

1B. Identifying DPD – features

Features of DPD

1) *Incompetence*

- feels incompetent in general, has low self-confidence
- pervasive feelings of helplessness and weakness
- feels they are incompetent, but others are competent
- does not trust own decisions, beliefs, behaviours. needs others to validate.
- has anxiety when acting independently
- has trouble starting for fear of messing up
- avoids life responsibilities, allow others to assume them
- live with parents for longer than is typical for their culture
- won't pursue career without excessive guidance or pushing

2) *Relationship dependence = depending on others*

- fear of separation, fear of being abandoned
- feels anxious and helpless when alone
- clingy (overt or subtle)
- desperate for help and support from others
- excessive need to be cared for, helped and protected

NB

- all of us want to be cared for and help and protected.
- all of us want to have people that we can depend on.
- all of us want to depend on people (but also have them depend on us)
- only an issue when it is EXCESSIVE

3) *Repressed Anger*

Dr Honda thinks this is a central feature of DPD: “Everyone with DPD has a problem with anger on some level.”

DPD persons are rarely or never angry

- May get angry in short bursts but suppressed on some level.
- “Always nice”
- Society treats this as a good thing [which reinforces it, or makes it hard to see it as a problem]

Stems from childhood treatment or life circumstances, that made the person suppress their anger in very significant ways.

Anger gives motivation to say no, to say "I disagree with you"

- Makes it difficult to disagree with others, or to assert oneself.

- Can lead to passive-aggressive behaviour [or acting out]

4) Poor Connection with Self

Common issue in personality disorders, but Dr Honda thinks it is another central feature of DPD

Everyone has

- feelings, emotions, and reactions
- needs, wants and preferences
- dreams, aspirations and ambitions.

But a lot of people aren't in good conscious contact with them. When we're young, we need a lot of attunement and space to explore our own emotions and needs, and feel safe enough to explore and to express ourselves. If we don't get that, then we graduate into adulthood without really knowing.

Every time you ventured off on your own, or were forced to, something went wrong, usually early in life. Sometimes these questions don't even get asked because the assumption is no one cares. "So why even start?"

Trouble answering these questions:

- who am I? what do I want in life?

- what do I feel, [what is the emotion called, why am I having it?]

- Subtext: "Can I even express myself, does anyone care?"

May reply with

- "I don't know. Someone else said to do this"

- "I don't know. I've never been asked that question before"

Feeds into lack of assertiveness: how can you be assertive when you don't even know what you want?

Feeds into enmeshment: need someone else to define your life for you because you don't know. You need someone else to tell you what to do because you don't know. You're used to someone else telling you what to do.

5) "Pervasive"

Personality disorders pervade the affected person's entire life. They feel it is normal; they cannot tell when it is excessive. So, there is lack of insight, lack of awareness into what the undesirable behaviour is.

6) Distress

Behaviours from personality disorders cause distress and dysfunction in affected person's life

7) Note on cultural differences

Behaviours seen as dependent in one culture are normal in another eg adult living with parents

Some cultures encourage more dependent behaviour eg more protective parenting now vs past

Features per DSM-V

1) difficulty making everyday decisions without an excessive amount of advice and reassurance from others

2) difficulty initiating projects or doing things on their own because of a lack of self confidence, judgment or abilities rather than a lack of motivation or energy

3) go to excessive lengths to obtain nurturance and support from others to the point of volunteering to do things that are unpleasant

4) feels uncomfortable or helpless when alone because of exaggerated fears of being unable to care for themselves

5) urgently seeks another relationship as a source of care and support when a close relationship ends and is unrealistically preoccupied with fears of being left to take care of themselves

DPD Subtypes (5 Million + 1)

Psych in Seattle	Wikipedia term	Description
Separation anxiety	Disquieted	Need to stay close to people they depend upon
Enmeshed	Selfless	Goes along with someone else's life, does not develop their own life
Child-like	Immature	Inexperienced in dealing with issues in Life
Life-avoidant	Ineffectual	Lives a limited, low-stress life
Compliant and Eager -> Passive-Aggressive	Accommodating	Being overly pleasing to others May also result in passive-aggressive behaviour: (comply on the surface, but rage inside, and act out)

Additional Notes on DPD

(from "DPD Overfunctioning" – where he answers subscriber emails)

- People with DPD can be good in school. Sometimes they're very good in school because they're being told what to do. They will sometimes seek and really thrive in venues of authority. If you just hand over your entire personality to the authority figures, and say "what do I do, tell me what to do",

and you happen to be a little bit studious, then you can become like one of the best students in the entire world, because your entire personality is oriented towards your teachers and your superiors

- DPD people can be extremely competent, but they believe they're incompetent, and they're constantly trying to prove to others that they can "do good by others".

It's being stuck in a position that every child goes through. Children, maybe around 4-7 years old, some of them are really concerned about "look at me, I can do this, I can run fast, I can jump off this thing, I can do math problems, I can play with this, I can throw the ball through this thing".

They really want to feel competent, and they really want you to see them as competent. You could see adults stuck in that place. When you see a six-year-old who's looking at you being like "validate my competence", you just think well they're six what are you gonna do. But when they're 35 and you have someone constantly saying validate my competence, you're like "will you just be competent on your own please".