



Title: The Covert Borderline

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Editorial

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Abstract

I propose a new clinical entity, a hybrid between narcissistic and borderline personality disorders. It is not the comorbidity which it quite common in clinical settings. It is a personality disorder that seamlessly integrates features of both NPD and BPD.

Keywords: Personality Disorders; Covert Borderline

Introduction

Covert Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD)

The shy or quiet borderline internalizes her struggles rather than externalize them. She becomes the exclusive target of her own turmoil. She “acts in”.

Both the classic and covert borderline (many of the latter are men) act out. Here is a table which compares the clinical features of these two subtypes. It is based on the schematic present by Arnold M. Cooper and S. Akhtar in 1989 for classic vs. cover narcissist.

	Covert/Antisocial Borderline	Classic/Dysregulated Borderline
Self-Concept		1. identity diffusion;
	2. false self grandiosity;	2. inferiority;
	3. preoccupation with fantasies of outstanding love; undue sense of uniqueness; feelings of entitlement; alloplastic defenses;	3. morose self-doubts and ego-dystony or ego discrepancy (“wrongness”), autoplastic defenses;
	4. internal locus of control; seeming self-sufficiency;	4. external locus of control;
		5. marked propensity toward feeling ashamed, guilty, or to blame;
		6. fragility, vulnerability;
		7. relentless search for safety and completion;
		8. marked sensitivity to criticism and realistic setbacks;

		9. mood lability;
	9. mood lability;	
		10. emotional dysregulation and numbing and dysempathy;
	10. emotional dysregulation and rationalization or reactance and defiance, contumaciousness;	
		11. alexithymia;
		12. low frustration threshold and tolerance;
	12. low boredom threshold and tolerance;	
		13. depression and anxiety;
		14. internalizing-externalizing;
	14. externalizing-internalizing;	
		15. suicidal tendencies;
	15. No suicidal ideation, aggression other-directed;	
	16. No self-mutilation, hypochondriasis, addictive behaviors;	16. self-harm and substance abuse or self-trashing (like egregious promiscuity)
	17. dissociative self-states, mainly: selective attention, confabulation, repression or denial, primary psychopathic protector	17. dissociative self-states, mainly: realization, depersonalization, or amnesia
Interpersonal Relationships	1. paranoid ideation;	1. inability to genuinely depend on others and trust them, hypervigilance;
		2. instant or fake intimacy (sometimes in casual sex)
	2. numerous but shallow relationships;	
		3. abandonment anxiety (impostor syndrome);
	intense need for love from others, people pleasing;	4. engulfment anxiety and fear of intimacy;
	lack of real empathy in primary psychopathic phase;	5. rejection sensitivity;
	valuing of children over spouse in family life;	6. effortful control;
	7. inability to genuinely participate in group activities;	7. chronic envy of others talents, possessions, and capacity for deep object relations;
		8. lack of regard for generational boundaries;
		9. disregard for others' time, limitations, obligations, and resources (unreasonably demanding);
	9. passive-aggressive, sullen, surly, self-denying, behaviors; cunning and premeditated malevolence;	
		10. unpredictable,
	10. intermittent reinforcement;	
		11. explosive behavior;
	11. scorn for others, often masked by pseudohumility;	

	12, 17. histrionic attention seeking;	12. impulsivity;
	13. recklessness aimed at hurting or affecting others;	13. recklessness;
	14. sadistic-punitive or goal-oriented triangulation;	
		14. interpersonal triangulation;
		people pleasing;
	15, 16. object inconstancy: idealize-devalue-discard-revert or replace	
		15. approach-avoidance repetition compulsion and preemptive abandonment;
		16. object inconstancy;
		17. drama queens
Social Adaptation		1. nagging aimlessness;
	2. Socially charming, charismatic;	2. social anxiety;
	3. consistent hard work done mainly to seek admiration (pseudo- sublimation);	3. shallow vocational commitment;
	4. intense ambition;	
		4. dilettante-like attitude;
	5. often successful;	
		5. multiple but superficial interests;
		6. chronic boredom;
	7. preoccupation with appearances	
		7. aesthetic taste often ill-informed and imitative
Ethics, Standards, and Ideals	1. idiosyncratically and unevenly moral, caricatured modesty, activism and apparent enthusiasm for sociopolitical affairs;	1. readiness to shift values to gain favor;
	2. inordinate ethnic and moral relativism;	
	3. pretended contempt for money in real life, feigned spirituality and "guru" status;	2. pathological lying;
	4. irreverence toward authority	
		3. materialistic lifestyle;
		4. delinquent tendencies;
Love and Sexuality	1. marital instability;	1. inability to remain in love;
	2. cold and greedy seductiveness;	2. impaired capacity for viewing the romantic partner as a separate individual with his or her own interests, rights, and values;
		3. inability to genuinely comprehend the incest taboo;
	3. extramarital affairs and promiscuity;	4. occasional sexual perversions
	4. uninhibited sexual life	
	1. dichotomous thinking;	1. dichotomous thinking;

Cognitive Style	2. splitting;	2. splitting;
		3. catastrophizing;
	4. impressively knowledgeable;	4. knowledge often limited to trivia (headline intelligence);
		5. forgetful of details, especially names;
	5. egocentric perception of reality;	
		6. impaired in the capacity for learning new skills;
	6. fondness for shortcuts to acquisition of knowledge	
		7. tendency to change meanings of reality when facing a threat to self-esteem;
	7. decisive and opinionated;	
		8. language and speaking used for regulating self-esteem
	8. love of language, often strikingly articulate;	

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