

Attentional Bias and Emotional Regulation in Individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder.

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Introduction

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is a complex and chronic mental health condition characterized by intense emotional instability, impulsivity, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Among the cognitive-affective mechanisms associated with BPD [1, 2, 3, 4, 5], **attentional bias** and **emotional regulation deficits** play crucial roles in shaping the behaviors and experiences of affected individuals [6, 7, 8].

Attentional bias refers to the tendency to focus more on emotionally charged or negative stimuli. Individuals with BPD are particularly prone to attentional biases toward perceived rejection, anger, or social threats. This heightened sensitivity may cause them to interpret neutral or ambiguous social cues as hostile, contributing to interpersonal conflict and emotional distress.

Simultaneously, emotional regulation—the ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences adaptively—is often impaired in BPD. These individuals may struggle to soothe themselves, delay reactions, or reframe negative thoughts, leading to emotional outbursts, impulsive behavior, and self-harming tendencies.

Recent neuroimaging and behavioral studies suggest that these attentional and regulatory deficits are interconnected. Hyperactivity in the amygdala and reduced prefrontal control may underlie both heightened emotional reactivity and difficulties in diverting attention away from distressing stimuli [9, 10].

Conclusion

Attentional bias and impaired emotional regulation are central to the symptomatology of BPD. Therapeutic interventions like Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) and mindfulness-based treatments can help reduce maladaptive attentional focus and enhance emotional regulation skills, leading to improved emotional and relational stability. Continued research into these mechanisms offers promise for more targeted and effective treatment strategies for individuals with BPD.

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