


# Personality Disorders: How to Respond

Betty Bartos MS NCC LCPC  
The Janet Wattles Center



Janet Wattles Center  
We're for mental health.

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

## Introduction

- The purpose of this presentation is to introduce how to approach treatment with persons who are diagnosed with Personality Disorders. The focus today is primarily from the cognitive behavioral approach.



Janet Wattles Center  
We're for mental health.

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

## General Focus or Approach (Bartos)

- Focus on the behavior that is occurring in the moment not the explanation for the behavior
- Consistently assess what behavior is being reinforced
- Work collaboratively
- Confront behavior, observe limits, provide structure
- Help the person identify consequences of behavior
- Do not personalize their behavior, do not get emotionally "hooked".



Janet Wattles Center  
We're for mental health.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## CBT for Personality Disorder (Judy Beck)

- Based on cognitive formulation
- Strong therapeutic alliance needed
- Oriented toward problem solving and achieving goals
- Sessions are structured and collaborative
- Cognitive restructuring is **vital**



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## A Useful Tool: Options for Responding to Any Problem

- Solve the Problem
- Feel Better or Differently about the Problem
- Tolerate the Problem
- Stay or Be Miserable



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Paranoid Personality Disorder

- Do not focus on the paranoia, focus on solving problems
- Promote self efficacy to reduce vigilance and defensiveness
- Establish a working relationship
- Help differentiate levels of trust



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Schizoid Personality Disorder

- Social skills
- Teaching about emotions
- Help them experience positive emotions
- Help them attend to emotional details



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Schizotypal Personality Disorder

- Establish strong therapeutic alliance
- Increase socially appropriate behavior in all contexts
- Structure sessions – focus for the session
- Set small measurable goals
- Teach them to look for objective evidence
- Make life better in practical ways (job, etc)



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Antisocial Personality Disorder

- Set clear limits for involvement
- Identify cognitions that support antisocial behavior
- Get them to move from narrow views to broader view
- Use cost benefit analysis
- Don't set self up as judge of what is moral behavior
- Therapist should not be the reinforcer



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Borderline Personality Disorder

- Collaborative relationship – relationship is key!
- Observe clear consistent limits
- Respond to crisis and keep focus on long term goals
- Decrease split thinking (either/or)
- Skills training to increase emotional control and impulse control



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Histrionic Personality Disorder

- Shift from global impressionistic thinking to problem focused thinking
- Collaborate so you are not the “rescuer”
- Reinforce competence and attention to detail
- One issue at a time
- Don’t get caught in the drama
- Cognitive challenges



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Narcissistic Personality Disorder

- Get collaboration on issues
- Address three major facets
  - Grandiosity
  - Hypersensitivity to Evaluation
  - Development of Empathy for others



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Avoidant Personality Disorder

- Elicit automatic thoughts
- Diagram the process of avoidance
- Identify the Pros/Cons of avoidance
- Build tolerance for negative emotional states
- Skills training (social, assertiveness, etc)



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Dependent Personality Disorders

- Develop “autonomy” not independence
- Develop sense of competence, self efficacy
- Have them develop the “answers” to problems
- Observe clear limits especially with touch
- Set clear goals and homework assignments
- Termination issues are huge – address from the beginning



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder

- Set agenda
- Prioritize problems and problem solve
- Teach meditation and relaxation to decrease anxiety
- Address obsessive or automatic thoughts
- Behavioral experiments



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**QUESTIONS?**

 Janet Wattles Center  
We're for mental health. 16

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---