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## AVOIDANT PERSONALITY DISORDER (AVPD)



AVPD is the feeling of extreme social inhibition, social inadequacy, hypersensitivity to criticism and rejection. They show social awkwardness. People mistake it as shyness and treat it as unimportant and avoid seeking help. They fail to form relationships as they fear rejection from others. They think they are inferior to others and suffer from low self-esteem and self-isolation. They are afraid to speak up for fear of saying the wrong thing, they may hide their faces, avoid eye contact, blushing or stammering, or no voice, just whispering sound. They constantly seek approval from others. They are afraid of sharing personal information or their feeling with anyone. They suffer from a deflated self-esteem. AVPD is seen in teenagers. AVPD should exhibit a minimum of four or more symptoms as follows:

- 1) Avoids school, social or career activities that involve significant interpersonal contact because of fears of criticism, disapproval, or rejection.
- 2) Reluctant to involve or interacted with people unless they are certain of being liked.
- 3) Not comfortable in forming intimate relationships because of the fear of being shamed or ridiculed.
- 4) Preoccupied with the thoughts of being criticised or rejected.
- 5) Avoid forming new interpersonal relationships because of feelings of inadequacy.
- 6) Self-defeating beliefs of being socially inept, personally unappealing, or feeling of inferiority.
- 7) Extremely reluctant to engage in any new activities, take risks and avoid participating in events because of the feeling of personal inadequacy or possible embarrassment.
- 8) Tendency to hide behind other people to avoid attention by others as they are hypersensitive to be negatively evaluated by people.

### The Causes of AVPD:

*Can be genetic, environmental, social, psychological or familial. Exposed to degradation and humiliation, uncared, neglected or rejected childhood, controlling or authoritarian parents, emotional abuse, lack of affection or nurturing by a parent or caregiver, over criticism and over demand to be liked or approved by others, emotional vacuum during childhood.*

### The Complexity of AVPD:

*AVPD belongs to the cluster C type personality disorders. A person with AVPD can experience fear, anxiety, stress, panic attacks, hopelessness, nervousness, self-sabotage and shame. The complexity increases when coupled with other mental conditions like depression, borderline personality disorder, dependent personality disorder or social phobia.*

### CAN SELF HANDLE IT?

You can try handling it by taking ownership of your life. Start to make decisions, learn life skills and social skills. Stop overthinking, do solution-focused thinking. Integrate well with groups, apply logical thinking over emotional thinking.

### WHEN TO SEEK HELP?

AVPD can be identified in late teenage or early adulthood. When self-handling or other influential person's interventions are ineffective, you should seek professional help without any further delay. Always choose licenced and experienced practitioners for your mental health management.

### WHAT IS THE DANGER?

The best-suited therapy for AVPD is talk therapy with an eclectic approach. Cognitive behaviour therapy, social and life skills-based mental hardiness building therapies and coaching found to be helpful. If not treated can lead to phobias, self-isolation, substance abuse, depression, anxiety disorders.



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