Beyond the Border:

Using Curricula & Personal Experiences to Overcome Stigma and Recover from BPD

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Overview of BPD
Borderline Personality Disorder

Diagnostic criteria for DSM-IV 301.83:

A pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects, and marked impulsivity beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:
1. Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment.

2. A pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation.

3. Identity disturbance: markedly and persistently unstable self-image or sense of self.

4. Impulsivity in at least two areas that are potentially self-damaging (e.g., spending, sex, Substance Abuse, reckless driving, binge eating).
Defining BPD Cont’

5. Recurrent suicidal behavior, gestures, or threats, or self-mutilating behavior.

6. Affective instability due to a marked reactivity of mood (e.g., intense episodic dysphoria, irritability, or anxiety usually lasting a few hours and only rarely more).

7. Chronic feelings of emptiness.

8. Inappropriate, intense anger or difficulty controlling anger (e.g., frequent displays of temper, constant anger, recurrent physical fights).

9. Transient, stress-related paranoid ideation or severe dissociative symptoms.
Overview of Recovery
Defining Recovery

- ODMH defines recovery as “The process of overcoming the negative impact of a psychiatric disability despite its continued presence.”

- Recovery is “a deeply personal, unique process of changing one’s attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills, and/or roles (Anthony, 1993).”

- Removing the negative from mental illness (anon)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Recovery*</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent/Unaware</td>
<td>Consumer relies on others and is not aware of his/her own status or needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent/Aware</td>
<td>Consumer relies on others but is aware of his/her status and needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent/Aware</td>
<td>Consumer relies on self and is aware of his/her status and needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependent/Aware</td>
<td>Consumer relies on self and others in a mutual exchange of beneficial support, services and resources.</td>
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Stages of Recovery Cont’

ODMH:
- Dependent/Unaware
- Dependent/Aware
- Independent/Aware
- Interdependent/Aware

The Village:
- Hope
- Empowerment
- Self-Responsibility
- Meaningful role in society
The Goal: Becoming Mentally Healthy

Mentally Healthy People Show these characteristics 95% of the time:

1. Try to enjoy life to the fullest.
2. Do not waste time and energy worrying.
3. Consider what others feel and have to say, but take actions according to their own convictions.
4. Do not feel distressed when others don’t like them.
5. Organize their lives functionally so that important things get done on time.
6. Can love other people easily and without fear.
Goal: Mentally Healthy Cont’

7. Can find inner peace and strength when they need it.
8. Laugh a lot, and are able to find humor in most situations.
10. Act out of their own self-interest.
11. Have a strong and consistent set of values.
12. Face new ideas with an open-minded skepticism.

Process of Recovery from BPD

- HOPE
- Empowerment
- Self-Responsibility
- Meaningful Role
- Recovered
Hope

I. Becoming rational thinkers

- hope is basically an attitude (influenced by thought)
- those of us with BPD tend to struggle a great deal with irrational thought patterns (black...white, exaggeration, etc.).

To obtain and maintain a sense of hope, we have to change (control) our thoughts…
…we have to become rational thinkers!
Hope Con’t

○ Helpful Coping Skills/Techniques:
  - Support from a trusted, third party observer
  - Journaling
  - mood logs
  - Positive self-talk and/or affirmations
  - medications

○ Barriers:
  - Stigma & discrimination from having a mental illness
    - “We’re difficult, manipulative, and nobody wants to work with us because we’re so bad off — how can we have hope when the system has no hope for us?”
  - Fears (change, abandonment, emotions, etc.)
Empowerment

- **Becoming Knowledgeable**
  - know your illness & yourself
    - learn to distinguish between symptoms and you
    - warning signs
    - triggers
    - rights

- **Utilizing Support**
  - Professional
  - Peer
  - Friends/family

- **Become active in your treatment**
  - Medications alone will not improve your life
  - Your treatment providers cannot fix you
Empowerment Con’t

○ Helpful Coping Skills/Techniques:
  ● Continue using skills from previous stage
  ● Read, read, read
  ● Self-Assessment
    ○ strengths, weaknesses, needs, wants, goals, etc.
  ● Let people help
  ● Exercise….pursue hobbies

○ Barriers:
  ● Stigma
  ● Triangulation
  ● Fear of abandonment
  ● Trust
Self-Responsibility

- **Changing Behaviors/Regulating Emotions**
  - **Advanced recovery**
    - critical stage where we shift from an external to internal locus of control
    - taking responsibility for our lives...being willing to do whatever it takes to get better
      - for some, progress in recovery stops here
  - **Anger is not the only emotion we have**
    - taking on responsibility for our well-being opens the door to feeling the positive emotions
  - **Creating a positive lifestyle**
    - change, change, change
    - risks, risks, risks
Self-Responsibility Con’t

○ Helpful Coping Skills/Techniques:
  - Continue previous skills as appropriate
  - Identify the problems as well as reasonable solutions…then, develop a plan to implement the solutions
    - Physical
    - Thought/Emotional
    - Relationships

○ Barriers:
  - Self-sabotage (fear of success)
  - Fear of failure
  - Low self-esteem & poor social skills
**Meaningful Role**

- Integrated life in the community
  - Life extends beyond mental illness and the mental health system

- Valued Role in the community
  - Employment/volunteering
  - Faith community
  - Family
  - Friendships/relationships
  - Community organizations
  - Giving back

- Pursuit of interests/hobbies (outside of MH)
Meaningful Role Con’t

○ Helpful Coping Skills/Techniques:
  - Keep doing what’s worked
  - Try new things
  - Give back

○ Barriers:
  - Old habits are hard to break
  - returning to the comfort zone
  - Self
Recovered

Seven Characteristics of a Person Who has Recovered from Mental Illness:

By Daniel Fisher, MD, PhD; Executive Director, National Empowerment Center
1. Makes their own decisions in collaboration with other supportive people outside the mental health system

2. Has a meaningful and fulfilling network of friends outside the mental health professionals

3. Has achieved a major social role/identity other than consumer (such as student, parent, worker)

4. Medication is one tool among many freely chosen by the individual to assist in their day to day life (used as the chronically “normals” use medication)
5. Capable of expressing and understanding emotions to such a degree that the person can cope with severe emotional distress without it interrupting their social role and without them being labeled symptoms.

6. A Global Assessment of Functioning Scale score of greater than 61: “functioning pretty well, some meaningful interpersonal relationships and ‘most untrained people would not consider him sick’ ”

7. Sense of self is defined by oneself through life experience and interaction with peers.

By Daniel Fisher, MD, PhD; Executive Director, National Empowerment Center
Overcoming Stigma

- **Stigma from others (external)**
  - Mental Health System
    - Providers
    - Peers
  - Community (family, friends, neighbors, etc.)

- **Self-stigma (internal)**
  - Serenity Prayer
  - Self-Esteem
  - Empowerment
Co-dependence & BPD

"Codependence is about giving away power over our self-esteem." (Burney, Robert)

It is this lack of a "self" that leads the person with BPD to continually set and re-set themselves up as victims. (Mahari, A.J., 2000).

**Codependence Cont’**

- **Recovery from co-dependence**
  - is about knowing that you want and deserve healthier relational reality…It’s about meeting your own needs!

- **Recovery from BPD**
  - involves seeking an active recovery from co-dependence...
  - One must become fully emotionally adult, take personal responsibility for themselves, build his/her own sense of self (identity), self-esteem and self-worth.

- **If you are co-dependent**
  - you NEED to learn to validate yourself from the inside out and you must stop seeking others to define you and or to meet your needs for you (Mahari, A.J., 2000).
Tools for Recovery

- MH Services
- Support/Self-Help
- Books
- Websites
Mental Health Services

- Dialectical Behavior Therapy
- Cognitive Therapy
- Medication
- Group therapy
- Vocational/psychosocial programs
Support/Self-help

- Peer Support
- Peer-to-peer education
- Workbooks
- Mood logs/other tools
Books

- I Hate You, Don’t Leave Me
  - Kreisman, Jerold

  - Bell, Lorraine

- The Angry Heart: Overcoming Borderline and Addictive Disorders: An Interactive Self-Help Guide
  - Santoro and Cohen

- Life at the Border: Understanding and Recovering from the Borderline Personality Disorder
  - Heller, Leland M.D.
Books Con’t

- Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder.
  - Linehan, Marsha M.

- Eclipses: Behind the Borderline Personality Disorder
  - Ford Thornton, Melissa

- The Feeling Good Handbook
  - Burns, David M.D.

- Pathways to Recovery: A Strengths Recovery Self-Help Workbook
  - Ridgway, Priscilla; McDiarmid, Diane; Davidson, Lori; Bayes, Julie and Ratzlaff, Sarah
**Websites**

○ **Borderline Personality Disorder**
  - http://www.bpdcentral.com
  - http://www.bpdresourcecenter.org/
  - http://www.mhsanctuary.com/borderline/
  - http://www.laurapaxton.com/
  - http://www.biologicalunhappiness.com/

○ **General Recovery Websites**
  - http://www.mhrecovery.com
  - http://www.adultrecoverynetwork.org
  - http://power2u.org
Q & A and Contact Info.

Change is inevitable…progress is optional.*

Choose Progress!

* Dr. Hogan, Director, Ohio Department of Mental Health
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