

Thinking Clearly About Personality Disorders

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The New York Times:

For years they have lived as orphans and outliers, a colony of misfit characters on their own island: the bizarre one and the needy one, the untrusting and the crooked, the grandiose and the cowardly.

Their customs and rituals are as captivating as any tribe's, and at least as mystifying. Every mental anthropologist who has visited their world seems to walk away with a different story, a new model to explain those strange behaviors.

This weekend the Board of Trustees of the American Psychiatric Association will vote on whether to adopt a new diagnostic system for some of the most serious, and striking, syndromes in medicine: personality disorders.

Personality disorders occupy a troublesome niche in psychiatry. The 10 recognized syndromes are fairly well represented on the self-help shelves of bookstores and include such well-known types as narcissistic personality disorder, avoidant personality disorder, as well as dependent and histrionic personalities.

Read the whole story: [*The New York Times*](#)