

Andromeda

Andromeda is a peer support group for carers of people with personality disorder to come and have a chat. Currently, the group is being run over a virtual platform. It meets monthly from 5.30pm to 7pm, on the third Wednesday of each month. To access the group please contact us by email or phone and we will provide you with the log in details. What our carers say about Andromeda:

“This group is helpful as you can talk freely over tea and biscuits about your experience as a carer with the likelihood that what you say will resonate with someone. Often people who aren’t carers struggle to grasp the gravity of our role and the impact it has on day-to-day life, so it can be really validating to be supported by people who recognise your struggles and successes. Being able to talk is invaluable at particularly difficult times, and it provides a vital release mechanism for pent-up emotion. It can be empowering when your experience translates into advice for another carer. Attending the carers group is a really positive and affirming experience and has allowed me to form meaningful friendships with people I wouldn’t have otherwise met”.

Support from Carers Leeds

Carers Leeds can provide one-to-one support, information about carers’ groups, information about carers’ education, and information about benefits.

For more information visit www.carersleeds.org.uk, email info@carersleeds.org.uk or telephone the advice line on **0113 3804300**.

Contact us

For more information, including short films about our services, please visit our website: www.leedsandyorkpft.nhs.uk/our-services/personality-disorder-managed-clinical-network

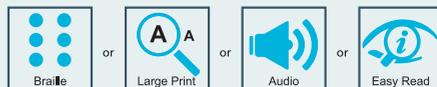
Contact our Carers Lead, Jannine Dowling

Tel: **0113 8557950** or
Email: PDCarers.lypft@nhs.net

Leaflet produced by carers and staff at PDCMN.
Cover image by Declan Bell.

Would you like this information in an alternative format?

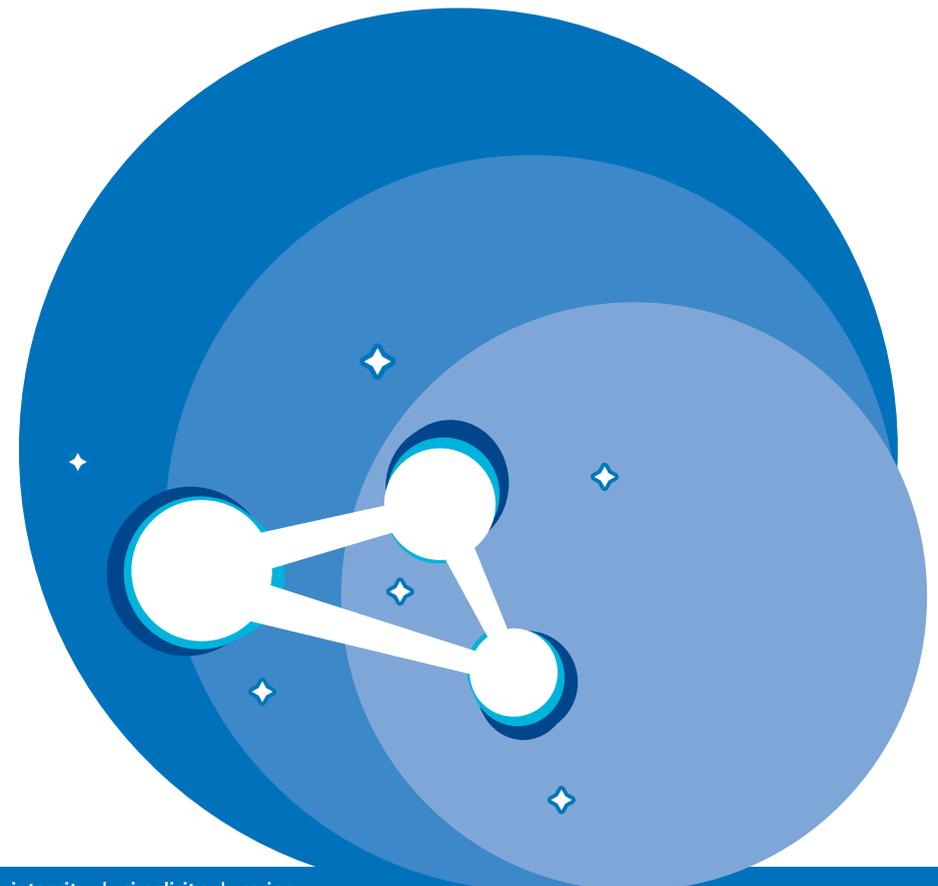
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Leeds Personality Disorder Clinical Managed Network

Information for family, friends, supporters and carers



What is personality disorder?

'Personality disorder' is a term used to describe longstanding difficulties in how an individual thinks and feels about themselves and others, and consequently how they behave in relation to other people.

We all have parts of our personalities that cause us problems in some situations. For example, someone who generally copes well might be anxious when meeting someone new. For someone's personality difficulties to be considered a 'disorder', those difficulties must be:

- **Problematic:** The difficulties severely limit the person in their life, or are a source of unhappiness to that person or to others
- **Persistent:** The difficulties are longstanding and relatively stable
- **Pervasive:** The difficulties lead to problems in different aspects of someone's life, such as relationships, employment, or their sense of self

Meeting the Challenge,
Making a Difference (2014)

Who is a carer? Family, friends and supporters

A carer is someone who provides help and (unpaid) support to a family member, friend or neighbour with mental health difficulties or learning disabilities, who would otherwise not be able to manage.

However, you may not think of yourself as a carer. You may feel as though you are just getting on with life and part of that is supporting someone in your family, your partner or a friend through their tough times.

How might supporting someone with personality disorder make you feel?

Being a carer can be physically and emotionally demanding. Carers describe often feeling worried, anxious or sad. It can be difficult to see someone you care about in distress, especially if you feel uncertain about how best to help or support them. Other people don't always understand your experiences of caring and this might lead to you becoming isolated. It might be difficult to find time for yourself and you may get tired or unwell.

You might find this leaflet helpful: www.england.nhs.uk/publication/a-practical-guide-to-healthy-caring/

Looking after yourself

It is important that you look after yourself. Here are some ideas from other carers:

A word cloud with the central text 'In the moment...' in large blue font. Surrounding it are smaller phrases in various shades of blue and green, including: 'avoid reasoning', 'complete some housework', 'make time for yourself', 'go to a friend's house', 'try not to show your shock', 'give each other space', 'go for a walk', 'grab a brew', 'phone someone', 'have a craft afternoon', and 'go for a walk'.

A word cloud with the central text 'In calmer times...' in large green font. Surrounding it are smaller phrases in various shades of green and blue, including: 'be consistent', 'talk to people in similar situations', 'seek support from healthcare professionals', 'create and maintain boundaries together', 'understand that this is something to manage, not to fix', 'acknowledge your own feelings', 'join a carer's group - you are not alone', and 'take up a hobby'.

Support available for people with personality disorder

There are a range of services that offer support for the difficulties experienced by people with personality disorder; see the Mindwell website for more information: www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk. Leeds PDMCN provides specialist personality disorder services including:

- **Care Coordination:** individual case management for up to 100 weeks
- **DBT Skills Groups:** a 14 month structured programme of skills training to help people who frequently use self-harm or life-threatening behaviours to manage distress
- **Journey:** a 12 week group programme which aims to improve health and wellbeing through balanced activity

There is no need for someone to have a formal diagnosis of personality disorder for you or for them to access our services.

What help is available for carers?

Cygnus

Cygnus is a six-week course for carers to learn more about personality disorder, ways of offering support and how to look after yourself. There are both daytime and evening groups, that are currently being run online, throughout the year. Here's what our carers say about Cygnus:

"I didn't really understand much about personality disorders before going to Cygnus, but I've learnt so much and been given a strong foundation to grow the relationship I have with my partner. For once, I could talk to people who got what I was saying and didn't just tell me to walk away."