

Diagnostic Features for Borderline Personality Disorder

The DSM-IV lists numerous traits of people with borderline personality disorder. These traits can be divided into five categories.

- A. Emotional traits
 - Strong mood shifts that last only a few hours. This is referred to as “emotional liability.”
 - Anger that is inappropriate, intense or uncontrollable

- B. Behavioral traits
 - Self-destructive behaviors including self-mutilation and threats of suicide
 - Impulsive acts that have the potential to be self-injurious including alcohol and other drug abuse, compulsive spending, and gambling

- C. Traits involving identity
 - Instability in identity including self-image, sexual orientation, career choice, and long-term goals
 - Chronic feelings of emptiness

- D. Traits involving relationships
 - Relationships tend to be intense, chaotic, and unstable
 - The person makes frantic efforts to avoid abandonment

- E. Traits under conditions of stress
 - Short-term dissociative thoughts and actions

