

# Personality disorders



On the open, mixed-gender Ward Des Alpes 3, the focus is on treating patients with affective disorders and personality disorders with suicidal and self-harming behaviour.

A member of the Michel group



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### Characteristics

Borderline personality disorder (as described in DSM-IV) is clinically complex. It is characterised by:

1. Fear of abandonment
2. Unstable interpersonal relationships (idealisation vs. debasement)
3. Instability of self-image
4. Dysfunctional impulse control (substance abuse, sexuality, binge eating)
5. Suicidal or self-harming actions
6. Affective instability
7. Chronic feeling of emptiness
8. Unreasonable, intense anger
9. Paranoid or dissociative symptoms

### Causes

Etiologically, early trauma (sexual abuse, emotional neglect) is very frequently found (in up to 70% of cases), with emotional dysregulation on the neurobiological level.

### Treatment

A detailed psychiatric examination and diagnosis are carried out initially. The treatment is based on dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT) as defined by Marsha Linehan, with a treatment team consisting of specially trained nursing staff, psychologists, body therapists and physicians.

Key aims of the therapy are the improvement of distress tolerance and emotional regulation as well as the enhancement of interpersonal skills. The therapy components are structured around a treatment period of 3–4 months. It is important to arrange the transition to outpatient treatment upon completion of the inpatient therapy.