

## A Guide to Critical Thinking/Discussion about the Amber Heard/Johnny Depp Case

### *1. BPD Stigma is real. BPD Stigma is wrong.*

The Amber Heard / Johnny Depp case in the media is **reinforcing negative BPD stigma**, stereotypes, and general misinformation.

**BPD should not be used as evidence to justify bad behavior.** Amber Heard acted badly . All people in society can at times do things to hurt others and break the law.

Mental health professionals should not use the BPD diagnosis as a negative label to justify bad behavior.

### *2. What if Amber Heard has BPD?*

**We also know, at Emotions Matter, that it's possible for all people to get dysregulated**, experience extreme emotional states, and lash out to intentionally or unintentionally hurt someone. This can be the hardest to imagine in relationships.

We do not condemn Amber Heard (or anyone who might recognize themselves in her behavior) as beyond our compassion.

**Everyone is different. Amber Heard does not represent ALL people with BPD.** There may be other factors influencing her experience of BPD (comorbid diagnoses, use of alcohol, or lack of effective evidence-based treatment, for example).

**You are not Amber Heard.** You do not have to feel that Amber Heard's story is your story, if you have lived experience of BPD.

**People with BPD are human beings who are more than a label or diagnosis.** At Emotions Matter, we believe people with lived experience of BPD are often kind, courageous, compassionate, creative, enjoyable, lovable people. We focus on the positive attributes of people who have a condition they did not choose, and that is experienced as painful.

### *3. What do we hope for?*

**-We want those who struggle** with extreme emotional states and their loved ones to receive stigma-free education, effective treatment, and family/community support.

**-We want the media culture** that impacts our everyday lives to reflect accurate, useful, stigma-free representations of BPD.

**-Until it does, we commit to cultivating critical media literacy skills that allow us to recognize stigma, name it, and refuse the terms of an unfair cultural conversation about BPD.**