



## Navigating the Complexities of BPD in Young People

**Project Echo**  
**11<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

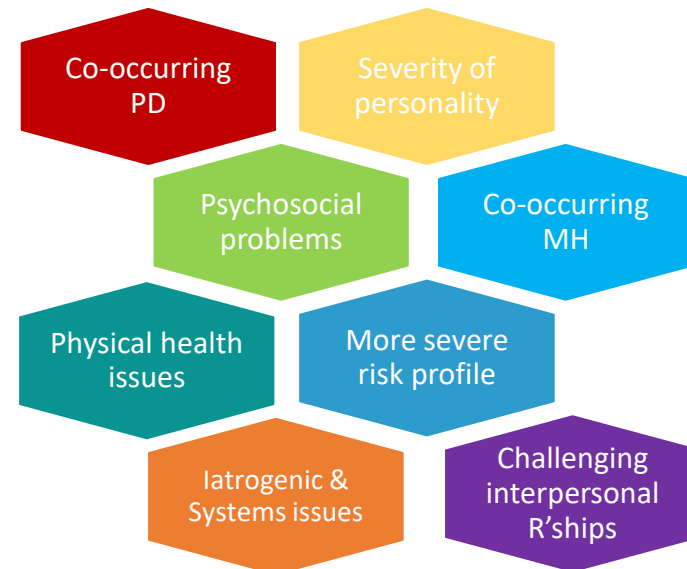
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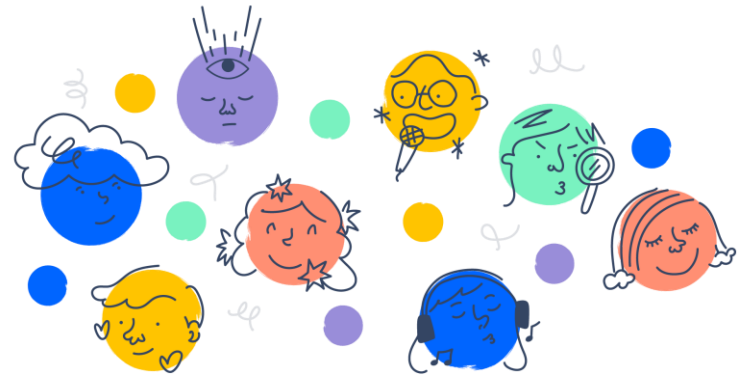
# Objectives

- Borderline Personality Disorder in Young People (YP)
- Biopsychosocial model
- Contributors to complexity and risk
- Influences of risk
- Working with risk
- Therapeutic work
- Systemic challenges
- Recommendations

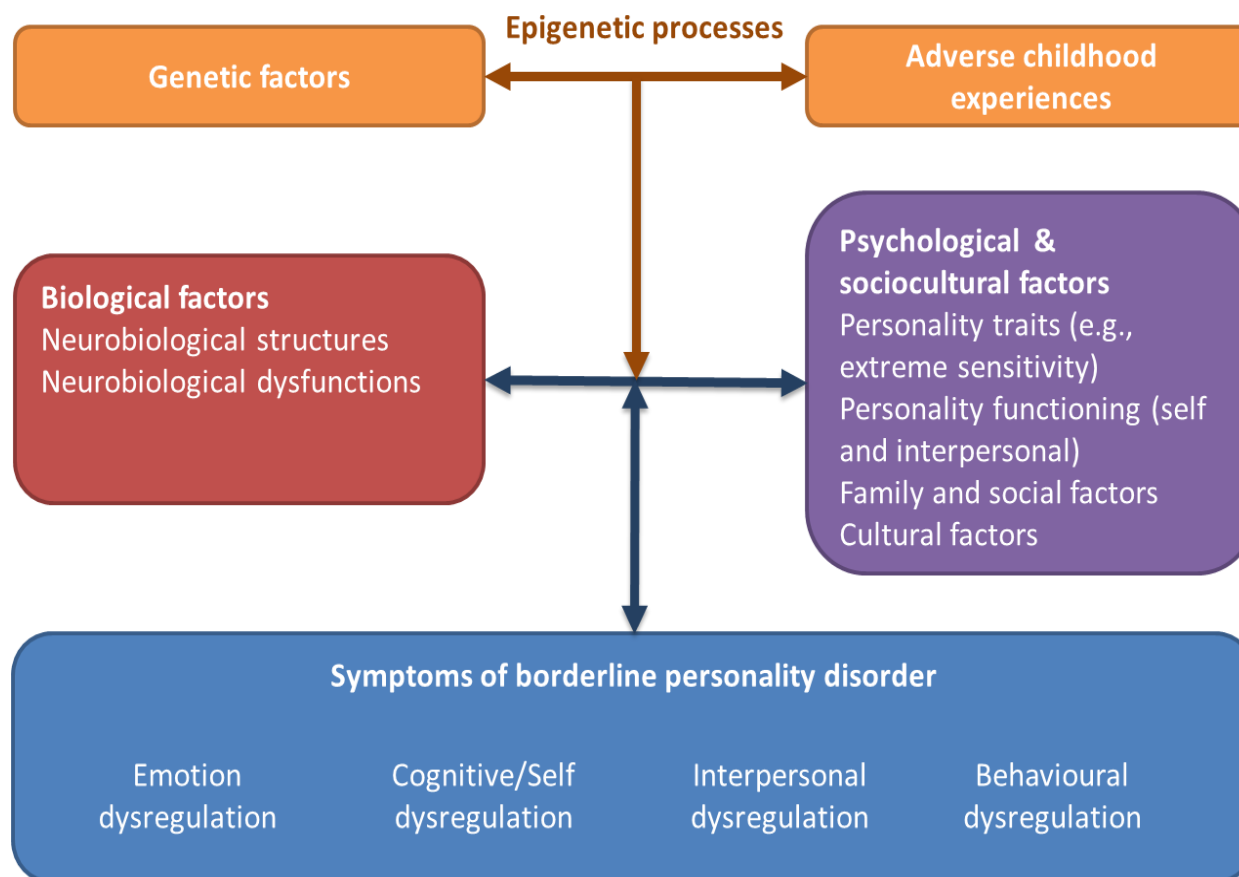


# Borderline Personality Disorder in Young People – what makes this complex?

- Developmental considerations
- Co-occurring challenges
- Family risk factors
- Trauma (ACEs)
- Sociocultural influences
- Maladaptive behaviours



# BPD: Biopsychosocial model



# What increases complexity & risk in a young person?

- Substance use
- Family breakdown
- Peers
- Contagion factor
- Social media / gaming / AI
- Neurodiversity
- Co-occurring problems



# Influences for Young People with BPD

<p><b>Yuper</b></p> <p>youper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost: \$69.99 per year (\$5.83 per month) for most features</li> <li>Availability: Apple App Store and Google Play</li> </ul>	<p><b>wysa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost: Free for a limited version of the app; \$74.99 annual plan, \$19.99 monthly plan or \$149.99 lifetime access for premium</li> <li>Availability: Apple App Store and Google Play</li> </ul>
<p><b>mindspa</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost: Free (if you're interested in taking a multi-day mental health course, however, it costs extra, ranging from \$4.99 to \$44.99)</li> <li>Availability: Apple App Store and Google Play</li> </ul>	<p><b>Earkick</b></p> <p>EARKICK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cost: Free</li> <li>Availability: Apple App Store and Google Play</li> </ul>



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Arcade

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## How do we work with this complexity?

- Early diagnosis and psychoeducation
- Risk identification and management
- Early intervention of the individual and family/network
- Therapeutic relationship
- Involve the whole system
- Focus on fostering autonomy, responsibility and life goals
- Be active not reactive
- Consent, privacy and confidentiality
- Statutory system (Children, Youth & Families Act 2005, Child Protection, Orange Door)





## Working with Risk in YP with BPD

- Is it non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) or suicidality?
- Assess and formulate baseline risk including the function of the behaviour, triggers and responses, within the broader context
- Assess changes based on baseline risk
- Complex presentations may increase risk and require a different approach
- Consider their history, current circumstances and protective factors
- What has changed? Is this an acute presentation or part of their chronic pattern?
- Consider changes in lethality, method and frequency including understanding function





## Principles of working with risk

1. Maintain autonomy and competence  
*or work to restore without taking control*
2. Increase or restore protective factors
3. Work with dynamic factors or changes in mental state
4. Maintain a long-term view
5. Risk benefit analysis of intervention to maximize therapeutic outcomes and minimize powerlessness, helplessness, hopelessness.

## Therapeutic Relationship

- The main task of the young person is to develop autonomy and identity withing a secure base (ideal – within family system)
- Some conflict within relationships is normal and expected
- Some risk taking is normal within a secure base
- If a secure base is present, a child/YP learns to internalize skills to self-soothe and regulate emotions
- YP develops relational patterns over time (attachment style)
- A relational therapeutic relationship becomes a secure attachment figure

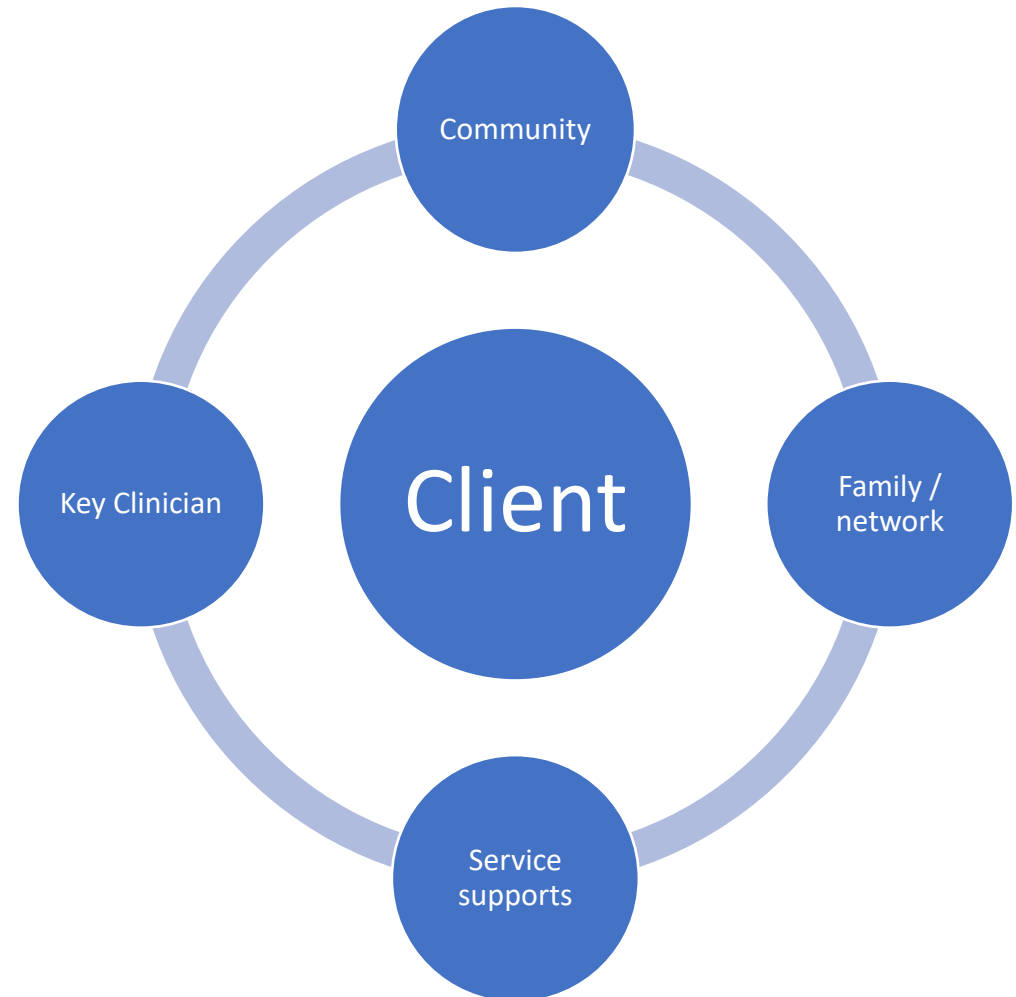


# Develop a system of care

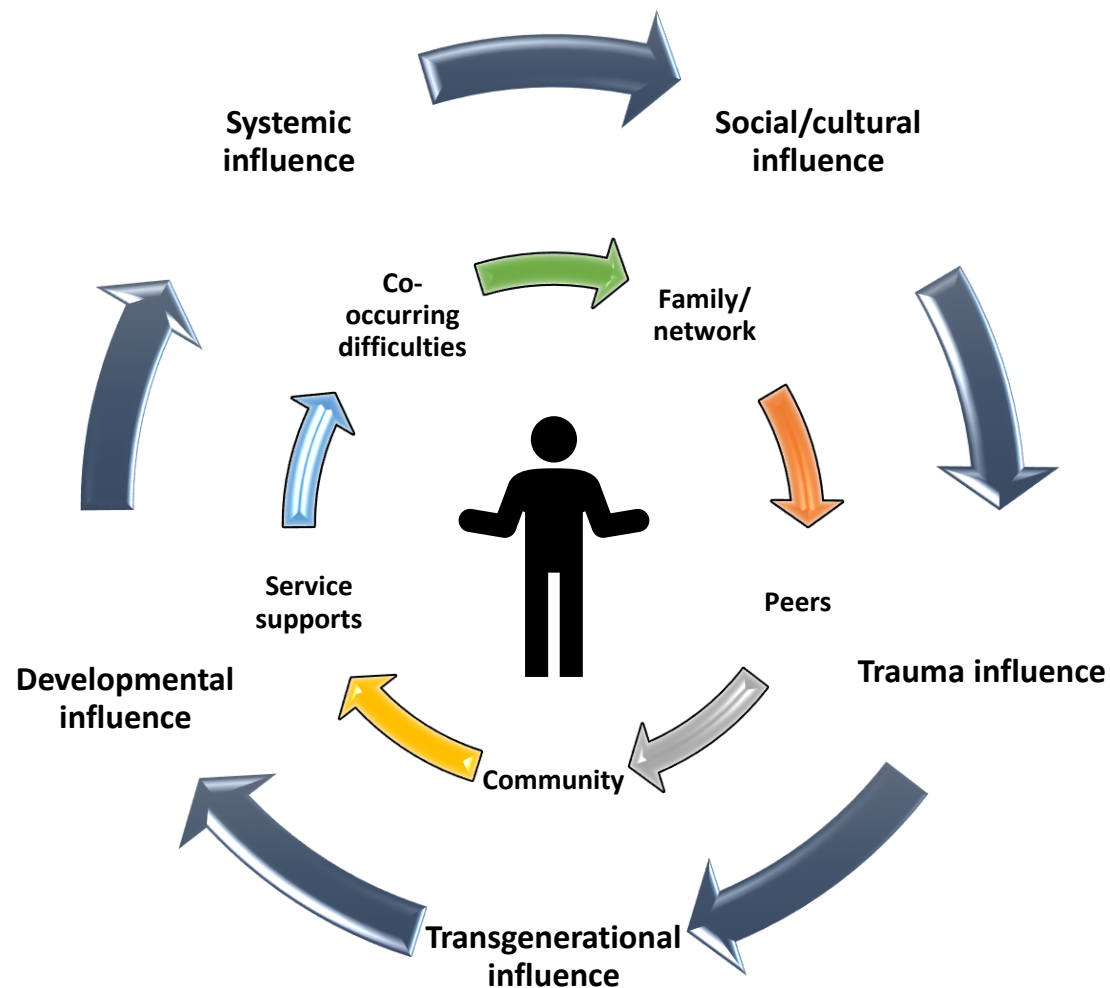


## Client Centred System

- **The Client** is at the centre of all care and support
- **Family / network**
- **Service supports** can include mental health, emergency services, NDIS, DFFS, homelessness etc
- **Community** can include educational, vocational, interest and support groups, peer consultants
- **Key clinician**



# Complex interactions in a system





## Working within a system of care

- Every interaction can be therapeutic
- Individualized approach – no one size fits all
- Flexibility – meet the person where they are at
- Foster collaboration and agency
- Formulation-driven treatment
- Care systems are circular and connected – dynamic and relational
- Facilitate change in relational patterns
- Systems *split* systems
- Identify the elements that you can change, even if small

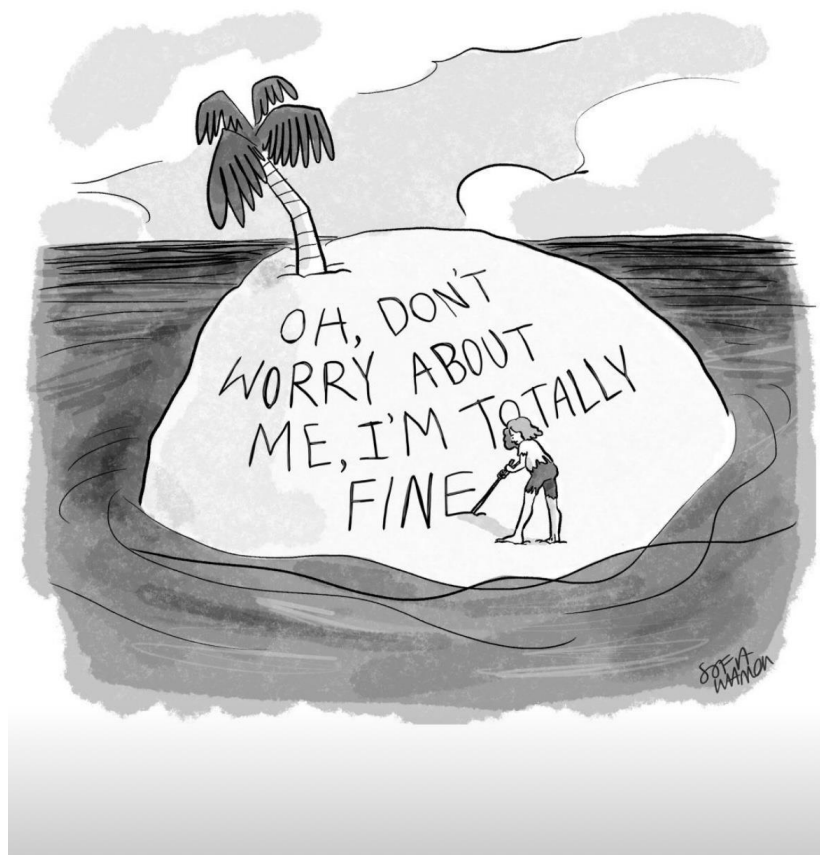
## Working with BPD in Young People

- Be curious, non-judgmental, validating, compassionate – stigma is a barrier
- Be active not reactive, calm, self-regulating
- Take the young person's concerns seriously
- Be consistent, predictable, transparent, reliable
- Maintain a long-term view and encourage life goals
- Take a strengths-based and trauma-informed approach
- Work relationally
- Encourage engagement in education or employment
- Work collaboratively with the YP, their families and networks, and the wider system
- Support diversity and linkages to other communities, services and supports
- Utilize different methods of communication and engagement
- Risk identification and management
- Teams *split* teams





# Thank you



## References

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## References, further reading and useful links

### **Australian Borderline Personality Disorder services:**

Borderline Personality Disorder Collaborative (SA) [here](#)

Borderline Personality Disorder Foundation  
<https://bpdfoundation.org.au/>

Project Air (NSW)  
<https://www.projectairstrategy.org/index.html>

Spectrum (VIC)  
<https://spectrumbpd.com.au/>