



YOU'VE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH BPD - WHAT NOW?

Understanding personality disorder

- **You are important.** Your diagnosis does not define who you are.
- **Recovery is possible,** and you can get there.
- **Diagnosis can be positive.** A diagnosis of personality disorder can be something to work with, and can guide effective treatment.
- **Everyone is unique.** Many combinations of symptoms make up a personality disorder. Your symptoms may look very different to someone else's and that is okay.
- **Make sure you get the right information** from mental health professionals and reliable internet sources. The internet and social media can provide unhelpful information on personality disorders, including some facebook groups and mental health forums.
- **Don't be afraid to ask questions** to mental health professionals.

Seeking treatment

- **Mental health professionals should compassionately treat personality disorder.** You will connect with someone, but it might take a trial and error process until you find the right one. You have a choice with who you work with.
- **Understand the length of care.** Find out how long a mental health professional will be able to support you. You have the right to be treated by someone else if you are not comfortable with the time someone is able to provide.
- **Know your support boundaries.** Ask your therapist whether they can provide support by skype/zoom, phone, email or text message.

Living with personality disorder

- Talk to people who support you about what is upsetting you.
- Have information to give others to help them understand your circumstances.
- Find a safe space where you can go when you feel distressed (eg. a safe space may be a public space where you can sit alone, but still have other people around you)
- If you can, connect with other people who have lived experience of mental illness who have found recovery. It can help to know that someone understands and can validate your experience and provide you support.
- Find activities that make you feel calm or give you positive outcomes. Art therapy, being around nature and spending time with pets can be helpful and help you get through distress.

Your loved ones and support people

- Involve your loved ones and support people in your treatment if you feel you can.
- Encourage your loved ones and support people to seek their own support. This will also help them better understand you, and learn helpful ways of responding.

Reliable websites

<https://www.projectairstrategy.org/>
<https://bpdfoundation.org.au/>

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE PROJECT:

*The information in these resources was provided by **people with lived experience of personality disorder and carers supporting people with personality disorder** through two focus groups carried out in May 2019. This set of resources were developed through co-design and consultation with people with lived experience and other peak Consumer and Carer bodies in NSW. This work was funded by the New South Wales Mental Health Commission.*