

## How to Tell Someone They Have Borderline Personality Disorder

### **Normalize. Emphasize that it's common and treatable:**

“The problems you’ve told me about bring to mind the diagnosis of borderline personality disorder (BPD). It’s a common and potentially disabling disorder, but there are treatments that work for it, and it generally gets better over time.”

### **Connect the DSM-5 symptoms to problems in their life:**

“People with BPD usually get better when they understand how their symptoms get triggered in relationships. One of those symptoms is interpersonal hypersensitivity, and it reminds me of what you’ve been going through. For example, when your emotions get very intense, I get the sense that you don’t know what to do with them. When you share them with others, they react in ways that make you feel rejected, so much so that you become furious with the person who rejected you.”

*Tables adapted from Choi-Kain LW and Gunderson JG, Applications of Good Psychiatric Management for Borderline Personality Disorders: A Practical Guide (APA, 2019).*

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