

## “Why is BPD so heavily stigmatized?”

- There are so many criteria that go into diagnosing BPD that it can be difficult for people to understand
- BPD is can be difficult to treat for a professional that has not had the proper training. Sometimes providers rather than recognize their own inadequacy just dismiss people with BPD as uncooperative and untreatable.
- These sentiments are often propagated in movies and on the news

## “What can we do to end the stigma?”

Here are some thoughts to keep in mind from the [bringchange2mind.org](http://bringchange2mind.org) website:

### For people living with mental illness:

- I am living with a mental illness that is treatable and manageable.
- I am a valuable and valued person and I deserve to be treated with respect.
- I am responsible for the decisions and choices I make in my life.
- Educating myself about the symptoms of my illness, and any side effects I may have from treatment, will help me find and use the resources I need to work toward stability.

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- Communicating about my experiences with others will help them support me in difficult times and keep me “on track.”
- If I am feeling suicidal, it is critical that I reach out for help, for in the face of real pain and suffering, it is others who can help me with a commitment to live.
- I can reduce stigma in myself and in others by being open about living with mental illness, naming it out loud, and raising people’s awareness.

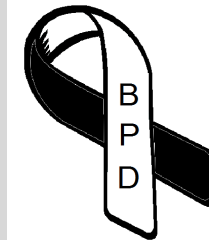
### For everyone:

- It is likely that someone I know is living with a mental illness and that fear of stigma may be preventing them from accepting their illness and seeking help.
- I can make a difference by learning about mental health issues and the devastating effects of stigma.
- If someone I know exhibits sudden changes in behavior, I will pay attention and reach out to them.
- If someone I know is experiencing suicidal thoughts, I will take it seriously and make every effort to ensure they get help.
- I will not perpetuate or tolerate stigma of any kind and will commit myself to changing the way society views people living with mental illness.

### You can also:

- Get involved with NAMI or Bring Change 2 Mind to work on ending the stigma that surrounds mental illness.
  - [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)
  - [www.bringchange2mind.org](http://www.bringchange2mind.org)
- Make copies of these brochures and pass them around and email them to your contacts.

# May 2012 Borderline Personality Disorder Awareness Month



## FAQs & Misconceptions

Brochure made by Dani Z [www.daniz.me](http://www.daniz.me)  
(All sources are referenced throughout the pamphlet)

## “What is borderline personality disorder?”

Borderline Personality disorder is a serious mental illness characterized by instability in mood, relationships, self image and behavior. It is a disorder of emotional deregulation.

Marsha Linehan one of the key researchers in BPD treatment says “Borderline individuals are the psychological equivalent of third-degree-burn patients. They simply have, so to speak, no emotional skin. Even the slightest touch or movement can create immense suffering”

People with BPD also see the world in absolutes. They view situations, people and even life as either all good or else all bad with no in between.

According to the DSM-IV-TR a person must meet at least 5 of the following 9 criteria to be diagnosed with BPD:

- 1) Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment.
- 2) A pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation.
- 3) Identity disturbance: markedly and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self.
- 4) Impulsivity in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging (e.g., spending, sex, substance abuse, reckless driving, binge eating).
- 5) Recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, or threats, or self-mutilating behavior\*\*\*.
- 6) Affective [mood] instability.
- 7) Chronic feelings of emptiness.
- 8) Inappropriate, intense anger or difficulty controlling anger (e.g., frequent displays of temper, constant anger, recurrent physical fights).
- 9) Transient, stress-related paranoid ideation or severe dissociative symptoms.

## “Don’t most people meet a lot of those criteria to some degree? It doesn’t seem that bad.”

A person with BPD displays these characteristics to such an extreme that they interfere with their ability to maintain relationships and function in daily life.

## “Can it be treated? I heard that people never recover from BPD.”

In the past few decades, treatment for Borderline Personality Disorder has changed radically, and, in turn, the prognosis for improvement and/or recovery has significantly improved.

One of the preliminary questions confronting families/friends is how and when to place confidence in those responsible for treating the patient. Generally speaking, the more clinical experience the treater(s) have working with borderline patients, the better. In the event that several professionals are involved in the care of a borderline individual, it will be important that they are compatible in their approaches and are communicating with one another. Support by family members of treatment is equally important.

**FACT: 2% of adults have the disorder, it is more common than schizophrenia but not as well known.**  
**FACT: 8-10% of the people that have it commit suicide. It’s crucial that we end stigma so people will not be too ashamed to seek help**

## “My friend/ family member/ spouse was diagnosed with BPD. What can I do to help?”

Please check out the “family connections” page at [neabpd.com](http://neabpd.com) for more information about how you can support your loved one. Borderline personality disorder is difficult not only for the person living with it but the people around them too. Make sure you are also taking care of yourself and getting the support you need.

[www.bpdfamily.com](http://www.bpdfamily.com) is a good online community of people with loved ones living with BPD. You can also go to [nami.org](http://nami.org) to find your local NAMI webpage. Most local NAMI chapters offer support groups to families of people living with BPD or other mental illness.

## “Where can I find more information about BPD?”

As with anytime you do online research be very careful about who your sources are. BPD is one of the most heavily stigmatized mental illnesses. There is a lot of misinformation out there on it. Below are a few trustworthy websites

National Education Alliance of Borderline Personality Disorder (NEABPD):  
[www.borderlinepersonalitydisorder.com](http://www.borderlinepersonalitydisorder.com)

National Alliance on Mental Illness :  
[www.NAMI.org](http://www.NAMI.org)

National Institute of Mental Health:  
[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)