

RECONCEPTUALIZING BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER: DEVELOPING A NEW MEASURE OF STIGMA RESISTANCE

INTRODUCTION

BORDERLINE PERSONALITY DISORDER (BPD)



- Dysfunction in relationships
- Emotional dysregulation
- Underdeveloped defense mechanisms (e.g., splitting)
- Unstable sense of self
- + + +

BPD IS ONE OF THE MOST HIGHLY STIGMATIZED PSYCHIATRIC DIAGNOSES (Hazell et al., 2022)

STIGMA RESISTANCE STRATEGIES (SRS)



SRSs are ways of relating to one's diagnosis that aim to buffer the effects of public stigma.

FOR EXAMPLE:



CHALLENGING (Thoits, 2011)

Engaging in education or activism to reduce the stigma surrounding one's disorder. Tends to correlate positively with well-being.



CONCEALMENT (Thoits, 2011)

Hiding one's diagnosis or withdrawing from social circles to avoid others discovering it. Tends to correlate negatively with well-being.

RECONCEPTUALIZING A NOVEL FORM OF STIGMA RESISTANCE?



When people diagnosed with BPD choose to understand their mental health in a non-medicalized way and see BPD as a stigmatizing diagnosis that does more harm than good.

Previous research has not considered this strategy. We wanted to know:

IS RECONCEPTUALIZING A STIGMA RESISTANCE STRATEGY THAT POSITIVELY RELATES TO WELL-BEING?

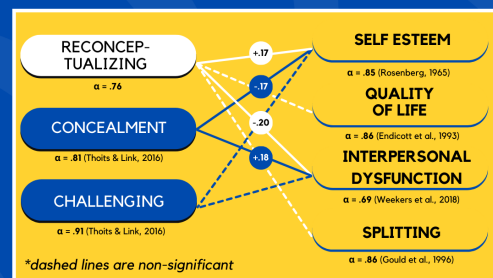
RESULTS

Stigma Resistance - Reconceptualizing

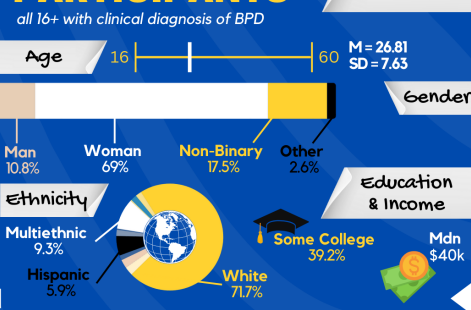
1. (R) I feel that my psychological experience is represented well by the term 'BPD.'
2. (R) I think personalities can be disordered.
3. (R) The current diagnostic model captures the complexity of what we call mental illness.
4. I have sought out people who have alternative perspectives on BPD.
5. I have considered alternative models of mental illness.
6. There are less harmful ways of understanding BPD.
7. I prefer to describe my psychological struggles with terms other than BPD.
8. (R) I think that the term BPD is the best way to describe my experience.
9. I see my mental health as inherently connected to my physical well-being.[‡]

[‡]dropped due to negative correlation

SPLIT-HALF CORRELATION: $rh = .86$
CRONBACH'S ALPHA: $\alpha = .76$



PARTICIPANTS



DISCUSSION

The reconceptualizing measure we developed showed **good reliability** on two tests of internal consistency. This suggests it is promising and warrants further assessment in the future.

Four correlations supported our hypotheses:

1. Reconceptualizing positively correlated with self-esteem and negatively correlated with interpersonal dysfunction.
2. Concealment negatively correlated with self-esteem and positively correlated with interpersonal dysfunction.

Challenging had no significant correlations with either measure, which was unexpected.

METHODOLOGY

MEASURE DEVELOPMENT

1. ITEMS GENERATED BY AUTHORS
2. INFORMAL PEER REVIEW
3. PILOT STUDY FEEDBACK (N = 14)
4. RELIABILITY TESTING FOLLOWING FULL STUDY

CORRELATIONAL STUDY



ONLINE RECRUITMENT ANONYMOUS, ONLINE SURVEY

CONCLUSION

Reconceptualizing is likely a distinct stigma resistance strategy. It has a positive relationship with at least two measures of well-being, while concealment does not. Our measure requires further development.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS



Is our measure valid?



What mediates stigma resistance and well-being?



What is the directionality of effect?

OBJECTIVES

1. To **develop** and assess a measure of reconceptualizing.
2. To **assess** the relationship of reconceptualizing to various measures of well-being.
3. To **compare** reconceptualizing to other stigma resistance strategies in the context of well-being.

RELATED LITERATURE

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OPERATIONALIZING 'WELL-BEING'



SELF ESTEEM

QUALITY OF LIFE



INTERPERSONAL DYSFUNCTION

SPLITTING