



MEN WITH BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER

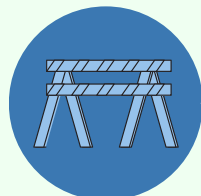
According to the DSM-5, 75% of people diagnosed with BPD identify as women. However, research suggests that the prevalence of BPD is equal for men and women in the general community. In other words, although BPD is equally common for men, fewer men than women receive the diagnosis.

This disparity in diagnosis may be due to a number of factors, including differences in help-seeking behavior, clinician bias or misdiagnosis, and differences in how BPD manifests in men versus women.



BPD IN MEN

- Research suggests that 1-4% of men in the U.S. have BPD.
- Research is mixed on how BPD might manifest differently in men as compared to women. In some studies, men with BPD have very similar symptoms and rates of other psychological disorders as women. In other studies, men are more likely to have histories of substance use disorders and less likely to have more difficulties with eating, mood, anxiety, and PTSD. They are also less likely to have tried pharmacotherapy or psychotherapy.
- Men and women with BPD attempt suicide with similar frequency. However, men's suicide attempts are more often lethal.
- Men with BPD often have more difficulty with temper and risky sensation-seeking behaviors than women.
- Research shows that males with BPD are less aggressive than the normal average, which may contribute to the under-diagnosis of BPD in males.



ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES AND BARRIERS

- BPD is often viewed by the public as a feminized emotional disorder. This may make it more difficult for men to identify with the disorder, and for professionals to assess or diagnosis it in men.
- Men with BPD are significantly underrepresented in BPD research, which has focused almost exclusively on women.
- Men with BPD may receive an inaccurate diagnosis (e.g., with bipolar disorder, PTSD, antisocial personality disorder), or it may be frequently missed or not diagnosed altogether.
- Due to cultural pressures, societal expectations, and gender socialization, men are sometimes less likely to seek help for mental health concerns, including BPD.
- BPD has not been well-studied in boys. Much of our understanding of BPD in adolescence comes from a large study of girls. Boys with BPD often get labeled as "disruptive" or as "acting out" which may prevent families and schools from recognizing the true source of their struggles. Boys and young men with BPD are much more likely to be referred to treatment for substance use disorders, or forensic facilities, rather than BPD specific treatments.



SOLUTIONS

- Families and friends can support men with BPD by encouraging them to seek help and helping connect them with resources regardless of the diagnosis.
- Asking for help can be difficult, particularly when emotions are at their strongest. Having contact information for suicide/mental health helplines readily available will enable appropriate help-seeking.
- Men with BPD should feel empowered to find a clinician who understands their difficulties and makes a proper diagnosis. This may require changing therapists if the fit is not right.
- When specialized therapies (e.g., dialectical behavior therapy) for BPD are not available, men with BPD may still benefit from other treatments (e.g., CBT, family therapy) and sources of support (e.g., 12-step programs, religious fellowship, peer support groups).
- Families with boys who are labeled as "acting out" may wish to consider whether emotional difficulties may be contributing to their behaviors, and to seek help accordingly. Early intervention for BPD is beneficial.



INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

For More Information

- [Sansone, R. A., & Sansone, L. A. \(2011\). Gender patterns in borderline personality disorder. *Innovations in Clinical Neuroscience*, 8\(5\), 16.](#)
- <https://www.clearviewtreatment.com/resources/blog/bpd-men/>
- <https://www.choosingtherapy.com/bpd-in-men/>
- <https://www.mcleanhospital.org/video/understanding-borderline-personality-disorder-boys-and-young-men>
- [Wetterborg, D., Dehlbom, P., Langstrom, N., Andersson, G., Fruzzetti, A.E., & Enebrink, P. \(2018\). Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Men with Borderline Personality Disorder and Antisocial Disorder: A Clinical Trial. *Journal of Personality Disorders*, 34\(1\):22-39.](#)

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