

# 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...



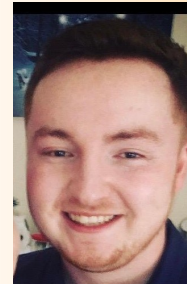
**Sue**



**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, swop stories and discuss coping skills, in a non-judgemental way**

**An official diagnosis is not necessary**

**The main point of contact is through our  
WhatsApp groups**

**Members are encouraged to arrange their own zoom  
and face-to-face meetings**

**You do not have to live in Derbyshire to join  
our support group**

# SUPPORT



# Group

## News



In this and the next few issues we are serialising the story of 'Steph', a group member who prefers to remain anonymous and to use a pseudonym. The reason she has called it *Eyes Opened*, she says, is because after years of therapy she now sees her childhood for what it was and, rather than being disconnected from it, she has learnt to recognise and accept it. Steph has a diagnosis of BPD and is on the Autistic Spectrum.

Part One is on pages 14-16.



On pages 10-12 you can read about the value of Peer Support, something that everyone in this group is receiving and that those of you in our WhatsApp groups, are also providing. Peer support is extremely important and is something to be proud of.

HAPPY EASTER



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

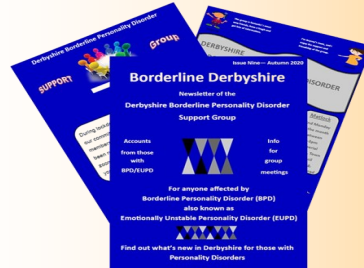


# What we offer...

Occasional Zoom Meetings  
(arranged by members)



Quarterly Newsletters



Occasional Meet-Ups (arranged by the members)



BPD chat

# WhatsApp

Autism & BPD

Women with BPD

Parent/Carer/Family/Friend

Positivity Group

Borderline of Nature



Crisis Card

Website:

[derbyshireborderlinepersonalitydisordersupportgroup.com](http://derbyshireborderlinepersonalitydisordersupportgroup.com)

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*We are constantly on the lookout for new information, personal stories, poetry, book reviews and other additions to our newsletters. Please email Sue if you would like to contribute:*

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

*XXX*



# All BPD



## WhatsApp Groups

We welcome and support all new members regardless of gender, sexuality, age, race, religion or disability

We maintain a non-judgemental environment where members are open-minded and encouraging

We recognise that every member is important and will be treated with respect

**\*\*IMPORTANT\*\***

If you post something on subjects that may be upsetting to others (self-harm; suicidal thoughts; bereavement; abuse; criminal behaviour, etc) please start with TRIGGER WARNING or TW and then leave a space underneath before you start writing.



Thank You!



## Symptoms of BPD...*but remember,*

*not everyone will experience all symptoms, and not all symptoms will be extreme*

### Four groups of symptoms

1. emotional instability, or emotional dysregulation.
2. distorted perception, meaning a disconnection from reality.
3. impulsive behaviour, which can often be self-destructive.
4. unstable relationships.



The symptoms of a personality disorder can range from mild to severe. They usually start to emerge in adolescence or early adulthood.

### How do the symptoms manifest?

#### *Abandonment*

One of the main symptoms people with BPD experience is a fear of abandonment and rejection. They are intensely worried that even their closest friends and family will leave them and will go to great lengths to avoid this nightmare scenario.

#### *Relationships*

People with BPD usually have a history of unstable relationships. They can be prone to drastic changes in the way they see their partners or friends, one day idealizing them and hating them the next. This negative switch is usually triggered by a feeling of insecurity that makes them think the other person is cruel and doesn't care about them.



#### *Self-image*

Self-image and identity are difficult to pin down for someone with BPD. They sometimes feel like they're a terrible person, other times they might feel like they don't exist. There are frequent shifts in core values, life goals, and relationships.

#### *Loneliness*



Considering how difficult it is for someone with BPD to feel secure in their relationships and their own identity, the things that usually anchor us and make us feel connected, it's no surprise that they experience intense feelings of loneliness. This can also manifest as a feeling of emptiness.

#### *Disconnection from reality*

In moments of severe stress, someone with BPD might become paranoid and even lose touch with reality for a period of a few minutes or a few hours. Psychosis can occur in extreme cases.

#### *Mood swings*

Persistent mood swings are another common symptom of BPD. Sudden changes in mood can last for hours or days, and may come with pleasant or unpleasant emotions, such as joy, excitement, shame, anxiety, or sadness.

*Continued...*

## Anger



One particularly problematic emotion of people with BPD is anger. They can have strong emotional reactions to issues that might seem small to someone else. Once they feel intense anger, it takes much longer for it to fade than it does for others. People with severe BPD who haven't learned the skills to regulate their emotions may even end up in physical fights.

## Impulsive behaviour

Impulsive behaviour is also common, particularly when it has a self-destructive outcome. Examples might include excessive spending, unsafe sex, gambling, suddenly quitting a good job, or ending a healthy relationship. Those for whom impulsive behaviour is particularly problematic are more likely to engage in substance abuse.

## Dissociation

People with BPD may sometimes feel disconnected from their bodies, their thoughts, or their identities. This “out of body” sensation makes the world feel less real.



## Self-harm

Someone struggling with BPD is at a higher risk of harming themselves when things are particularly difficult. They may hurt themselves by cutting or burning, threaten to take their own lives, and even make an attempt to do so. This is one of the reasons it's so important for them to seek help with their condition and improve their quality of life.

## Treatment and outlook

Borderline personality disorder can be a scary diagnosis because it's a highly stigmatized condition that's widely misunderstood, but it is treatable. There are therapies and medications that can massively improve the symptoms and help patients live happy, fulfilling lives.

The main type of therapy used to treat BPD is called dialectical behavioural therapy, or DBT. It's a talk therapy that helps people with BPD understand and accept their emotions, as well as giving them the skills to manage them.

There isn't one specific medication that is used to treat all cases of BPD. For some, anti-depressants or mood stabilizers may be used to help with anxiety, depression, and mood swings. For those who suffer particularly from paranoia and disorganized thinking, anti-psychotics are an option.

Another important element for recovery from BPD is support from family and/or friends. It's extremely helpful if loved ones understand the condition and also have the tools to deal with difficult situations that may arise. There are many support groups and educational resources available.

## Stigma

Borderline personality disorder is still highly stigmatized, partly because even healthcare professionals didn't understand the condition until recently. There's a misconception that people who suffer from it are dramatic, manipulative, and attention-seeking.



This misunderstanding is extremely detrimental as it can make those with the condition feel hopeless and wary of seeking help or confiding in others. It's important to find support from a clinician with a deep and up-to-date understanding of the condition, to avoid misdiagnosis or mistreatment.

*Continued...*

## Childhood trauma

The environmental factor is also significant. Many people who suffer from BPD have experienced childhood trauma such as abuse or abandonment. Others were sensitive children who grew up in an unstable environment where they felt invalidated by those around them.



## The brain

There is also research to suggest that people with BPD have structural and functional differences in their brains, particularly in the areas that contribute to impulsive behaviour and emotional regulation.

## Heightened emotions

Those who have BPD are often high functioning in many areas of their lives. It's usually their personal lives where they may struggle and experience instability. They feel extreme emotions that might be triggered by an event that seems minor to others, and it's much harder for them to return to their "emotional baseline" afterward.

Thankfully, we live in a time where mental illness is being destigmatised, and we as a society are recognising that no one goes through life without being touched by it.



The problem with silence often lies in what it conceals or enables: it can be a tool for abuse (the silent treatment), a symptom of trauma (selective mutism), or a barrier to growth, connection, and social change by silencing important voices, preventing accountability, and fuelling misunderstanding or isolation.

## Silence

Silence is like a blanket

I feel it surround me

Like a wall of protection

Enveloping my being

No noise, no voice

Cultivating safety

Enticing the memories to stay

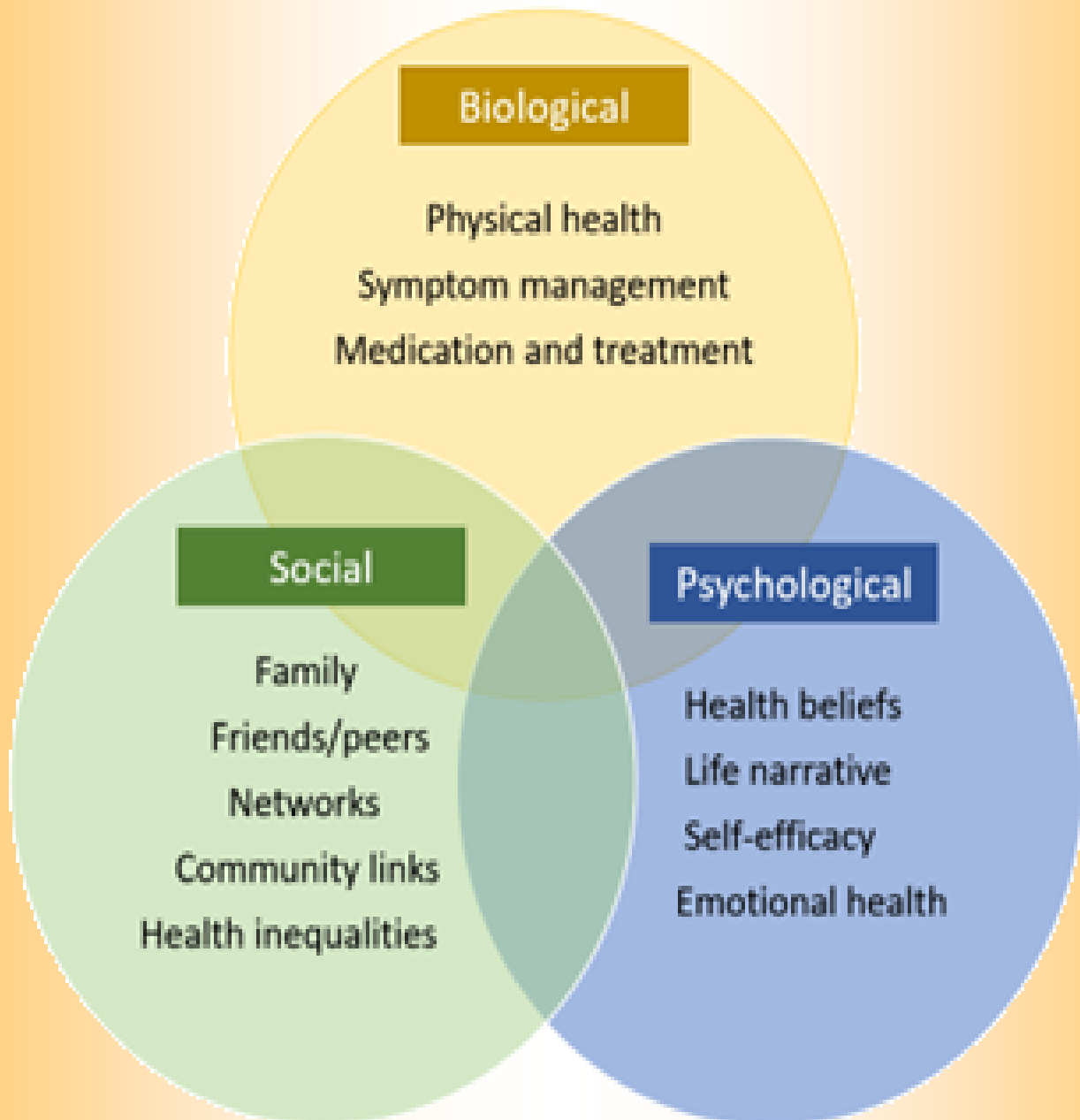
'silent'.

Kelly x





## The Biopsychosocial Model of Care



**Peer support helps to address people's holistic needs**

Peer support can be a powerful and adaptable enabler in connecting people with shared experiences and this could include providing peer support to people from deprived areas, people leaving the criminal justice system, people with disabilities or from minority ethnic groups living with long-term conditions, or at increased risk of developing them.

People can benefit from peer support at different times in their health and wellbeing journey; there's no universal best time to explain the benefits of peer support.

Peer support is a form of personalised care, and it is important that people should be able to access it at the time that is right for them.

Source: [NHS England » Supported self-management: peer support guide](#)

## The Basics of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

ASD is a developmental disorder that affects the cognitive, emotional, and social skills of an individual. It is not a disease and so it has no cure. However, speech therapy and behavioural therapy can help an individual reduce the impact of being autistic. More people are being diagnosed with autism in adulthood as our understanding of the condition improves.



One of the biggest myths of all is that vaccines, specifically the MMR vaccine, cause autism. High-quality research studies have consistently shown that vaccination does not cause autism.

Symptoms vary in severity in each individual, but a common trait is an intense interest in a particular topic or niche, such as painting, reading, or music.

Individuals with ASD experience social communication disorder (SCD). Therefore, it's common for them to have trouble recognising and responding to the emotions of others. However, they do feel emotions and simply express them non-traditionally.

Each person has different ways of learning. By reading, watching videos, or by listening, for instance.

ASD isn't new. Today we just have better tools and methods for evaluating it. Resources and awareness have also increased over time. is a lifelong diagnosis.

Individuals with ASD may need support with social skills and interact differently with the surrounding world, but most enjoy having relationships.

ASD isn't a mental health disorder. It's neurodevelopmental in nature, where the individual has anomalous brain structure and neurotransmitter activities. Some individuals may express their feelings in less obvious ways, but it doesn't mean they're incapable of experiencing or expressing love. Many individuals with ASD enjoy hugs and other forms of touch.

Individuals with ASD feel as much, if not more, empathy as others. They may simply express it in ways that are harder to recognise. It's also more likely that they express humour in unique or less obvious ways.

Since ASD is a spectrum disorder, there's no specific type of job they are suited to. While some may enjoy repetitive tasks, it's incorrect to assume a job is a good match solely based on a label.

Every individual is unique and each individual's experience with ASD is different because it refers to a broad range of conditions. The skill sets, behaviours, and challenges vary widely from person to person.

Source: [The biggest myths about autism](#)



PART ONE

Home



Life at home was tense. We never knew when dad would turn violent; it didn't take much to set him off. If he couldn't find his socks, for example, he would think someone had hidden them and would turn on whoever was in the room with him. Usually, it would be mum who would bear the brunt of his outburst. Banging her head against the wall was common, but his favourite seemed to be threatening her with the fire poker. I remember vividly, her sitting on the rug in front of the fire, terrified, with him in a rage and waving the poker around. I saw it and so must have been there, but I can't place where I was watching from. Many memories like this are sketchy.



One of the most enduring images I have of myself as a seven-year-old is of standing at the bedroom window of my aunt, who would sometimes look after me when my mum was working nights. Mum's bus would go by at the same time each evening and I would wave to her. Most of the time she would wave back, and I would feel happy, but occasionally she didn't, and I would feel sick, anxious, desperate and totally alone. These exact feelings would be repeated throughout my life again and again whenever I felt insecure about an attachment figure. When I was no longer able to see them, I would invariably feel suicidal, believing that I couldn't cope without them.

My aunt, arguably through no fault of her own, was cold and incapable of showing any compassion or warmth. When I stayed with her, she would invariably tell me how dirty I was and insist I have a bath. More than once, I was forced back into the bath for not being clean enough. I don't hold any animosity for her over this. Along with my dad and five other siblings, she was brought up in a violent household and lost her mother when she was still quite young. They were all damaged in one way or another.

My mum's side of the family were, for the most part, friendly, of generous spirit, and kind. My mum was the life and soul of the party, liked by everyone. She was also a survivor. I am conflicted by this; I understand her need to get away from the violence, but the damage she caused by repeatedly abandoning her children had far reaching consequences. More so, I believe, than that caused by living with a violent father. But then, if he hadn't produced such a toxic atmosphere, she wouldn't have had to leave. It's a mess, one that's no doubt repeated on a daily basis within thousands of families.

When mum left, it was always to one of her siblings. Mostly she would go by herself but sometimes she would take one of us with her. As far as I am aware, she only took me with her one time. She went to stay with her sister, and I stayed with my cousin, who was several years older than me and had a young family of her own. I don't know how long I stayed there but it was long enough to start at the local school. All I remember of that is being centre of attention the day I started and was introduced to the rest of the class. I never liked being singled out; I would freeze, unable to speak, even to say hello.

I wasn't happy living with my cousin, mainly I suppose because I wasn't with my mum. She would visit me once a week and bring me comics. I don't remember anyone expressing understanding or compassion regarding my unhappiness. I was told that I was selfish to expect her to buy me comics every week and that I was making everything worse for her. I always cried when she left, which I think was the reason she never took me with her again and if my brothers went to see her, I wasn't allowed to go because I might cry and want to stay with her.



*Continued...*

Like most children in traumatic situations, I learnt coping strategies. I know now that I learnt to dissociate at the worst times. One such occasion was in the car when dad was in a temper and mum was screaming. He was threatening to crash the car and kill us all, but I wasn't scared. There was a small hole in the floor of the car that was going rusty and that's what I concentrated on.

At home, I was hypervigilant, always watching for signs of his temper. I vaguely remember one day when he couldn't find something. I told my younger brother to stay out of his way and to not make a sound. I don't know where everyone else was; I just remember the sound of the furniture being smashed. Usually in these situations, I would get out of the house and stand at the gate waiting for my mum to come home. Of course, she didn't always come home.

Looking back, I think dad was mentally ill. At the very least, he was paranoid. He was always convinced that my mum was having an affair and would look everywhere in the house for where she had hidden someone, even to the extent of looking in cupboards. Whether she was unfaithful I don't know, but I have since been told that he was.



He had some good qualities, of course. He was a good worker and by all accounts, was well regarded by his colleagues. I think he was ashamed of us though. I remember the factory where he worked would have a party every Christmas for the workers' children, but he wouldn't let us go. He did bring the present back for us though. I distinctively remember a 'compendium of games.'

No matter how much I try and understand my dad, I just can't. I know he had a horrible childhood, but is that a good enough excuse for how he treated his own family? It wasn't just the physical violence. One day after school, I walked through the door into the house. It was the back door, and it opened into the kitchen. There was a walk-in pantry immediately to the right. As soon as I closed the door behind me, dad jumped out and shouted, loudly. I jumped in shock. I didn't say anything but for a while I couldn't stop shaking. He walked off laughing. In some families this may be seen as a bit of fun, but ours wasn't that kind of family.

Another memory I have is of walking into the toilet. I didn't know he was in there and so turned to leave, but as I put my hand on the door handle, he took it off and I couldn't move. Another time, I thought my mum was in bed and went into her bedroom to speak to her. I walked up to the bed to see if she was awake, but it wasn't her, it was him. I said I was looking for my mum and turned to leave but he grabbed hold of my arm, and I couldn't move. Both these memories may have been cut short to protect me, but I will never know. I will also never know how much my mum was aware of. Many years later she would say that she 'often wondered'. I will leave it there.

I'm not entirely sure how my brothers coped with the situation at the time. I was the third of four children, and I know that the eldest, 'X', has struggled with the abandonment, although I don't think he has attachment issues like mine. He has been married three times; the first two ended because of his violence towards them. He is now in his 70s and seems happy and settled.

The second eldest brother, 'Y', has been married for over fifty years and has not displayed any signs of violence. However, he has serious controlling issues and believes he knows best for everyone and shows no signs of changing. A therapist might say this is a result of his childhood and I can see how. Even now, in his late 60s, he struggles with not being able to protect me when we were children and although both his wife and I have constantly told him it wasn't his fault, it frequently comes up in conversation. It is possible that his need to control as an adult stems from when he had no control as a child.



*Continued...*

'Y' and his family have always lived in the same village as our parents. There were times when I would run to his house when dad was hitting mum, but 'Y' has tended to bury his head in the sand and would merely say that it would soon blow over. I would then have to walk two miles to the next village to fetch 'X', who would come and 'sort it out'.

My youngest brother, 'Z', may have benefited slightly from being so young when all this was going on, but he certainly witnessed his share of violence. After I moved away, he was alone with the two of them, something that I didn't appreciate at the time. After he started setting small fires, my mum took him to the doctors, who said it was because he was missing me. 'Z' is now happily married to his second wife and is close to his two grown-up children.

I don't know if 'Z' has ever sought any kind of therapy, he probably wouldn't tell us if he had. I know that 'Y' hasn't. I have suggested it to him, but he says there's nothing wrong with him. He knows what's best for himself and for everyone else so why would he need a therapist? Personally, I think he needs one more than any of us. 'X' had group therapy many years ago after his second wife gave him an ultimatum over the domestic violence. It didn't stop the violence, but it made him realise that he couldn't blame our parents for his behaviour. He had to take some responsibility.



As with many families on the estate, money was scarce. My parents worked but were just not very good at managing their finances. They were both heavy smokers and he liked to gamble, although not excessively. Every Friday, when they got paid, we would have what we called a 'fuddle'. Pop, crisps, chocolate, cake and other goodies, and that would last us the weekend. After that it would be chips and egg until the next Friday. Home-made chips in a pan full of lard, with a fried egg cooked in the same fat on a high heat so that it would crisp and brown as soon as it hit the pan. Not healthy, but definitely tasty.

When she was present, I believe my mum tried to do her best for us, but she knew I was different. She even said so, *'why can't you just be like other girls?'* I don't think she realised the effect this would have on me. Some kids would shrug it off, but I was very sensitive, and it only confirmed what I already knew, that I was different, and not in a good way.

Despite my acceptance of this, something I discovered in recent years shocked me. I already knew that as a toddler I, along with my two older brothers, was left at the local office of the Department of Health & Social Security (DHSS) by my mum, who said she could no longer feed us. What I didn't know was that the Social Services were called and took us to my two aunties (on my dad's side), who agreed to keep the boys but said they couldn't deal with the girl (me). Maybe I was too young, and it was just too much for them, I don't know.

I was then taken to another aunt (on my mum's side) who agreed to take me. Not only that but she wanted to adopt me. It seems that for a while this was a distinct possibility, but then my mum changed her mind and fetched me back. I assume she had fetched my brothers sometime earlier. With both parents having died many years ago, I am unable to get their side of the story. I have no reason to doubt it, but I choose to believe that she was desperate at the time, and it was nothing to do with me being 'different'.



Next issue.....School



# You Were Likely an Emotionally Neglected Child If You Recognise These Experiences

It's not necessarily about what happened—it's often about what *didn't* happen. If no one tuned into your feelings, made space for your struggles, or showed you how to regulate your emotions, that absence can echo well into adulthood. These are some of the signs people often carry when they were emotionally neglected as children, even if they didn't realise it at the time. If these are familiar to you, you might have missed out on some much-needed love, attention, and support as a child.

## 1. You struggle to identify your feelings in the moment



You might only realise you were upset hours later, once it's already passed. Or you default to "fine," even when you're clearly not. It's like there's a delay between what you feel and when you actually notice it. This often happens when your feelings weren't acknowledged growing up. If no one asked, "What's going on for you right now?" you never learned to ask yourself either.

## 2. You second-guess your emotional reactions

Even when you feel hurt, angry, or sad, your next thought is usually, "Am I overreacting?" You don't trust your gut responses because you were likely told, directly or indirectly, that your emotions were wrong or inconvenient. Eventually, that kind of environment teaches you to doubt yourself. So now, you look for logic or permission before you let yourself feel anything too deeply.

## 3. You rarely ask for help, even when you need it

You power through, stay quiet, and pretend you've got it covered. Admitting you're struggling feels too vulnerable, or like no one would help even if you did ask. This belief usually starts in homes where emotional support wasn't offered. If you learned early that your needs wouldn't be met, you stopped expressing them altogether.



## 4. You feel guilty for having emotional needs

Wanting comfort or validation makes you feel needy, dramatic, or burdensome. You might even pull away from people the moment you start to feel close—just to avoid the shame of "needing too much." That guilt doesn't come out of nowhere. It's often a response to being made to feel like your emotional needs were a nuisance growing up, even if no one said it out loud.

## 5. You over-apologise, even when you've done nothing wrong

You find yourself saying sorry for things that aren't your fault—taking up space, setting boundaries, or just existing. It's a knee-jerk habit that's hard to switch off. When emotional neglect is part of your upbringing, it's common to internalise the idea that your presence is disruptive. So, you apologise, often pre-emptively, just in case.



Continued...

## 6. You find it easier to care for other people than for yourself



You're quick to offer advice, comfort, or support, but when it comes to your own wellbeing, you go blank. It's like all that nurturing energy disappears when the focus turns inward. This pattern often forms when you weren't shown how to treat yourself with care. You become a great caregiver to other people while quietly running on empty yourself.

## 7. You minimise your own experiences

Even when something hurts, you're quick to say, "It's not a big deal," or "Other people have it worse." You downplay your pain before anyone else can. This habit is common in people who weren't taken seriously as kids. If your emotions were brushed aside, you learned to dismiss them, too—just to stay safe and avoid disappointment.

## 8. You feel uncomfortable when other people get emotional

When someone cries, vents, or expresses strong feelings, your instinct might be to shut down, crack a joke, or change the subject. You're not unkind; you just genuinely don't know what to do. That discomfort usually points to a lack of emotional modelling. If big emotions weren't handled openly in your family, they now feel overwhelming or even threatening.

## 9. You intellectualise your emotions instead of feeling them

Instead of saying, "I'm hurt," you say, "That was an interesting dynamic." You analyse what's happening instead of sitting with the actual feeling. When emotional neglect is part of your past, staying in your head often feels safer than being in your body. You learned to survive by thinking, not by feeling.



## 10. You're afraid of being a burden, even to people who love you

No matter how close you are to someone, there's a quiet voice saying, "Don't be too much." You might isolate, censor yourself, or pretend you're fine just to avoid feeling like a problem. This fear runs deep for emotionally neglected kids. When your needs were ignored or met with frustration, you learned to expect rejection—not support.

## 11. You avoid confrontation at all costs



Even minor tension makes you anxious. You'd rather keep the peace than risk expressing a need, setting a limit, or pushing back. Conflict doesn't feel like something you can safely move through—it feels like something to escape. This kind of reaction usually comes from growing up in homes where conflict meant danger, disconnection, or silence. So now, avoidance feels like self-protection.

## 12. You don't really know what you want in life

Because so much of your energy has gone into pleasing other people or keeping the peace, you may have lost touch with your own desires. Making decisions feels overwhelming because you were never encouraged to explore your preferences in the first place. Emotional neglect can leave you feeling like a passenger in your own life, unsure of what excites or fulfils you. Reconnecting with those parts of yourself can take time, but it's worth it.

*Continued...*

### 13. You struggle to self-soothe

When you're upset, your coping strategies are often distraction, numbing out, or trying to fix everything externally. Comforting yourself in the moment doesn't come naturally—it feels foreign or forced. That's because it's a skill you were never taught. Without caregivers who helped you co-regulate as a child; you're now trying to learn those calming techniques from scratch as an adult.

### 14. You rarely feel fully seen in relationships



You might be surrounded by people but still feel misunderstood, lonely, or emotionally disconnected. No one ever really “gets” you, or so it seems. This is often a lingering effect of being overlooked emotionally as a child. When you're not mirrored back properly growing up, it becomes harder to feel visible and valued later in life.

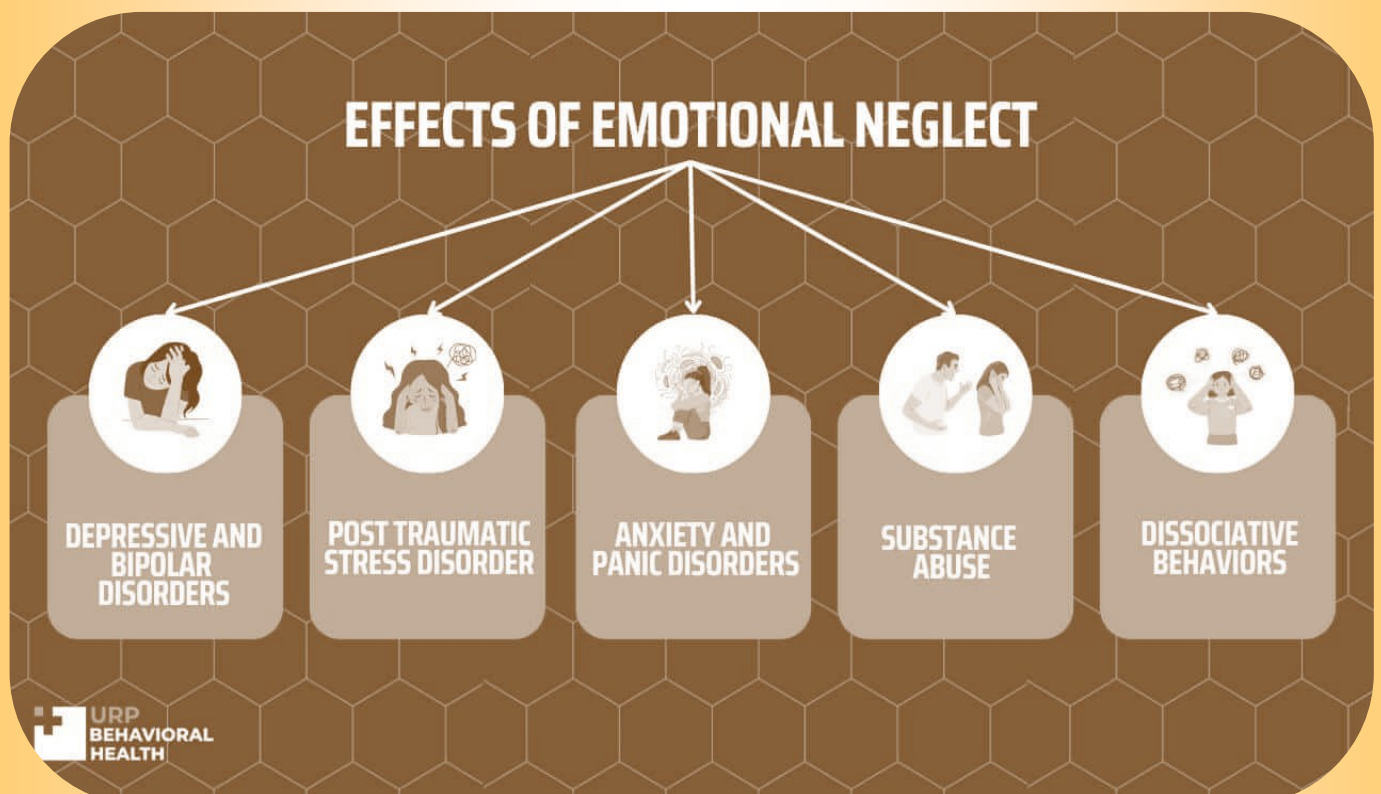
### 15. You over-function in relationships and at work

You're the dependable one, the fixer, the one who gets things done. But beneath all that competence is a quiet fear that if you stop performing, you'll lose your worth. That tendency often grows out of childhood environments where love was conditional tied to how helpful, quiet, or impressive you were, not to who you actually are.

### 16. You feel strangely empty sometimes, and don't know why

Even when life looks good on the surface, there's a dull, lingering emptiness. It's not depression exactly—it's more like something is missing that you can't name. This hollow feeling is often a leftover from being emotionally unseen for years. When the emotional core of childhood is empty, it leaves behind a kind of echo, and healing means slowly filling it with the care you never got.

Source: [\*You Were Likely An Emotionally Neglected Child If You Recognise These Experiences\*](#)



## What is loneliness?

We all feel lonely at times – it's a natural human emotion. We're biologically wired for social contact, and loneliness is our signal that we need more. Everyone's experiences of loneliness are different. It's subjective and personal to each of us.



### Is loneliness the same as being alone?

You don't have to be on your own to feel lonely - you might feel lonely in a relationship or while spending time with friends or family, on social media, in a city or at university. You can feel lonely if you feel like you are not being acknowledged or understood by those around you. You can feel lonely when the relationships in your life are lacking in emotional depth, if you've grown apart from someone or if communication has broken down. You might feel lonely when you're by yourself. Other people might choose to be alone and live happily without much social contact. Loneliness can also be characterised by its intensity or how strongly it is felt, which can change from moment to moment and over different durations of time.

### There are different types, including:

- Emotional loneliness → When someone you were very close with is no longer there. This could be a partner, family member, close friend or pet.
- Social loneliness → When you feel like you're lacking a wider social network of friends, neighbours or colleagues.
- Transient loneliness → A feeling that comes and goes.
- Situational loneliness → Loneliness which you only feel at certain times like Sundays, bank holidays or Christmas.
- Chronic loneliness → When you feel lonely all or most of the time.

### Who experiences loneliness?

Most of us will experience loneliness at some point in our lives, regardless of age, circumstance and background. We all experience loneliness differently. It's a common misconception that loneliness is limited to older people. In fact, 16-24-year-olds are the loneliest age group in the UK. In 2023, a survey revealed that 85% of UK adults had experienced loneliness in the last 12 months. Almost half (44%) felt chronically lonely.

*Research suggests that some people are more vulnerable to loneliness than others. Examples of this include people who:*

- Belong to a minority group or live in an area where there aren't many people with a similar background
- Are excluded from social activities because of mobility problems
- Have no friends or family, are a single parent or care for someone else
- Don't have much money for certain social activities
- Experience discrimination and stigma because of your gender, race or your gender or sexual identity
- Have experienced any kind of abuse, including neglect, which may make it find it harder to form close relationships with other people.



*Continued...*

## What causes loneliness?

Loneliness has many different causes, which vary from person to person. There are key life points which will increase the likelihood of feeling lonely.

*Some examples are:*

- Moving away from home
- Starting university or a new job
- Becoming a new parent
- Experiencing mental health problems
- A relationship break-up
- Suffering a bereavement
- Retirement

## Are loneliness and social isolation the same thing?

Social isolation and loneliness are both terms which relate to a degree of social disconnection. Social isolation can lead to loneliness, and feeling lonely can lead to social isolation. Many people are both lonely and isolated. People can experience different levels of social isolation and loneliness over their lifetime, moving in and out of these states as their personal circumstances change.



Research shows that we can start to fall into a cycle of loneliness: the longer we feel lonely the more we start to isolate ourselves. We can start to feel like there is something wrong with us, or that the world is an unfriendly and scary place when that normally isn't the case at all. First and foremost, loneliness is a normal human emotion. Left unchecked, chronic or long-term loneliness can lead to mental health conditions like anxiety or depression.

## Has loneliness always been an issue?

Human beings evolved to feel safest in groups, and as a result, we experience stress when we're disconnected or isolated. Imagine if you lived in a tribe, and while you were out hunting, you found yourself alone. You'd be under serious threat without the protection of your group - your levels of the stress hormone cortisol would rocket up and would stay raised until you're back with your tribe.

Researchers believe that this stress and hypervigilance in response to isolation became embedded in our nervous system to produce the anxiety we associate with loneliness.

Fast forward to modern times, our biological need for connection remains, but our society has never been more disconnected. More of us live alone than ever before, our sense of belonging to neighbourhoods has fallen and 36% of people in the UK feel lonelier now than before the pandemic.

## Is loneliness a mental health problem?

Loneliness isn't a mental health problem. If left unchecked, loneliness can start to affect our mental and physical health, but it's important to know that, first and foremost, it's a normal and natural feeling.

Having a mental health problem can increase feelings of loneliness. For example, if you're struggling with your mental health, you may avoid social events and activities or find it hard to try new things and worry about engaging with others.



*Continued...*



## The British and Irish Group for the Study of Personality Disorders (BIGSPD)

BIGSPD was formed in 1999 as a forum for networking in the field of personality disorder. This began as a small annual conference, predominantly for clinicians but has evolved significantly over the past 25 years. BIGSPD is an organisation which values lived experience equally to those who are traditionally trained. This is reflected in our co-presidency, executive committee, organisational values and in our conference content.

BIGSPD acknowledges the contentious nature of the diagnosis and diagnostic construct and acknowledges the real harm that may come to those as a result of having this label. BIGSPD also acknowledges that this is a diagnosis that some do identify with and find useful. To ensure we maintain our neutrality, our conference consists of a range of perspectives and voices from both the traditionally trained and people with lived experience. This is also reflected in our co-produced executive committee where our members hold positions of being pro, anti, and ambivalent about the construct.

For us as an organisation, we acknowledge that how people choose to identify with their diagnosis is unique to them and we do not believe we should be the organisation that force people into leaning one way or the other. Our primary aim is to ensure that people who receive a diagnosis of personality disorder or have associated difficulties are treated with the care and respect that they deserve. We believe if we cut out large parts of this conversation, we fail to ensure that learning and reflection takes place from any position, and we should never be silencing the voices of those with lived experience from either side of the fence. As stated in our values, we do not think any true co-produced endeavour can take place if voices are actively excluded.

Find out more about BIGSPD click on the following link...

[Find out about BIGSPD - the British and Irish Group for the Study of 'Personality Disorders'](#)

and for an example of how lived experience is included...

### 1. Criminal justice - Descript

The screenshot shows a video player interface. The main content is a presentation slide with a dark blue header containing the text '1. Criminal justice'. Below the header, it says 'By Andre Tomlin' and 'September 18, 2025'. The central part of the slide is a large white box with the text 'Criminal justice' in a bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the slide, there is a logo for 'BIGSPD British & Irish Group for the Study of Personality Disorder' on the left and the website 'bigspd.org.uk' on the right. The video player interface includes a search bar at the top right with a magnifying glass icon and the text 'Search'. Below the slide, there is a play button, a progress bar showing '0:00 / 3:44', a volume icon, a '1x' speed indicator, a full screen icon, and an 'Auto-scroll' toggle. A help icon is visible in the bottom right corner of the player.



# Things you never need to explain to anyone



Your need for emotional space



How you spend your free time



Why you left a relationship



Your way of practicing self-care



Why you need rest



Why you changed your mind



Your way of grieving and healing



Your decision to go to therapy (or not)



Why you need alone time



# Rules for a Good Relationship

by Dan Wile, PhD



## 1. Never go to bed angry.

Stay up all night yelling and screaming. After the way your partner behaved, he doesn't deserve to sleep.

## 2. Don't jump in to help when your partner is telling a joke.

--unless, of course, you can tell it much better.

## 3. When fighting, take a time out.

That will give you a chance to come up with more devastating putdowns.

## 4. Don't interrupt your partner.

You need to have all the facts in order to show her how totally wrong she is.

## 5. Don't mind read.

Your partner might be thinking awful things about you that you don't want to know.

## 6. Don't dump out all your stored-up complaints.

Keep a few in reserve so you won't be caught with nothing left while your partner still has four or five.

## 7. Restate your partner's message.

Let him see how truly irrational it is.

## 8. Make "I" statements, not "you" statements

--except when nothing but a good "you" statement will do.

## 9. Don't say "always" or "never"

--except when you need it for added emphasis when your partner won't admit how totally wrong he is.

## 10. Don't raise your voice.

You can have so much more effect by speaking softly between clenched teeth.

## 11. Don't try to change your partner

--except, of course, for the few things that really do need changing. In fact, make a list.

**LAUGHTER  
IS THE  
BEST  
MEDICINE**

### But seriously...



Traits of Healthy relationships

Source: Rules for a Good Relationship



**Healthy Relationships**

Have you noticed how...

## ...people deemed to have no empathy share the symptoms of those on the Autistic Spectrum?

*Personality traits people without empathy show again and again*

They may:

- Struggle to read facial expressions and emotional cues.
- Turn every conversation back to themselves.
- Become confused when people get emotional about things.
- Say incredibly tactless things without realising.
- Be brilliant at logic but rubbish at emotional support.
- Not adjust their behaviour based on social context.
- Remember facts about you but forget how you feel about things.
- Be great in emergencies, but rubbish at comforting people afterwards.
- Take things literally and miss implied meanings.
- Not feel guilty or apologise naturally.
- Be confused by social niceties and small talk.
- Struggle to maintain close relationships long term.
- Be attracted to careers with clear rules and systems.
- Be loyal but in a practical way rather than emotional.



Source: [14 Personality Traits People Without Empathy Show Again And Again](#)

*Personality traits of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)*

They may:

- Find joining in conversation difficult.
- Speak in a way that is not expected in the context of the conversation e.g. very formally or very informally, in a monotone, in an accent, etc.
- Have difficulty in using and responding to tone of voice or non-verbal social cues such as facial expressions and body language in social interactions.
- Find it hard to read someone's body language and emotions.
- Find that others don't understand how they are feeling and say that "it is hard to know what you are thinking".
- Like to lead conversations and provide extensive information on the specific topics they are interested in.
- Find it easier to talk 'at' people, rather than engaging in a two-way conversation.
- Find 'small talk' such as talking about the weather and what others are doing difficult.
- Experience differences in natural communication styles, preferring more literal language use rather than the use of non-literal language like sarcasm or metaphor, which may be more challenging to understand in context.
- Be blunt in their assessment of people and things.
- Prefer to make little or no eye contact when they are talking to someone.
- Have their own unique phrases and descriptive words.
- Find building and maintaining close friendships and relationships difficult in a range of environments.
- Enjoy consistent routine and schedules and get upset or anxious should that routine or schedule be changed.
- Find it upsetting when something happens that you did not expect to happen, even if it is positive.
- Have trouble regulating their emotional responses.
- Be bothered if their things are moved or rearranged by someone.
- Like operating solo – both at work and play.

Source: [Autism signs and characteristics checklist for adults | The Spectrum](#)

## How many times has ASD been missed?

## **Brent Bourgeois**

I told my therapist,

“I feel safest doing everything alone.”

She didn't ask why.

She said, “That's not independence. That's grief.”

And something in me cracked open.

Because it is grief.

Grief for every time you asked for help, and no one came.

For being the kid who had to stay strong...

...while everything else fell apart.

For learning too young that no one was coming to save you.

You didn't choose to be strong.

You had to be.

Because breaking wasn't safe.

Crying changed nothing.

Needing people only brought pain.

So, you learned to handle everything.

To overthink.

To prepare.

To say, “I've got it,” even when you're falling apart.

They call you independent.

They don't see the part of you that just wants to be

held...and not dropped this time.

Source: [Facebook](#)





A

Happy Easter

to all our  
members!



**Supported in the past 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**

**Active Nottinghamshire**

**Active Derbyshire**

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

**CLINKS**

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