Borderline Personality Disorder and Complex Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
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Introduction

• Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) – DSM-5
• Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – DSM-5
• Complex PTSD (C-PTSD)
• Treatment Approaches and Considerations
What is BPD?

DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria for BPD

Pattern of instability in relationships, self-image, affects, and marked impulsivity beginning in early adulthood with 5+ of the following:

A. Frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment
B. Pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships
C. Identity disturbance
D. Impulsivity in at least 2 areas that are potentially self-damaging
E. Recurrent suicidal behavior or self-mutilating behavior
F. Affective instability due to a marked reactivity of mood
G. Chronic feelings of emptiness
H. Inappropriate, intense anger
I. Transient, stress-related paranoid ideation or severe dissociative symptoms
What is PTSD?

DSM-5 Diagnostic Criteria for PTSD

A. Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence
B. Re-experiencing symptoms
C. Avoidance symptoms
D. Negative alterations in cognitions and mood
E. Hyperarousal symptoms

- Duration of the disturbance (Criteria B, C, D, and E) is more than 1 month and causes distress or impairment.
- Dissociative subtype includes depersonalization and derealization.
What is Complex PTSD?

Difference between PTSD and Complex PTSD

• Complex PTSD associated with long-term child physical, sexual abuse & exploitation, long-term interpersonal violence/domestic violence (high betrayal trauma)

• Complex PTSD = PTSD symptoms + chronic, repeated trauma

• Resulting difficulties with emotion regulation, negative self-concept, interpersonal problems
BPD versus Complex PTSD

- Complex PTSD is commonly misdiagnosed as BPD due to overlap in the following symptom categories
  - Emotion regulation
  - Self-image
  - Interpersonal problems
BPD versus Complex PTSD

Emotion Regulation

- BPD
  - Frequent impulsivity
    - Suicide attempts/gestures, self-harm behaviors
  - Mood lability

- Complex PTSD
  - Ineffective coping choices
  - Reactive anger
BPD versus Complex PTSD

Self-Image

- **BPD**
  - Unstable sense of self
  - Shifting self-image

- **Complex PTSD**
  - Persistent negative self-image
BPD versus Complex PTSD

Interpersonal Problems

• BPD
  – Fear of abandonment
  – Unstable relationships that alternate between idealizing and devaluing the other person

• Complex PTSD
  – Chronic avoidance of relationships
  – Sense of alienation from others
Treatment Approaches

Treatment Approaches for BPD

- There are a variety of evidence-based modalities, including Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Mentalization Based Treatment (MBT), and General Psychiatric Management (GPM)
- DBT merges CBT change principles with Eastern acceptance practices
- Teaches skills in the areas of mindfulness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness
- Initially developed for treating BPD, but can be helpful for a variety of diagnostic conditions, including PTSD
Principles of PTSD Treatment

- **Stage One**
  - safety, stabilization, structure, skills, self-care

- **Stage Two**
  - grieving, remembrance, processing, meaning-making

- **Stage Three**
  - reconnection, integration
Important Treatment Considerations

- Natural overlap between
  - Principles of DBT and Stage 1 trauma treatment
  - Principles of various evidence-based treatment modalities for PTSD (e.g., CPT, PE, DBT PE) and Stage 2 trauma treatment
Treatment Approaches

Important Treatment Considerations

• Different aims of treatment
  – BPD
    • Reduce suicidality and self-harm; maintain safety
    • Reduce dependence on others
    • Develop a stable sense of self
  – Complex PTSD
    • Reduce interpersonal avoidance, increase social connection
    • Build a positive self image
    • If appropriate, eventually work with the content and meaning of traumatic memories
Treatment Approaches

Important Treatment Considerations

- Importance of trusting relationship and rapport
- Pacing and grounding
- Addressing interpersonal difficulties
Thank You!
Questions?