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Avoidant Personality Disorder
M2 Psychiatry Sequence
Cluster C Personality Disorders

Avoidant Personality Disorder

• “A pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation.” (DSM-IV)
Avoidant Personality Disorder

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnostic Criteria for Avoidant Personality Disorder (DSM-IV)</th>
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<tr>
<td>A pervasive pattern of social inhibition, feelings of inadequacy, and hypersensitivity to negative evaluation, beginning by early adulthood and present in a variety of contexts, as indicated by four (or more) of the following:</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) avoids occupational activities that involve significant interpersonal contact, because of fears of criticism, disapproval, or rejection</td>
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<td>(2) is unwilling to get involved with people unless certain of being liked</td>
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<td>(3) shows restraint within intimate relationships because of the fear of being shamed or ridiculed</td>
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<tr>
<td>(4) is preoccupied with being criticized or rejected in social situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5) is inhibited in new interpersonal situations because of feelings of inadequacy</td>
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<td>(6) views self as socially inept, personally unappealing, or inferior to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7) is unusually reluctant to take personal risks or to engage in any new activities because they may prove embarrassing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR)
Avoidant Personality Disorder

Clinical Vignettes
Avoidant Personality Disorder

- Prevalence: 0.5-1% of population
- Sex ratio: M=F
- Comorbidity: Social phobia, depression, anxiety
- Family: Cluster C disorders
Avoidant Personality Disorder

Treatment

• Psychotherapy - Individual and group therapy, typically interpersonal (IPT), is the treatment of choice

• Medication - Antidepressants and anxiolytics are often useful for accompanying depression and anxiety
Avoidant Personality Disorder

Physician-patient Interaction

- Unconditional respect and concern are very helpful
- Avoid implications of rejection
- Be aware that even a limited personal interaction may be very important, and its loss very distressing