

FACT VS. FICTION:
SOME KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT BDD

01

How BDD Impacts the Quality of Lives



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Professional Affiliations

BDD Special Interest Group (SIG) Leadership

IOCDF Board of Directors

IOCDF Lead Advocate

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What is the definition of disorder?

The final "D" in BDD stands for disorder

The preoccupation causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning.



Mental Fixation

Severe cases of BDD can spend greater than 8 hours a day obsessing and compulsively ruminating about their perceived appearance flaw(s)

Repetitive Behaviors

Severe cases of BDD can spend greater than 8 hours a day performing exhaustive repetitive behaviors, such as grooming, mirror checking, online research

BDD's Impact: The Basics

Disorder

Individuals suffering from BDD often find that the disorder interferes with their ability to socialize with others, attend school and work, and perform activities of daily living



The Impact of BDD on the Quality of Life

Socialization

Many with BDD will isolate themselves from others, afraid they may see and validate their flaw(s) in appearance

Work

Being on time is difficult when having BDD. Individuals often get caught up in the mirror or grooming and are unable to arrive on-time to work. Additionally, the BDD may interfere with work responsibilities such as customer interactions

School

People with BDD often find it more difficult to interact with their peers and are often highly triggered at school. Additionally, many with BDD find it difficult to focus and concentrate in class. 20% drop out

Low Self-Esteem

When someone has BDD, they often also experience low self-esteem. Many with BDD only find personal value and esteem in looks and because they feel ugly or unattractive, they often do not think highly of themselves



Additional Impacts of BDD on the Quality of Life

Dating

Many with BDD find dating to be one of the most difficult activities. They have a huge fear of rejection or worry a partner will leave them due to their appearance flaw(s). Also avoid intimacy

Family

Family members are often the subject of reassurance seeking, which can cause a rift in the relationship. Additionally those in the household are often negatively affected by the impacts of BDD. Do not use social media or connect with others

Friends

Friends can also be the subject of reassurance seeking, but often they feel abandoned by their friend with BDD. This can be due to the person with BDD often being late or canceling on plans without much notice

Development

Someone with BDD, similarly to individuals with other mental health disorders, see an impact on their development. They often are preoccupied by their appearance flaw(s) and the accompanying compulsions, preventing them from developing at the same pace as their peers



Additional Impacts of BDD on the Quality of Life

Emotional Distress

Individuals with BDD experience shame, disgust, guilt, embarrassment, inadequacy, and other distressing emotions about their appearance. Core beliefs include they are unlovable and unacceptable to others. Difficulty regulating emotion

Loss of Identity

A BDD sufferer often has to quit activities they enjoy, such as sports, outdoor activities, and clubs, because the focus is solely on appearance and less on the other attributes that contribute to their identity. Feel vain

An Outsider

Individuals with BDD, especially severe cases, feel disfigured and deformed. It often can go beyond feeling ugly leaving the person feeling as if they are an outsider who does not belong in society. Seriousness of disorder can be dismissed by society

Health Risks

Individuals with BDD, specifically muscle dysmorphia, may use potentially dangerous anabolic steroids or workout beyond a safe capacity. Others may restrict eating or skin pick / hair pull to dangerous levels to manipulate appearance





Additional Impacts of BDD

Impairment in role functioning: Difficult to be a parent or caregiver. Many remain unmarried and without children



Additional Impacts of BDD On Quality of Life



Disconnect from One's Culture or Community

An Asian client who feels their skin color is too dark. LGBTQ+ client feels community is too judgmental



Rigidity

Often someone with BDD becomes very black-and-white with their appearance. Beauty or the beast - disliking all aspects of their appearance



Becoming Judgmental of Others

People with BDD may report that they feel shameful because they find themselves judging and analyzing other's appearances



BDD's Impact Continued



No Longer Liking Best Features

Often, a person with BDD is so judgmental of their appearance that they begin to find flaws in all body parts, including features they previously liked

Nothing New Until Fixed

Many with BDD have a list of all the features they feel must be "fixed" and only then can they buy new clothes, get an expensive haircut, or get their nails done

Fear of Aging

People with BDD often fear aging. They do not see any benefits in growing older and often find themselves dreading birthdays

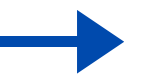
Misreading People's Facial Expressions

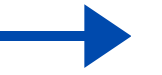
Difficulty Interpreting Facial Expressions

Misreading other's facial expressions
as angry or disgusted, reinforcing their
appearance beliefs

Delusions of reference

People are taking special notice of
them or mocking them because of
how they look





Higher Levels of:

Anxiety, social anxiety, social avoidance, depressed mood, neuroticism, perfectionism, substance use disorder, and introversion

Botched

Individuals with BDD often get plastic surgery, cosmetic procedures, dermatological enhancements, and cosmetic dentistry only to have additional distress when they are unhappy with the results



Individuals affected by BDD often have executive dysfunction and visual processing abnormalities, with a bias for analyzing and encoding details rather than holistic or configural aspects of visual stimuli.

Individuals with this disorder tend to have a bias for negative and threatening interpretations of facial expressions and ambiguous scenarios

Additionally, individuals with BDD have a fear of abandonment and feel they must improve their appearance so others will like them and continue to keep them in their lives

- Good or Fair Insight
Recognizes their image concerns are likely BDD or are open to them not being true
- Poor Insight
Thinks the flaw(s) in image are probably true and finds it difficult to know what they look like
- Absent Insight / Delusional Beliefs
Completely convinced their BDD beliefs are true

BDD's Impact on Insight



How BDD Affects Lives: Outcomes

Housebound

Many individuals with BDD will be housebound due to their BDD symptoms

Psychiatrically Hospitalized

High proportion of adults and adolescents are hospitalized due to their BDD symptoms

Suicidality

Many individuals with BDD feel hopeless and as if there is no solution to their problem. Suicide often feels like the only solution





80%

Experience suicidal thoughts

1 in 4

Have attempted suicide

**Suicidality
In BDD**



Suicidality In BDD

Suicide Risk

Individuals with BDD are at greater risk for suicide and should be carefully assessed and monitored.

Greater than OCD, major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, and anorexia nervosa

Increased Risk

In youth and individuals who developed BDD before 18, in veterans with BDD, and people with muscle dysmorphia (as high as 50%)

Increased Risk

The presence of major depressive disorder, substance use disorder, PTSD, and more severe BDD



How BDD Impacts the Quality of Life Even After Treatment Concludes



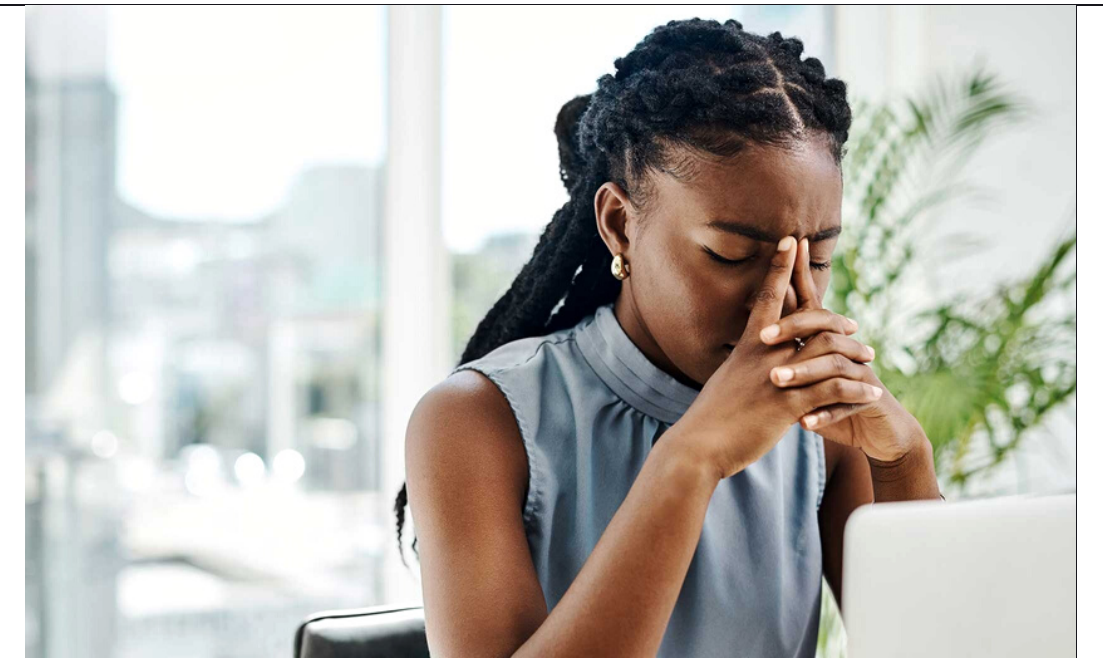
Feeling Behind

Individuals with BDD often feel behind their peers in areas of school, work, and dating



Grieving Time Lost

Many people with BDD spent years isolated and alone. They grieve the years spent on BDD



Burnout

After dealing with BDD, then the treatment, many are struggling to find the energy to re-enter life

