

Histrionic Personality Disorder Websites  
Reviewed by Nimo Singh

Encyclopedia of Mental Disorder. (2007). Histrionic Personality Disorder. Retrieved May 18, 2009, from <http://www.minddisorders.com/Flu-Inv/Histrionic-personality-disorder.html>

This website provides information on the definition, description, causes, symptoms, demographics, diagnosis, treatments, prognosis, prevention, and resources on Histrionic Personality Disorder. Underneath the definition of the disorder, this site specifies that it is classified as a Cluster B Personality Disorder in the DSM-IV. Histrionic Personality Disorder is the only Personality Disorder that is explicitly connected to a client's physical appearance. Research says that this Personality Disorder primarily appears in men and women with above-average physical appearances. Listed underneath the section on causes and symptoms, the site provides a list of various causes such as the following: neurochemical/physiological causes, developmental causes, biosocial learning causes, sociocultural causes, and personal variables. The symptoms listed are pulled exactly from the DSM-IV except for the caption that says there needs to be five (or more) of the following criteria present in order for a person to have this Personality Disorder. In the section on demographics, information is provided regarding high-risk populations, cross-cultural issues, and gender issues. The site explains how characteristics of Histrionic Personality overlap with the characteristics of other Personality Disorders. Types of treatment listed include psychodynamic therapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, group therapy, family therapy, medications, and meditation. There is also a section on prevention, which explains that early diagnosis and education can prevent some cases of mild histrionic behavior from developing into maladaptive Histrionic Personality Disorder.

This website provides a lot of detailed information, but I am not quite sure how accurate all of the information is. Underneath the criteria for Histrionic Personality Disorder, there was no mention that five (or more) of the following criteria need to be present for a diagnosis of Histrionic Personality Disorder. If I had no background information about this disorder, I would have thought that all 8 of the criteria listed needed to be present for the diagnosis of this Personality Disorder. I am also wary of the explanations behind the causes of Histrionic Personality Disorder. There is no specific research that is mentioned to support the information found about the causes. I am also unsure of the treatments that are described. For example, this website says that group therapy and family therapy are effective for people with this disorder. This information does not match up with information I have found more other websites, which makes it difficult to know whether or not those treatments are actually useful. On a side note, I think it was helpful to include a list of resources regarding Histrionic Personality Disorder.

Grohol, J. M. (2009). Histrionic Personality Disorder. *Psych Central*. Retrieved May 18, 2009, from <http://psychcentral.com/disorders/sx17.htm>

This website provides information on the symptoms and the treatment for Histrionic Personality Disorder. The criteria for Histrionic Personality Disorder are found on this site and are taken directly from the DSM-IV. People with Histrionic Personality Disorder are more likely

to seek treatment than people with any other type of personality disorder. They are also more likely to exaggerate their symptoms and difficulties. Since people with this type of personality disorder are characterized as emotionally “needy,” they have trouble terminating therapy. Underneath the section on treatment, there is information on psychotherapy, medications, and self-help.

Psychotherapy is the treatment of choice for people with Histrionic Personality Disorder. Group and family treatment are not commonly recommended because individuals with this personality disorder draw attention to themselves. Therapists may find themselves in the “rescuer” role because they will want to constantly reassure and rescue their client. Even further, the client may view his or her therapist as sexually attractive, which may create boundary issues in the therapeutic relationship. Medications are not recommended for people who suffer from Histrionic Personality Disorder because the medications may contribute to more self-destructive or harmful behaviors. There are also no self-help support groups or communities that are helpful for people with this disorder. The self-help approach would not be very effective because people with this disorder are likely to be very dramatic and “fake” or shallow in their interactions with others.

The website appears to be credible and includes information about Histrionic Personality Disorder from the DSM-IV. It is useful to include the criteria of Histrionic Personality Disorder in a bulleted form. I think that the website would have benefited from including a section on the features of someone who has Histrionic Personality Disorder or even a brief overview of what the disorder actually is. The overviews of the three different types of treatment were helpful; however, underneath the section on “Medications,” no medications were listed. Even though the website mentioned that medications are not typically indicated for personality disorders, it would have been useful to include types of medications that have been prescribed to people who have Histrionic Personality Disorder and what the side effects of the medication are. The website did say that some medications may contribute to self-destructive or harmful behaviors, but did not explain how or why. The section on psychotherapy included a lot of helpful information about the disorder and the therapeutic relationship, but the sections on medication and self-help were very vague. Lastly, I think that it would have been helpful to include information on how the features of Histrionic Personality Disorder may be confused with other Personality Disorders such as Borderline Personality Disorder, Antisocial Personality Disorder, Narcissistic Personality Disorder, and Dependent Personality Disorder.

Hanson, G.D. (2009). Understanding Histrionic Personality Disorder. Retrieved May 18, 2009, from [http://www.nefliving.org/bk\\_128\\_histrionic1.php](http://www.nefliving.org/bk_128_histrionic1.php)

This website introduces a story of a woman with Histrionic Personality Disorder. In this story, the woman, Christy, seeks pastoral counseling at the request of her husband because of the issues she is facing regarding her relationship with her husband and their daughter. Traits of this disorder are addressed in this story through the description of Christy. She is described as having emotional outburst, craving attention, attractive, provocative, and charming. She has a dramatic flair that makes her the life of the party and she is full of energy. Although Christy meets people easily, she has a difficult time maintaining committed relationships. She has a constant need for approval and becomes very upset if she does not get the attention that she seeks. This website

points out that in moderation, Christy's characteristics are not negative, but when they all come together in one person in such a pronounced way, they can cause serious problems. Information is provided regarding the history of this Personality Disorder. There is also information regarding the associated features, the causes and dynamics, spiritual issues, treatment, and frequently asked questions regarding Histrionic Personality Disorder.

I find this website to be very helpful because it provides a story on a woman with this personality disorder. Within the story, it is easy to pull out the characteristics of this woman that are affecting her life in a negative way. Providing the story made the information about Histrionic Personality Disorder more interesting to read. This website is written in language that is easy to understand. It also is very comprehensive and appears to be valid as it cites the DSM-IV as a reference. I found it helpful to include frequently asked questions and answers to those questions. Since the information found on the website was written by a Christian counselor, the section regarding spiritual issues may not be useful for everyone; however, I wanted to incorporate this site because I think that people who are Christian may enjoy reading about the spiritual issues or find it helpful to know about this information. Overall, I think this website provides an abundance of information regarding Histrionic Personality Disorder, regardless of what religion a person identifies as.

Stephens, L. (2005). Histrionic Personality Disorder. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved May 18, 2009 from <http://www.psychologytoday.com/conditions/histrionic.html>

This website includes information on the definition, symptoms, causes, and treatment of Histrionic Personality Disorder. It explains how individuals with Histrionic Personality Disorder exhibit excessive emotionalism and are attention seekers. They appear to be lively, dramatic, charming, and enthusiastic and tend to use their physical appearance to draw attention to themselves. Their personal interests and conversations are self-focused. This disorder occurs more frequently in women, though the site points out that this may be because it is more often diagnosed in women. The diagnostic criteria are listed under the section "Causes" and is directly pulled from the DSM-IV. For treatment, medication may be helpful with symptoms such as depression. Also, Histrionic Personality Disorder does not usually affect a person's ability to function in a superficial work or social environment; however, problems usually occur in relationships that are more intimate.

The information found on this website matches up with what I have learned so far about this Personality Disorder. The website references the American Psychiatric Association, DSM-IV, and the National Institutes of Health. I found it helpful to include a definition of the disorder. The website even defined what constitutes as a Personality Disorder in general, which was useful. The website included a link to articles on Histrionic Personality Disorder found on *Psychology Today*. The information regarding treatment was not very descriptive. It said that medications can be helpful for symptoms of depression because patients with this disorder often come to therapy for depression resulting in a failed relationship. It would have been more helpful to include more information about the medication and the effects it can have on a person with this disorder. I read in other articles that medication is not recommended, which makes me question the whole topic of medication and Histrionic Personality Disorder.

The Cleveland Clinic Foundation. (2009). Histrionic Personality Disorder. Retrieved May 18, 2009, from [http://my.clevelandclinic.org/disorders/Personality\\_Disorders/hic\\_Histrionic\\_Personality\\_Disorder.aspx](http://my.clevelandclinic.org/disorders/Personality_Disorders/hic_Histrionic_Personality_Disorder.aspx)

This website provides information on the definition, symptoms, causes, diagnosis, treatment, complications, outlook, and prevention of Histrionic Personality Disorder. It says that Histrionic Personality Disorder is in a group of conditions called dramatic personality disorders. People with this disorder have unstable emotions and distorted self-images. Their self-esteem depends on the approval of others and they constantly have the desire to be noticed. Fourteen bullet points are listed underneath the symptoms of Histrionic Personality Disorder. Although the causes of this Personality Disorder are unknown, many mental health professionals believe that both learned and genetic factors play a role in its development. Psychotherapy is generally the treatment of choice for Histrionic Personality Disorder, with the goal of treatment being to help the client uncover his or her motivations and fears associated with his or her thoughts and behaviors. People with this Personality Disorder can function well socially and at work. Although prevention is probably not possible, treatment can help an individual with this disorder to learn more productive and positive ways of dealing with certain situations.

This website is written in terms that are easy to read. The symptoms of Histrionic Personality Disorder provide a general picture of what to look for; however, the actual diagnostic criteria are not provided. I think the website does a good job with providing a general idea of what this Personality Disorder is like, but is not very specific. Although it defines this Personality Disorder, it does not provide much description of the features of this disorder, which I think would make the website more useful.