Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss Borderline Personality Disorder with a Loved One

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When you suspect a loved one has Borderline Personality Disorder

- Do not bring the subject up in a time of crisis
- Avoid outright “labeling” such as:
  - “You are Borderline”
  - or any “you are” statements
- Use a curious, “not knowing stance”
  - Saying you understand is often felt as dismissive
- Always observe and describe in a non judgmental manner
  - Be brief and clear
- Be prepared for push back!
When you feel treatment would help

- Again, do not raise "you need therapy" in the middle of an argument
  - It will increase negative associations.

- Avoid "selling treatment" discussions, as you may increase resistance

- Again, using a curious, exploratory stance is not only tactical, but essential
  - There are many types of treatment and it's often not clear what will be most helpful.

- Don't get discouraged by push back
  - Plant the seed!
Resources

- There is a lot of disinformation on the internet!

- Always have good, reliable resources readily available, such as:
  - National Educational Alliance for Borderline Personality Disorder: www.neabpd.org
  - Family Guidelines by John Gunderson, MD and Cynthia Berkowitz, MD: http://www.borderlinepersonalitydisorder.com/family-connections/family-guidelines/
  - Tara4BPD: http://www.tara4bpd.org/
  - BPD Resource Center: www.bpdresourcecenter.org
  - Borderline Personality Disorder Patient and Family Education Initiative: mcleanhospital.org/bpdinitiative