



Ambassador's Welcome

BPD Awareness Week 2020

I was honoured to be invited by the BPD Awareness Week Collaboration Group to be the Ambassador for BPD Awareness Week 2020 and I am pleased to accept the role.

I am Henry Jackson, Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology in the Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences at the University of Melbourne. Although I am no longer involved in academic teaching or clinical supervision, I am still actively involved in research into borderline personality disorder (BPD).

So why my interest in BPD? When I began working clinically in Australia 40 years ago, I realised that my formal clinical training had not prepared me for working with people diagnosed with BPD. Basic CBT and behavioural approaches were not sufficient. At the same time, I realised that many of my fellow clinicians viewed people diagnosed with BPD as untreatable or simply did not accept the concept of personality disorder.

My first wave of research was conducted in the 1980s to establish the various types of personality disorders and comorbidities with other mental disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety, substance use). This work was later extended with an examination of the epidemiological data from the Australian Mental Health and Well Being Survey. My colleagues and I found there was a range of personality disorders in the Australian community and that people diagnosed with BPD were highly involved with various health services and providers. We now know that with appropriate supports and treatment, people are able to build a 'life worth living'.

Since the late 1990s my major collaborators on personality disorders have been Professor Andrew Chanen (Orygen) and Associate Professor Carol Hulbert (Melbourne School of Psychological Sciences). Together with post-doctoral students, we have investigated emotional sensitivity, attachment style, theory of mind, schemas, and attentional bias in people living with BPD. Most importantly, in studies led by Professor Chanen we have been investigating forms of treatment for young people living with BPD and are currently looking at the efficacy of individual placement and support in jobs for young individuals living with BPD.

I look forward to working with you during BPD Awareness Week to raise awareness and help change the narrative of BPD and the way the world sees BPD.

There are some interesting times ahead. Meanwhile stay safe!

Henry Jackson