

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!

- 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