



Considering Personality Disorders in Sport

Barry Kirker

Clinical Psychologist

Phone: 027 226 1581

Email: bkirker@xtra.co.nz

What is a Personality Disorder

- An enduring pattern of inner experience and behaviour that deviates markedly from the expectations of an individual's society/ culture.
- Experience or behaviour that is problematic, pervasive, stable over time, inflexible, and that has an onset in adolescence/ early adulthood.
- Causes the individual distress or impairment; maladaptive.
- Extreme personality traits in way of perceiving, relating to, thinking about oneself and the world.
- Manifested through thought processes, emotional response, interpersonal functioning, and impulse control

DSM1V Classification

- 10 Personality Disorders
 - 1. Paranoid Personality Disorder: Distrust and suspiciousness, such as others motives are interpreted as malevolent
 - 2. Schizoid Personality Disorder: Detachment from social relationships and a restricted range of emotional expression
 - 3. Schizotypal Personality Disorder: Discomfort in close relationships, cognitive/ perceptual distortions, eccentric behaviour

DSM1V Classification

- Types of Personality Disorders Continued
- 4. Antisocial Personality Disorder: Disregard for, and violation of, the rights of others
- 5. Borderline Personality Disorder: Instability in interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects, and marked impulsivity
- 6. Histrionic Personality Disorder: Excessive emotionality and attention seeking
- 7. Narcissistic Personality Disorder: Grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy

DSM1V Classification

- Types of Personality Disorders Continued
- 8. Avoidant Personality Disorder: Social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation
- 9. Dependent Personality Disorder: Submissive and clinging behaviour related to an excessive need to be taken care of
- 10. Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder: Preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism, and control

Sign of Problems with Personality

- Person continually difficult to deal with across situations; clear patterns apparent
- Behaviour resistant to learning
- Extreme thoughts and feelings (range, intensity, appropriateness)
- Causes problems for the individual in key life areas: ie, social relations, employment, finances, health and sporting endeavours
- No other explanations or conditions apparent
- They or others report a history of difficulties since adolescence or early adulthood

Etiology

- Interactions of individual's environment with biological dispositions
- Dysfunctional schemas (cognitive, affective, interpersonal components) developed through childhood environmental influences
- Poor fit between evolutionary programmed strategies and current environment shows adaptability problem as a result of learned exaggerated behaviours or attitudes
- Example of rigid competitiveness trait; positive innate trait, unhelpful environmental responses, excessive trait



Most likely to see in Sport?

- Narcissistic (males) and Borderline (females)
- Prevalence rates uncertain
- Well known cases in public arena, eg, Shane Warne.

Narcissistic PD

- A pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy, consistent across time and situations.
- Often have fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love
- Interpersonally exploitative, taking advantage of others to achieve own ends
- Sense of entitlement and sense of envy
- Believes special or unique and only can be understood by a few other people
- Shows arrogant or haughty behaviours/ attitudes

Narcissism vs Confidence

- Confidence = Accepting of self, belief in personal resources, fundamental security, not afraid of failure
- Narcissism = Defence mechanism for low confidence -over confident; Denial of weakness, Overestimation of worth, Egocentric, Excessive pleasure from Self-focus, Blaming others frequently, Pushing down or using others to raise own confidence, Lacking give and take

Borderline PD

- Instability and intensity in interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects; marked impulsivity (sex, drugs, money, etc)
- Underlining fear or abandonment
- Switching between extremes of idealization and devaluation of others
- Threats of self-harm behaviour
- Feelings of emptiness (described as depression)
- Difficulty controlling emotions
- (Transient) paranoid or dissociative symptoms



Borderline Pattern

Typical Core Beliefs Over-developed Under-developed

I am bad; nobody will ever
love me

Self-punishment
Avoidance of closeness
Over-dependence

Self-nurturance
Openness to relationships
Independence

I cannot cope on my own

Treatment for BPD

- CBT
- DBT
- Group vs Individual
- Treatment hierarchy (DBT)
- Modify maladaptive schemas
- Overcome schema maintenance, schema avoidance and schema compensation
- Significant time can be required
- Re-learning, re-working
- Therapeutic relationship important