

Personality Disorder & Paranoia

Factsheet

Paranoia

Paranoia is an unfounded or exaggerated distrust of others, sometimes reaching delusional proportions. Paranoid individuals constantly suspect the motives of those around them, and believe that certain individuals, or people in general, are “out to get them.”

Common signs of paranoia

Anxious	Scared	Confused
Frustrated or angry	Mistrustful	Threatened
Misunderstood	Alone and isolated	Tired – from worrying all the time

Behaviour

- May find it difficult to trust other people and maintain relationships
- May show physical symptoms of stress or anxiety
- Finding it difficult to concentrate or continue with day-to-day tasks
- Sleeping very little or not at all
- Not making time to look after themselves
- Isolation to avoid frightening situations, or occasions where people might judge

What causes Paranoia?

There is no exact cause, could be a combination of a number of factors

- Anxiety and depression
- External environment
- Life experiences
- Effects of drugs and alcohol
- Lack of sleep
- Physical illness
- Childhood experiences

Treatment

Treatment for Paranoia can be discussed with your GP or specialist (if referred)

- Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT)
- Talking treatment
- Psychotherapy/group/family therapy
- Medication
- Complementary and alternative therapy

Paranoia diagnosis

- Paranoia is not a diagnosis in its own right
- Paranoia can be seen as a symptom of another mental health problem

Common diagnoses

- Paranoid schizophrenia
- Delusional or paranoid disorder
- Paranoid personality disorder



Less common

- Bipolar disorder
- Severe anxiety
- Severe depression
- Postnatal psychosis
- Schizoaffective disorder

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Personality Disorder

Personality disorders are conditions in which an individual differs significantly from another person, in terms of how they think, perceive, feel or relate to others.

NHS Definition

Common signs of PD

- Feeling anxious
- Distressed or feel worthless
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Possible self harming
- Possible threatening behaviour
- Possibly abusing drugs or alcohol
- Possible attachment issues with peers, colleagues or carers

Signs and symptoms

The different types of personality disorder that might need treatment can be broadly grouped into one of three clusters, called A, B or C.

Cluster A

A person with a cluster A personality disorder tends to have difficulty relating to others and usually shows patterns of behaviour most people would consider different:

- Paranoid personality disorder
- Schizoid personality disorder

Cluster B

Someone with a cluster B personality disorder struggles to relate to others. As a result, they may show patterns of behaviour which are possibly considered dramatic or threatening:

- Anti social personality disorder
- Borderline personality disorder
- Histrionic personality disorder
- Narcissistic personality disorder

Cluster C

Someone with a cluster C personality disorder may fear personal relationships and shows patterns of anxious around other people. Others may be withdrawn and reluctant to socialise:

- Avoidant personality disorder
- Dependent personality disorder
- Obsessive compulsive personality disorder

3 P's

Problematic

The individuals personality characteristics must be well outside of the norm for the society in which they live.

Persistent

PD's are chronic disorders, symptoms usually emerge in adolescence or early adulthood, are inflexible and persist into later life.

Pervasive

They result in distress or impaired functioning in a number of different personal and social contexts; such as intimate, family and social relationships, employment and education.

Personality disorders are best understood as unusual or extreme personality types, which cause suffering to the individual or others and hinder interpersonal functioning.