



Coping with Borderline Personality Disorder

A person with BPD may be in considerable emotional distress at times and it is difficult to know how to support someone close to you in these circumstances. It is not only important to have a clear understanding of what you can do to help the person concerned but also how you can safeguard your own wellbeing. Therefore, this leaflet aims to provide some guidelines both on how to help support the person with BPD and the sort of things you can do to look after yourself as well.

Contact addresses and for the pen pal service:

BPDWORLD
22 Revenue Chambers
St Peters Street
Huddersfield
HD1 1DL

Registered Charity Number: 1111750

BPDWORLD



Where to find us

Visit our website www.bpdworld.org for information, advice and support

Helpline: 0870 005 3273
Talk to an understanding volunteer

Info line: 0870 005 6787

Where to Find More Information

Alternative sources of advice and support can be obtained from the following organisations:

www.bpdworld.org

www.tara4bpd.org

A website dedicated to BPD friends and family

www.first-steps.org

A website dedicated to supporting family and friends of mental health sufferers and has a specific section relating to BPD family

You may also find it helpful to obtain a copy of 'Stop Walking on Eggshells: Coping when someone you care about has BPD' by Paul Mason and Randy Kreger

WWW.BPDWORLD.ORG
BPDWORLD

Providing Information, Advice & Support to those affected by Personality Disorder

0870 005 6787

Information for Friends and Family





What Can I Do To Help Someone With Borderline Personality Disorder?

It is important the family and friends of a person with BPD are familiar with the symptoms of the disorder. Those who do not have a good understanding of the disorder may just see a person with BPD as manipulative or attention seeking. Therefore, it is crucial that close friends and family can recognise and accept the difficult thoughts and feelings that are experienced by a person with BPD.

Stormy relationships, fears of being alone or rejected and a tendency to see others as either all good or all bad are common in BPD. It is therefore, not surprising that maintaining a positive relationship is difficult for both parties. A person with BPD, due to fears of being alone, is often very demanding upon the time of their friends and family. For example, as a partner of someone with BPD, you may find that they become very angry and distressed at times when you are going out and they will be alone. A person with BPD may think that by wanting to spend time with friends you are rejecting them. In this kind of situation, it is usually helpful if you can try to empathise with how the person feels instead of arguing. → →

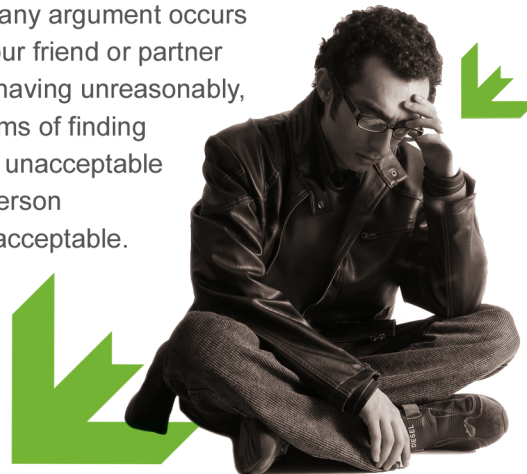
What Can I Do To Help Someone With Borderline Personality Disorder Continued...

If you are employed you may receive many phone calls from the person with BPD. In this case, it can be helpful to sit down with the person and mutually agree times for them to contact you or for you to contact them. You may also want to agree a set limit to the number of phone calls each day.

As mentioned previously, people with BPD have a tendency to see people as either all good (idealised) or all bad (devalued). It is important to understand this and try not to take it personally if one moment you are seen as the perfect partner or friend and the next you are despised. These feelings tend to fluctuate rapidly so try to just let it pass and don't take it to heart if you are being judged harshly.

People with BPD usually have problems with their self-esteem. Therefore, although it is hard to see someone in a positive way all the time, it is important to try not to say things that will further undermine the person's fragile sense of esteem. Due to this arguments can be particularly difficult because we all say things in the heat of the moment to hurt the other person.

Accordingly, if any argument occurs and you feel your friend or partner with BPD is behaving unreasonably, try to talk in terms of finding their behaviour unacceptable and NOT the person themselves unacceptable.



How to Look After Yourself While Supporting a Person with BPD

First, don't get isolated. You are not the only person trying to relate to someone with a BPD diagnosis, and there are support resources out there.

Second, work for a balance of communication. Don't be blaming for all the difficulties (you can always leave, so if you stay, then stay to work), and don't accept all the blame either (BPD people can feel really bad about themselves, and pass the pain onto someone else).

Third, sort yourself out. It is very common for partners and family of BPD people to seek out therapy for themselves. This is understandable and not to be embarrassed about, or avoided. You're going to need support, and you're going to learn a lot about what makes you tick in a relationship with a BPD sufferer, so don't be afraid to look for help, professional or otherwise.

Fourth, work very hard at being honest.

Fifth, learn about your anger. You won't have much choice: the BPD person in your life will help you learn a lot about this.

Sixth, good luck. If you can handle the rollercoaster, a relationship with a person with BPD will be intense, exciting, daunting and exhilarating. Then again, you know this by now, or you wouldn't have started reading this.

In an emergency

If at any time you fear that the person with BPD is a serious risk to themselves or others, as the 'nearest relative' (as defined under the Mental Health Act 1983) you can request that the person has a mental health assessment by a qualified practitioner. The practitioner would assess the best course of action and determine if hospitalisation is required either voluntarily or under section