



Parenting

How does personality disorder impact on parenting?

Parenting is a rewarding yet challenging experience. These challenges can be exacerbated when a parent has a personality disorder. There are many strategies that can assist in supporting parents and caregivers and help minimise the impact of mental illness on children.



When parenting becomes a challenge: What are the signs?

Parenting may be more difficult when people with personality disorder are experiencing a stressful time or are feeling unwell. Difficulties may include:

- Stress in the parent-child relationship: Both parents and children may find it harder to communicate and understand each other, which may lead to arguments. When unwell, the parent might also find it harder to have quality time with their child.
- Difficulty helping children that are struggling: It may be harder for an unwell parent to help at these times, particularly if the child needs extra support because of their own stresses at school or with friends.
- Difficulty in keeping things consistent: Household structure, routine and discipline can be hard to maintain when life becomes stressful for parents with personality disorder. Sometimes it might even feel like a child has to take charge instead of the parent.

Supporting parents with personality disorder:

What can help?

Talking honestly to a health professional can provide parents with the support they need.

Strategies to assist in parenting can include:

- Making plans for the family in times of stress when a parent is getting unwell
- Building on parents' strengths and keeping the good things that are helping the family
- Reflecting on difficulties experienced in the parenting role and making changes to keep routines simple

Parents with personality disorder have the same needs, fears, and hopes as others, just as their children need love, protection and nurturance. Overcoming personality disorder may take time, yet the rewards of parenting can help bring joy along this recovery journey.