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Splitting is a symptom of borderline personality disorder where a person sees everything as black or white. Understanding splitting is a term used in psychiatry to describe the inability to hold opposing thoughts, feelings, or beliefs. Some might say that a person who splits
sees the world in terms of black or white—all or nothing. It's a distorted way of thinking in which the positive or negative attributes of a person or event are neither weighed nor cohesive. Verywell / Hugo Lin Common in those with BPD view
others, events, or even themselves in all-or-nothing terms. Splitting allows them to readily discard things they consider "good," even if those things are harmful or risky. This video has been medically reviewed by David Susman, PhD. Splitting can interfere with relationships and lead to intense and
self-destructive behaviors. A person who splits will typically frame people or events in terms that are absolute, with no middle ground for discussion. Examples of splitting behavior may include: Opportunities can either have "no risk" or be a "complete con"People can either be "evil" and "crooked" or "angels" and "perfect Science, history, or news is
either a "complete fact" or a "complete lie"Things are either "always" or "never"When things go wrong, a person will feel "cheated," "ruined," or "screwed" What makes splitting all the more confusing is that the belief can sometimes be iron-clad or shift back and forth from one moment to the next. People who split are often seen to be overly dramatic
or overwrought, especially when declaring that things have either "completely fallen apart" or "completely turned around." Such behavior can be exhausting to those around them. By itself, splitting may seem almost commonplace, a behavior can be exhausting to those around them. By itself, splitting may seem almost commonplace, a behavior can be exhausting to those around them.
is considered a consistent and distorted behavior usually accompanied by other symptoms, such as: Acting out (acting without consideration to consequences) Denial (consciously ignoring a fact or reality) Emotional hypochondriasis (trying to get others to understand how severe your emotional pain is) Omnipotence (the belief that you possess
superiority in intelligence or power) Passive aggression (an indirect expression of hostility) Projection (assigning an undesirable emotion to someone else, and then behaving toward that person in a way that forces them to respond to you with the feelings you
projected onto them) Understanding the process of diagnosis and the careful management of borderline personality disorder can be helpful in understanding behaviors like splitting that are associated with the condition. A BPD diagnosis can only be made by a qualified mental health specialist. To make the diagnosis, the doctor would need to confirm
five of nine symptoms outlined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR), including: A warped view of yourself that affects your emotions, values, moods, and relationships Anger issues, such as violent outbursts followed by extreme guilt and remorse Extreme attempts to avoid abandonment or extreme feelings of
abandonment Extreme depression, anxiety, or irritability that can persist for hours and days Feeling dissociated from yourself, including paranoia and amnesia Feeling persistently empty or bored Impulsive behavior, such as abusing substances or driving recklessly Intense and stormy relationships that involve splitting Suicidal thoughts and/or self-
harming behaviors There is no easy answer on how to deal with a loved one who has BPD, especially when symptoms are extreme. How you cope depends largely on the nature of your relationship and the impact your loved one's symptoms are extreme. How you cope depends largely on the nature of your relationship and the impact your loved one's symptoms are extreme.
empathy. Start by reminding yourself that splitting is part of the disorder. While certain actions may seem intentional and manipulative, your loved one is not doing any of this to gain satisfaction. These are simply defense mechanisms they turn to whenever they feel defenseless. Encourage and support treatment. Your loved one can live a better life
with treatment, which may include medication and/or talk therapy, most likely dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). Encourage them to start or continue with treatment, and learn everything you can about what they are going through. If needed, participate in therapy with your loved one. Maintain lines of communication. Discussing a situation when it
happens allows you to isolate that event rather than piling one situation on top of the next. Failure to communicate only serves to fuel your loved one that you care. People with BPD are often terrified of being rejected or abandoned. Knowing that someone cares often helps reduce the splitting behavior. Set
boundaries. Dealing with the challenges of BPD is one thing; becoming the object of abuse is another. Always set limits with a loved one who has BPD. If that line is ever crossed, explain why you are backing away, and try to do so dispassionately. Setting boundaries helps preserve the relationship rather than challenging it. Take care of yourself. This
may include finding your own therapist to help you balance your needs along with those of your loved one. Try to manage your response. If your loved one has BPD, keep in mind that you are in a better position to control your temper. Yelling or engaging in hostility will only serve to make the situation even worse. We've tried, tested, and written
unbiased reviews of the best online therapy programs including Talkspace, Betterhelp, and Regain. Find out which option is the event that the relationship is harming your family, your work, and your sense of well-being, you may be faced with the reality that the
relationship cannot continue. While this is an incredibly painful choice for everyone involved, it can also be the healthiest one in some cases. If needed, this decision should be made with the help of a qualified mental health professional. What is "Splitting" and How Does It Occur? Copyright 2002 by John T. Tennison, MD The word, "splitting" can be
used in two senses: as a way of perceiving OR as something that is "done" to others, and which results in conflict between others. Splitting is a process that oscillates between external manifestation) can result in a
developmental process whereby a child's thought processes (an internal manifestation) come to mirror these external behavior of a parent (most often a mother), biases the thought processes of a child into thinking in black and white, polarized ways. Because the parent does not model behavior and thinking that
allows for shades of gray, continua, and subtleties, the child internalizes similar patterns. Thus, an external, i.e. behavior, which can then cause that child to
treat people in polarized, black-and-white ways, such as valuation/devaluation. In virtually every case, incidents of splitting have been caused by splitting that occurred prior to the incident under consideration. That is, to think of splitting have been caused by splitting as having a "beginning" is a misnomer. For a given individual, it does have a beginning. Yet, much like the
famous chicken-and-egg question, the processes of splitting oscillates between the external and the internal processes in their cognition after having experienced behavioral examples of splitting as modeled by their parents and others in their
early environment. When "splitting" is used in the sense of something that is "done" to others, we often hear that a borderline patient is "splitting the staff" on an inpatient psychiatric ward or other healthcare facility. Yet, the process by which this happens is often not explained. Here is an example of how it happens: A patient is admitted to an
inpatient psychiatric ward. In a private, one-to-one interchanges or assessments, the patient praises certain people, who in turn, feel bad and thus, do not like the patient. Because the patient has treated the staff in
these polarized ways in private unobserved interactions, different members of the staff come to have very opposite opinions of the staff could have witnessed ALL of the patient's interactions, they would have seen how inconsistently the patient was
behaving, depending on the particular member of the staff with whom the patient was internalization consists of liking and sympathizing with the patient if one had been valued. However, this internalization consists of
disliking and lack of sympathy for patient if one had been devalued. This internalized "split" then plays out in arguments (an external split) among staff member who was valued by the patient might become angry with a devalued staff member who said something bad about the
patient. At this stage, an oscillation back to the internal can potentially stop if the ones who were valued/devalued were adults. This is because adults are past their formative, impressionable years, and their thought processes are less subject to being biased on a long-term basis by the behavior of the one(s) who has done the splitting. However, if
children are the ones being valued /devalued, they are more likely to internal/external oscillations. If you call me a jerk, I might react angrily because I feel attacked. My anger in turn might result in my behaving like a jerk.
However, I would not have behaved like a jerk had I not been reacting to being called jerk in first place. Some theorists would suggest that the person who called me a jerk was actually the "jerk" and that they were "projecting" this onto me. In turn, the theorist might say that I am "identifying" with the projection. Yet such a theoretical explanation
only makes things unnecessarily complicated and abstract. "Occam's Razor" would suggest that I am simply reacting to an insult or to being attacked, rather than "identifying" with something that was "projected" on me. It is a coincidence that my behavior is also jerk-like, as someone else might have reacted in a completely different way.
"Projection" is sometimes a confusing metaphor, and a misleading word for the process we are trying to describe. "Generalizing their psychology onto others" or say that "they are treating others as they have been treated" rather than say they are "projecting." Another confusing
example of the use of the word "projection" occurs when a doctor feels nervous around an anxious patient (or when a patient feels nervous around an anxious doctor.) This is what has sometimes been called "projective identification." Some psychodynamic theorists might say that the anxiety has been "projected" from one person to the other, with
the second person "identifying" with this projection. However, "resonance" or "diffusion" would probably be a better word for the process that is occurring, especially if the original person feeling the anxiety had not started out attributing it to the second person who later felt it. It should be noted that "splitting" is not necessarily a pathological or
unconscious process. Many forms of competition intentionally utilize splitting as a means of "dividing and conquering." Business, military, and political processes often intentionally "split" the masses or competitors, so that those who are split are not as effective at competing with those who have instigated the splitting. Moreover, some of the most
successful splitting occurs covertly, whereby the splitter is unknown to those who have been split. For example, if someone was framed for a crime that they did not commit as a result of evidence that was planted in their house, a split could occur between that person and the law, even if the person responsible for the planting of the evidence
remains unknown. In this case the victim probably knows that someone has intentionally caused his or her plight. However, there is still an even more covert example of splitting that could be given: This occurs when someone is victimized and is completely unaware that someone was responsible for his or her woes. Untrue rumors can serve this
function. If someone is going around spreading slanderous, vicious rumors about me, people might begin avoiding me, even though I remain completely oblivious as to why no one wants to spend time with me. This process does not extinguish easily because people feel awkward confronting me about the rumors. A similar process can take place in
the business world, in which a competitor slanders someone's product or service without the victim being aware or present to defend themselves. Nonetheless, consumer worry then creates gravitation towards the product of the person who instigated the covert splitting. Back to the Psychiatric Journal Splitting is a defense mechanism that plays a
significant role in the dynamics of the unconscious mind, particularly in cases of borderline states, narcissistic pathology, and severe psychological trauma. As a concept, splitting has been central to the work of several psychoanalytic theorists, including Melanie Klein, Donald Winnicott, and Otto Kernberg, who explored its implications for both the
individual's internal world and their interpersonal relationships. This article will provide a psychoanalytic exploration of splitting, examining its origins, its manifestation in both clinical settings and everyday life, and its implications for the development of the self and relationships. This article will provide a psychoanalytic exploration of splitting, examining its origins, its manifestation in both clinical settings and everyday life, and its implications for the development of the self and relationships.
the inability to integrate opposing aspects of the self or others into a cohesive whole. It results in the tendency to view people, experiences, and even oneself in all-good or all-bad terms, without recognizing the complexity or ambiguity inherent in human nature. This binary view can prevent the development of a realistic and balanced sense of self and
others, leading to distorted perceptions and maladaptive coping mechanisms. Individuals who engage in splitting often experience a fragmented sense of self and struggle to reconcile conflicting emotions or aspects of their identity. For example, someone who splits might idealize a person, placing them on a pedestal, only to quickly shift to viewing
them as an "enemy" when their needs are not met or when their needs are not met or when they feel disappointed. This inability to integrate the good and bad aspects of people, situations, or oneself is a key feature of splitting in Early Development, particularly in her model of
psychic life in infancy. Klein suggested that infants are incapable of understanding the complexity of relationships and the ambiguity of good and bad experiences. This early inability to integrate conflicting feelings leads to the development of splitting as a defense mechanism. Klein's work focused on the infant's early relationships with the mother and
the internalization of these object relations. According to her, the infant initially perceives the mother as an idealized figure (the good object), but when she is unable to meet the infant's needs, the mother becomes a bad object. This split is necessary to help the infant manage feelings of frustration and helplessness, but it also prevents the infant from
developing a whole view of the mother as both nurturing and imperfect. As a result, the child's internal world becomes divided into a "good" self and devalued parts of the self onto others is a fundamental feature of splitting, and it can persist into
adulthood, influencing how individuals perceive others and themselves. The lack of integration between these polarized views leads to a fragmented sense of identity and contributes to difficulties in emotional regulation. Splitting and the Development of the Borderline Personality Otto Kernberg and Margaret Mahler expanded on Klein's ideas,
particularly with regard to the development of borderline personality disorders. Kernberg described splitting as a key feature of borderline states, where the individual struggles to integrate both the good and bad aspects of self and others. For Kernberg, splitting was a defense that protected the individual from overwhelming feelings of anxiety
shame, and guilt by dividing the internal world into idealized and devalued parts. Kernberg's work highlights the importance of the early object relationships in shaping this defense mechanism. Borderline patients often have trouble forming stable and cohesive internal representations of themselves and others, and their relationships are marked by
dramatic shifts between extreme affection and intense hostility. This phenomenon is frequently seen in therapeutic settings, where the patient may view the analyst as a benevolent figure one moment and a persecutory figure the next, depending on how their emotional needs are being met. The defense of splitting, in this context, helps the individual
avoid the painful and overwhelming reality that people are multifaceted—capable of both caring and failing, strength and weakness, love and anger. The inability to integrate these conflicting feelings results in a rigid view of the world, one in which people are either entirely good or entirely bad. Splitting in Narcissism: A Defense of Grandiosity
Narcissistic personalities are another group for whom splitting plays a significant role in the defense of self-esteem and the maintenance of a grandiose sense of self. Heinz Kohut, a key figure in the development of self-psychology, explored how narcissistic individuals often use splitting to maintain their idealized sense of self while defending against
feelings of shame or inferiority. Narcissistic individuals, according to Kohut, may experience extreme shifts between self-idealization and self-devaluation, creating an unstable sense of identity. In response, they may project their internal conflicts onto others, seeing people as either "mirrors" who reflect their idealized image or as "objects" who fail to
meet their inflated self-concept. This splitting mechanism allows the narcissistic individual to avoid confronting feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness that fuel their grandiosity. For example, a narcissistic person may excessively praise someone who admires them, idealizing the person as a reflection of their own greatness. However,
if the person later criticizes them or fails to meet their needs, the narcissist may devalue them entirely, viewing them as unworthy or contemptible. The shifting views of others as either good or bad help maintain the narcissist's fragile self-image, but also contribute to profound difficulties in forming healthy, stable relationships. Splitting and the
Unconscious: The Role of Projective Identification Splitting also plays a key role in the phenomenon of projective identification occurs when an individual projects parts of their unwanted feelings or internal conflicts onto another person, and, in some
cases, attempts to manipulate or control the other person to act in ways that align with these projections. Through splitting, the individual is able to maintain the illusion of control over their internal experience by externalizing and attributing it to another person. For example, a person experiencing intense anger or guilt may project these feelings
onto someone else, perceiving them as "angry" or "guilty." In doing so, they avoid confronting their perceptions and maintain a sense of psychic equilibrium, but at the cost of distorting their perceptions and potentially damaging their relationships. In the therapeutic setting, the analyst may become the target of the patient's projections. A
patient may see the analyst as either a perfect figure who offers complete understanding or as a hostile figure who cannot be trusted. The therapist's ability to recognize and interpret these projections is crucial to helping the patient integrate the split parts of themselves and develop a more cohesive and realistic sense of self. Splitting and the Path to
Integration While splitting can be a protective mechanism in the short term, its long-term effects can be devastating to the individual's psychological development. Psychic integration, or the ability to hold the good and bad parts of the self and others in mind simultaneously, is essential for psychological maturity. As individual's psychological development.
conflicting feelings and experiences, they develop a more balanced view of themselves and the world. The psychoanalytic process often involves helping the patient learns to tolerate ambivalence, to accept imperfection, and to integrate conflicting
emotional states. In doing so, the patient moves beyond the rigid defenses of splitting, allowing for the development of a more cohesive sense of self and the ability to engage in healthier relationships. Conclusion: Splitting as a Defense and a Pathway to Healing Splitting is a powerful defense mechanism that reflects an individual's difficulty in
integrating contradictory aspects of themselves and others. It is a psychic defense that helps protect the person from anxiety, confusion, and the overwhelming nature of life's complexities. However, while splitting can provide short-term relief, it also perpetuates long-term psychological fragmentation and relational difficulties. In the therapeutic
setting, working through splitting is a crucial step toward psychic integration and healing. By recognizing and confronting the split within, the individual can begin to reconcile the polarized parts of themselves, leading to a greater capacity for emotional resilience, self-cohesion, and adaptive functioning. Splitting, when understood and worked
through, can ultimately pave the way for a more integrated sense of self and healthier relationships with others. Splitting occurs when a person with borderline personalities are defined by the way we think, feel, and
behave. They're also shaped by our experiences, environment, and inherited traits. Our personalities are a big part of what makes us different from those
of other people in the life of an individual who has a personality disorder, and, without treatment, these patterns may create difficult and painful situations. Individuals with personality disorder is called borderline personality disorder (BPD). It's
characterized by: self-image concernsdifficulty managing emotions and behaviorunstable relationships One key behavior shared by many people with BPD is known as splitting. This happens when an individual with BPD sees a situation in an all-or-nothing or good-versus-bad way. Approaching situations in this inflexible manner is a way an individual
with BPD may try to cope with stressful, distressing, or threatening situations. Keep reading to learn more about splitting in BPD and how to cope with it. To split something means to divide it. Those with BPD tend to characterize people, and situations in black and white terms. In other words, they may suddenly characterize people
others, objects, beliefs, and situations. This can make them more prone to splitting, as they attempt to shield themselves from anxiety caused by potential abandonment, loss of trust, and betrayal.» Learn more: Understanding Borderline Personality Disorder versonality Disorder vers
abandonment and instability. To cope with these fears, they might use splitting as a defense mechanism. This means they might cleanly separate positive and negative feelings about: themselvesobjects beliefs other peoplesituations. This means they might cleanly separate positive and negative feelings about: themselvesobjects beliefs about: the means they might cleanly separate positive and negative feelings about: the means they might cleanly separate positive and negative feelings about: the means they might cleanly separate positive and negative feelings about: the means they might cleanly separate positive and negative feelings about: the means they might cleanly separate positive and negative feelings about: the means they might cleanly separate positive and negative feelings about: the means the 
commonly through the language of a person with BPD. They'll often use extreme words in their characterizations, such as: "never" and "always" "none" and "good" Here are a couple of examples: You've been feeling good about yourself, generally. You're out on a road trip one day and make
a wrong turn that gets you temporarily lost. Suddenly, any good feelings you have about yourself disappear, and you get very down on yourself. You may say negative things to yourself or others, such as "I'm such an idiot, I always get lost" or "I'm so worthless, I can't do anything right." Of course, making a wrong turn when driving doesn't mean a
person is worthless. But a person with BPD can split their perception to avoid the anxiety of others perceiving them as worthless if they do the job first. You have a mentor you deeply admire. They've helped you professionally and personally, and you begin to idealize them. They must be without flaw if they're so successful in their professional and
personal lives. You want to be like them, and you tell them so. Then one day, your mentor undergoes turmoil in their marriage. You view this as a sign of weakness. Suddenly, you view your mentor as a complete fraud and failure. You want nothing to do with them. You completely separate yourself and your work from them and look for a new mentor
elsewhere. Such splitting can leave the person hurt, annoyed, and confused by the sudden shift in your perception. Splitting often leads to extreme — and sometimes destructive — behavior and personal turmoil in relationships. Splitting often confuses those who are trying
to help people with BPD. Splitting is an unconscious attempt to safeguard ego and prevent anxiety. Those with BPD often report having intense and unstable relationship traits of a person who's a friend one day may be perceived as an enemy the next. Some relationship traits of a person with BPD include: difficulty trusting othersirrationally fearing others'
intentionsquickly cutting off communication with someone they think might end up abandoning themrapidly changing feelings about a person, from intense closeness and love (idealization) to intense dislike and anger (devaluation) rapidly initiating physically or emotionally intimate relationships physically or emotionally intimate relationships about a person, from intense closeness and love (idealization) to intense dislike and anger (devaluation) rapidly initiating physically or emotionally intimate relationships about a person, from intense closeness and love (idealization) to intense dislike and anger (devaluation) rapidly initiating physically or emotionally intimate relationships about a person, from intense closeness and love (idealization) to intense dislike and anger (devaluation) rapidly initiating physically or emotionally intense closeness and love (idealization) to intense closeness and love (idealization) to intense closeness and love (idealization) rapidly initiating physically or emotionally initiating physically or emotionally initiating physically initiating physically or emotion and initiating physical physica
by people who have experienced early life traumas, such as abuse and abandonment. Long-term treatment involves developing coping mechanisms that improve one's perspective of life events. Reducing anxiety can also help. If you need help coping with a splitting episode in the moment, here's what you can do: Calm your breathing: A surge of anxiety
often accompanies splitting episodes. Taking long, deep breaths can help calm you and prevent your extreme feelings from taking over. Focus on all your senses: Grounding yourself in what's happening around you at a given moment can be a good way to distract yourself from extreme feelings and help you better put things into perspective. What can
you smell, taste, touch, hear, and see in a moment? Reach out: If you find yourself splitting, consider reaching out to your mental health care professional. They may be able to calm you and help ease the split while it's happening. FINDCARE: Find a therapist in your area today. It's not easy to help a person with BPD who experiences splitting. You may
feel at the mercy of their symptoms. If you feel capable enough to help, here are some tips:Learn as much as you can about BPD. It's easy to get offended by the up-and-down behavior, the more understanding you'll have about your loved one's
behavior. Know your loved one's triggers. Often, the same events over and over again are a BPD triggers, alerting them avoid or cope with those triggers may prevent a splitting episodes
be honest. Tell them when they should seek professional help. Here's how to access therapy for every budget. BPD is a mental health disorder characterized by extremes in the way a person thinks, feels, and situations during episodes called
 splitting. Situations associated with anxiety often trigger splitting episodes. While it may be difficult at times, coping with splitting cycles. Borderline personality may be the posterchild for problematic splitting, but it is premature to reflexively
assume BPD is always at hand. In some instances, what seems like splitting may be an adaptive response to one's environment. Splitting is a natural thought process, like categorizing good and evil. Only when it disrupts interpersonal relating is a natural thought process, like categorizing good and evil. Only when it disrupts interpersonal relating is a natural thought process, like categorizing good and evil.
good or all bad, with failure to integrate the positive and negative qualities of the self and others into cohesive images. Often, the person alternately overidealizes and devalues the same person (Shahrokh & Hale, 2003). The gifted psychoanalyst Nancy McWilliams, (2013), noted that splitting is used in everyday adult life. She explained it is "a
powerful and appealing way" to make sense of complex/confusing/threatening experiences in everyday adult life, such as the free world against terrorists or good versus evil. Source: Robin Higgins/Pixabay Nonetheless, the term "splitting" may send shivers up your spine. Images flash of patients with character pathology, constantly pitting staff or
family members against one another in order to attain some goal. You sprout a thought bubble with "borderline" pulsating in neon red to a nuclear danger alarm sound. Such a Pavlovian response is premature. A Condemning Assumption As written about in Tips for Accurate Diagnosing: 1 Symptom isn't Enough, too frequently a well-known core
feature of a diagnosis isn't contextualized and the diagnosis it is most associated with is applied to the person. We must remember the edict of Emil Kraepelin, the father of modern psychiatric diagnosis who said, "A single symptom, however characteristic as may be, never justifies a diagnosis by itself..." (Spitzer et al., 2002). While people with
al., 2015; Ring & Lawn, 2018). Unfortunately, even clinicians, particularly new clinicians who have no other point of reference, can succumb to these misunderstandings because personality disorders get little attention in academic programs. As soon as it is proposed someone has BPD, they may, for example, be avoided because of the assumed
difficulty they'll present, and thus not be provided the attention they deserve. Splitting Must Be Contextualized It's not always pathological or diagnostic. For someone in a correctional institution, what seems like splitting may just be going from one person to another trying to get a need met. They're in a setting where looking out for number
one counts, and needs get met any way possible. If that means playing staff, you do what you must do, like if a kid doesn't mean the child will grow up to have BPD. For splitting to be pathological, and thus a sign of character disturbance, it must be an established pattern within a
bigger clinical picture. It isn't unusual for someone to be entirely fed up with a family member they previously got along with and see them as all negative in family or couples work. They may be moody towards them and even seem to feel rejected two major Borderline traits. However, suppose the person doesn't have a history of such behavior and a
general background of a tumultuous relationship. In that case, chances are it's isolated to the family member and not a BPD issue. It must also be considered that pathological splitting can be evidence of maturing BPD. They
cast themselves as victim, mostly regarding their immediate family, and sought savior figures; there were push-pull dynamics, explosive reactions to limit setting, and self-destructive behaviors. However, there was no developmental history of traumas, abandonment or parental BPD modeling, as usually seen in BPD backgrounds. What Is Personality?
Take our Agreeableness Test Find a therapist near me Interestingly, the victimization material was increasingly unusual. Upon evaluation, it was discovered that beliefs about their family that led to "borderline" reactions were part of a billowing persecutorial delusion that the family didn't like them. In times of clarity, they were loving and peacefully
relating, as if nothing ever changed, only to be swallowed again by the delusion, telling everyone who'd listen how they were ousted and harassed by the family. Coupled with increasingly disorganized activity and unprovoked self-dialogue, it was clear this was evolving psychosis and not likely BPD. Evaluating for Personality-Based Pathological
Splitting The first example of personality-based pathological splitting I witnessed was so distinct that no other metaphor than "black and white" thinking could describe it. An inmate demanded to be seen after a call with his girlfriend. Typically idealizing her, that day, he was irate about her. She was unable to visit, and he assumed she was lying. "If
she does come around, I'm going to make her feel so small she'll need a stepladder to get over a curb!" he literally cried. The next week, he explained, matter-of-factly, that she came to visit, brought one of his Italian suits for his court date, and talked about how much he appreciated her. Over time, I was subjected to similar changes in status. He
sometimes refused to see anyone but me and, were I not immediately available, would later let me know just where I stood. For those who have never encountered such dynamics, similar examples can be seen throughout the 1945 film Mildred and Monte. If these who have never encountered such dynamics, similar examples can be seen throughout the 1945 film Mildred?
tendency is to assume BPD if you perceive someone splitting, take a step back and consider the following: Is the behavior an established pattern of obvious over-idealization and undervaluation as in the above examples or is it isolated to one incident or person? Can it be recognized as an ongoing, general manner of interpersonal relation causing
social/familial strain? Is it part of a larger clinical pathology that includes fears of abandonment, self-destructive behaviors, and intense, reactive moods? Is it possible the splitting is occurring during a psychotic disorder or affective disorder episode? If the above can't be established, such an arbitrary application of this diagnosis only serves to protect
the clinician while damning the patient, and this begs the question, who's really doing the splitting? Disclaimer: The material provided in this post is for information should not replace personalized care from your provider or formal supervision if
you're a practitioner or student. To find a therapist, visit the Psychology Today Therapy Directory. References Knaack, S., Szeto, A.C., Fitch, K., Modgill, G., & Patten, S. (2015). Stigma towards borderline personality disorder. Effectiveness and generalizability of an ant-stigma program for healthcare providers sing a pre-post randomized design.
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companion to the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (4th ed., text rev.). American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc. Get the help you need from a therapist near you-a FREE service from Psychology Today. Atlanta, GA Austin, TX Baltimore, MD Boston, MA Brooklyn, NY Charlotte, NC Chicago, IL Columbus, OH Dallas, TX Denver, CO
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San Francisco, CA San Jose, CA Seattle, WA Tucson, AZ Washington, DC More from Anthony D. Smith LMHC More from Psychology Today For people with borderline personality disorder (BPD), splitting means a person has difficulty accurately assessing another individual or situation. It can lead to intensely polarizing views of others, for instance
they are either very good or very bad. A person typically splits unconsciously or without realizing it. Rather than seeing people in their lives as complex human beings with good, bad, and forth rapidly. For example, their partner
may be the "worst partner in the world" one day and the "greatest partner ever" the next. Read on to learn more about what splitting looks like in BPD, its symptoms, duration, management strategies, and more. Share on PinterestCatherine Falls Commercial/Getty ImagesBPD is a type of personality disorder that causes people to experience intense
emotions, self-image issues, and impulsive behaviors. They often lack stability in personal relationships and behave irrationally. Splitting is a type of black-and-white thinking. It causes a person to perceive others — or even themselves — as all good or all bad. These perceptions may shift rapidly. People engage in splitting because they have conflicting
emotions about something or someone they find difficult to manage or intolerable. They may have unstable and intensive personal relationships that alternate between extreme highs and lows. Often, individuals with BPD have difficulty maintaining a consistent sense of self. This also disrupts their perceptions of other people. Splitting is a defense
 mechanism, and it is not unique to BPD. People with other mental health conditions, as well as those without any underlying mental illness, may also occasionally engage in splitting. However, for those with BPD, splitting can be a pervasive, ongoing pattern that contributes to relationship instability. Idealization and devaluation are both features of
BPD. Someone experiencing splitting may fluctuate between both. Idealization is a mental process that involves attributing overly positive qualities to a person on a pedestal, believing they can do no wrong. Devaluation is the opposite of idealization. It involves attributing overly
negative qualities to a person, object, or situation. They are seen as all bad. An example is when a person expresses intense anger toward someone. Both concepts can occur in people without BPD, too. Splitting is not always immediately apparent to people witnessing it. Individuals with BPD feel their emotions intensely and may believe that their
perceptions reflect reality. Some signs that a person is splitting include: idealizing someone one moment, then later calling them abusive or toxic not seeing nuance in the relationships or actions of others cutting people out of their life, then expressing feelings of abandonment Some signs a person might detect in themselves include: many chaotic or
unstable relationships rapidly changing feelings about other peoplefeelings that seem more intense than the feelings of others alternating between pushing someone away and wanting them not to leave when they actually do attributing another
person's behavior to their fundamental goodness or badness instead of seeing them as a complex person with good, bad, and in-between attributes perceiving oneself or others as all good or all bad having very intense emotions about other people that shift rapidly according to a person's feelings or circumstances.
behavior will last. A person may alternate between conflicting perceptions of another several times a day, or their perception of someone may last a very long time. They will continue to split until they find more effective ways to manage conflicting emotions. Experts do not fully
understand the causes of BPD, but research points to several different potential causes, including: trauma or stress in childhoodgenetic factors Learn more about triggers for BPD. person who thinks they may be splitting may wish to consider whether this is a pattern of behavior for them. If it is,
treatment for BPD may be beneficial. Some prevention strategies include: Gaining perspective and reframing the situation may be helpful. For example, perhaps a person did not destroy one's life but rather disappointed or hurt them. Considering other traits: Practice thinking about naming other
characteristics of the person and about the language contributing to splitting, such as "always" and "never." Try to practice using more accurate language. Cultivating empathy: Consider why a person might behave as they do. Keeping a journal: A person can log emotions and better understand what experiences increase splitting behaviors, as well as
one's own feelings that come up during splitting. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved any medications to treat BPD. However, doctors may still prescribe medication to manage symptoms. One of the most effective treatments is psychotherapy. Three different therapeutic approaches have proven especially beneficial:
Mentalizing-based therapy: This approach cultivates understanding and empathy to help people better manage intense emotions. The goal is to stimulate curiosity so people make fewer assumptions about others' behavior. Dialectical behavior about others' behavior. Dialectical behavior about others' behavior.
social skills and emotion regulation training. Transference-focused psychotherapy: In this model, the client to explore and reframe problematic emotions about medications. Individuals can contact a healthcare
or mental health professional if: they experience splitting oftenthey have a history of unstable, abusive, or chaotic relationships they frequently have intense emotions that feel difficult to controlthey have a history of unstable, abusive, or chaotic relationships, make it
difficult to resolve conflict, leave a person feeling overwhelmed and confused, and cause them to feel disappointed in their relationships. However, the right treatment can ease BPD symptoms, including splitting. It is important for a person to question their assessments of others, consider whether other explanations might be just as accurate, and
cultivate empathy for the behaviors of others. A psychotherapist can help a person manage or decrease splitting means seeing everything in black and white, without gray areas. Splitting can make relationships intense and unstable. Therapy
and medication can help identify triggers and improve BPD symptoms. BPD splitting is a characteristic of borderline personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions like narcissistic personality disorder (BPD) and a few other conditions are conditions as a few oth
event, or idea is either entirely good or bad without the possibility of grey areas. BPD splitting leads to exaggerated and polarized views of what is positive or negative. This tends to disrupt relationships as well as one's own sense of self. Treatment for BPD can help you to identify the triggers of BPD, with psychotherapy and/or medications used to
improve your condition. jeremyiswild / Getty Images BPD splitting is a characteristic of borderline personality disorder, a diagnosis based on specific criteria outlined in the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders" (DSM-5). It is a disorder, not a personality trait. Splitting can involve a rapid change in how you see a person or situation
It's considered a defense mechanism to protect from threatening parts of the external world as well as their own personality. For example, someone living with BPD might say that they "finally came to their senses" in rejecting a person or
devaluing them, an either-or that doesn't allow for complexity. Other signs of BPD splitting include: Habitually making snap judgments about people or situations and needing frequent reassurance
from idealized people, while punishing them with angry outbursts or silent treatment if they don't get what they wantDescribing things in absolutes ("they never do anything right," "they always do things to perfection") and using extreme words (angelic, evil, genius, moron) to describe peopleExpecting others to choose sides when a person or
situation is devalued, and shutting down or feeling attacked when others don't share their perceptions Splitting is an extreme behavior, interfering not only with relationships but with a person's sense of well-being. Splitting is an extreme behavior, interfering not only with relationships but with a person's sense of well-being. Splitting is an extreme behavior, interfering not only with relationships but with a person's sense of well-being.
ability to regulate their emotions, and a defense mechanism in which a person views people, ideas, or situations with the extremes of: Idealization, in which a person holds an exaggerated view of negative qualities Splitting is a normal behavior in younger children who are
not yet able to grasp how complex relationships or situations are. Instead, children may simply categorize things as being either "bad" or "good." Splitting is a defense mechanism that helps children to cope better. However, if childhood development is disrupted by something like emotional trauma, a person may hold onto this defense mechanism as
they grow up. As an adult, they will be unable to find a middle ground between idealization and devaluation. Splitting can also occur in people living with NPD. In addition to trauma, factors that lead to NPD can include: Co-occurring mental health conditionsRelationship problems with family or friendsGenetics and family history In some cases,
splitting also has been associated with psychosis and other personality disorders. Splitting is triggered by anything that causes a person with BPD to take an extreme emotional viewpoint. The triggers are similar to those seen with BPD and could be something that seems harmless or "innocent" but is enough to spur emotions that a person with BPD and could be something that seems harmless or "innocent" but is enough to spur emotions that a person with BPD and could be something that seems harmless or "innocent" but is enough to spur emotions that a person with BPD and could be something that seems harmless or "innocent" but is enough to spur emotions that a person with BPD and could be something that seems harmless or "innocent" but is enough to spur emotions that a person with BPD and could be something that seems harmless or "innocent" but is enough to spur emotions that a person with BPD and could be something that seems harmless or "innocent" but is enough to spur emotions that a person with BPD and could be something that seems harmless or "innocent" but is enough to spur emotions that a person with BPD and could be something that seems harmless or "innocent" but is enough to spur emotions that a person with BPD and could be something that seems harmless or "innocent" but is enough to spur emotions that a person with a pe
is not able to handle. BPD triggers can be different for everyone. Common triggers include: RejectionBetrayalAbandonmentThreats to self-conceptSevere anxiety Splitting is a way of avoiding, deflecting, or sidestepping feelings that often occur with BPD, such as poor self-image, lack of self-direction or goals, limited empathy for others, and impulsive
behavior. A relationship with someone living with BPD tends to be intense but unstable. Splitting can cause distress in relationships for people with BPD seeks constant attention or reassurance. The other partner may feel mistrust because of
with BPD can be more vulnerable to harm if they are unable to see warning signs of danger in a person that they believe is infallible because they've idealized. Some people have relationships that just last a few weeks or months, while other people living with BPD have relationships that last years or even decades (sometimes with cycles of breaking
up and getting back together). Communication strategies can help both partners with listening, empathy, validation of feelings, and exploring interests. There is no specific treatment for BPD splitting is addressed as part of a treatment plan for BPD that involves psychotherapy and sometimes medication. In severe cases, inpatient treatment
for care under a psychiatrist is needed. Types of psychotherapy that can help people with BPD splitting include: Dialectical behavior therapy focused on changing the thinking behind your behaviorsGroup therapy: Used to help people learn to interact
with others with empathy and gain awareness of their responses. Family and relational therapy also may be used. Transference-focused psychotherapy (TFP): Used to gain a clearer sense of self and better relationships with others by drugs)
 and mood stabilizers to help manage the condition symptoms of the condition. There is no specific drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration for BPD treatment, though studies suggest that 96% of people diagnosed are treated with medication. If you know someone with BPD, encourage them to seek help from a therapist to help manage
their feelings and emotions. If a person with BPD has thoughts of suicide, dial 9-8-8 and put them in touch with a counselor at the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. If they pose a genuine risk of harm to you or others, call 9-1-1. Defense mechanisms are psychological strategies that people may use to try and save themselves and avoid unpleasant
feelings such as uncertainty, fear, or shame. They're largely unconscious patterns that our brains develop to try and keep us safe. Since they can be limiting or even harmful, however, learning to recognize and challenge them in ourselves can be helpful. In this article, we'll discuss one defense mechanism in particular that's known as splitting. Ilona
Titova/EyeEmLearn about splitting and its impactWhat is the splitting defense mechanism. It refers to the tendency to "split" people, things, beliefs, or situations. It's the brain's way
of making sense of complex situations to decide where danger may lie so it can help us avoid that option. However, in many other situations, it can be an incredibly limiting and even damaging mindset. The reason splitting can be problematic is that so many things in life exist somewhere on the spectrum in between the two extremes of great and
terrible. Sorting everything into one of two buckets leaves no room for nuance. This approach may seem easier on the surface, since you never have to think too hard about how you feel about something or whether it should have a place in your life. However, there's a lot you can miss out on if you let a single negative quality or experience tip
something completely into the "bad" category. For instance, finding a romantic partner may be almost impossible for someone who operates completely from the mindset of splitting. They may reject all their dates for having normal human flaws and end up never entering a relationship with anyone. As you can imagine, people who rely heavily on the
splitting defense mechanism are likely to have a strong perfectionist mindset.iStock/PeopleImagesWho employs the splitting defense mechanism? This defense mechanism are likely to have a strong perfectionist mindset.iStock/PeopleImagesWho employs the splitting defense mechanism of it in adolescents and young adults. As children, we're often taught a simplified
worldview that may not expand to include more nuance and possibilities until we're older and have had a bit more life experience. Those who have experience certain forms of neglect or trauma in childhood may also rely more heavily on splitting. For example, someone who grew up with an inconsistent caregiver may have been unable to reconcile
their nurturing actions with the times they were unresponsive. This could potentially lead their brain to categorize the caregiver as "bad" or "to be avoided" because they were unresponsive. This could potentially lead their brain to categorize the caregiver as "bad" or "to be avoided" because they weren't meeting their needs. Without a specific effort to shift this mindset, the person may automatically characterize people in their adult life as either all good or all bad. If you are
experiencing trauma, support is available. Please see our Get Help Now page for more resources. Those diagnosed with narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) also have a strong tendency to split, classifying people as either winners or losers. To safeguard and maintain their self-esteem, they may see themselves as completely virtuous and admirable,
and those who don't hold the same beliefs or values as beneath them. This mechanism can be commonly seen in those with borderline personality disorder as well. They may vacillate between the extremes of idealizing someone one moment and devaluing them the next. Examples of the splitting defense mechanism Most of us are exposed to the
concept of splitting from a young age. It's rampant in fairy tales and cartoons where there is a stark divide between the all-good heroes and the all-bad villains. As we get older, we're exposed to it in other forms of media as well. In many romantic movies, for example, the protagonist becomes hopelessly infatuated with someone the instant they meet
and they go to great lengths to preserve the relationship without ever considering or addressing clear red flags. Other examples of splitting that you may commonly encounter in life include when... A political party portrays the opposing party as purely contemptible.
encouraged to view one parent as exemplary and the other as despicableWhile splitting is common, the reality is that everything and everyone possesses both good and bad qualities. Even the most detestable person can have some positive traits, and everyone possesses both good and bad qualities. Even the most detestable person can have some positive traits, and everyone possesses both good and bad qualities.
split people into extreme categories may not be reasonable or possible, noticing the tendency and then leaving space for a more nuanced view is typically the goal. Being able to acknowledge the layered complexities of people and situations will generally allow for more stable relationships and a richer life experience overall. How splitting can damage
relationships Being in a relationship with someone who sees the world completely in black and white rather than in shades of gray can be challenging. This person may unpredictably flip between thinking that their partner is perfect or awful, holding them to high standards and not allowing room for mistakes. They may be unable to accept or integrate
new information about the person that conflicts in any way with the image of and judgments about them that they've already formed in their mind. This can be exhausting for the other person, potentially creating feelings of never being good enough. A person with a splitting tendency may also apply this mindset to the actions of their partner. They
may see each one as either loving and supportive or as a direct attack, without acknowledging the complex other factors at play such as intentions, circumstances, history, etc. Sometimes, splitting tendencies in a relationship stem from a fear of abandonment. In this case, the person may be more attuned to negative traits or actions in their partner so
they can "prove" that their fears were justified and leave the relationship before they can be left. It's part of why the person prone to splitting may be negatively affected by this mechanism, too: The fear it was borne out of may prevent them from ever forming close, lasting bonds until they get it under control. Finally, splitting can have consequences
for the individual that can affect them in both their personal life and in their relationships. One study notes that this defense mechanism correlates with poor self-image stability, self-esteem, and even depression. Since these are negative mental health outcomes that can have far-reaching effects on multiple aspects of a person's life, learning to
temper one's inclination to split can be a worthwhile endeavor. Signs that you may be splitting one major sign that you may have splitting even yourself into two
extremes, rather than integrating all your characteristics to form a realistic, holistic view of yourself as a complete person. When it comes to relationships, identifying with the following traits or tendencies may indicate a habit of splitting: Experiencing intense mood swings and fluctuations in regards to how you feel about your partner or your
dynamicIdealizing a partner at the beginning of a relationship, and then condemning them as time goes on Creating a push/pull dynamic in relationships earching for perfection in a relationship and its impactWays to gain control over the
splitting defense mechanismSince splitting can damage your relationships and limit your own happiness and potential, working toward gaining control over it can bring about positive outcomes. The first step is to learn to recognize when you're employing this mechanism. Beginning a mindfulness practice of some kind may help you develop a stronger
awareness of your thoughts so you can notice when this tendency arises. Becoming aware of what triggers your instinct to split can also be useful. You might try keeping a journal of these instances and studying it for trends. Over time, you'll likely also need to learn to expand your worldview. Remind yourself that people are multi-faceted. When you're
tempted to judge someone, remember that they have hundreds or thousands of different traits and that it's unrealistic to imagine that all of them fit neatly into the "good" bucket or the "bad" one. It may help to start by trying to extend this grace and understanding to yourself, since people who are prone to splitting may hold themselves to as harsh a
standard as those around them. How therapy can help Seeking the support of a mental health professional can also be a powerful resource in this process. Since defense mechanisms are generally unconscious, you may not even realize you're splitting. A therapist can help bring these instances to your attention so you can work toward shifting this
thought pattern whenever it arises. Over time, they can assist you in seeing the world in a more nuanced, colorful way rather than in dreary black and white, which can benefit your happiness and well-being as well as your relationships. If you choose to connect with a therapist, deciding between in-person or virtual therapy usually comes down to
your own comfort level. If you prefer in-person sessions, you can seek out a provider in your local area. If you feel more at ease meeting with someone online from the comfort of your own home, you might consider an online therapy platform like BetterHelp. You'll fill out a brief questionnaire about your needs and preferences and will then be
matched with a licensed therapist accordingly. You can meet with them via phone, video call, and/or online chat to work through whatever challenges you may be facing. Since research suggests that virtual therapy offers similar benefits to in-person sessions, you have the freedom to choose the format that feels best for you because both are
effective. "Gwennie is a gem. She creates a safe space where I feel supported while navigating tough emotions. Her kindness, professionalism, and empathy make therapy easier. She helped me feel comfortable from the start, and her insights have made a huge difference in my life. I'm so grateful for her support and highly recommend her as a
therapist."— BetterHelp member's review of their therapistThe defense mechanism of splitting may be holding you back from living a richer, more colorful life. Learning to recognize when you may be employing this thought pattern is the first step toward getting it under control and broadening your perspective on life in a healthy way. Splitting is a
psychological phenomenon in which a person views themselves, others, or situations in extreme, black-and-white terms. For example, a person with borderline personality disorder (BPD) may idealize their therapist one day and then completely devalue them the next. This can also happen in relationships, where a person may see their partner as
either perfect or completely flawed. What is the mechanism of splitting? The mechanism of splitting involves categorizing experiences or people as all good or all bad, without recognizing the gray areas found in most situations. This is a defense mechanism that can save the ego by keeping positive and negative thoughts about the same object separate,
reducing conflict and anxiety. What is splitting according to Freud? According to Freud? According to Freud believed that this mechanism was a primitive defense, more commonly seen in the development stages of a child when dealing with complex
emotions toward their parents. Parents provide care and affection but also set limits, creating a complex mixture of emotions for the child. Whose concept is the defense mechanism was developed by Ronald Fairbairn but has roots in Freudian psychoanalysis. However, it was Anna
Freud who expanded on the idea, detailing how splitting defense mechanism? An example of a splitting defense mechanism can be seen in BPD. A person with this disorder may guickly idolize a romantic partner (seeing them as perfect), only to suddenly shift to
devaluing them at the first sign of disappointment, perceiving them as wholly negative without recognizing any redeeming qualities. What is the meaning of splitting? Splitting is a term defined in psychology as a defense mechanism that involves dividing the world into "all good" or "all bad" categories. It simplifies complex situations but also distorts
reality, as the same object or person cannot be viewed with nuance. Instead, the world is seen through an alternating lens of idealization and devaluation. Is splitting a trauma response, especially in individuals who have experienced childhood trauma. It serves as a coping strategy to manage overwhelming emotions
and anxiety related to past trauma. In regard to mental health services, treatment may help patients integrate these splitting in narcissism, splitting is a defense mechanism in which an individual may view themselves or others in extremes. A narcissist might perceive
themselves as superior and others as inferior, or they might swing between extreme self-love and self-hate. This can be a symptom of underlying personality disorders, as the narcissist interprets objects and people as either completely for or against them. What is staff splitting in mental health? Staff splitting occurs when a person with a personality
disorder, such as BPD, manipulates healthcare professionals or caregivers, causing them to take sides. This can create divisions within a team, as different people on the staff may be seen as either all good or all bad. As a result, staff splitting in trauma? S
trauma is a defense mechanism in which a trauma survivor categorically divides people or experiences into good or bad. They may use splitting as a way to manage the intense emotions that come from traumatic experiences and
relationships linked to their trauma. "There's another key aspect to this splitting: people with BPD also split themselves, often into victim or hero—or into someone capable or someone incompetent."—Paul T. Mason, Stop Walking on EggshellsWhat is splitting in BPD? Splitting in BPD?
with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). It refers to a cognitive distortion where a person views themselves, others, and situations through an extreme lens, categorizing the emotional turmoil characteristic of BPD. Individuals with this condition
often struggle to integrate different aspects of their experiences, leading to an unstable self-image and difficulties in relationships. The phenomenon of splitting can significantly influence interpersonal dynamics. Individuals with BPD may suddenly idealize someone they admire, perceiving them as flawless and supportive. However, this perception can
shift abruptly, resulting in devaluation when the individual perceives even minor faults or disappointments. For example, a friend who was once regarded as a source of unwavering support might suddenly be seen as completely untrustworthy due to a single perceived betrayal, leading to intense feelings of anger and sadness. This fluctuation in
perceptions can create substantial challenges in relationships, as loved ones may feel they are walking on eggshells, unsure of when they will be valued or devalued. Furthermore, the emotional instability inherent in splitting perpetuates a cycle of frustration and misunderstanding. Those with BPD might even express feelings of abandonment or
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betrayal when the perceived negativity surfaces, amplifying their emotional distress. Overall, splitting diminishes the ability to engage in healthy, balanced relationships, as individuals oscillate between extremes without the capacity to appreciate nuance. This mechanism underscores the necessity for therapeutic intervention that aims to address these cognitive distortions, fostering a more integrated and stable emotional experience. Characteristics of Splitting Behavior Splitting Behavior is a prevalent characteristic observed in individuals diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). It is often identified through rapid fluctuations in emotions and perceptions related to other people. These shifts can happen abruptly, leading individuals to oscillate between extreme admiration and profound disappointment regarding the same person. This behavior not only complicates personal relationships but also impacts social dynamics, as it creates an unstable and unpredictable environment. One significant observable sign of splitting is the

difficulty in maintaining stable relationships. Individuals with BPD may experience intense connections with others, often idealizing them and attributing positive qualities. However, this admiration can quickly transform into feelings of contempt and resentment when perceived flaws emerge. For instance, a person may initially regard a friend as supportive and loyal, only to later view them as unreliable and selfish, highlighting the duality of emotions common in splitting. Another common trait is the tendency to devalue others, which is intricately linked with idealization. In extreme forms, this behavior manifests in strong reactions to perceived abandonment or criticism. A person experiencing splitting may respond to constructive feedback with rage or withdrawal, causing further strain in interpersonal relationships. Real-life examples illustrate this phenomenon; for instance, a partner might shower their significant other with affection, only to react with hostility if they feel neglected or dismissed, thus perpetuating a cycle of emotional turmoil. Individuals exhibiting splitting often struggle to navigate their emotions complicates not just romantic relationships but friendships and family dynamics as well, resulting in a series of tumultuous interactions. Recognizing these characteristics can be vital for fostering empathy and understanding for those living with BPD and their experiences of splitting behavior. Causes of Splitting Splitt stems from an individual's attempts to cope with deeply rooted emotional distress and instability. Understanding the causes of splitting is essential for grasping its role as a symptom indicative of more significant emotional regulation. Research has indicated that dysregulation of neurotransmitters, particularly serotonin and dopamine, can lead to mood swings and impulsive behavior, which are prevalent in BPD. These neurochemical imbalances may predispose individuals to perceive and respond to situations in black-and-white terms, a characteristic trait of splitting. Psychologically, splitting often arises from attachment issues developed during the formative years. Early experiences of inconsistent caregiving can lead to difficulties in establishing secure attachments, which consequently foster an unstable self-image and fear of abandonment. As individuals grapple with feelings of insecurity, they may resort to splitting as a defense mechanism, idealizing some relationships while devaluing others, reflecting their internal chaos and emotional turmoil. Environmental factors, particularly childhood trauma, significantly contribute to the development of splitting in BPD. Witnessing or experiencing abuse, neglect, or significant losses can shape an individual's coping strategies. Such traumatic experiences often engrain a sense of helplessness and contribute to a distorted perception of relationships, prompting individuals to categorize people and situations in extreme terms as either wholly good or wholly bad. A deeper understanding of these factors provides valuable insights into the mechanisms behind splitting in BPD, underscoring the importance of addressing underlying emotional struggles through therapeutic intervention and support. Treatment Options for Splitting Treatment for individuals experiencing splitting due to Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) encompasses various therapeutic approaches tailored to each person's unique needs. One of the most widely recognized methods is Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), which places significant emphasis on emotional regulation, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness. DBT helps patients understand their emotions and thoughts more clearly, allowing them to lessen the impact of splitting, a common symptom characterized by extreme black-and-white thinking. Through skills training and individual therapy sessions, DBT fosters a balanced perspective, teaching patients how to navigate relationships and manage intense emotions effectively. Another valuable therapeutic approach is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). This method focuses on identifying and changing unhelpful thought patterns and behaviors that contribute to emotional distress and splitting episodes. By addressing cognitive distortions, patients can cultivate healthier thought processes, thus promoting emotional stability and resilience. CBT equips individuals with practical tools to challenge irrational beliefs and replace them with more nuanced and constructive perspectives, thereby reducing instances of splitting. In some cases, medications are approved solely for BPD, antidepressants, mood stabilizers, and antipsychotic medications can help alleviate certain symptoms. This pharmacological approach, when paired with therapy, offers a comprehensive strategy, potentially enhancing the overall effectiveness of treatment. Furthermore, a personalized treatment plan, developed collaboratively by the individual and their healthcare providers, ensures that the therapy and medications selected align with the person's symptoms, lifestyle, and preferences. Lastly, the support systems surrounding individuals with BPD are essential in facilitating their treatment journey. Family and friends can provide encouragement, understanding, and stability, creating an environment conducive to recovery and growth. Engaging in support groups can also offer validation and shared experiences, further enhancing the individual's capacity to manage their condition and develop effective coping strategies.

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