

SELF-UNDERSTANDING: IDENTIFYING SOME BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL SOURCES

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The biopsychosocial approach guides self-reflection to identify multiple physical, psychological, and social features that may contribute to distress or perplexing behaviors.

I. BIOLOGICAL / PHYSIOLOGICAL FACTORS

- endocrine / hormonal imbalance:
 - thyroid
 - diabetes
 - gender hormones
 - other:
- neurologic:
 - epilepsy – seizures
 - cerebral accident (e.g., mini-stroke)
 - MS
 - other:
- physical illness:
 - bi-polar disorder
 - endogenous depression
 - sleep apnea
 - cardio-vascular disease
 - allergies (e.g., mold, perfume, cats, etc.)
 - other:
- Lifestyle features:
 - drugs and alcohol misuse
 - sleep deprivation
 - obesity
- Other:

II. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS:

1. COGNITIVE DIMENSION – Thoughts

- erroneous beliefs about relationships / sexuality:
 - e.g., relationships eventually decline; gender differences are irreconcilable; percent who have affairs, frequent strip clubs, etc.
 - lifetime affairs: 18-24 % of men; 16-20% women.
 - Beliefs that limit depth of intimacy: “love is earned”
- conscious awareness of the emotional environment
 - the necessity to balance autonomy vs. cohesion in primary relationship.
 - predisposing situations: who, where, when... time, place, mood...
- other: OCD? Mood disorders?

2. EMOTIONAL DIMENSION

- emotional foundation or “geology”:
 - character or personality disorder (e.g., dependent; OCD, etc.)

- physical neglect/abuse history
- family “culture”
- other:
- emotional environment or “geography”:
 - exceptional stressors
 - overwhelming pressures
 - daily stressors:
 - special needs children
 - financial distress
 - career stressors
 - extended family demands
- awareness of emotional vulnerabilities:
 - loneliness
 - resentment - anger
 - depression – sadness - anger
 - anxiety
 - other:
- deficits in self-care: “rest & relaxation” --> R & R
- “emotional regulation” difficulty:
 - deficits in emotional self-discipline
 - cognitive rationalizations:
 1. lack of emotional responsibility / blame of other(s):
 2. condemnation of others:
 3. self-righteousness
 4. cathartic expression
 5. anger expression is an effective way to control others:
- other:

3. **BEHAVIORAL DIMENSION**

- boundaries guarding relationship commitment
- emotional regulation deficits
- other:

III. SOCIAL / INTERPERSONAL FACTOR

- depth of relationship identity:
 - attachment deficits
 - superficial expectations of intimacy
- questionable perceptions, attributions, expectancies?
- gender “disrespect”
- social anxiety
- avoidance vs. constructive conflict engagement
- emotional vs. “rational” misperceptions
 - (e.g., “tears” as shame; logical as unemotional)
- other:

IV. Consider other possibilities not surfaced above: