

## BPD Spectrum Worksheet

### NDL & BPD Session Guidance

Today we're mapping Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) features compassionately and practically. We'll identify where difficulties cluster, prioritise the toughest areas, and design small skills-based experiments to try between sessions. If your experience differs at **work vs. home**, complete **two profiles** to capture transferable strengths.

- **Validation first:** your emotions make sense in context — skills reduce suffering, not invalidate pain.
- **Prioritise:** we'll focus on the lowest-scoring domains, not everything at once.
- **Skills frame:** DBT-informed (mindfulness, emotion regulation, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness).
- **Safety:** if self-harm/suicidal urges are present, we'll co-create a safety plan.

### Step 1: Concise Psychoeducation

BPD can look like a “high-gain” emotional system: feelings rise fast, peak higher, and take longer to settle. Contributors may include temperament, developmental experiences, trauma, attachment, and nervous-system reactivity.

Common co-occurrences: ADHD/Autism, PMDD, OCD, anxiety, depression, trauma. Skills training helps regulate the nervous system, strengthen identity, and build stable, values-based relationships.

- Core themes: emotion intensity, rejection/abandonment sensitivity, identity instability, impulsivity/risk behaviours.
- Therapy focus: increase choice under strong emotion, reduce harmful coping, and build a life that feels worth living.

## Step 2: McLean Screening Instrument for BPD (MSI-BPD)

**Note:** The MSI-BPD is a **10-item Yes/No** screening tool owned by McLean Hospital/partners.

**Client instruction:** “Please answer **Yes/No** for each statement as it generally applies to you.”

| Item # | MSI-BPD statement (insert licensed text)    | Yes                      | No                       |
|--------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1      | Frantic efforts to avoid abandonment        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2      | Unstable or intense close relationships     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3      | Unstable self-image / identity disturbance  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4      | Impulsivity in risky or self-damaging areas | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5      | Recurrent suicidal thoughts/behaviours      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6      | Non-suicidal self-injury (self-harm)        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7      | Rapid mood shifts / affective instability   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8      | Chronic feelings of emptiness               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9      | Intense or hard-to-control anger            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10     | Stress-related paranoia or dissociation     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Scoring:** 1 point for each “Yes” | **Total:** \_\_\_\_ / 10

**Interpretation (clinical guidance only):** Higher totals indicate greater likelihood of meeting BPD criteria. A **commonly used research cut-off** is  $\geq 7$  endorsements. It’s a **screen**, not a diagnosis—interpret with a clinical interview, risk assessment, differential dx, and cultural context.

## Step 3: BPD Profile Domains (rate each 0–10)

**Guide:** 0 = no difficulty; 10 = severe/problematic most days. If work vs. home differs, complete both.

| Domain                                                             | Work (0–10) | Home (0–10) | Notes / Examples |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| Emotion intensity & rapid shifts (affective instability)           |             |             |                  |
| Abandonment sensitivity / fear of rejection                        |             |             |                  |
| Relationships: idealisation ? devaluation; conflict/rupture/repair |             |             |                  |
| Identity disturbance / sense of self (values, roles, goals)        |             |             |                  |
| Impulsivity (spending, sex, substances, food, risky acts)          |             |             |                  |
| Self-harm urges / suicidal thoughts or behaviours                  |             |             |                  |

|                                                          |  |  |  |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Chronic emptiness / boredom / meaning                    |  |  |  |
| Anger: frequency, intensity, control, recovery time      |  |  |  |
| Dissociation / 'numbness' / paranoia under stress        |  |  |  |
| Shame / self-criticism / perfectionism & people-pleasing |  |  |  |
| Boundaries (setting, keeping, respecting)                |  |  |  |
| Functioning impact (work/school/parenting/ADLs)          |  |  |  |
| Emotion intensity & rapid shifts (affective instability) |  |  |  |

## Step 4: Brief Scenario Examples (for discussion)

- **Emotion shifts:** A short text delay → spike from calm → panic/anger in minutes.
- **Abandonment:** Neutral feedback feels like “I’ll be fired” → urge to quit.
- **Relationships:** One disagreement flips view of partner to “doesn’t care about me.”
- **Identity:** Values/goals feel unclear; strong pull to mirror others.
- **Impulsivity:** After conflict, urges to binge/spend/message repeatedly.
- **Self-harm urges:** Intense shame → thoughts of hurting self to relieve pressure.
- **Emptiness:** Even when things go well, life feels flat; hard to start purposeful actions.
- **Anger:** 0→100 fast; long cool-down.
- **Dissociation:** Stress → feeling unreal/detached; thinking gets fuzzy.
- **Shame/people-pleasing:** Over-apologising; needs go unsaid; resentment builds then explodes.
- **Boundaries:** Say yes to avoid conflict → feel trapped → rigid cut-offs.

## Step 5: Client Reflection Prompts

1. Which three domains scored highest? Why these now?
2. Where do **work** and **home** differ? Any transferable strengths?
3. What triggers show up most (rejection, shame, boredom, stress, hormones)? Patterns over week/cycle?
4. What helps emotions settle faster? What pulls you back into loops?
5. What are **small, doable steps** toward “a life worth living” this month?

## Step 6: Menus of Supports (choose 1–2 to trial)

**Aim:** tiny, repeatable steps; evaluate after **2–4 weeks**.

- **Mindfulness & regulation:** Wise Mind 3-breath check-in (Observe–Describe–Participate).
- **Rapid downshift (TIP):** ice/temperature shift, paced breathing, brief intense movement.
- **PLEASE skills:** sleep, nutrition, movement, meds/health, substance moderation.
- **Opposite Action:** approach when urge is to avoid (when emotion isn't fully facts-based).
- **STOP skill:** Stop–Take step back–Observe–Proceed mindfully (use a phone “pause card”).
- **Crisis survival box:** self-soothe (5 senses), grounding, sensory aids (earplugs/weighted blanket).
- **Urge surfing:** rate urge 0–10, ride 10–20 mins, track drop curve.
- **Check the Facts:** story → facts → alternative views → one action aligned with values.
- **Interpersonal:** DEAR MAN + GIVE + FAST; rehearse and send one message.
- **Boundaries:** pre-decide “what I do / don’t”; one-line scripts.
- **Meaning:** schedule 2 small value-aligned activities/week (connection, creativity, nature, service).

## Step 7: Safety Plan (collaborative)

Differentiate **urges** from **intent**.

Plan steps **before** you need them; keep a copy on your phone.

- Early warning signs I notice: \_\_\_\_\_
- Things that help quickly (skills/people/places): \_\_\_\_\_
- People I can contact / supports: \_\_\_\_\_
- Steps I will take if risk increases: \_\_\_\_\_
- Remove/secure means; reduce alcohol/substances; follow my crisis plan.
- If acute risk: contact emergency services, local crisis team, or attend A&E.

## Step 8: Prioritising Targets

Circle your three highest domains. Choose **ONE** primary target for the next fortnight.

- Primary target domain: \_\_\_\_\_ (Why this one?)
- Secondary target domain: \_\_\_\_\_
- Third target domain: \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 9: Micro-Experiments (2–4 weeks)

1. When I notice \_\_\_\_\_ (trigger), I will use \_\_\_\_\_ (skill) for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes; I'll track emotion/urge 0-10.
2. I will practise one **DEAR MAN** conversation on \_\_\_\_\_ and review the outcome next day.
3. I will schedule two **value-aligned actions** per week (\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_) and log mood before/after.

## Step 10: Review Plan

- Review date (after 2–4 weeks): \_\_\_\_\_
- What worked? What didn't? Any surprises/learning?
- Update targets and next steps.

## Notes