

Histrionic Personality Disorder

After watching the Amber Heard and Johnny Depp trial and listening to the psychologist's testimony in court, saying that Heard had Histrionic Personality Disorder, I decided to research the topic and report my findings in this article. The viral posts and the negative press increased public awareness and brought to the forefront an illness that many knew very little or nothing about.

My research found that HPD is relatively rare compared to other personality disorders. The researchers have found that only 2 and 3 percent of the general population is diagnosed with this disorder, and females are most affected.

Histrionic personality disorder was first identified in 1968 and affects more than 200,000 people a year according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Medical Disorder. The cause of histrionic personality disorder is not known. However, the child of a parent with the disorder might simply be repeating learned behavior. If signs of this personality disorder are present, the doctor will begin an evaluation by performing a complete medical and psychiatric history. Conversely, if the doctor finds no physical reason for the symptoms, they might refer the person to a psychiatrist or other licensed behavioral health professional. Environmental factors that might be involved include a lack of criticism or punishment as a child, positive reinforcement that is given only when a child completes certain approved behaviors and unpredictable attention given to a child by their parents, all leading to confusion about what types of behavior earn parental approval. HPD usually develops in relation to individual temperament and psychological styles and ways people learn to cope with stress.

In general, people with histrionic personality disorder do not believe they need therapy. They also tend to exaggerate their feelings and to dislike routine, which makes following a treatment plan difficult.

Psychotherapy is generally the treatment of choice for Histrionic Personality Disorder. The goal of treatment is to help the individual uncover the motivations and fears associated with their thoughts and behavior and to help the person learn to relate to others in a more positive way. Many people with this disorder can function well socially and at work. Those with severe cases, however, might experience significant problems in their daily lives.

Although prevention of Histrionic Personality might not be possible, treatment can allow a person who is prone to this disorder to learn a more productive way of dealing with this situation.

"Histrionic Personality Disorder". "Ronald G Rossetti", MBA, Article # 32, Volume 2, Series #2, International Alliance for Mental Health, (2023)