

Paranoia

Paranoia is the irrational and persistent feeling that people are 'out to get you' or that you are the subject of persistent, intrusive attention by others. This unfounded mistrust of others can make it difficult for a person with paranoia to function socially or have close relationships. Paranoia may be a symptom of a number of conditions, including paranoid personality disorder, delusional (paranoid) disorder and schizophrenia.

The cause of paranoia is unknown but genetics are thought to play a role. People with this disorder: Doubt the commitment, loyalty, or trustworthiness of others, believing others are exploiting or deceiving them. They are reluctant to confide in others or reveal personal information because they are afraid the information will be used against them. Are unforgiving and hold grudges.

Paranoid symptoms may range from mild to severe. They depend on the cause but, generally, a person who is paranoid may:

- Be easily offended
- Find it difficult to trust others
- Not cope with any type of criticism
- Assign harmful meanings to other people's remarks
- Be always on the defensive
- Be hostile, aggressive and argumentative
- Not be able to compromise
- Find it difficult, if not impossible, to 'forgive and forget'
- Assume that people are talking ill of them behind their back
- Be overly suspicious – for example, think that other people are lying or scheming to cheat them
- Not be able to confide in anyone
- Find relationships difficult
- Consider the world to be a place of constant threat
- Feel persecuted by the world at large
- Believe in unfounded 'conspiracy theories'.

While there is no absolute cure for the conditions that cause paranoia, treatment can help the person cope with their symptoms and live a happier, more productive life. Treatment depends on the condition diagnosed as its cause, and may include treatment by psychological therapy or medication.

Resources:

Understanding Paranoia

Self-help for paranoia

ABC for paranoia-psychosis

What is Paranoia?

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/paranoia>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/paranoia/about-paranoia/>

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-paranoia-personality-disorder-21950>

