

# 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.

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## 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:**