

Condition:



Dependent Personality Disorder

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What is Dependent Personality Disorder?

Dependent Personality Disorder (DPD) is a collection of personality traits in which you excessively rely on others to meet all your emotional and psychological needs.

Dependent Personality Disorder and Work

You may have an issue with Dependent Personality Disorder if you find it difficult to make decisions around finding and keeping work. Or there may be an issue if the prospect of going to work causes anxiety because it would involve not being in proximity to the person i.e. a family member or friend who organises much of your day to day life.

Some workplace adjustments might include:

- Changing your working hours to avoid busy times
- Flexible working (e.g. altering start/finish times, particularly during acute episodes; working from home where appropriate and possible, part time working, job sharing)
- Changing tasks or the pace of work to avoid exacerbating the condition
- Allowing for reasonable time off for appointments and treatment
- More frequent and/or longer break
- Your employer providing a quiet place to rest without being disturbed

What does Dependent Personality Disorder feel like?

If one or more of the following statements apply to you, there may be an underlying Dependent Personality Disorder.

Clinging to others most of the time.

Unable to make minor decisions without help or support.

Allowing others to assume responsibility for many areas of your life.

Agreeing to things you feel are wrong for fear of losing someone's support.

Being afraid of being alone.

Having low self-confidence.

Seeing other people as being much more capable than you are.

Being overly submissive and passive.

Difficulty initiating any projects or doing things on your own.

It is important not to confuse Dependent Personality disorder with cultural factors, an individual's cultural background may promote a higher level of interdependence. Similarly the elderly may require a higher level of dependence on others for their basic needs to be met.

What causes Dependent Personality Disorder?

The exact cause of Dependent Personality Disorder is not known, though there are known to be several environmental and genetic factors that could lead to an individual developing the traits of a dependent personality, such as:

- Experiencing overly protective care from parents during childhood
- Experiencing overly authoritarian parenting during childhood
- Being consistently overindulged by parents or family members from a young age
- Not having received realistic feedback about one's behaviour or achievement from a young age
- Being born with an over sensitive temperament

Talking to Your GP or Health Professional

The above symptoms will be diagnosed by a mental health professional.

You may not know that you have DPD although you may recognise that you are prone to anxiety or depression. In this case you should seek help from your GP.

If you feel that you may have DPD, a referral to a mental health professional can help to work out whether it applies to you. However this may take some time to diagnose.

Treatments

Psychotherapy or counselling from a qualified mental health professional is the main method of treatment for DPD.

The goal of therapy is to help you become more active and independent, and to enable you to learn how to decrease your dependence on another individual such as a partner or close relative.

Self-Management

It might be useful to reflect on the following, if you feel that the above symptoms of DPD apply to you:

Try to work independently on managing your own feeling of wellbeing. Wellbeing isn't something you have, but something you do.



Take notice

Try to remember that you can't please all of the people all of the time. Given that you cannot please everyone all of the time, you're bound to face the reality of disappointing another person sometimes. Try to remember that ultimately you cannot control how they feel, even if you have done everything in your power to please them.

Another person's approval is not a sturdy place to tether your sense of self. Take some time and space for some quiet self-reflection. Perhaps try journaling or keeping a diary where you record your thoughts on your own values, the kind of person that you want to be, and what you would like to achieve in your life. In other words, what would be in your long term best interest?

Try to identify the truth about the present state of your relationships. Ask yourself, "What will happen when I inevitably displease this person?" If you guess that the person will probably punish you in some fashion (rejection, humiliation, or worse), and your behaviour is focused on attempts to avoid this reaction, then perhaps it

would be worth thinking about what this behaviour might be costing you in the long term.



Be active

What could you do for yourself that you have not tried before? Perhaps take up a new sport or hobby. Physical activity is a great way to build up self-esteem and trying something new is a great way to become a more active participant in your own life.



Keep Learning

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life.



Connect

This can be in any form; talk to someone, speak to someone new, ask how someone's weekend was or put aside 5 minutes of your day to find out how someone really is. This can then in turn help with developing relationships which is something that you might be struggling with.



Give Back

Think about volunteering or maybe doing some charity work or getting involved with local community projects. Challenging yourself to come up with a voluntary project will provide a sense of satisfaction and the knowledge that you can help others, instead of being the one is always being helped.

Useful links

