Is OCD a Personality Disorder?

Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCPD) is fairly common in Western cultures. If we think about it, our contemporary society is built on competition and high standards, which makes it a perfect environment for people who possess high self-control, attention to detail, and perseverance.

However, these characteristics can also become so exacerbated that they may grow to be dysfunctional, causing more harm than good. As you might be able to guess by now, the real issue lies in our irrational preoccupations.

OCD vs OCPD

Since both conditions have something to do with obsessions and compulsions, it's difficult to draw a firm line between OCD and OCPD. However, it is important to understand that OCD is an anxiety disorder, which is not as interwoven into the individual's everyday life, as is OCPD, which is a personality disorder. The origin of personality disorders is currently unknown. Some argue that it's a mix of genetic predispositions and environmental factors, such as trauma, or abuse.

Perception of Preoccupations

People learn to live with their OCD and even use it to their advantage. For instance, a person who's obsessed with arranging objects in alphabetical order, can easily work as a librarian, because this job would provide that person with the opportunity to arrange books. In that particular context, deriving pleasure from organizing would be perfectly fine, and even desirable. However, an individual with OCD would still realize that their behavior is unconventional, would feel some anxiety about it, and would waste time on their preoccupations.

Is It Dysfunctional?

The main difference between the two disorders, is that people with OCD understand the dysfunction of their obsessions and compulsions, even when they can be converted into something useful. On the other hand, those struggling with OCPD believe preoccupations and rigidity to be normal and desirable, and they might even believe that others should conform to the same standards.

How to Identify OCPD

OCD and OCPD may often overlap and even coexist, within the same individual. That is why their symptoms may often be similar and sometimes difficult to distinguish between. A good criterion for the commonly accepted symptoms of a mental health disorder is the "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition: DSM-5".

Let's take a look at some of the symptoms described in DSM-V. In order to be considered valid, each symptom must be present for at least 6 months.

1.
    Unrealistically high and inflexible standards that interfere with one's tasks. For instance, you are unable to carry out a work-related project because of your rigid set of standards and moralistic attitudes.

2.
    You are so preoccupied with lists, plans, organizers, details and rules, that you forget the main point of the activity.

3.
    When it comes to ehtics and morality, most people consider you scrupulous, inflexible and hyperconscientious; they might also view you as stubborn and uncompromising.

4.
    You are utterly dedicated to work and productivity, up until the point where you put aside friends, family, vacations and leisure activities.

5.
    You're unable to throw away objects, even when they've seized to be useful in any way.

6.
    Money is something of paramount importance that must be ketp for emergencies. You

only spend on necesities like food, water, bills, transportation, etc.

7.
You're not a team player and you refuse to delegate tasks. You colaborate with others but only if they agree to follow your careful instructions.

What Can You Do?

Since OCPD is more severe than OCD, you cannot deal with this issue all by yourself. Usually, the best course of action whould be to consult a mental health professional.

We know that there's a certain stigma attached to the idea of visiting a psychologist, but keep in mind that your mental health is just as important as your physical health and the two inevitabl influence each other.

Source URL: https://explorable.com/e/is-ocd-a-personality-disorder?gid=21785