What is borderline personality disorder (BPD)?

BPD is a serious mental illness that many people do not understand. People with BPD have trouble with their emotions. This leads to mood swings, relationship problems, poor self-image, and destructive behavior. People with BPD want loving relationships, but often push others away. The cause of BPD is unknown, but likely both genetic (born with) and environmental (events that happen) factors play a part. Many people with BPD have been neglected, abandoned, and/or abused (often sexually) as young children. Those who receive caring and proper treatment for BPD can live happy, healthy lives.

**What does it mean to have BPD?**

BPD affects how a person feels about their inner self and how they act and get along with others. People with BPD often live unstable lives. Frequent changes in friends, jobs, values, and goals are common. People with BPD have stormy, love-hate relationships. One minute they see a person as perfect and the next minute they hate them. A person with BPD tends to sees things as black or white: all good or all bad.

References: All retrieved on June 25, 2019. National Alliance of Mental Illness, Borderline Personality Disorder. <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions/Borderline-Personality-Disorder>; Mayo Clinic, Borderline Personality Disorder. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/borderline-personality-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20370237>; National Institute of Mental Health, Borderline Personality Disorder. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/borderline-personality-disorder/index.shtml>

Symptoms of BPD may include:

* Strong emotions that change quickly
* Strong, but short periods of anxiety or depression
* Ongoing feelings of emptiness
* Extreme fears of being alone or abandoned
* Unstable self-image
* Extreme anger, often leading to outbursts or fights
* Risky and impulsive behavior (unsafe sex, drug use, binge eating, risky driving)
* Repeated suicidal behavior
* Self-harm (e.g., cutting self)
* Unstable relationships

**Are there other problems from BPD?**

Yes. People with BPD often struggle with other mental illnesses including depression, eating disorders, anxiety, and bipolar. Many people with BPD turn to alcohol and drugs to try and numb their pain. While they may feel temporary relief, drug and alcohol use tends to make symptoms worse.

How can I help myself if I have BPD?

While in Job Corps, our goal is to help you understand and manage your condition so you can move toward finding employment. It may include medication, therapy, and participation in groups and activities.

* Talk to your counselor and health and wellness staff
* Ask for reasonable accommodations, if needed
* Stay on your medication, if prescribed
* If your medication is making you feel strange or bad, please contact health and wellness staff
* Keep good eating habits
* Make sure you get enough sleep
* Be aware of your mood swings (keep a mood chart/journal)
* Ask a close friend to help you stick with your treatment
* Be patient about your symptoms; improvement takes time

I know someone who has BPD. What do I do?

* If they are thinking about hurting them self or someone else get help immediately
* Do not leave the person alone
* Let the nearest Job Corps staff member know NOW!
* If not able to find a Job Corps staff member quickly, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room
* Access the Job Corps Safety Hotline (844-JC1-SAFE) via text, email, phone, mobile app or web site

References: <http://www.nami.org/Content/ContentGroups/Illnesses/Borderline_Personality_Disorder_%28BPD%29/Borderline_Personality_Disorder.htm>; <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/borderline-personality-disorder/DS00442/>; <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/borderline-personality-disorder/index.shtml>. Accessed July 26, 2012.

* Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
  (800) 273-TALK (8255)  
  TTY: (800) 799-4TTY (4889)