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# Dependent Personality Disorder

## M2 Psychiatry Sequence

Michael Jibson  
Fall 2008



# Cluster C Personality Disorders

## Dependent Personality Disorder

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- “A pattern of submissive and clinging behavior related to an excessive need to be taken care of.” (DSM-IV)
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# Dependent Personality Disorder

## Diagnostic Criteria for Dependent Personality Disorder (DSM-IV)

*A pervasive and excessive need to be taken care of that leads to submissive and clinging behavior and fears of separation, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:*

- (1) has difficulty making everyday decisions without an excessive amount of advice and reassurance from others*
- (2) needs others to assume responsibility for most major areas of his or her life*
- (3) has difficulty expressing disagreement with others because of fear of loss of support or approval*
- (4) has difficulty initiating projects or doing things on his or her own (because of lack of self-confidence in judgment or abilities rather than a lack of motivation or energy)*
- (5) goes to excessive lengths to obtain nurturance and support from others, to the point of volunteering to do things that are unpleasant*
- (6) feels uncomfortable or helpless when alone because of exaggerated fears of being unable to care for himself or herself*
- (7) urgently seeks another relationship as a source of care and support when a close relationship ends*
- (8) is unrealistically preoccupied with fears of being left to take care of himself or herself*



# Dependent Personality Disorder

## Clinical Vignettes



# Dependent Personality Disorder

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- Prevalence: 2.5-27% of population
  - Sex ratio: F>M
  - Comorbidity: Mood and anxiety disorders, adjustment disorders
  - Family: Cluster C disorders
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# Dependent Personality Disorder

## Treatment

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- Psychotherapy - Dynamic, behavior, group, and family therapies are all used successfully
  - Medication - Anxiolytics are often helpful. Antidepressants may be used with comorbid depression.
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# Dependent Personality Disorder

## Physician-patient Interaction

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- Physicians should take an active role in treatment planning, with clear explanations and recommendations
- Patients may need encouragement to make decisions about treatment plans
- Family involvement is often helpful



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Slide 5: American Psychiatric Association: *Diagnostic and Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, Text Revision (*DSM-IV-TR*), Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 725