

Personality Disorders: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

Your personality is your own set of traits that make up who you are and how you see the world. We all have certain traits that shape how we handle stress, adjust to new situations, and engage in relationships. But people with personality disorders have traits that make their lives difficult. They do not adjust to changes well and usually have trouble getting along with other people.

There are several types of personality disorders. You might be afraid of other people and prefer being alone. You could fear that people are against you. You might think poorly of yourself and be depressed. You might be very angry, even violent, and have little concern for laws. You could see the world as clearly divided into "good" and "bad" and think people who are not like you are bad. Any of these traits can become a big problem for you and the people around you.

Long-term therapy and medicine may help many people with personality disorders. Your doctor can set up a treatment plan to help you learn behavior control and new ways to cope with people and events around you.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine. When you feel good, you may think you do not need your medicine, but it is important to keep taking it.
- Find a counselor you like and trust. Talk openly and honestly about your problems. Be willing to make some changes. Go to all counseling sessions. Do not skip any just because you are feeling better.
- Get enough rest. When you are too tired, it can be hard to cope with even small problems.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet to help prevent illness.
- Get at least 30 minutes of exercise on most days of the week. Walking is a good choice. You also may want to do other activities, such as running, swimming, cycling, or playing tennis or team sports. Exercise can help you relieve stress and feel better.
- Stay active. Try to do the things you usually enjoy, even if you do not feel like doing them.
- Do not use illegal drugs, and limit your use of alcohol.
- Talk to friends and family for emotional support.

What should you do if someone in your family has a personality disorder?

- Learn about personality disorders and the signs that the problem is getting worse.
- Remind your family member that you love them.
- Make a plan with all family members about how to take care of your loved one when symptoms are bad. Talk about your fears and concerns and those of other family members.
- Do not focus attention only on the family member who is in treatment.
- Remind yourself that it will take time for changes to happen.

- Do not blame yourself for the person's condition.
- Know your legal rights and the legal rights of your family member.
- Take care of yourself. Stay involved with your own interests, such as your career, hobbies, and friends.
- Use exercise, positive self-talk, relaxation, and deep breathing exercises to help lower your stress.
- Give yourself time to grieve. You may need to deal with emotions such as anger, fear, and frustration. After you work through your feelings, you will be better able to care for yourself and your family.
- If you are having a hard time with your feelings and your interactions with your family member, talk with a counselor.

Know how to get help

Where to get help 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

If you or someone you know talks about suicide, self-harm, a mental health crisis, a substance use crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress, get help right away. You can:

- Call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at **988**.
- Call **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**.
- Text **HOME to 741741** to access the Crisis Text Line.

Consider saving these numbers in your phone.

Go to **988lifeline.org** for more information or to chat online.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- Someone you know is about to attempt or is attempting suicide.
- You feel you cannot stop from hurting yourself or someone else.

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Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You think someone is trying to hurt you.
- You hear voices.
- Someone you know has depression and:

- Starts to give away possessions.
 - Uses illegal drugs or drinks alcohol heavily.
 - Talks or writes about death, including writing suicide notes and talking about guns, knives, or pills.
 - Starts to spend a lot of time alone.
 - Acts very aggressively or suddenly appears calm.
- You start hurting yourself on purpose, even in small ways.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Any of the following problems lasts for 2 or more weeks.
 - You feel sad a lot or cry all the time.
 - You have trouble sleeping or sleep too much.
 - You find it hard to concentrate, make decisions, or remember things.
 - You change how you normally eat.
 - You feel guilty for no reason.
- You have trouble taking care of yourself.
- You cannot go to your counseling sessions.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **M378** in the search box to learn more about **"Personality Disorders: Care Instructions"**.

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