

Chronic Responsibility Avoidance Personality - A Subset of Avoidant Personality Disorder?

Michael F Shaughnessy*

Department of Special Education, Eastern New Mexico University, New Mexico, USA

*Corresponding author: Shaughnessy MF, Department of Special Education, Eastern New Mexico University, New Mexico, USA, Tel: 575-562-2791; E-mail: michael.shaughnessy@enmu.edu

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Abstract

On occasion, observant clinicians observe certain things in their cultural milieu or zeitgeist that bear examination. Since COVID there has been a number of personality issues that have been examined in the culture of Personality Disorders. This paper examines a potential subset of Cluster C- of the Personality Disorders of the DSM-5.

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-5 [1] contains a number of “personality disorders.” A few are listed on page 645. These are:

- Paranoid personality disorder
- Schizoid Personality disorder
- Schizotypal Personality Disorder
- Antisocial Personality Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Histrionic Personality Disorder
- Narcissistic Personality Disorder
- Avoidant Personality Disorder
- Dependent Personality Disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
- Personality change due to another medical condition
- Other specified personality disorder and unspecified personality disorder.

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These personality “disorders” have been written about and reviewed in many abnormal psychology textbooks and training texts. Robinson [2,3]. In this paper, the author will review and discuss certain personality features that could possibly be subsumed under “Avoidant Personality Disorder” or “Dependent Personality Disorder.

In a recent excellent paper, this author Shaughnessy [4] has cogently discussed the appearance of certain personality that seem to draw the attention of the populace. In this most recent piece, the personality of Roy Kent of the television series Ted Lasso was highlighted bringing certain personality issues to the fore.

1. A Brief Description

In any work environment, there are those who arrive at work ready to perform their assigned tasks and some go “above and beyond “what is required. There are others who are chronic avoiders of any new assignment or any old assignment and thus cause consternation and often chaos in the work environment. There may be long diatribes as to why the person does not want to begin their work complete their work and take pride in their work. There are gradations of these avoidant personalities.

2. The “Absent Member” Maneuver

Some of these workers who chronically avoid work often call in sick and they have a variety of reasons for their absence- Some cite a medical appointment, others a dental appointment, others a chiropractic appointment and some others provide somewhat suspect reasons- a taxidermy appointment or an embalming appointment and others a psychiatric (perhaps much-needed appointment).

3. The “Whiner”

This individual manifest what is termed L.F.T. (they have Low Frustration Tolerance) and this is loosely translated into impatience in terms of engaging in or performing tasks or completing tasks. They have a number of “excuses”, some palatable some esoteric and some tangential. When confronted about the accountability that they have to a project or task, they have a list of subtle medical reasons for their not engaging in the task at hand.

4. The Bathroom Buoy

This individual spends a good amount of time on their cell phone in the bathroom. The cell phone obviously allows them to communicate via text message or email and to make it appear that they are “ on the job” The bathroom also provides a place for them to snack and smoke and to feign diarrhea or to use some plausible excuse- for example “I am on Lasix or Furosimide and I have to continually excuse myself to urinate-It prevents A-Fib” In some instances they will use more esoteric medical terminology such as “ I have Barlow’s Syndrome” (Yes, I had to look it up).

5. The Walker and Talker

This individual has mastered the art of avoiding work by talking in a loud tone of voice and walking and talking thus giving the appearance of a devoted workaholic and they are anything but!

The “walker and talker” is often found entering the bathroom with another person, getting situated in the stall and then launching into a long diatribe as to how tired they are and how stressed they are,

6. No Fire Drill Today

Some of these avoidant people have a plethora of diversions when confronted about their absence or lack of contributions. They have a question at the ready such as “I heard we have a fire drill today” is that correct? Apparently, some fire drills allow people to leave the building and often not return- depending on the timing of the fire drill. Discussing the latest fire drill is yet another diversion to avoid and escape work.

7. The Running Documentary

In the movie “Office Space” the hero of the movie enters into a hypnotic trance due to the fact that as he says” every day is worse than the one before. There are individuals who recount every last visit with their mental health specialist- be they a counselor, social worker psychologist or psychiatrist. The average worker in a business has no real interest in their “parataxic distortion: or transference- thus no further responsibility is placed on this person [5].

8. The Lottery Winner

In some work environments, the lowly workers who are getting minimum wage are determined to use every last hour of their sick leave. In some places, there is apparently some sort of contest to see who can call in sick the most. This contest begins January 1 and continues to Christmas. The winner gets some sort of recognition from their peers.

9. Summary and Conclusions

As most readers will attest, there are some individuals that are simply lazy or unmotivated. It is generally agreed upon that about 90 percent of the work is actually done by about 10 percent of the workers. One can ascertain the source of this if they so desire but the reader can also ignore the infinitely small probability of my being wrong.

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