

PSYCHOPATHIC PERSONALITY

Antisocial behaviour is characterized by impulsive irresponsible actions satisfying only immediate + narcissistic interests without concern for obvious + implicit social consequences (A.P.A).

The following are 4 types of antisocial behaviour -

- (1) Sociopathy or Psychopathy or Antisocial personalities.
- (2) Criminal behaviour - delinquency + Crime.
- (3) Alcoholism and drug addiction.
- (4) Sexual deviations and disorders.

Antisocial behaviour is not only harmful for adequate personality development + well being of the individual but also affects their social adjustment + proves detrimental to the society.

Sociopathic personality which constitutes one category of antisocial behaviour is used to refer to the people who have no sense of responsibility or morality + no concern or affection for others. Their behaviour is ^{determined} entirely by their own needs. In other words these people lack ~~conscience~~ conscience.

According to D.S.M. II sociopaths (antisocial personality) may be defined as "individuals who are basically unsocialized + whose behaviour pattern brings them repeatedly into conflict with society. They are incapable of significant loyalty to the individuals, groups or social values. They are grossly selfish, callous, irresponsible, impulsive, + unable to feel guilty or learn from previous experiences."

Characteristics -

Typically intelligent, spontaneous and very likeable on first acquaintance, antisocial personalities are deceitful and manipulative; callously using others to ^{achieve} their own end. Often they live in series of present moments, without consideration for past or future.

Based on findings + writings of some well-known psychologists + sociologists like Cleckley (1959), Thorne (1959), Weatonward (1963), Coleman (1964), Rosen, Fox + Gregory (1965) the common characteristics of sociopaths may be summarized as below.

- (1) Ability to put up "a good front" to impress + exploit others

- 2) Irresponsible + impulsive behaviour with low frustration tolerance
- 3) Rejection of Authority + inability to profit from experience.
- 4) Inadequate conscience development + lack of anxiety or guilt
- 5) Inability to maintain good interpersonal relationship.
- 6) No genuine suicide attempts.
- 7) An unrestrained + unconventional sex life.
- 8) Addiction to drugs + alcohol.

Early onset and long persistence :- The onset of sociopathic characteristic is usually not later than early twenties.

Absence of symptoms of psychosis and neurosis :- Sociopaths apparently look like neurotics or psychotics, but sociopathy is different from these functional disorders. Sociopathy never affects the body of an individual as in neurosis or psychosis. Psychoneurotic manifestations like neurotic anxiety, nervousness etc are absent in sociopathy. Similarly irrationality, delusions, hallucinations and other common symptoms of psychosis are absent in sociopathy.

Inadequate and improper social adjustment.

Absence of judgement and insight - The main characteristic of sociopath is the absence of judgement + inability to reach a decision based on logic.

All the characteristics of psychopaths discussed above are not essential for identifying an individual psychopath. Some combination of these can however be found in a sociopath. The severity of the sociopathic behaviour to a large extent depends upon the multiplicity + the severity of these characteristics.

Etiology of Sociopathy :-

There is no well supported theory for psychopathy, any factors are involved, that may vary from case to case. Current research focuses on biological determinants. It is believed that reinforced psychopathic

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Stimulation Seeking

In a study comparing psychopaths & normals Fenz (1971) found that psychopaths seem to have insatiable need for stimulation.

Such findings supported the earlier view of Quay (1965) who concluded that psychopathic behaviour is extreme form of stimulation seeking behaviour.

(a) Hereditary Factors:-

Wilkin and his colleagues studied all men born in Copenhagen between 1944 & 1947 which numbered 31346. Out of this the investigators chose all those who were above 6 ft tall (as it is considered that very tall men have a chance of XYY chromosome). The number of men they selected by this process was 4591. Necessary tests using blood & mucous smear obtained from check of each person, were conducted to identify extra Y chromosome. They also obtained records of criminal offences, school reports & estimates regarding the intelligence of each of these persons. Finally they identified 12 XYY men out of which 5 had been convicted for one or more criminal offences, from the rest of the XY men, 9.3%, as against 11.7% of XY ~~(out of 12)~~ men, were found to have criminal records. It should not however be concluded from this that there is a relationship between extra Y chromosome & sociopathy.

(b) Sociocultural Factors:-

Individuals living in slum condition are exposed to an environment characterized by breakdown of social norms & regulations, disorganization, undesirable peer models & a climate of alienation from & hostility towards the broader society often tend to become psychopaths. Their personality is manifested by inadequate conscience lack of concern for others & destructive anti social behaviour.

Psychosocial Factors:-

Early parental loss & emotional deprivation.
A number of studies have reported that

Constitutional or Biological Factors:-

Because the psychopath's impulsiveness, acting out + intolerance of discipline tend to appear early in life, several investigators have focused on the role of constitutional deficiencies as causative factors in antisocial personality disturbances.

(1) Malfunctioning of inhibitory mechanisms in the central nervous system:-

In a review + interpretation of studies indicating a relatively high incidence of EEG abnormalities among psychopaths, particularly those involving slow-wave activity in the temporal lobe of the brain, Hare (1970) concluded that such abnormalities reflect malfunctioning of inhibitory mechanism in C.N.S. + that "this malfunctioning makes it difficult to learn to inhibit behaviour that is likely to lead to punishment."

It may be emphasized that most psychopaths don't show abnormal EEGs + when they do, there is no conclusive evidence that the EEG patterns are directly related to the development of psychopathic personalities. In addition many individuals who show similar EEG pattern are not psychopathic. So when brain anomalies do occur in psychopathic personality they are probably interactive factors rather than primary determinants of the maladaptive behaviour.

2- Deficient Emotional Arousal:-

A good deal of research evidence indicates that psychopaths are deficient in emotional arousal, this presumably renders them less prone to fear + anxiety in stressful situations + less prone to normal conscience development + socialization.

In an early study eg Lykken (1957) concluded that psychopaths have fewer inhibitions about committing antisocial acts because they suffer little anxiety.

Eysenck (1960) concluded that psychopaths are less sensitive to noxious stimuli + have a slower rate of conditioning than normal individuals. As a result psychopaths presumably fail to acquire many of the conditioned responses essential to normal avoidance behaviour.

high number of ...
a parent at early age usually through separation or divorce.
Greer (1964) found 60% of a sample of psychopaths had lost a parent during childhood, as contrasted with 28% for a control group of neurotics + 21% for a control group of normal subjects. But since many normal people also have faced the trauma of losing parents in childhood it seems that losing a parent is not just sufficient to cause psychopathic personality.

Hare (1970) suggested that the factor of key significance was not the parental loss *per se*, but rather the disturbances in the family relationship created before the departure of parent. The point is supported by findings of Wolkind (1972) who found a high incidence of 'affectionless psychopathy' in a group of 92 institutionalized children.

(5) Parental Rejection and Inconsistency:-

A number of studies have attempted to relate parental rejection + inconsistent discipline to inadequate socialization and antisocial personality.

McCord + McCord (1964) after the review of available literature concluded that severe parental rejections were primary causes of psychopathic personality.

Buss (1966) concluded that two types of parental behaviour fosters psychopathy. In first parents are cold + distant towards the child + allow no warm or close relationship to develop. Child if he imitates parental model will become cold and distant in own later relationships + although he learns the formal attributes and amenities of social situation, he doesn't develop empathy for others or for that matter becomes emotionally involved.

The second type of parental behaviour is inconsistency, in which the parents are capricious in supplying affection, rewards, + punishment. Usually these type of parents are inconsistent in their own role enactment as well, so that the child lacks a stable model to imitate and fails to develop clear sense of self identity. Often the parents reward not only

superficial conformity but underhanded non-conformity -
conformity that goes undetected by outsiders. Thus, they
display behaviours that lead to psychopathic behaviour.

Similarly when the parents are both arbitrary & inconsistent
& punishing child, avoiding punishment becomes more
important than receiving rewards. Instead of learning right from
wrong the child learns to avoid blame & punishment by lying or
other manipulative means.

Parental rejection & inconsistent discipline results in slow
conscience building & aggression on the part of the child. In
such children bad habits once formed take longer time for
extinction than children who were subjected to consistent reward
and discipline.

5) Faulty parental model and family interaction: -

Greenacre (1945) & subsequent studies on psychopaths
from middle class families reveal that in a family where
father is respected member of community, but is distant,
uninvolved & fear inspiring to the son & the mother is over
indulgent frivolous & often tacitly contemptuous of her husband's
importance, but the couple conceal all their differences &
hatredness, just for the sake of maintaining status in the soci-
ety, the children learn that appearance is more important
than reality. Such children often develop superficial charm
& great adroitness in handling people for selfish ends. Often
in such cases due to prominence & the respect the father holds,
the child goes unpunished for his misdeeds (wrongs) & his
habit gets reinforced.

Similarly in families where father tells his son the necessity
of honesty & sincerity & is himself a cheat ~~and~~ manipulative &
insincere (shows contradictory behaviour) it appears to have a
family back ground capable of producing middle class psychopath.

Here (1970) concluded that "at least a part of a psychopath's
behaviour results from modeling another individual's psychopathic beh-
aviour". In other words psychopathic fathers may give rise to psych-
opathic children.

Sociopathy ^{besides being a} ~~are emotionally~~ ^{distinct} legal problem is a behavioural disorder + social problem. Hardened measures in form of capital punishment, imprisonment of psychopaths or depriving them of essential needs don't show favourable results.

Proper socio-psychological measures need to be taken for providing them relief from their problem + rehabilitating them.

Sociopaths are emotionally disturbed personalities. During the episodes of perturbed behaviour, some anti convulsant or depressant drugs like phenothiazines, dilazine etc. may help in stabilizing their behaviour + reducing antisocial trends. But drug-treatment is only temporary + may have side effects.

Under psychological measures psychotherapy has been tried, but results have not been encouraging. The failure of psychotherapy largely stems from the lack of sociopath's cooperation with the therapist who is unable to win his confidence as the latter doesn't trust the therapist.

More recently behaviour therapists have dealt successfully with specific antisocial behaviours + modern behaviour therapy techniques appear to offer promise of more effective treatment.

However the use of behaviour therapy in such cases has a disadvantage that we are dealing with a total life style + not a specific case of maladaptive behaviour like phobia. Further we are dealing with a man who is ^{adept} in fooling others + so precautions must be taken to see whether change in behaviour is permanent or just a trick played by psychopath to fool the therapist.

Fortunately many psychopathic personalities tend to improve after 40 yrs possibly due to weaker biological drives, better insight into self-defeating behaviour + cumulative effect of social conditioning. Such individuals are called burn out psychopaths. However psychopaths create much havoc because they reach 40 and even afterwards if they don't change.