PERSONALITY DISORDER
CLUSTER C

Personality Disorder is . . .

a pattern of behaviours, thoughts, and feelings that causes distress to the person experiencing them and to the people in their lives. It is true that no one person is the same, as we all have distinct personality traits that make us who we are. However, personality traits become a disorder when they are extreme, maladaptive, inflexible and persist over time that leads to significant impairment in carrying out daily activities. There are 10 distinct types of personality disorder that are grouped into 3 clusters: A, B and C.[1]

Cluster C

This cluster is characterized by anxious and fearful behaviours. Includes the *Avoidant*, *Dependent,* and *Obsessive-Compulsive* personality disorders.

Available Treatment[2]

Every case of personality disorder is unique and treatment takes time, but options are available that may be helpful in reducing symptoms and improving the client's quality of life.

Treatment Options Overview:

Medication
There is no single medication that specifically treats personality disorder. However, medication may still be prescribed to help with symptoms like anxiety/depression (antidepressants) and psychotic episodes (antipsychotics).

Psychotherapy
Allows client to learn coping skills and regulate emotions. Evidence supports that the most effective psychotherapeutic approaches are Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Cognitive Analytical Therapy (CAT) and Mentalization Based Therapy (MBT).

Self Help / Care
Engaging in support groups, self care groups, and surrounding yourself with those who understand and are going through similar recovery processes is encouraged. A combination of the various treatment options may be beneficial.

Causes[3]

It is not clear as to what causes personality disorders, but onset appears to be influenced by a combination of factors. For example, an individual's biological makeup (genes), early childhood experiences and environmental factors can all contribute.

Symptoms[1]

A person may experience many signs / symptoms of more than one type of personality disorder. But specific to cluster C, they include:

Avoidant: Oversensitive to criticism, extreme shyness and feels inadequate. Avoid social interactions due to fear of rejection.

Dependent: Displays extreme need to be taken care of and submits to allow others to take lead in their lives. Clings to others and feels uncomfortable / helpless when alone.

Obsessive-Compulsive: Anxious when things are unorganized, preoccupied with orderliness and perfectionism. Believing that actions are justified, wanting to be in control and being inflexible.

Diagnosis[1]

Proper diagnosis requires the health professional to rule out the possibility of the presented symptoms occurring from other medical conditions or substance abuse. After eliminating such possibilities, physicians can use the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as a guideline and the client participates in an 'assessment' where they are asked questions about their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Family history may also be reviewed.

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1 Mayo Clinic. (2016, September 23). Personality disorders. Retrieved from https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/personality-disorders/symptoms-causes/syc-20354463
2 Rethink Mental Illness. (2016, October). Personality Disorders - Treatments. Retrieved from https://www.rethink.org/diagnosis-treatment/conditions/personality-disorders/treatments
3 Rethink Mental Illness. (2016, October). Personality Disorders - Causes. Retrieved from https://www.rethink.org/diagnosis-treatment/conditions/personality-disorders/causes