

Profile of the Sociopath

This website summarizes some of the common features of descriptions of the behavior of sociopaths.

- **Glibness and Superficial Charm**
- **Manipulative and Cunning**
They never recognize the rights of others and see their self-serving behaviors as permissible. They appear to be charming, yet are covertly hostile and domineering, seeing their victim as merely an instrument to be used. They may dominate and humiliate their victims.
- **Grandiose Sense of Self**
Feels entitled to certain things as "their right."
- **Pathological Lying**
Has no problem lying coolly and easily and it is almost impossible for them to be truthful on a consistent basis. Can create, and get caught up in, a complex belief about their own powers and abilities. Extremely convincing and even able to pass lie detector tests.
- **Lack of Remorse, Shame or Guilt**
A deep seated rage, which is split off and repressed, is at their core. Does not see others around them as people, but only as targets and opportunities. Instead of friends, they have victims and accomplices who end up as victims. The end always justifies the means and they let nothing stand in their way.
- **Shallow Emotions**
When they show what seems to be warmth, joy, love and compassion it is more feigned than experienced and serves an ulterior motive. Outraged by insignificant matters, yet remaining unmoved and cold by what would upset a normal person. Since they are not genuine, neither are their promises.
- **Incapacity for Love**
- **Need for Stimulation**
Living on the edge. Verbal outbursts and physical

punishments are normal. Promiscuity and gambling are common.

- **Callousness/Lack of Empathy**
Unable to empathize with the pain of their victims, having only contempt for others' feelings of distress and readily taking advantage of them.
- **Poor Behavioral Controls/Impulsive Nature**
Rage and abuse, alternating with small expressions of love and approval produce an addictive cycle for abuser and abused, as well as creating hopelessness in the victim. Believe they are all-powerful, all-knowing, entitled to every wish, no sense of personal boundaries, no concern for their impact on others.
- **Early Behavior Problems/Juvenile Delinquency**
Usually has a history of behavioral and academic difficulties, yet "gets by" by conning others. Problems in making and keeping friends; aberrant behaviors such as cruelty to people or animals, stealing, etc.
- **Irresponsibility/Unreliability**
Not concerned about wrecking others' lives and dreams. Oblivious or indifferent to the devastation they cause. Does not accept blame themselves, but blames others, even for acts they obviously committed.
- **Promiscuous Sexual Behavior/Infidelity**
Promiscuity, child sexual abuse, rape and sexual acting out of all sorts.
- **Lack of Realistic Life Plan/Parasitic Lifestyle**
Tends to move around a lot or makes all encompassing promises for the future, poor work ethic but exploits others effectively.
- **Criminal or Entrepreneurial Versatility**
Changes their image as needed to avoid prosecution. Changes life story readily.

Other Related Qualities:

- 1. Contemptuous of those who seek to understand them**
- 2. Does not perceive that anything is wrong with them**
- 3. Authoritarian**
- 4. Secretive**
- 5. Paranoid**
- 6. Only rarely in difficulty with the law, but seeks out situations where their tyrannical behavior will be tolerated, condoned, or admired**
- 7. Conventional appearance**
- 8. Goal of enslavement of their victim(s)**
- 9. Exercises despotic control over every aspect of the victim's life**
- 10. Has an emotional need to justify their crimes and therefore needs their victim's affirmation (respect, gratitude and love)**
- 11. Ultimate goal is the creation of a willing victim**
- 12. Incapable of real human attachment to another**
- 13. Unable to feel remorse or guilt**
- 14. Extreme narcissism and grandiose**
- 15. May state readily that their goal is to rule the world**

(The above traits are based on the psychopathy checklists of H. Cleckley and R. Hare.)

NOTE: In the 1830's this disorder was called "moral insanity." By 1900 it was changed to "psychopathic personality." More recently it has been termed "antisocial personality disorder" in the DSM-III and DSM-IV. Some critics have complained that, in the attempt to rely only on 'objective' criteria, the DSM has broadened the concept to include too many individuals. The APD category includes people who commit illegal, immoral or self-serving acts for a variety of reasons and are not necessarily psychopaths.

DSM-IV Definition

Antisocial personality disorder is characterized by a lack of regard for the moral or legal standards in the local culture. There is a marked inability to get along with others or abide by societal rules. Individuals with this disorder are sometimes called psychopaths or sociopaths.

Diagnostic Criteria (DSM-IV)

- 1. Since the age of fifteen there has been a disregard for and violation of the rights of others, those rights considered normal by the local culture, as indicated by at least three of the following:
 - A. Repeated acts that could lead to arrest.**
 - B. Conning for pleasure or profit, repeated lying, or the use of aliases.**
 - C. Failure to plan ahead or being impulsive.**
 - D. Repeated assaults on others.**
 - E. Reckless when it comes to their or others safety.**
 - F. Poor work behavior or failure to honor financial obligations.**
 - G. Rationalizing the pain they inflict on others.****
 - 2. At least eighteen years in age.**
 - 3. Evidence of a Conduct Disorder, with its onset before the age of fifteen.**
 - 4. Symptoms not due to another mental disorder.**
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Antisocial Personality Disorder Overview (Written by Derek Wood, RN, BSN, PhD Candidate)

Antisocial Personality Disorder results in what is commonly known as a Sociopath. The criteria for this disorder require an ongoing disregard for the rights of others, since the age of 15 years. Some examples of this disregard are reckless disregard for the safety of themselves or others, failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors, deceitfulness such as repeated lying or deceit for personal profit or pleasure,

and lack of remorse for actions that hurt other people in any way. Additionally, they must have evidenced a Conduct Disorder before the age of 15 years, and must be at least 18 years old to receive this diagnosis.

People with this disorder appear to be charming at times, and make relationships, but to them, these are relationships in name only. They are ended whenever necessary or when it suits them, and the relationships are without depth or meaning, including marriages. They seem to have an innate ability to find the weakness in people, and are ready to use these weaknesses to their own ends through deceit, manipulation, or intimidation, and gain pleasure from doing so.

They appear to be incapable of any true emotions, from love to shame to guilt. They are quick to anger, but just as quick to let it go, without holding grudges. No matter what emotion they state they have, it has no bearing on their future actions or attitudes.

They rarely are able to have jobs that last for any length of time, as they become easily bored, instead needing constant change. They live for the moment, forgetting the past, and not planning the future, not thinking ahead what consequences their actions will have. They want immediate rewards and gratification. There currently is no form of psychotherapy that works with those with antisocial personality disorder, as those with this disorder have no desire to change themselves, which is a prerequisite. No medication is available either. The only treatment is the prevention of the disorder in the early stages, when a child first begins to show the symptoms of conduct disorder.

**THE PSYCHOPATH NEXT DOOR (Source:
<http://chericola57.tripod.com/infinite.html>)**

Psychopath. We hear the word and images of Bernardo, Manson and Dahmer pop into our heads; no doubt Ted Bundy too. But they're the bottom of the barrel -- most of the two million psychopaths in North America aren't murderers. They're our friends, lovers and co-workers. They're outgoing and persuasive, dazzling you with charm and flattery. Often you

aren't even aware they've taken you for a ride -- until it's too late.

Psychopaths exhibit a Jekyll and Hyde personality. "They play a part so they can get what they want," says Dr. Sheila Willson, a Toronto psychologist who has helped victims of psychopaths. The guy who showers a woman with excessive attention is much more capable of getting her to lend him money, and to put up with him when he strays. The new employee who gains her co-workers' trust has more access to their chequebooks. And so on. Psychopaths have no conscience and their only goal is self-gratification. Many of us have been their victims -- at work, through friendships or relationships -- and not one of us can say, "a psychopath could never fool me."

Think you can spot one? Think again. In general, psychopaths aren't the product of broken homes or the casualties of a materialistic society. Rather they come from all walks of life and there is little evidence that their upbringing affects them. Elements of a psychopath's personality first become evident at a very early age, due to biological or genetic factors. Explains Michael Seto, a psychologist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental health in Toronto, by the time that a person hits their late teens, the disorder is almost certainly permanent. Although many clinicians use the terms psychopath and sociopath interchangeably, writes psychopath expert Robert Hare on his book 'Without Conscience', a sociopath's criminal behavior is shaped by social forces and is the result of a dysfunctional environment.

Psychopaths have only a shallow range of emotions and lack guilt, says Hare. They often see themselves as victims, and lack remorse or the ability to empathize with others. "Psychopaths play on the fact that most of us are trusting and forgiving people," adds Seto. The warning signs are always there; it's just difficult to see them because once we trust someone, the friendship becomes a blinder.

Even lovers get taken for a ride by psychopaths. For a psychopath, a romantic relationship is just another opportunity to find a trusting partner who will buy into the lies. It's primarily why a psychopath rarely stays in a relationship for the long term, and often is involved with three or four partners at once, says Willson. To a psychopath, everything about a

relationship is a game. Willson refers to the movie 'Sliding Doors' to illustrate her point. In the film, the main character comes home early after just having been fired from her job. Only moments ago, her boyfriend has let another woman out the front door. But in a matter of minutes he is the attentive and concerned boyfriend, taking her out to dinner and devoting the entire night to comforting her. All the while he's planning to leave the next day on a trip with the other woman.

The boyfriend displays typical psychopathic characteristics because he falsely displays deep emotion toward the relationship, says Willson. In reality, he's less concerned with his girlfriend's depression than with making sure she's clueless about the other woman's existence. In the romance department, psychopaths have an ability to gain your affection quickly, disarming you with words, intriguing you with grandiose plans. If they cheat you'll forgive them, and one day when they've gone too far, they'll leave you with a broken heart (and an empty wallet). By then they'll have a new player for their game.

The problem with their game is that we don't often play by their rules. Where we might occasionally tell a white lie, a psychopath's lying is compulsive. Most of us experience some degree of guilt about lying, preventing us from exhibiting such behavior on a regular basis. "Psychopaths don't discriminate who it is they lie to or cheat," says Seto. "There's no distinction between friend, family and sucker."

No one wants to be the sucker, so how do we prevent ourselves from becoming close friends or getting into a relationship with a psychopath? It's really almost impossible, say Seto and Willson. Unfortunately, laments Seto, one way is to become more suspicious and less trusting of others. Our tendency is to forgive when we catch a loved one in a lie. "Psychopaths play on this fact," he says. "However, I'm certainly not advocating a world where if someone lies once or twice, you never speak to them again." What you can do is look at how often someone lies and how they react when caught. Psychopaths will lie over and over again, and where other people would sincerely apologize, a psychopath may apologize but won't stop.

Psychopaths also tend to switch jobs as frequently as they switch partners, mainly because they don't have the qualities

to maintain a job for the long haul. Their performance is generally erratic, with chronic absences, misuse of company resources and failed commitments. Often they aren't even qualified for the job and use fake credentials to get it. Seto talks of a patient who would get marketing jobs based on his image; he was a presentable and charming man who layered his conversations with educational and occupational references. But it became evident that the man hadn't a clue what he was talking about, and was unable to hold down a job.

How do you make sure you don't get fooled when you're hiring someone to baby-sit your child or for any other job? Hire based on reputation and not image, says Willson. Check references thoroughly. Psychopaths tend to give vague and inconsistent replies. Of course the best way to solve this problem would be to cure psychopaths of their 'illness.' But there's no recipe for treating them, say psychiatrists. Today's traditional methods of psychotherapy (psychoanalysis, group and one-on-one therapy) and drug treatments have failed. Therapy is more likely to work when an individual admits there's a problem and wants to change. The common problem with psychopaths, says Sets, "Is they don't see a problem with their behavior."

Psychopaths don't seek therapy willingly, says Seto. Rather, they're pushed into it by a desperate relative or by a court order. To a psychopath, a therapist is just one more person who must be conned, and the psychopath plays the part right until the therapist is convinced of his or her 'rehabilitation.'

Even though we can't treat psychopaths effectively with therapy, it doesn't mean we can't protect ourselves, writes Hare. Willson agrees, citing the most important factor in keeping psychopaths at bay is to know your vulnerabilities. We need to "realize our own potential and maximize our strengths" so that our insecurities don't overcome us. Because, she says, a psychopath is a chameleon who becomes "an image of what you haven't done for yourself." Over time, she says, "their appearance of perfection will begin to crack," but by that time you will have been emotionally and perhaps financially scathed. There comes a time when you realize there's no point in searching for answers; the only thing is to move on.

Taken in part from MW -- By Caroline Konrad -- September 1999

THE MALIGNANT PERSONALITY:

These people are mentally ill and extremely dangerous! The following precautions will help to protect you from the destructive acts of which they are capable.

First, to recognize them, keep the following guidelines in mind.

- (1) They are habitual liars. They seem incapable of either knowing or telling the truth about anything.**
- (2) They are egotistical to the point of narcissism. They really believe they are set apart from the rest of humanity by some special grace.**
- (3) They scapegoat; they are incapable of either having the insight or willingness to accept responsibility for anything they do. Whatever the problem, it is always someone else's fault.**
- (4) They are remorselessly vindictive when thwarted or exposed.**
- (5) Genuine religious, moral, or other values play no part in their lives. They have no empathy for others and are capable of violence. Under older psychological terminology, they fall into the category of psychopath or sociopath, but unlike the typical psychopath, their behavior is masked by a superficial social facade.**

If you have come into conflict with such a person or persons, do the following immediately!

- (1) Notify your friends and relatives of what has happened.**

Do not be vague. Name names, and specify dates and circumstances. Identify witnesses if possible and provide supporting documentation if any is available.

- (2) Inform the police. The police will do nothing with this information except to keep it on file, since they are powerless to act until a crime has been committed. Unfortunately, that often is usually too late for the victim. Nevertheless, place the information in their hands.**

Obviously, if you are assaulted or threatened before witnesses, you can get a restraining order, but those are palliative at best.

(3) Local law enforcement agencies are usually under pressure if wealthy or politically powerful individuals are involved, so include state and federal agencies as well and tell the locals that you have. In my own experience, one agency that can help in a pinch is the Criminal Investigation Division of the Internal Revenue Service or (in Canada) Victims Services at your local police unit. It is not easy to think of the IRS as a potential friend, but a Swedish study showed that malignant types (the Swedes called them bullies) usually commit some felony or other by the age of twenty. If the family is wealthy, the fact may never come to light, but many felonies involve tax evasion, and in such cases, the IRS is interested indeed. If large amounts of money are involved, the IRS may solve all your problems for you. For obvious reasons the Drug Enforcement Agency may also be an appropriate agency to approach. The FBI is an important agency to contact, because although the FBI does not have jurisdiction over murder or assault, if informed, they do have an active interest in any other law enforcement agencies that do not follow through with an honest investigation and prosecution should a murder occur. Civil rights are involved at that point. No local crooked lawyer, judge, or corrupt police official wants to be within a country mile if that comes to light! It is in such cases that wealthy psychopaths discover just how firm the "friends" they count on to cover up for them really are! Even some of the drug cartel biggies will scuttle for cover if someone picks up the brick their thugs hide under. Exposure is bad for business.

(4) Make sure that several of your friends have the information in the event something happens to you. That way, an appropriate investigation will follow if you are harmed. Don't tell other people who has the information, because then something bad could happen to them as well. Instruct friends to take such an incident to the newspapers and other media.

If you are dealing with someone who has considerable money, you must realize that they probably won't try to harm you themselves, they will contract with someone to make the hit. The malignant type is a coward and will not expose himself or herself to personal danger if he or she can avoid it.

Update: A thorough article. You may also find more at <http://sociopathworld.com/>.

I, the creator of this site, am not a psychologist and no special expertise in the subject. I created the site as a public service, because no similar site existed in 2003. I occasionally get sad calls and emails. I urge you to consult either a clinical psychologist or the police depending on the problem you face, and wish you good luck.