

Caregiver Headlines

CARING FOR THE DIFFICULT... PART 1 OF A 2 PART ARTICLE

Announcement
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proud parents of
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1/8/2007
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Is someone you are caring for causing you a great deal of pain?

- ◆ Are you constantly being put down?
- ◆ Do you have a hard time planning anything (social engagements, etc.) because of the person's moodiness, impulsiveness, or unpredictability?
- ◆ Do you make excuses for their behavior or try to convince yourself that everything is ok?

You are not alone. Others are going through the same experience. Everything is not your fault. These things may be happening because the person you are caring for may have traits associated with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD).

According to Mason & Kreger, (authors of Stop Walking on Eggshells) people with BPD feel the same emotions that other people do; do many of the same things that other people do. **The difference is that they feel things more intensely, act in ways that are more extreme, and have difficulty regulating their emotions and behavior.**

The following are thoughts that may indicate BPD

Does this person:

- ◆ Alternate between seeing others as completely for them or against them?
- ◆ Alternate between seeing themselves as either worthless or flawless?
- ◆ Have a hard time recalling someone's love for them when they're not around?
- ◆ Believe that others are responsible for their actions—or take too much responsibility for the actions of others?
- ◆ Not realize the effects of their behavior on others?

The following are feelings that may indicate BPD

Does this person:

- ◆ Have extreme moodiness that cycles very quickly (in minutes or hours)?
- ◆ Feel emotions so intensely that it's difficult to put others' needs ahead of their own?

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- ◆ Feel distrustful and suspicious a great deal of the time?
- ◆ Feel ignored when they are not the focus of attention?
- ◆ Express anger inappropriately or have difficulty expressing anger at all?

The following are *behaviors* that may indicate BPD

Does this person:

- ◆ Have trouble observing others' personal limits?
- ◆ Have trouble defining their own personal limits?
- ◆ Act impulsively in ways that are potentially self-damaging, such as spending too much, engaging in dangerous sex, fighting, gambling, abusing drugs or alcohol, reckless driving, shoplifting, or disordered eating?
- ◆ Mutilate themselves—for example, purposely cutting or burning their skin?
- ◆ Threaten to kill themselves—or make actual suicide attempts?
- ◆ Physically abuse others, such as slapping, kicking, and scratching them?
- ◆ Verbally abuse others, criticizing and blaming them to the point where it feels brutal?
- ◆ Act verbally abusive toward people they know very well, while putting on a charming front for others? Can they switch from one mode to the other in seconds?
- ◆ Act in what seems extreme or controlling way to get their own needs met?
- ◆ Do or say something inappropriate to focus the attention on them when they feel ignored?

People who provide care for someone with Borderline Personality Disorder are usually surprised when they find out that this may be the cause of the person's erratic, hurtful, and confusing behavior. The American Psychiatric Association did not formally recognize

BPD in its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (a standard reference for the diagnosis and treatment of psychiatric illnesses) until 1980.

For caregivers, learning about the existence of BPD is a powerful, transformational experience. With this information it seems logical that the person with BPD will be grateful and will immediately get help. Unfortunately, this doesn't usually happen. Usually, the person responds with denial and will actually accuse the caregiver of having the problem. Also, the complete opposite might happen—the one with possibly a borderline personality disorder might attempt to harm herself/himself or may use this information as a reason to deny responsibility for her/his behavior.

Remember, you cannot force someone to change their behavior. According to John M Grohol, Psy.D., "They are not just 'behaviors' to the person suffering from the disorder—they are coping mechanisms they have used all their life."

Borderline Personality Disorder is often misunderstood and a big misperception is that people never get any better. New research suggests that BPD may be associated with disturbances with neurotransmitters within the brain. Medicines are helping with depression, moodiness, and impulsivity.

Commonalities of those who get better:

1. Accept responsibility for their behavior & recovery.
2. Willing to work through inner pain instead of deflecting it onto other people or other means.
3. Had faith in themselves & believed that others believed in them as well.
4. Had access to continued therapy with a competent clinician.
5. Received the appropriate medication.

Marsha Linehan's cognitive-behavioral method of treatment known as Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) has been shown to help patients experience less anger, less self-mutilation, and fewer inpatient psychiatric stays than patients who received other forms of treatment. [Look for more information on DBT in the March issue of *Caregiver Headlines*.](#)

BOOK REVIEW OF THE MONTH

Stop Walking on Eggshells is written by Paul T. Mason and Randi Kreger. The book is published by New Harbinger Publications, Inc. (1998). People with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) challenge those close to them with their mood shifts and unpredictable behaviors.

For those people who have relatives or friends with BPD, this book should be very helpful. It delineates the ways in which these people's behavior and communications frustrate and perplex those

around them; however, the book also provides people with strategies to effectively cope with these kinds of behaviors.

The book also provides a list of resources divided into specific categories for people who have a spouse, mother, father, child, or friend who has Borderline Personality Disorder. This list includes books and internet support groups.

Do you feel that anything you say or do will be twisted against you?



Does someone you care about have Borderline Personality Disorder?

Are you accused of things you never did or said? If you are interested in reading Stop Walking on Eggshells contact Heartland Human Services at 217/347-7179 or toll-free 1-888-560-8805, extension 1046.

LIBRARY RESOURCE HOURS

Fayette County: Evans Public Library
215 Fifth Street

Vandalia

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Next Visit: February 6

Effingham County: Helen Matthes Library

100 Market Avenue

Effingham

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Next Visit: February 1

Jefferson County: CE Brehm Memorial Library

100 South Seventh

Mt. Vernon

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Next Visit: Canceled

Marion County: Bryan-Bennett Library

217 West Main Street

Salem

1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Next Visit: February 20

Clay County: Flora Public Library

216 North Main

Flora

1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Next Visit: February 27

GEAR & GADGETS

Keys to Success

Big Keys LX Computer Keyboard's VisionBoard combines large, high contrast letters on oversized keys to make computer use easier for those with limited dexterity or vision. The keyboard operates on any PC with a PS/2 port and is adaptable to non-PS/2 port Macs or PCs with an optional converter. Order at www.activeandable.com or call (877) 229-9993. The cost is \$149.

Lean On Me (cane)

This adjustable cane is for users from five-feet tall to six-foot-five and able to support up to 550 pounds. The HUGO Folding Cane has an extra-wide, shock absorbent tip to provide stability and traction. The cane is available in black, bronze and gun-metal grey. The cost is \$29.99. Thirteen custom, interchangeable handles (\$6.97 each); five limited-edition handles (\$12.97 each). Order at www.hugoanywhere.com or call (866) 321-4846.

5TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM FOR CAREGIVERS

Think Spring!! The Effingham County Mental Health and Aging Advisory Group is sponsoring its 5th Annual Symposium for Caregivers.

This year's event proves to be the best yet. Caregivers are provided with an evening of information, relaxation, and fun.

The evening begins at 4:30 p.m. with registration and exhibits. A free meal is served from 5:00—6:00 p.m.

At 6:00 p.m., Dr. Stephanie van Ulft, Medical Director at Heartland Human Services and Board Certified Geriatric Psychiatrist will speak.

At 7:00 p.m. we'll have round table discussions on various caregiving topics with a facilitator present at each table. Each person will get an opportunity to attend 3 different discussions.

At 8:00 p.m., Jeff Speer will entertain caregivers with a humorous and motivating presentation.

As usual we'll be drawing door prizes throughout the evening with grand prizes to be drawn at the end of the last session.

Caregivers must be present to win.

**Mark your calendars for
Thursday, April 12, 2007.**



CAREGIVER RESOURCE/SUPPORT MEETINGS

Fayette County & Surrounding Area

February 6
March 6
April 3
3:00-4:00 p.m.

First United Methodist Church
127 N. Fourth Street
Vandalia
Meets in the Library

Jefferson County & Surrounding Area

February 13
March 13
April 10
3:00-4:00 p.m.

**** Guest Speaker—Jackie Witges, R.N., BSN
Life Care Coordinator w/Siemer Elder Law.
Discussion on personal care/skin care and safe
medication practices. Bring a friend!**

Addus Adult Day Center
108 N. Third Street
Mt. Vernon
Meets in the North Room

Effingham County & Surrounding Area

February 19
March 19
April 16
3:30-4:30 p.m.

Heartland Human Services
1200 N. Fourth Street
Effingham
Meets in Room 119

Marion County & Surrounding Area

February 20
March 20
April 17
4:00-5:00 p.m.

****Guest Speaker—Jackie Shelton, Veteran
Pension Plan Coordinator with Addus Health-
Care. She will educate participants on Vet-
eran, Veteran & Spouse, and Surviving Spouse
Benefits. Bring a Friend!!**

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
512 W. Main Street
Salem
Meets in Church Basement

“The great thing about getting older is that you don’t lose all the other ages you’ve been.”

Madeline L’Engle

Heartland Human Services

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Guest Speaker at February 13 Caregiver Resource/Support Meeting in Mt. Vernon

See Page 5 for Details

Guest Speaker at February 20 Caregiver Resource/Support Meeting in Salem

See Page 5 for Details



April 12—5th Annual Symposium for Family Caregivers in Effingham

See Page 4 for details