings, but acknowledging that they're there and allowing them to sit at the back of your mind, not letting them disrupt your daily life.

Visualise a happy place: Negative news can often leave us feeling low. Try to sit quietly for a moment, close your eyes and imagine your happy place. This could be your favourite holiday destination or the home of a loved one. Wherever you have fond memories, bring this to your attention and feel the negative feelings drift away.

Listen to music: Play your favourite song to lift your mood. To really reap the benefits of this, you could pretend you're hearing it for the first time. Tune into the melody and the lyrics.

Box breathing: When you need to calm anxious thoughts quickly, wherever you are, you can give box breathing a try. This involves breathing in for four seconds, holding the breath for four, breathing out for another four seconds, and holding for four. You can repeat this as many times as you need.

There can feel like a lot of pressure to keep up with what's going on in the world and around us, but it's important to remember that staying informed shouldn't come at the cost of your mental health. If you feel that you can safely digest events in the news with the help of these strategies and techniques, remember that you don't need to speak up and showcase what you're doing to help; you can still be thoughtful offline.

How to navigate intrusive questions

If someone crosses a boundary, is getting too personal, or makes you feel uncomfortable with their line of questioning, here's a helpful guide to navigating your response.

You were likely raised to be polite to everyone. It's just good manners, right? But what happens when courteous conversation crosses the line? Whether it's an ill-advised query about sexuality, or a deeper interrogation about political leanings, there are certain people who – perhaps unknowingly – invade your emotional space.

Instead of automatically answering and regretting it later, here are a few pointers on how to navigate those dreaded intrusive questions when they arise.

Pause before you act

Start by trying to get a sense of the other person's motives. Not only will this buy you a few minutes of thinking time, but it also transfers the weight of responsibility back on to the questioner to explain why they felt the need to ask. If you're lucky, they may backtrack, and realise they've acted out of turn. Plus, you'll gently show them what it feels like to be questioned, which can open up the conversation to an equal blend of sharing and listening. *Try: That's an interesting question. Why do you ask?*

Consider whether you are emotionally ready to answer

It's normal to feel a sense of panic when a stranger, colleague, or even family member asks you to communicate something you deem private. You might have a physical reaction (sweaty palms, increased heart rate), as well as an emotional response (crying, a sense of dread), and that is nothing to be ashamed of. These signals are a way to determine your ability and willingness to engage in the conversation. Ask yourself, 'What am I feeling and where in the body am I feeling it?' Your emotions are signals telling you to act, move, or be still. Allow the emotions to guide you. They are your gut instinct.

Know that you have the right to say no. Just because someone asks you a question, does not mean you are obliged to respond. Don't feel pressured into sharing, although it is worth acknowledging that in some cultures there may be no other option. If you are choosing not to answer, that doesn't mean you need to respond abruptly.

Try these techniques:

- Be honest and divert the topic back to the other person. *I feel a bit uncomfortable talking about that, so I'd rather not get into it. How are things with you?*
- Deflect with humour, if appropriate. *The story behind that is so long and boring, honestly, you'd regret asking me! Can we talk about something fun instead?*

Follow up by saying thank you to show that you appreciate them respecting your boundaries.

Try to engage in a two-way conversation

If you are open to sharing your response, or for cultural reasons feel you must answer, reflecting on their projections is a good place to start. Let's use anger as an example.

Ask yourself to consider why they feel angry. Is there a possible conversation you could have that would get them to appreciate that your journey and theirs are separate? You could point to a difference in age, gender, background, interests, or personality traits that mean they may never fully understand your choices. To de-escalate, are there any words or phrases that have calmed you in the past that might help them now? Ask for their perspective on the situation, and respect that everyone has a right to their opinion before you share yours.

Try: That's an interesting question. What are your thoughts on the matter?

Or: I'm not sure what I think about that. How do you feel about the situation?

Continued...

Prioritise your safety

When approached by a stranger, you have a few options. You could attempt to ignore the question, perhaps choosing to walk away or put headphones in. If with a friend, look to them for support in shutting down the conversation.

Try: Would you mind telling that person that I'm having a bad day, and don't want to talk to anyone?

If you feel safe to do so, answer with compassion, and steer the conversation to a light-hearted resolution.

Try: I get that question a lot, but it's kind of personal. How's your day been so far?

Upholding boundaries is an ongoing process, and one that can still catch you off-guard even after years of practice. Be kind to yourself as you figure it out, and don't forget to reflect on the times when you share openly and get a positive response.

Pat yourself on the back for doing the work!

Source: Fiona Fletcher Reid, [5 tips on how to navigate intrusive questions \(happiful.com\)](https://happiful.com/5-tips-on-how-to-navigate-intrusive-questions/)

Book Review



CULTURE

Injustices against the body and the mind are common in prison and Sue highlights the torment that she, and other women, experienced

In *Pushing the Boundaries: Struggling to comply in a women's prison*, Sue describes the circumstances surrounding the arrest, but mostly she talks about her experiences in prison. She presents an incredibly candid account of how her personality changed from being placid and somewhat introverted, to someone who was confrontational, belligerent, and extroverted.

The book examines the relationships between prisoners, as well as their interactions with officers, managers, governors, and healthcare staff. Also discussed are issues such as bullying, loneliness, boredom, anger, violence and desperation, as well as friendship, compassion, community, and loyalty.

Injustices against the body and the mind are common in prison and Sue highlights the torment that she, and other women, experienced. In doing this, Sue reflects on the loss of bodily autonomy she felt when being forcibly restrained by over-zealous prison officers; being denied water to flush her toilet when in a segregation cell; or refused a haircut as punishment for a petty misdemeanour.

After leaving prison and reflecting on the reasons behind the change in her behaviour, Sue became an activist, campaigning for better mental health services both in prison and in the community. In 2019, she was given the prestigious Janey Antoniou award for her work in prison reform and in highlighting the need for change in mental health care. Sue continues with this work, and is currently writing her next book, a personal account of the UK health and justice system.



Pushing the Boundaries - Sue Wheatcroft

Available on Amazon

Struggling to comply



Former inmate and activist Sue Wheatcroft shares her experience of life in a women's prison in this book

Sue Wheatcroft

Sue Wheatcroft

At the age of 54, Sue Wheatcroft was arrested for attempted murder. Although never charged, the fallout from the experience, along with poor mental health, led her to spending over a year in prison.

She argues that her change in personality was largely in response to the lack of control she felt over her basic human rights. Her example of a senior manager forcing her head against a cell wall in order to rub out a word she had written, in her own blood, is testimony to how the criminal justice system allows such brutality against the prisoner. This is further exemplified by the fact that, rather than the manager being punished for the assault, Sue was punished for the manager being exposed to her blood.

Another example Sue gives is of the agony she suffered after being denied a trip to the hospital for five days to have her dislocated shoulder repositioned. For these five days, it was the prison service who had total control over her body, including how her pain was managed.



Former Coronation Street star Nicola Thorp opens up over being diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder

By Jess Lee, Chief Sub-Editor of Digital Spy

This article contains discussion of themes including suicide and self-harm that some readers may find upsetting.

In 2010, Nicola Thorp, who played Nicola Rubinstein on *Coronation Street* between 2017 and 2019, appeared on BBC's *Victoria Derbyshire* wanting to dispel some of the myths surrounding her mental illness. She says...

I think the label itself of 'personality disorder', there's a suggestion there that it's your personality that is disordered and that isn't the case. It's a mental illness, much like other mental illnesses, and it's characterised by different things, but for me, I've always had extreme anxiety. I think that it's really fantastic that everyone's talking about depression and about anxiety, but it often can be so generalised. I think it's time now that we talked about issues more specifically.

Thorp opened up about how borderline personality disorder affected her in the past, and said that she was misdiagnosed seven years ago...

I was hospitalised and misdiagnosed with bipolar disorder, because a lot of the symptoms can be a lot similar. I used to have anxiety attacks that were so bad, I couldn't function. In order to try and break out of that cycle of anxiety and depression and stop these panic attacks, I would resort to extreme behaviours like trying to knock myself out. Hitting my head against a wall, that kind of thing, just to make it end.

Thorp added that she believes there needs to be "first aid training for mental health", so that people are better equipped to respond and take suitable actions when talking with someone who is struggling with mental health issues.

We need to know what to do when someone does say something like, I don't want to live anymore. It's a very, very frightening thing, and it puts a lot of pressure, I understand, on the person who's hearing that. When people talk about suicide or self-harm, it's kind of portrayed as this slow, gradual thing that's done in secret. But for other people, it can come on like that. There can be a trigger.

The star also said that borderline personality disorder has never affected work, including her time on *Coronation Street*.

It's never affected my working life. You see people with stammers but you can sing and it stops when you sing. It's the same with acting for me.

*Thorp is engaged to actor Nikesh Patel, having been in a relationship since 2021. The couple took part in series five of *Celebrity Hunted* in 2023. In September 2023, they announced they were expecting their first child.

We acknowledge that people with BPD may also have traits of other personality disorders. This is the second in our series looking at those diagnoses

What is Dependent Personality Disorder (DPD)?

DPD causes those suffering from it to believe they cannot cope with life without the direct help of others. They take a passive role in both personal and work relationships and go to any lengths to gain nurturing and acceptance of others, even volunteering to do things they find unpleasant or repulsive. Individuals with DPD are oversensitive to criticism and avoid disagreeing with others for fear they will lose support. The word *obsequious* describes this behaviour quite well. Obsequious can be defined as "obedient or attentive to an excessive or servile degree. "

The dependent personality's clingy, submissive behaviour is designed to elicit caring behaviours from others, but in many cases, it actually pushes them away. Often, even if the caregiver is abusive, the dependent personality will remain in the relationship. When a primary relationship does end, an individual with a dependent personality immediately and urgently seeks a replacement. This can make dependent personality disorder treatment very challenging.

The dependency needs of adults with this disorder differ from those of children.

Children need the caring and nurturing of others. They need help when making decisions beyond the scope of their age and experience and may exhibit mild to severe separation anxiety when left with people other than their parents. These are all normal and developmentally appropriate in children.

Most kids gradually grow out of separation anxiety by adolescence and dependency on parental nurturing also diminishes during the teen years. Keep in mind, as with children, it's also normal for the elderly and disabled to have increased dependency and a need for others to assume responsibility for their lives.

But some kids don't ever go through the normal developmental path to independence from parents and caregivers. For these individuals, dependency on others increases over time and becomes excessive to the point that it departs markedly from the social norm and has a profound negative impact on the quality of life.

Causes of Dependent Personality Disorder

As with a great number of mental illnesses, experts don't have a clear understanding of the causes of DPD. Most researchers agree with the theory that the causes are a combination of genetic, biological, and social factors. This means you probably wouldn't develop the disorder just because you had a genetic predisposition as long as you had no biological and social risk factors in your environment. Scientists refer to this three-pronged causation system as the *biopsychosocial model*.

Some researchers theorise that excessively authoritative or overprotective parenting can contribute to the development of DPD in people with a predisposition for the condition.



DPD seems to occur more often in women, based on gender splits of diagnosed cases. That said, it might occur just as often in men, but remain undiagnosed for a variety of reasons.

Source: [What is Dependent Personality Disorder? | HealthyPlace](https://www.healthyplace.com/abuse/dependent-personality-disorder/)

Crisis Support Drop-In Centres in Derbyshire

Our Crisis Support Drop-In services provide a welcoming non-clinical alternative to A&E for any person who self-defines as needing immediate help with their mental health or emotional wellbeing.

The aim of the service is to provide a safe, supportive environment for adults experiencing psychological distress requiring support to prevent deterioration. Our trained Support Workers and Peer Support Volunteers provide de-escalation support, wellbeing, social and emotional support, safety planning, and signposting to community-based support services or other support as required.

Being based in the heart of the community the purpose of the Crisis Support Drop-ins is to help you access the right support at the right time in the right place for you.

The services are designed to offer support and a safe space to anyone over 18 experiencing (or nearing) a mental health crisis. For example, you might:

- be feeling emotionally distressed
- be experiencing or nearing crisis point with your mental health
- feeling low and potentially experiencing suicidal thoughts
- be feeling anxious, worried or panicky
- have experienced a life event that has impacted your usual ability to cope
- be having a 'dip' in your mental health, that you are usually able to manage
- want a calm space to go to to keep yourself safe and distract from thoughts of self harm.

We also recognise that you might also want to come and visit the service and staff so that you know who and where we are in case you experience a crisis in the near future.

Where to Find Us:

High Peak Crisis Support Service:

Zink HQ, Clough Street (within Market Street Car Park),
Buxton, SK17 6LJ [\(Click Here for Google Map\)](#)

Ripley Crisis Support Service

The Croft, Slack Lane, Ripley, DE5 3HF. (Just off Ripley Market Place.) [\(Click Here for Google Map\)](#)

Swadlincote Crisis Support Service

12-14 West Street, Swadlincote, DE11 9DG. (Opposite the old Empire Cinema) [\(Click Here for Google Map\)](#)

Need Help Now?

Visit: derbyshiremind.org.uk/get-help-now

Continued...

We have a friendly team of support workers and volunteers ready and waiting to welcome you when you arrive at your local service. The team are on hand to listen to what you are experiencing and offer support and interventions accordingly.

We also have a range of distraction activities on offer, such as fidget toys, games, books, and mindful drawing equipment.

There is no pressure for anyone to disclose or talk about anything they don't feel comfortable with.

You are also welcome to attend anonymously if you would prefer to. You will always be supported according to your current needs and always from a person-centred approach.

Our friendly and welcoming support workers and volunteers will do what they can to help you feel comfortable and put you at ease and may ask some questions to help understand what you are currently experiencing. Once we understand a bit more about what you are struggling with that day, **we can offer a range of support and activities including:**

- ◆ a safe and supportive place to be, as an alternative to attending A&E
- ◆ non-clinical, non-judgemental and impartial support and a supportive listening ear
- ◆ help and advice to identify positive coping and wellbeing strategies
- ◆ a variety of activities designed to distract, ground, and relax
- ◆ support to create personal safety plans or crisis plan documents
- ◆ support to try relaxation and breathing techniques to carry on with at home
- ◆ simple CBT-based exercises to help manage your symptoms at home
- ◆ information about how to access local services and support groups and activities
- ◆ signposting to phone numbers/websites to access support organisations and online support communities

The Crisis Support Drop-In services do not offer:

- ◆ any clinical or medical support
- ◆ food or meals, or immediate support from the food bank
- ◆ support to anyone who is behaving aggressively
- ◆ an informal community group for people who aren't experiencing immediate mental health symptoms or emotional distress
- ◆ support to individuals under the influence of drugs or alcohol and unable to hold a conversation
- ◆ information about your NHS care or treatment plan – we do not have access to your NHS records

We also cannot support children under the age of 18, however parents and guardians are able to attend (without the child present) with the intention of seeking information about suitable mental health crisis support and services in the local area.

Crisis Support Drop-In Centres in Derbyshire





Derby and Chesterfield Safe Havens



If you or a loved one are experiencing distress or anxiety, or feeling that you cannot cope, please contact your local safe haven in Derby or Chesterfield. Both safe havens are open from 4.30pm to 12.30am, every day. Self-referrals are welcome, just drop by.

Trevayler
309 Burton Road
Derby, DE23 6AG
Call: 03300 083722 or email:
derby.safehaven@nhs.net

188 North Wingfield Road
Grassmoor,
Chesterfield, S49 5EJ
Call: 01246 949410 or visit:
<https://bit.ly/derbyshiresafehaven>

Members' meet-up, December 2023



What Is Ableism?

The Sneaky Assumption That Hurts Disabled People

This form of discrimination can be insidious and often unconscious.

by Lizz Schumer (USA)

To the casual observer, I look pretty “normal.” If you catch me walking down the street, you probably can’t tell I’m in pain, probably dizzy, a little more reliant on my maps app than I should have to be in my own neighbourhood.

Because my disabilities are largely invisible, much of the ableism I encounter is internal, coming from inside my own head. That same little voice that criticizes my unruly hair, the wrinkles that have carved their way into my forehead over the past few years is as constant a companion as my body is, and as cruel as any commentary the world could offer.

“You’re fine. Stop being lazy,” it whispers as I struggle up the subway steps from an exhausting commute, my energy reserves all but spent before my workday even begins. “A child could follow this recipe,” it jeers, as I read the instructions for the fourth time, fighting through the fog that clouds my brain. I avoid the older passengers’ glares when I take a seat on a crowded train instead of standing, joke about how my goldfish-length memory means I’m constantly surprised and delighted and probably use my mobility aids less frequently than I should to deflect unwanted questions, stares, the kind of attention that feels closer to pity than I’m comfortable with. The world isn’t made for bodies or minds that live on the spectrum of disability, but we have to live in it however we can. But ableism makes it harder.



Ableism is a set of beliefs or practices that devalue or discriminate against people with physical, intellectual or psychiatric disabilities. It can be insidious and often unconscious, relying on the belief that disabled people need “fixing” or that there’s something wrong or bad about bodies and minds that work differently from what we’ve been taught to consider the norm. That’s called the medical model, because it assumes that a person’s medical status is the problem, rather than society’s barriers. And it can take the form of seemingly small slights, like using words like “crazy” or “retarded” as slurs, all the way up to discrimination based on someone’s perceived abilities in the workplace or when starting a family.

Ableism can come from Fear

Much like other forms of prejudice, ableism can be rooted in fear, ignorance or a lack of education. Many people are uncomfortable talking about disability or interacting with disabled people, especially those with apparent physical or mental disabilities. That can make living in the world as a disabled person akin to navigating a minefield — in some ways, more challenging than the disability itself.

What to Do When a Kid Stares at Someone

“I was born with a physical disability. Growing up, I thought I knew what to look out for when it came to ableism,” explained Theresa Dougherty. “What I wasn’t prepared for are the times when a person might look at me, see that my body looks different, and assume certain things about me that have nothing to do with physical ability — like those who attribute my quiet personality to a mental disability — or the well-meaning individuals who exclude me from an activity because they don’t want me to be embarrassed or feel bad if I can’t participate in the same way that others in the group do.”



Ask any disabled person: they likely have a script or standard way of responding when someone asks a rude or insensitive question, grabs their mobility aids or tries to pet a service dog or tries to “help” them in ways that are at best unnecessary and at worst, can be downright dangerous. Word to the wise: There’s nothing wrong with asking someone if they need help, as long as you’re kind and respectful about it and (most importantly) willing to accept whatever answer you’re given. But staying on guard for those situations can be exhausting.

Continued...

"I have a disability called spinal muscular atrophy type three. I'm ambulatory, but I trip and fall, sometimes I have difficulty getting up from a seated position, and I can't run," explains artist and activist James Ian. Because his disability is largely not evident to people who don't know him, Ian gets comments like, "How come you can't lift that," or, "You should be ashamed of yourself for asking for help to carry that," that keep him on his guard. "I feel like I'm always kind of on edge about, well, somebody's gonna say this, or assume that," he adds.

It Can Take the Form of Microaggressions

Even if many people know better than to be downright rude to others, a lot of ableism takes place in the form of microaggressions, or expressions or actions that indicate a negative view of someone's age, gender identity, race, sex, disability or other identity marker. In the case of ableism, examples of that could include phrases like:

- "That's so lame."
- "That guy is crazy."
- "You're acting so bipolar today."
- "It's like the blind leading the blind."
- "My ideas fell on deaf ears."
- "I'm super OCD about how I clean my apartment."
- "Can I pray for you?"
- "I don't even think of you as disabled."



Many of these sayings aren't ill-intentioned, and many people use words like "insane" without even thinking about their ableist connotations. Part of the reason ableist language is so pervasive in our culture is because disability has historically been seen as an inherently negative thing, something people find pitiable or even disgusting. We have the entertainment industry to thank for that — take Quasimodo, Tiny Tim and the Phantom of the Opera for example.

"Ableism is insidious and often tells us that disabled people are the problem. We get this idea that we should change, instead of society should change," explained writer and educator Fin Leary. "I'm trans, and ableism made it so much harder to come out. Sometimes I need a break or a mobility aid, like my cane. I don't think that makes me weak, but toxic masculinity and ableism tell me that it does. I had to fight hard against those ideas in order to come out and be proud to be the man that I am." But it also starts at home. When well-meaning parents tell their children not to stare at disabled people, or usher them away from wheelchair users or guide dogs, that instils a lesson that disability is something scary or bad.

"I actually never thought that I could do the things that I'm currently doing, because I thought like, 'Oh, I'm gonna have a life where people are going to pity me, no one's gonna want to date me, I'm not going to have friends. Because that's what I saw in all forms of media,'" Ian explained.

How Ableism Hurts Both Individuals and Society

Ableism can impact every area of an individual's life and hold them back in ways that don't impact non-disabled people. "In college, a dean flunked me out of a required course for missing an exam because I was hospitalized for a life threatening medical emergency," said Matthew Cortland, a senior resident fellow at Data for Progress. "In law school, I was threatened with expulsion over the ADA reasonable accommodations I requested. Now I work in politics and policy, where ableism is weaponized against opponents for cheap political points."

We have only to look at how Senator John Fetterman was treated after he had a stroke and received treatment for depression, or how the left crowded in elation when Mitch McConnell appeared to have a neurological event while speaking. While politicians and public figures can expect a certain level of criticism because of their positions, their mental and physical health should not be used as a basis for criticism or personal attacks. Their constituents include disabled people too, and we're watching how the rest of the world talks about our representatives.

Continued...

"Inspiration Porn" Also Plays a Role

Not all ableism looks negative on its face, either. Think about those videos or articles that surface reliably a few times every year: The entire basketball team stops playing to give the kid with mental disabilities a chance to shoot a basket. A popular guy asks a girl with Down Syndrome to prom, and she gets voted homecoming queen. That baby whose face lights up when he gets cochlear implants for the first time. These are called “inspiration porn,” a term first coined by activist Stella Young.

While intended to be heartwarming, these stories show disabled people as pitiable, inherently less capable and on the outside of society in some way. They objectify disabled people in order to make others feel good, and it's harmful both for those individuals depicted in the video and for people like them everywhere.



Instead, Treat Disabled People Like People

Just like avoiding racist, sexist or ageist language, resisting ableism might require a little extra thought. Instead of saying “Wow, that’s so crazy,” consider saying something like “Wow, I didn’t expect that” or “Who could’ve seen that coming?” If your child stares at another kid who uses a wheelchair, encourage them to ask if the other child wants to play. Ian also recommends educating yourself on disability culture and history, reading books by disabled authors and consuming media made by disabled folks that features accurate, inclusive representation.



"I think the most important thing is to actually have conversations

"I think the most important thing is to actually have conversations with disabled people," he said. "It doesn't have to be uncomfortable. You can come to them humbly and say, 'Listen, I don't know what I'm doing here. But I want to learn.'" Of course, there's a time and a place for these conversations. Asking a disabled friend about their lived experience is one thing; asking personal questions in line at the grocery store is quite another.

It also helps to lead with kindness and curiosity instead of impatience or judgment. Not all disabilities are visible, and some people who use

mobility aids don't need them all the time. When in doubt, it hurts no one to assume good intentions. "I board planes [early] to ensure that I can get my diabetes supplies on board the plane, have time to check my blood sugar before everyone watches me prick my finger on board and treat any potential lows or highs," explains Emily Goldman, who has Type 1 diabetes. "I am often accosted by people who tell me I'm not 'disabled' and therefore shouldn't board early." Assumptions like these require disabled people to go on the defensive, and that can lead to an argument, rather than a discussion.

I'm the first to admit that I haven't always been great at discussing my disabilities. For a long time, my internalized ableism made me shy away from conversation, lest someone see me as less capable, less intelligent or just *less*. But making friends with more disabled and chronically ill people, reading up on disability history and following the work of disabled activists and artists has empowered me not to be ashamed of the perfectly imperfect way my body and mind work. It's a lifelong journey, and I'm still working to eradicate ableist language from my vocabulary too.

We can all treat each other with a little more kindness, a little more empathy, a little more grace. That matters, just like we all do.

Lizz Schumer

What Is Ableism? Examples and Meaning of the Behavior (goodhousekeeping.com)



Sorry to bother, but do you say 'sorry' too much?

9 things I've stopped saying at work:

1	Sorry for rescheduling.	→	Thanks for being flexible!
2	Sorry to bother you.	→	Thanks for carving out time.
3	Sorry for venting.	→	Thanks for listening.
4	Sorry for running late.	→	Thanks so much for waiting.
5	Sorry I had to take that call.	→	Thanks for your patience!
6	Sorry for jumping in.	→	I have an idea that may help.
7	Sorry for the mistake.	→	Thank for catching that!
8	Sorry, I don't get it.	→	Could you repeat that? I just want to be clear.
9	Sorry, does that make sense?	→	I'm happy to answer any questions!

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