

Overview: Personality Disorders

When Rigid Patterns of Thinking and Relating Drive the Cycle of Relapse

What Are Personality Disorders?

Personality disorders are mental health conditions marked by deeply ingrained patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that differ significantly from what's expected. These patterns affect how a person sees themselves, relates to others, and handles emotions. Because they shape the core of who someone is, they're rarely identified, diagnosed, or treated in short-term programs.

The Personality Disorder Spectrum

Cluster A: Odd, Eccentric

- **Paranoid Personality Disorder**
Deep distrust of others, even those trying to help
- **Schizoid Personality Disorder**
Detachment from relationships, limited emotional expression
- **Schizotypal Personality Disorder**
Unusual thinking patterns, discomfort with closeness

Cluster B: Dramatic, Emotional, Erratic

- **Borderline Personality Disorder**
Intense emotional swings, fear of abandonment
- **Narcissistic Personality Disorder**
Grandiosity, need for admiration, lack of empathy
- **Antisocial Personality Disorder**
Disregard for rules and others' rights, manipulation
- **Histrionic Personality Disorder**
Excessive emotionality, constant need for attention

Cluster C: Anxious, Fearful

- **Avoidant Personality Disorder**
Intense fear of rejection, social withdrawal
- **Dependent Personality Disorder**
Excessive need for others to make decisions
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder**
Rigid perfectionism, need for control



Prevalence:
9.1% of U.S. adults¹

Co-Occurrence:
35-73% of people in addiction have a co-occurring personality disorder²

Relapse Risk:
High
Personality disorders are a consistent risk factor for treatment dropout and relapse³

Sources: ¹ NIMH, *National Comorbidity Survey Replication*. ² PMC: *Comorbidity of Personality Disorder among SUD Patients*. ³ *Clinical Psychology Review: Drop-out from addiction treatment*

How Personality Disorders Contribute to Relapse

Personality disorders create patterns so deeply embedded that substances become the primary way to cope with emotional pain, manage relationships, or quiet internal chaos.

- 1) The Pattern Is the Problem**
Substances become part of how they function daily.
- 2) Short-Term Programs Can't Reach Deep Enough**
Treatment ends before real therapeutic work begins.
- 3) Without Treating the Disorder, Relapse Is Likely**
Same patterns, same responses, same familiar solution.

“Many clients with personality disorders have been through multiple programs without anyone identifying what’s actually driving the addiction. Accurate diagnosis is the first step. The second is having enough time to do the deeper therapeutic work.”



Meghan Bohlman, LPC-S, LCDC, EMDR-Trained
Executive Clinical Director, Burning Tree Ranch

How Personality Disorders Are Identified & Diagnosed

- Extended observation in a structured environment
- Comprehensive psychiatric evaluation
- Assessment of patterns across relationships, not just during crisis
- Differentiation between substance-induced behavior and underlying personality structure

Long-Term Treatment for Personality Disorders and Addiction

Personality disorders are deeply-ingrained and don't respond to quick interventions. Our **long-term, progress-based model** gives clients time to recognize their patterns, practice new ways of relating, and build a foundation for lasting change.

- 1) Accurate Diagnosis Comes First**
Proper identification of the disorder guides our treatment planning.
- 2) Treating Both Conditions Together**
Without addressing the underlying disorder, sobriety is temporary.
- 3) Measuring Progress by Behavior, Not Days**
Clients advance when they show genuine change in how they handle stress, conflict, and relationships.



Have Other Treatment Programs Missed the Deeper Issues?

Burning Tree Ranch is the Nation's only authentic long-term treatment program for chronic relapse. Call us at (866) 287-2877 or visit us online at www.BurningTree.com.

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