

**Bangor University**

## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

### **Living with psychiatric labels**

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Interview Transcript "Alex"

Emergent Themes	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
	<p>I: Can you tell me how you came to receive a personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: Well...um...what it is, is that I tried to commit suicide in 2012 and then I had to speak to about 3 or 4 psychiatrists and then they finally diagnosed me with a personality disorder... which was pretty shocking for me. So then I didn't understand what it was yeah, and now obviously I do.</p> <p>I: how did that make you feel at the time?</p> <p>P: More depressed 'cos I didn't understand about it. Just big words...couldn't take it all in.....</p> <p>I: so at that time you didn't really know what to make of it?</p> <p>P: no....just confusing...and then you had to go on medication which you don't know what it is like...which paranoids me even more 'cos you don't know what the medication is. I don't know whether I should take it or not, whether it has funny effects. I'm paranoid about taking any pills. Now I've taken them for over two years now yeah which...they're alright yeah they're not too bad. It's just medication isn't it?</p>	

	<p>I: so what does the diagnosis mean to you?</p> <p>P: It's just that I have a mood and personality switch. Sometimes I can be alright, the next minute I'll be not myself yeah. I just get angry quick. It makes me get in trouble all the time with the police and stuff. I don't understand it, I still don't understand it fully, just...take it day by day. That's all I can do until the medication properly sorts out, what I take.</p> <p>I: has the diagnosis influenced your life?</p> <p>P: well...it's not influenced my life, it's...I think it's put it on hold until I find out exactly what's wrong yeah....like properly what's wrong until I understand all the facts more fully. I don't really understand properly what it is but all I know is that, as I say, I'm always getting in trouble. So maybe that's part of why I get in trouble. Cause I haven't got a care in the world, apart from my medication yeah. So it's hard yeah...to understand.</p> <p>I: You mentioned that it's quite hard to understand, can you tell me a bit about how the people who gave you the diagnosis explained it to you what it meant?</p> <p>P: Not really no. They haven't explained hardly anything. They just throw medication at the whole thing, which is...it don't help me in a</p>	
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way. If I understood exactly what I've got then maybe I could sort it out myself. Obviously with the medication, it helps but if I don't understand fully what it means then I don't understand...but then every time I ask the psychiatrist they they can't tell me nothing...so it's just living on a guess of what it means...but I don't understand what it means.

I: how does that make you feel?

P: Angry. 'Cos it's not giving me a chance to understand the facts, but like I say every time you ask the psychiatrist he don't tell you nothing. He just says oh yeah we'll put your medication up, we'll double it, they just keep doubling it and doubling it but it don't...it does help sometimes the medication does help but then if I wake up in a bad mood then I can't, I just can't shake it, even if I take my pills. It just don't move...and then obviously I end up getting arrested for things that I don't want to go out and do, I just have to go out and do, 'cos it's the only way of dealing with it. You can't just sit indoors and frown on it because it just makes you heated, even more heated, so you have to be out doing things you shouldn't be doing.

I: Is that the way you cope with difficulties?

P: Yeah, by locking myself away, locking myself

in my bedroom and just pretend I'm back in prison again. It's easier when you're in there. It's just you're locked in a room all day so you aint got no one doing your head in or....it's just peace and quiet, you just sleep all day. I just take my pills and then just crash. Until the morning or even when I have my lunch or dinner. But apart from that...it's all I can do, either lock myself away but then if I lock myself away then I've also got my son and my daughter to face yeah. I can't be angry in front of them cause then they'll pick up that I'm angry, and I don't want social services and everyone getting involved because of my mood and personality disorder. So I don't know what to think anymore.

I: it sounds like you have some difficult things to deal with..

P: yeah, it is difficult, it's not easy. If people say it's easy they're wrong yeah. 'Cos it's not them who have got to live with it. I've got to live with it for the rest of my life which aint that easy.

I: what about how other people relate to you? Can you tell me you have found that there have been differences in the way people are towards you since you've had the diagnosis?

P: Yeah, they talk to you like you're stupid. But really yeah it's like um...I was on a probation

meeting, um probation thinking skills and um...they were explaining that....a similar thing that I've got where as I take medication for what I've got but they were saying about Mohammed Ali and how he used to go into the fight intimidating people and that he's always on a level ground. Well that's just the same thing about my medication, they keep me on a level ground, unless that's obviously like I say I wake up in a mood or wake up happy yeah. If I wake up happy then I'm fine all day, if I wake up in a mood then I'm bad all day yeah. Same as him yeah. I could go into a fight now and just intimidate them yeah or beat them up badly but they would think that I'm an easy target, but really yeah they don't know what I've got deep inside. I've got too much anger inside, it just that um...the medication hasn't got rid of, which makes me even more, think more about what I've got and what they think of me. Obviously they're not the ones who have to live with a disorder, whereas I've got to live with it and think about it every day, how it can affect me...if I was to lose it. 'Cos obviously if I lose it then it's me getting banged up, banged up back in prison...which I can't afford now I've got a son and my daughter to think about. I have to keep my head straight, which is pretty hard.

I: What about your family, have you talked to them about your diagnosis?

P: Well my mum and that they live in (place name), I've spoken to my mum, when she lived here she used to come to every meeting with me. So she basically heard what they said but she...she don't know how to deal with it either because obviously she's not in my body and doesn't know what's going through my mind every day...but they know exactly what I've got. Um...my dad he can't really say a lot 'cos I haven't seen him for about two years, well since I was in prison that's when I saw him last. Um....but they've always known that I had something wrong with me but they just didn't know what. So really they can't speak yeah, they don't know what's going on. But my brothers and that they know they've known since we were kids that I had something wrong with me, just the way I've been, not caring about anyone else, just caring about myself. Whereas everyone else just walks about... walks around with they're head down, I walk with my head up 'cos...I've got no care in the world. Well I have now yeah, I've got kids yeah and my misses yeah and I can't afford to lose them right now, 'cos if I lose them right now then...I'll have nothing left to lose, so then I'll go out and do something mad. It's not going to help me in but it could help in the long run. That's about all really.

I: so how have they responded to the diagnosis, has it changed the way that they are with you?

<p>P: Not really, they're still the same as what they used to be but obviously... they've had to come to terms that...they have to be a bit more understanding. They've got to understand how I feel and why I do what I do because...if they didn't then they carry on the way they are then...obviously things will go tits up and I'd end up losing my family completely...which I don't really want to do because my family means a lot to me, especially my dad. They mean a hell of a lot. If I didn't have them then I probably wouldn't be here myself. In 2012 when I committed, tried to commit suicide I didn't want to be here. I still don't want to be here but like I say I've always... haven't got a choice 'cos I need to be there for my son and my daughter. So...I just have to be here, even if I like it or not, I just have to keep going.</p> <p>I: is it something that you feel comfortable talking about, the diagnosis?</p> <p>P: I've never had to really speak about it before, so this is a new thing for me. Obviously you speak to the psychiatrist but that's just about putting your medication up or reducing the medication, which I can't understand yeah. When they diagnosed me in 2012 and then I went to prison (4 months later), when I got to prison, when I was in the actual prison itself and they ask you what medication you take and everything and I told them exactly what I take</p>	
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and what I've got and what disorder I've got, but they chose to take the decision on themselves that I was only allowed to take my Mirtazipine...but they wouldn't let me take the Quetiapine...which probably screwed my head up even more because obviously if you've been diagnosed with something and you have to take that medication, you need that medication but the prison did not understand that and they couldn't get hold of the doctor's records or anything. So I wasn't allowed to take the medication whilst I was in there.

I: why not?

P: because they say that the medication is worth a lot of money but obviously I wouldn't sell the medication because I need it myself. So trying to explain to them that I need it and they didn't really care. All they care about is that you get banged up 23 hours a day doing nothing. You have your lunch at 12.30, your dinner at 5 and then go back to bed. You just have to go along with it.

I: it sounds like you had a lot going on then, to get a diagnosis and go to prison not long after

P: yeah it was yeah

I: and then to not be allowed the medication you've been prescribed

<p>P: yeah, it was hard yeah. It was really hard, but you just had to push through it, keep going yeah. A lot of people in jail they can't keep going and they have to kill themselves they...well about three or four of my mates committed suicide when I was in there</p> <p>I: I'm very sorry to hear that</p> <p>P: it was really hard yeah. But then obviously you know far more about what was going on in their minds than the screws or anyone else knows what's going on. One of my friends... he'd been in jail for about five years, on and off, but on his last stretch, a six month stretch his mum died of an um...died of cancer and his dad died of a heart attack and then...two months after that his wife wanted a divorce and then got with his brother...that screwed him up pretty bad. All you can do is try and be there for your friends yeah. I know people say don't mix with people in prison, don't make any friends but they're just, they're just the same as me. They've either been...they've blatantly got something wrong with them otherwise...why would they do the things they do. Why would they need to take drugs? It just the way they deal with things. It's the same as me, how I deal with things is not the way I should deal with things...but that's just me, the way I deal with things. Whereas you deal with things in a different way. I just explode, whereas most</p>	
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<p>people they hold it in or they do it in their own home, or go to the gym and smash the boxing bag. I'd rather go out and if someone looks at me dodgy then I just....I flip out, you know. It's wrong, I know it's not right, it's just the way it's got to be. I can't stay indoors otherwise I could just smash the house in, and I don't want to do that. I used to just smash my stuff but then I thought to myself I paid £400 for things or £500 for things that I want and then I go and break it over a stupid little thing...which I can't afford to do anymore. I went and bought an x-box 1, that cost me the best part of £700 or £800 and I thought I'm not going to flip out and smash that up because it's too much money to lose. Same as my telly it cost me a grand and a half, I aint going to smash that up, it costs too much...and plus if I smash these things then my son's got nothing to do. I mean he obviously can't play it if it's broken, it's just cutting his life a bit...which I'm not doing. I didn't have a lot growing up...so I want him to have as much as he wants, even if that does make him spoilt, I want him to have what he wants. The same with my daughter, whenever she wants something she can have it, but then if....this is why I can't understand that the police are looking at it a completely different way, how can I have so much money? They don't think that I get my money legally whereas in these last few months I've started receiving PIP and I've started receiving um...ESA, which I get</p>	
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£900 a month. The police still think that's drug money. So every time they pull me over or they check my wallet, they're always like 'where's this money come from? Don't make us have to take you down the station' and all this. But then....all I've got to do is show them the paperwork I have indoors that shows that I'm getting £900 a month, but even if I showed them the paperwork showing £900 a month they still don't believe the paperwork. It's just stupid, the police around here they're just... because I'm now a district target because I'm up for (name of offence). But they just think what they want to think, they don't care what anyone else thinks or how they feel or....they've just been targeting me since I've been here. Since they found out I've been to prison, they've been targeting me since I've been here. Which I think it pretty wrong if I'm honest, I came here for a fresh start. I went to prison because I couldn't get along with, I can't get along with my girlfriends properly yeah, like I either cheat on them or I get angry with them and they have to end up getting restraining orders...and then I breach them yeah because I can't understand why they've got them, it's not like I have been violent towards them or anything like that, well in the past I have been violent towards girls but then everyone says a leopard never changes its spots but then if a leopard wants to change its spots then it will change its spots. I haven't done nothing wrong

since...well...2012, I haven't done anything but I still get penalised because of my past.

I: do the police know about your mental health difficulties?

P: yeah they know about them yeah, but they choose to ignore that fact. Whereas when I lived in England, if you got arrested there was a...a different kind of police there yeah. You had like a disability police, so instead of taking you down to the police station they take you to like...that one down there was (place name) which is basically the same as the Hergest unit. They used to keep me there until gone 3, 4, 5 in the morning sometimes, it all depends on how I got taken in, but...the police up here they're just...arrogant, they don't care what you've got or what problems that you...you know you've got, they don't know what you've got but...if they...they have the choice to ring up my social worker but they don't, they just take it into their own hands. Whereas I would prefer them to...instead of just coming to my address, arresting me for nothing really yeah, instead of that go and ask people about my, what I've got wrong with me instead of discriminating me cos of what's on my record...which I...I just...they do it every day, even if they see me on the street they give me dirty looks, they call me a criminal, whereas it's their job to keep the peace, not to harass me, which they've been

harassing me now since January of last year and they can't...they just can't seem to leave me alone...which I don't get myself yeah. I've been arrested in different places, I've been arrested in (place name), and when I got arrested there I had this police officer...um...PC (name) it was, but he used to come and deal with me every time, but he knew how to deal with me yeah. He'd come in and speak to me or whatever or he's take time off and come to my mum's address, yeah he might swear at me and everything but at least he knew how to deal with me, just bring it down a notch yeah. 'stop acting cocky' that's what he used to tell me, but obviously since then I've been diagnosed with what I've got and obviously the voices in my head I can't tell them...if I tell them it's the voices in my head telling me what to do and that, they look at you like you're a freak. Because they obviously don't have that, they don't understand how it feels to have someone in your head telling you what to do every day for god knows how long yeah. I obviously don't know how long it's going to be there and the medication don't...don't kick it out the way, it's always there but obviously when you're getting too stressed, that's when it's there the most. Doctors they turn around and say 'well are you sure it's not your own thoughts?' it's not my voice, so it can't be my thoughts because if it was then it would be my voice, but it's not. It's an older man but I don't know who's voice it is,

I don't...I don't read into it that much.  
Obviously if I hear something then I...I smash  
my head up on the wall.

I: have you been offered any other help apart  
from medication?

P: no, I had um...oh what was it...I had a woman  
in the (name) unit that I used to go and see like  
every month or every couple of weeks, but then  
um she left to be a nurse, a mental health nurse  
and um...ever since then all they're given me is  
(name) but he only sees me when he wants to  
see me. We used to have appointments every  
week but now we don't, it's rare that we have  
appointments every couple of months. So really  
I'm just sitting indoors...just thinking about  
what's wrong and like not being able to speak  
to anyone. It's not like I can...I can't speak to my  
partner, she doesn't understand properly.  
Obviously if they...if they had a big booklet  
telling you exactly or instructions on what to do  
yeah then she's understand.

I: does she know about the diagnosis?

P: she knows about the diagnosis yeah but  
she...she's not...she's just in the same boat as  
me. We're not clued up. It's not really... we can't  
understand what they're talking about but like  
I say if they made an instruction manual. How  
to use it and what to do with it or what to think

about it then people would understand. But obviously you can understand what you can see now is just the outside, but in the inside it's battered and bruised, 'cos it don't understand itself. Whereas, like I'm saying, no-one knows exactly how to deal with it. They can throw loads of things at it but it might...there's no guarantee that it's going to work.

I: so do you feel that people aren't taking the time to understand what it is that's going on for you?

P: yeah I think that is the case yeah. Like I say if everyone knew, the police knew, everyone who knows me knew, if they knew exactly what I had then that would defuse the situations or...just just listen...then people would understand a lot more. They would understand a lot more, but like I know a man, he's...like one of my brother's friends, he's on the same medication as me, he's on 750mg a day, but it's taken him the best part of 20 years to get where he is now, and he can still flip like that. But like he's older than me, he's not that much older than me, but I'll end up in the same boat as what he's in now because there's not a guaranteed way to stop the way I think and the way I do things, or the way I can't get rid of the...it's basically a disability, I can't get rid of it. It's just going to be stuck there the rest of my life, not knowing how to, how to do things, not



<p>knowing what to do to stop myself getting into trouble. It's just going to keep ending up as, the police are going to keep banging me up until obviously I end up dead yeah, which I don't know when that'll be yeah. If they keep banging me up it won't be long yeah, 'cos I can't afford to keep going back to prison, I'll just lose it. I just about get a new, fresh start and then I end up getting banged up. It's just like last time, I'd only just moved here that year and then we'd got...I was making a fresh start, I was getting to know people, I was speaking to people like friends and that. Whereas before I wouldn't even leave the front door but then I moved here and I was like doing things, I started meeting people, seeing to people and then they bang me up in jail and then I come back out of jail and do the same thing again. Can't afford to go out and like introduce myself to new people and that because now they know about my past, because they tell you that these things don't go in the newspapers and stuff, but when you...when you're on trial for a serious offence, it all gets written up, it's always in the newspaper and they tell them exactly where you live. When I was arrested for what was it.....driving without a licence in (place name), when I was living down there and...um...I got...they were trying to do me for hit and run and driving with no licence and insurance, and that was banged in the newspaper. So everyone knew who I was before everyone else knew who I was, so then</p>	
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that's basically followed me everywhere I've moved cos...news travels far, it's everywhere. But now I'm up for (crime) that's going to make my life even more hell because then people are just going to look at me and think he's just a scumbag, which in fact I'm not yeah, I just get myself involved with people that I shouldn't get myself involved with. People I speak to and people I see every day...that's my problem, I find trouble wherever I go, just even if I...even if I'm sitting indoors trouble comes and finds me.

I: have you got any thoughts on why that may be?

P: I haven't got a clue. I don't exactly understand why but it just...it is everywhere I've been so far, there's not a place I haven't been that I haven't been arrested in. Like I moved here and within around 6/7 months of moving here I was banged up, and then I was arrested as I moved....I come out of prison, I kept myself clean cos I had to do 6 weeks on a licence...and then after my licence had finished the police were banging on my door for something but I...I um...the reason I went to prison is because I breached a suspended sentence and um...obviously I had problems with my ex-partner, she wouldn't leave me alone and before I went to prison she still wouldn't leave me alone. The way she used to

do it was she had like an injunction on me so that I couldn't go near her yeah, which I didn't want to go near her cos obviously I moved here so she was three hundred something miles away from me but she still text me, winding me up and that but the understanding, what I can't understand why, myself, personally yeah is if I'm not allowed to contact her and abuse her or anything like that yeah, why why can she still contact me and put my life through hell yeah. But since I've been here and since I've been with my new bird, my new bird yeah, like...my past still manages to catch up with me. They obviously read up on facebook oh yeah he's in a relationship with blah de blah and then all the shit starts coming back. 'Oh yeah did you know that he used to beat me, did you know that he done this to me' and everything else yeah, so every time I get with someone new it's all thrown up in my face because people are just, they can't leave things, they just have to thrive on whatever they're thriving on yeah. They have to get it out of their system what they've got in there, whereas I don't understand it personally yeah. If I have a grievance with somebody, it doesn't matter if it's 12 months or 2 years later, I know they're still in my brain somewhere. I can sit there and wait for a long time before I snap, but obviously with day to day life with this disorder, I could probably hold something in for about 3 years and then I will have to explode. Obviously it's not good to

<p>keep things in, you should tell people yeah...but I have trouble...it's the same as when I was in school, whatever I had in my brain and they wanted me to put that on paper, I couldn't get it from the brain to the paper, it's like I can't get it from the brain to the mouth properly either yeah, I can't exactly just open up and spill it all out yeah cos there's too much in there to spill. Which is well it's hard for me, I don't know if it is hard for other people with disabilities, they've probably been diagnosed for years and they know how the system works or whatever else...but obviously being only diagnosed for 2, well 2 years, it will be in 3 in (month- 8 months time), it's harder for me to actually just tell everyone exactly what's wrong with me.</p> <p>I: how do you think people might react to that diagnosis?</p> <p>P: I don't know how they'll react but I know that some people they throw themselves out of that situation. If I was to tell, I don't know, some of the lads round here they'd think 'oh he's an easy target', but I know deep down inside that I'm no easy target yeah, I will fight my way out of anything. Well if I had the choice I wouldn't fight, I'd rather talk my way out but if it's some little annoying little kid or bloke, like a youngster, 20 or something...I'd...in my head I'd have to show him exactly what I mean yeah. I couldn't just turn around and say look</p>	
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mate, you don't know what you're messing with yeah, I've got a disability, I can't say oh yeah I've got a disability, just leave me alone yeah. I'd have to go over and proper smack him yeah, I couldn't just talk to him, cos he's just not going to understand. He's only a youngster he doesn't understand what's going on. Like if he went and spoke to someone with schizophrenia or something yeah and they've only been on the medication a couple of years, it doesn't matter yeah, if he started on them, they're either just going to stab him or kill him, they could go back to sleep and they aint going to wake up thinking 'oh I killed someone', they're going to wake up fresh 'oh I didn't do nothing last night, I just stayed in'. That's exactly how I do it...I could be there at night and have an argument with my misses at night, take my medication and as soon as I wake up in the morning I can't remember nothing. It's just one of them. I wouldn't know if I'd done something the night before or not. She has a go at me because I sleep too long but it's the medication as well yeah, they turn you literally turn you into a zombie. The medication I was on before was um...2 anti-depressants, they put me on 50mg ones and 45mg ones, but literally yeah, I couldn't even move out of bed, I was literally a zombie. I would just sit there watching TV in bed, or if I didn't I'd wake up for about 5 minutes, look around the room and then I'd be gone again, back to sleep, which is pretty...it's

<p>terrifying for me yeah, I don't know what's going to be the next step, whether I'm going to go to sleep and not wake up or go to sleep and get up well angry in the morning and just go out and do something stupid. I can't say what I'm going to do. Whereas some people they get up in the morning and take the kids to school, go shopping and do whatever they've got to do and go home. I could...I could say that the night before but then I won't get up until 5 o'clock in the evening, so I can't exactly say oh yeah I'll get up in the morning and I'm going to do this and do that, when I don't know if I can or am, I don't know whether I'm going to wake up and then be able to do the things that I'm doing, 'cos I have to wake up and take the medication straight away in the morning, 'cos if I don't take the medication then the...confusing things happen yeah, I just get into random arguments, it doesn't matter who with. I can just go into town and see someone and just not like them...and just kick off there, but the...my main problem is the police. That's my main problem. I don't really have a lot, well...a lot of people are scared of me now...just for the fact that I hang around with the wrong people...but...yeah...like I say it's just the police. They don't know how to take me...like they think I'm proper violent and everything else.</p> <p>[part of the interview omitted for confidentiality reasons due to discussion of</p>	
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current offence under investigation]

The police hate me round here and there's nothing I can do personally to make them...any different. In their eyes I'm a criminal, and I'll always be a criminal in their eyes. The last time I was arrested was in (month) of last year and I haven't been in trouble since then but it...yeah the police are still asking questions around the street and then people are obviously coming back to me and saying 'do you know the police are still asking questions about you around the streets?' and it makes me feel even more gutted because...it's like they're spreading the rumour so that everyone can hate me yeah... they already look at me like I'm dirt and scum anyway. Someone that I know turned around and confronted me in the street a few months back saying oh yeah that I'm scum, so I just turned around and said maybe you should look closer to home, your son is a dirty drug dealer, except no-one even looks at him, but fucking you had to come up to me and say everything to me. He ended up having to walk off cos I was just going to knock him out otherwise. My girlfriend and everyone was holing me back...I just wanted to hit him. It's just he made me feel so small that I didn't know what to think anymore...but obviously I just looked at it as a lucky escape. Maybe if they didn't hold me back I would have hurt him and then been arrested again, and I probably wouldn't have been here

now, I'd have been in jail by now. It's just the way it is yeah. The way the system works it's too messed up.

I: so having the diagnosis, does that change the way you see yourself?

P: yeah it's changed the way I see myself yeah. I...I...it has changed me yeah, but...it hasn't...sometimes it changes me for the best yeah

I: in what way?

P: well...cos I...cos I take the medication yeah. I went, before I started taking the hefty medication, the psychiatrist before only put me on like 25 or 50 or something like that...but like an idiot he turned around and said the pills only wear off in 2 hours, they don't last that long yeah, so about...when I was taking them I thought oh yeah they last from pill to pill to pill yeah, and that's when I was on 25, 3 times a day, so I was thinking they're lasting from pill to pill to pill and then he turns around and says yeah but they only last 2 hours, but I know deep in my heart now yeah, I know that these medication that I'm on now are lasting from pill to pill to pill, because...I can feel the difference, but then, like I say, some days...since I've been on these pills now for about a month...um... they work for the first couple of weeks, 2-3



weeks they work, but then once I have to go back for more, well just before, they seem not to work anymore. It's cos I'm getting used to them, well I'm...I'm not getting addicted to them but I know when I have to take them and what times and everything. They sort of fade off yeah, they don't work as well until obviously I get the next lot and then he doubles them and then it hits me for the first 3 weeks again and then after that it'll just wear off...but they do work for like the first 3 weeks and then they just start to fade off. There's not a lot I can do about it, I can ring up the psychiatrist and say I need more and he'll turn around and say well, we'll have to discuss that at your next session, but waiting a whole month aint helping me. Well I can see him every month but he's still going to have the same argument with me like we had the last time. Me and the psychiatrist had an argument because he was telling me one thing, he was saying 'well I'm going to put them up to 300s if you can last out of your medication taking 300mg a night and 100mg in the morning' but I'd already told him I haven't got enough medication to last me till then yeah, to do that sort of like change, and he was like um...he kept on arguing 'I've told you just do it' yeah. I said I haven't got enough so how can I do it and he said 'just do it'. I'd had enough yeah I just turned around and said basically just fuck off yeah. I'm telling you I haven't got the medication so I can't do it yeah, and just walked

<p>out and then I received a letter saying to go there on the (date). But...he...they don't understand that...yeah they're psychiatrists they learn about it every day, they understand it, well they think they understand it but in fact they're just like every other normal person, they do not know what's going on in my brain... which is....it just annoys me to think that people actually know more about it than what I do but a psychiatrist just reads it in a book or online, he aint inside my brain to listen to what's going on, to actually listen to what's going around and going on. So really yeah, I'm probably more clued up than what they all are because I haven't had to read that, I've had to live it. It's dead annoying yeah.</p> <p>I: yeah, I can see that. Do you feel differently about yourself since you've had the diagnosis? Has it changed anything?</p> <p>P: It's not...It's not exactly changed me for the best yeah. It has in a way changed me for the best cos I haven't kicked off, I haven't flipped out, because of the actual fact, like I say, that I don't go anywhere anymore. I have to, I just stay indoors because it's just that it's a hundred times easier if I stay indoors then I can't be arrested for anything. If I go out, like to come here, I'm always looking over my shoulder to make sure that there's no one behind me like the police or anything they've put me on so</p>	
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much of a paranoia because the way they come across is well 'you're a criminal, you've done something wrong, why are you looking over your shoulder?' because of you lot... you're harassing me but they all they...they don't understand, they just think I'm just another common criminal, filth on my shoe, but it's the other way around they're the filth on my shoe because they...just...it's like a stain on a pair of trousers you can't wash it off, they're always there. It gets me irate, just thinking about them. They don't understand.

I: so since you've been diagnosed has the diagnosis helped you to understand yourself?

P: not properly, I'm still young and it's going to take a fair few years before I even know myself. I'm not that, I'm not that up on everything, yeah I'm quite slow... for me yeah, for a lad yeah, most other lads they're proper quick yeah, whereas if I want to do something it's gonna take... it'll probably take me a day maybe two days to think of what to do and that's...that could be after what's happened but...it's it's just confusing for me to not know exactly what's wrong with me...what...what....I honestly don't think yeah that maybe everyone should get a... if there was like a group, like a... alcohol anonymous yeah where like everyone in that room are, like, alcoholics so they know exactly what all the other...what each of them are going

through. So why can't they do that for people with all these disorders, cos then maybe some people could have been sitting there with um...what 40 years 50 years and they know exactly what it is. So then they can maybe make us understand exactly what it is, and be like... like... 'we know this' 'that that never happened' 'because the psychiatrist just reads a bit of paper- you've got that'. Like a friend of mine, they told her yeah you've got bipolar, she doesn't even know what bipolar is. I don't even know what bipolar is, but yeah...I've been told via someone else that I've got bipolar because it's basically saying that bipolar is something... it's like a sleeping disorder, well some of it is a sleeping disorder but some of it is other things. It's similar to what I have and they're on the same medication as to what I'm on but she's on...I think she's on 200s and she's not even with the mental health team...which makes me think that she's lying about what she's got just to get medication, cos she just takes medication for the fun of taking medication...but I take medication because I have been diagnosed with something so I know... I know that I've got to take my medication otherwise my life's just going to go tits up, I don't know what's going to happen. But to know that people take medication for the sake of taking medication, that just annoys me, cos... she, she walks around and you can see it yeah, she doesn't look like she's got anything wrong with her at

all, whereas I can walk down the street and people can tell that I've got something wrong with me.

I: in what way?

P: because ...I um...it's like you see those old women walking up and down the road and they have got a smile on their face, they're obviously happy yeah, they look like they haven't got a care in the world, they're just happy for living yeah. Whereas if you were to walk down the street, I could see other disabilities with people yeah...like if they're walking down the street and they're all like paranoid...they're not sure. If they're paranoid, half of them are on drugs anyway, that's the drugs yeah that are making them paranoid. But half of them, the ones who are paranoid, they're unsure of what's around the corner, so I can see that straight away yeah, but I can't see that in myself, but I can see it in other people, but...yeah other people...I've noticed a few people around here that I think to myself have got mental health issues yeah, but obviously they're not like me, they're not going to go and blab or spill what they've got inside, whereas I have to otherwise, like with the psychiatrist, I have to speak to them yeah because otherwise I'll flip out and lose my rag but other people they just deal with it by being paranoid and unsure, which I can't, I can't do anymore. It just makes my brain like spaghetti

junction, confused, and I do wake up like that some mornings, like moving...I'm not...I can't stand to do things...like I was living in a house in (place) for a while for two years and now we've had to move yeah. So moving into a new house is a bit of a setback I don't know what's going on yeah, one minute were in one house and then literally were in a new one, so I can't exactly understand why we had to move yeah, but in one sense I do understand because there was a rat yeah, so I killed it but she was scared that there would be more, and with a baby on the way. So she got in touch with the council in (place) and within about a month we had a letter through the door with a tenancy agreement to move into here but we couldn't move into here until after Christmas so obviously got the keys last week and just moved in. It's been quiet there but like I said, I'm not going to stay here cos this is where the police mainly target me, living here cos I used to live just down there, but they target me wherever I go so....If I'm over in (place)...they don't harass me as much, it's pretty quiet over there, there's not all these people walking around the streets like there is here, it's proper quiet. If you see anyone they're in a car or they're getting on the bus, it's proper dead. But I know for a fact that round here on the weekend there's a lot of people drinking and they do come and bang on your door. My mates used to come and bang on the door at about 3 o

	<p>clock in the morning, waking my mum up and everything, but now I've got kids yeah, if they come banging on the door then obviously I've got to wake up and do something about it because you don't know who it's going to be, and if they're drunk they could do almost anything...which...I don't want them thinking 'oh yeah, oh yeah, we can just walk around do what we want, we can bang on their door and get in and batter him' or something. I'm not going to allow that. I'm going to do everything I can to stop that...and then if I get arrested for that then that's...it's not my problem then. It's not my problem...cos they've come into my property and done what they've done...and I can't stop them, I can't stop them and the police aint going to deal with it because it's me. Last year I got beaten up and it was physically...it was...well, you could see that I'd been beaten up yeah, and the police didn't even do nothing, they just come around and looked at my face and said 'oh yeah, you have been beaten up yeah' and then went to the geezer and took money off him then went back to the police station. So they're on the bribe...which I can't understand. The police... no police are meant to take bribes. One of the coppers here takes speed, the other one takes...um... acid or something yeah, but I'm the one who's being penalised for what I've done in the past, which I honestly do not get.</p>	
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I: sounds like it a tough thing to have to carry around with you.

P: yeah, obviously people have known these coppers for years and they've lived here for years so they know them, but yeah...I smoke....I used to smoke a bit of weed yeah so obviously I know what weed does to you. I wouldn't go and take like pills or speed or anything like that because that could make my disorder even worse...than what it is now. But when you hear that the police are taking drugs and everything else, and you've got people to back that...well obviously you can't go and report them cos all the old bill stick together yeah...there's no way of getting around that, they're always going to be pally pally with each other, so....obviously I've just had to forget what's going on and what they've done yeah....but they still carry on at me, which I don't understand properly yeah. Whether it's me just over thinking or them actually doing it and getting away with it.

I: I've got one last question for you, seeing as I've kept you here for ages

P: that's alright

I: how important has the diagnosis been to you?

P: It's been important to find out what I've got



wrong with me yeah...and like I said at the beginning, it was 18 years to find out exactly what they've told me now, until 2012.... (tails off)

I: were you involved with mental health teams before then?

P: well...ever since I was about 8 years old that I first started...I first tried to commit suicide at 8, I tried hanging myself from my bedroom ceiling, and ever since then I've been with the mental health team, psychiatrists, people that...that haven't actually made a diagnosis, whereas, like I say I move to Wales and straight away they find out exactly what I've got and they're able to tell me what I've got, but not explain properly what I've got. Maybe if they did then I'd understand a bit more but ...as it is now yeah, I understand a little bit and I'm grateful for that even though I don't like taking medication, these medication are good for me...even if it does only work for 3 out of 4 weeks but yeah I'm glad that they have diagnosed me, because at least now I can build on what I've got and live with it...which is very good for me. Instead of going around and beating people up, well...just because I think it's fun, when it's not 'cos I've actually got something diagnosed so now I can stop doing that and maybe read up about...more about it, which I think....it's pretty good. Instead of

Interview Transcript "Alex"

	<p>running around like a lost chicken not knowing what's going on.</p> <p>I: have you got anything else you'd like to say about personality disorders or your experiences?</p> <p>P: no that's it really</p> <p>I: that's great, thank you.</p>	
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Interview Transcript "Elen"

Emergent themes	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
	<p>I: can you tell me how you came to receive a personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: um... it happened about fifteen years ago. Um... I lost my son at the age of six... no ten weeks.....I was charged with it but found not guilty after spending 12 months away from my other two children....and things weren't just going right. In and out of prison yet again ...um... seen a psychiatrist a few times but not recognising or dealing with things, with everyday life. They put it down to personality disorder because I wasn't getting on with people. I was getting rather angry and nasty but all days were not the same, some were good and some were not. When I'm on one with this disorder, this personality disorder I seem to back off or I don't want to go out 'cos I know I can ...um...lose it, and I just don't want that.</p> <p>I: yeah. So what does the diagnosis mean to you?</p> <p>P: I don't know, I don't understand it. All I know is that I lose my temper, I get angry with people. Even down to my sisters, I get nasty and bad tempered with them and I shouldn't do 'cos I've not seen them for 15 years and it does get to me. With this disorder, I just don't like it.....because I think it continues with this but goes on in my head. I think that I might just go for people, and I</p>	

	<p>don't do that, because I kept it down for so long...so... I just back off and go home.</p> <p>I: yeah. So, has the diagnosis influenced your life?</p> <p>P: yeah... I do sit back and look at people and see what they're like and what they're not like...and if they speak or start asking for stuff I just lose it and tell them to go away and leave me alone. 'Cos I get angry with it, and for them not to push me to the limit I just walk out and go home</p> <p>I: so, are you saying there that it has influenced the way you act sometimes?</p> <p>P: yeah...like I said I can have good days and there's days when they are bad, and I have these bad days when that's it I just don't go out, but I know I have to come out to go for appointments, doctors and things like that but I just don't want to. So ...I don't class myself as normal or like anybody else I just class myself as being non-normal.</p> <p>I: can you tell me a bit more about that?</p> <p>P: put it this way sometimes I feel like Jekyll and Hyde and it's..... rather scary and I don't like doing it so..... yeah... it's just a no go area with me. There are people, other people that's got it and they seem to be all right, you don't see that they've got it and when they say they have, that's</p>	
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	<p>it I just back off and go, just leave here. It's something I don't normally talk about.</p> <p>I: yeah. So, is it something that you've talked about with you family and friends?</p> <p>P: no, I don't talk to my family about it. Like I said I've not seen my two sisters for 15 years up until a fortnight ago, but I can't tell them that because my older sister has some brain disorder that's left her wasted and I will not discuss any of my problems with her. I've got to my sisters because I don't want them getting upset and whatever, no, I keep mine to myself.....my sisters, they've got enough on their plate on the moment without adding mine onto it.</p> <p>I: so you don't want to add to their stuff they've got going on?</p> <p>P: no, no I don't</p> <p>I: how do you think they might react if you did tell them about your personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: well I'd lose another 15 years of not seeing them, no, I can't do that, I can't. I don't even see my middle daughter, never mind my sisters. No... I do not put my issues and my problems on my sisters or my family. Whatever goes on up here, that's mine and for me to deal with, not my family. They can't deal with me and my other sister, no.</p>	
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	<p>I: so, do you think that if you were to tell them about this personality disorder diagnosis that they would back off?</p> <p>P: yeah... of course they will. People are scared of other people who have got this personality disorder because they think they are....what... Jekyll and Hyde or they.....are like, what, a monster. That's why I don't say nothing (long pause)</p> <p>I: yeah. So, has the diagnosis changed the way you see yourself?</p> <p>P: yeah...yeah...me... I used... I normally used the drink to get rid of it, to hide it, but the drink doesn't help 'cos in fact it makes it worse. So, no...my issue is getting on with it, cope with it. Other people can get medication for it to calm them down or to keep them on a level... but me I try to deal with it the best ways I can on a daily basis (long pause).</p> <p>I: So, do you see yourself differently now than before you had the diagnosis?</p> <p>P: um... to be honest with you I don't know. When I'm on one level when I know I can do things, I'm alright. When I know it's starting to go down-hill,</p>	
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	<p>that's it, I tell people can you back off please and I just go home and I lock my door and step away from it and deal with it the best way that I can. But not by....wrecking my flat or damaging what I've bought I just write it down the way I feel and what I want to do. Um...after about an hour...a couple of hours I feel alright with it.</p> <p>I: so that helps you to cope with the difficult stuff that comes up?</p> <p>P: yeah....yeah.... (tails off)</p> <p>I: So, has the personality disorder diagnosis changed the things that you do or the way that you think or feel?</p> <p>P: yeah... I feel...when this comes on I feel... anger um people are against me even if it's just normal talking. I just flip with it. I know it's not them, it's me. There's that much stuff that I want to do but I can't because when I come to do it I change...just like that and when I've changed I get angry and think I wish I would have done that sooner than later. Too late now for me to do anything.....so..... (long pause)</p> <p>I: So, has the personality disorder diagnosis been helpful in understanding yourself?</p> <p>P: understanding myself?...half the time I don't even understand what I do most of the time. I just</p>	
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	<p>do what I've got to do and if it's wrong, then that's that. I just back off then I go back and correct it or do right... or... no... understanding myself in what I do on a daily basis...no... there's too much up here for me to release what's going on up here ...but...too scared just in case it upsets people.. and I don't want to upset people. I just want to get on with life and do things on a normal daily basis.</p> <p>I: you mentioned earlier that you weren't really sure what a personality disorder diagnosis is, what it means , can you tell me a bit more about that?</p> <p>P: well... what it means...well... when I first found out that I was diagnosed with this personality disorder I only thought it happens in older people or people who use drugs, but I didn't know it can affect people who are drinkers or losing their family member, especially if it's a child. But now... thinking now... it's still a thing on a daily... daily... life. Personality disorder...what does it mean? And I keep trying to find out what it means and what it entails. The more I'm thinking and thinking, the more angry I'm getting that I just don't want to think about it. All I want to think about is that I don't want it...I don't. I wonder how many other people think that 'I don't want this personality disorder' just to want to get on and have a normal life, shop. That's another issue, shopping you want to go and do what you've got to do but you end up</p>	
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	<p>just having to put your shopping trolley down... stop your shopping trolley or put your shopping basket down and just get out of the store because you think that people are looking at you and that you've got two little horns on each corner (points at head), like ...no...I've got to get out I can't cope, I can't stay in the supermarket more than... what... five minutes... if I'm in the supermarket more than five minutes that's a miracle, it's a bonus, out in five minutes because I know that I want to pick an argument with somebody or get the bus and it stays at the bus stop, you want to tell them can you move up, can you hurry up because I'm getting rather agitated and nasty in myself. Well you can't, get off the bus if you're going to be like that. No, my routine with this up here (points at head), I can't pick or decide what I'm going to do tomorrow or decide what I'm going to do tonight, I can't do that. I've just got to do what I've got to do on a daily basis. That's what I've got to do on a daily basis, deciding what I wanna do. If I don't want to go out because I know up here (points at head) is gonna play, I won't. So I just take one day at a time and see how it goes.</p> <p>I: yeah. So, what about the people you work with, is the personality disorder diagnosis something that comes up with them?</p> <p>P: no, the people I work here (probation service) like (name and name), they're alright to speak to, because I can speak to them about whatever's up</p>	
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	<p>here in my brain and I know I want to tell them that but there's something at the back of my head telling me not to, and I won't. There's a lot I can come out with and say but I won't because I don't think that people understand what I want to say and what I want to come out and say. It just gets looked at by other people that.....you're classed as an idiot. What... an idiot that's got a personality disorder...oh... err... 'I think you better leave just in case you have a go at people'. Um... 'excuse me...medication for it? Well we don't know that'. Excuse me.... got medication for it, and if you lot expect me to sit here where there's other people around me and you're thinking I'm going to be up and flipping. There's me carrying on, nagging, complaining or whatever, I just get up or get out, that's it just go. Then I know then that I'm not causing the argument, its other people around me, and that's now stuck up here. To me if people what to class me as an idiot or anything else, think twice about what they say and what they do. I'm just like them, I have a life to get on with just like other people, if they don't like it there's always a back door or a front door to get out. Go and don't come back. But where I'm originally from people said 'yeah you've got a personality disorder', well ....yeah... and what about it? I didn't choose to get this, I didn't have a choice to have it, I was diagnosed with it. Yeah well people were saying this and that ...'the old saying is what goes around comes around'. Err, no... people are different; everybody's got their own way of life, all because I</p>	
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	<p>don't want to be a part of their so called way of life.... I won't. My way of life is take me for who I am not what I am. I'm just as good as them.</p> <p>I: so how important has the diagnosis been for you?</p> <p>P: um...how important... well if they found this out forty odd years ago... um.... not 15 years ago I think I would have coped with it, because they recon it's gone back as far as when I was... what.... 11, 12 and they could have dealt with it. 15 years ago? but only recently in the past 12 months, 2 years that they gave me medication for it. You know what you can take the medication like smarties because it doesn't give you any effect. It doesn't make me any better, in fact it makes me sit there and I just look at people as if they're not there and yet they're there but to me they're not. They're sitting there 'you alright?' ... yeah fine... 'you're looking at us as if we're not there' ...look it's not me it's the medication that's making me do all this... 'oh', so I think I better leave that so called medication alone for now cause its making me feel like a bit of a zombie and ratty with people.</p> <p>I: so, it's not been helpful then?</p> <p>P: no</p> <p>I: can you tell me a bit more about any other help you've been offered or had?</p>	
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	<p>P: I was under a psychiatrist at (CMHT name), I'm not mentioning his name. 'We can't help you with your personality disorder because it was caused through you drinking too much'. Um... hold on I spent two and a half months in hospital, I've seen psychiatrist, after psychiatrist, after psychiatrist and they said its personality disorder and you're now saying it's not, you're saying it's because of the drinking...'well yeah'... so I'm not going to get no help, no support, no nothing. I gets up 'where you going?' if I'm not getting no help or support from you then I'm not going to show myself up in here for you tell me that I can't come back here, that I'm banned. I'm going to go quietly and peacefully. I goes home made a phone call to the psychiatrist I was under in (place name) 'oh' he said 'we know who he is, he's got an attitude towards women', so I gathered, 'leave it with me and I'll get it delved into'. Within a couple of days I had a phone call from the psychiatrist down here in (place name) 'how dare you get me into trouble with your psychiatrist' pardon? 'I've had your psychiatrist on the phone I've got to give you the treatment you need' put it this way don't even go there, I've handled this now for what, coming on 15 years. I do not want your support and I do not want your help. Like I said my psychiatrist has told me that you've got an issue with women, I'd like to know why, were just normal human beings like yous blokes but we're the opposite sex, we're stronger than a bloke and you don't like it? well</p>	
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sorry I'm off and I put the phone down. From that day to this I've not heard from him or seen him. I'm not getting no help from the mental health team, they don't want to know, they don't. Since I've been here in North Wales, I've been here seven years next September, not once have I been in the mental health unit up here. Mind you though, I don't think that I would like to go in there after listening to it on the news. I don't think so, I'd rather be at home and deal with my issues. I'd rather be at home and watch DVDs and listen to my music when my mood's going to go on one. I'd rather deal with it my way.

I: well, it sounds like you're trying to find ways to cope with some of the stuff that's coming up for you?

P: you've got to try and find new ways of dealing with it instead of sitting there like a zombie. I'm not keeping taking medication for the rest of my life with it, I'd rather be up, out doing something, working with animals, horses, dogs, cats, sheep. It's even getting that way that I'd rather work with snakes and spiders which I don't like, but I don't want to work with snakes and spiders, no, but I'd rather work with animals that are lonely. They're on their own, they've got no one to look after them, I'm on my own I've got no one to look after me. I might adopt a dog or a cat or something. Yeah...so...that's the way I deal about it and I think about it. I don't want this so-called personality

	<p>disorder destroying my life. You're a long time dead and I don't want to be down that road yet. I'm not letting this disease or this disorder get the better of me. What the people should do is have a club or some form of premises where people who've got this disorder can meet other people who've got the same disease or disorder. They can talk it through, get on with it, have cups of tea, coffee. They should have something for that but there's nothing. All you here about is cancer this, cancer that, but they don't want to know the real issues with personality disorder, schizophrenia or anything like that. They seem to put that to the back. You get people who've got it, it's an everyday illness, people have got it but people who work with them just don't want to know, but they should be made more common and recognisable who's got it. That's what I think. Do something about it instead of brushing it under the carpet.</p> <p>I: so you think talking to other people with the same diagnosis would be helpful?</p> <p>P: my cousin had it, but he was worse than me.</p> <p>I: did he talk to you about it?</p> <p>P: yeah, we used to talk a lot, they called us the terrible cousins, no the terrible twins because we looked alike, but he passed away 18 months ago.</p>	
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	<p>I: I'm sorry to hear that</p> <p>P: It was cancer. His family, my other cousins, they're alright. Like I said the professionals don't want such people who've got this disorder to speak out about it just in case if they upset people, or might jeopardise or 'oh they've got this they've got that, how do we know they're not going to go for us'. Well why don't they speak to us and get info across. We're just normal human beings just like them. But like I said, people just don't want to know, and they don't.</p> <p>P: why do you think that is?</p> <p>I: what do I think why they don't? because they think that we're a danger to the public. So why don't they... when they hear people talk about it and they're getting a bit horrible about it 'well you shouldn't be talking about this or talking about that' well, what do they talk about or what about what illnesses or diseases have they got? I would like to know then I can read up on it, so I can know the details about it. But nah, they don't.</p> <p>I: how does that make you feel, that people think that people with a personality disorder diagnosis are dangerous?</p> <p>P: Angry. Angry. They don't 'know me, I don't know them. If I've got it, I've got it, like I said, why</p>	
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don't you come up and ask. Then they know then what people can be like. Yeah, like I said I'd rather be at home watching whatever, doing this, doing that. I'd rather be using this (points at head) instead of just sitting around doing nothing, 'cos it only makes matters worse for me then I start getting angry, then I can go into the kitchen or the bathroom... should I or shouldn't I...what should I do. um... well kitchen there I can make a cup of tea, bathroom.... I could always think should I use a razor blade or shouldn't I use a razor blade. I've self-harmed twice but I've never done that within ... the last time I done that was...what....about 14 ½ years ago, or 15 years ago. I used to do it quite regular and it wasn't just my right arm, I done my stomach and my legs. But I got thinking why should I scar my arms why should I cut my arms and my legs and my stomach? I got thinking and thinking and well, I was thinking that much I couldn't think anymore. So...my cousin came up and he said 'are you alright?' yeah I'm fine 'when was the last time you self-harmed?' I said well there was a day but I got thinking it's not worth it 'well there's your answer, I don't want to see your arms and your legs and your stomach all messed up'. I've never done it since, up until recently. And when I done my right arm I felt, well, it made my arm sore, but is like a relief that I got what's up here (points to head) out. I'm not hurting anybody else except for myself. And, yeah, I called myself all of the names under the sun because I self-harmed, so I have to find another way to deal with



	<p>it than doing that. It's not worth it. All I know is that I do not like it, it's like a Jekyll and Hyde or cat and mouse sort of issue, 'cos not all days are the same, they're not. Each day is different.</p> <p>I: yeah. So, have you got anything else you would like to say about your personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: all I can say about personality disorder, is it is horrible. Like I said individual people who's got it.... they can more likely tell you what they're like with it. Me....there's days when I am Jekyll and Hyde and that's where I do not go out. I stay in and keep away from people. Have the odd drink? No... go down the off licence and get a bottle of vodka and neck it down to cope with it, but it doesn't... it doesn't cope with it as I ends up getting into trouble for it. I don't go back down that road of drinking to stop this...don't want it. I need to deal with it in other ways. And also people don't want you, me around when I've got that. Well they say they do but then they say 'we're just going out', I know they don't. They could say I'm not being unkind but you want me before I want you....but I don't want no conflict, no arguments, none of this, none of that or nothing like it. If you want anything you've got your parents, you've got your family around you up here haven't you, well go and ask them don't be asking me. Do you know what, they came up and knocked on my door the other night 'er....have you got such and such a</p>	
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	<p>thing?' you talking to me? 'er Yeah' Put it this way love I'm just going out, I wasn't, I was in my PJs. But I was ready to just get out because my head's on one. You want this that and the other? 'er yeah'. Well there's a shop around the corner or take a short walk into town and go to the shop 'but I've got no-one to look after the baby' well don't be asking me love cause I'm not 'well why not?' I've had my girls, I've had my children, they're all grown up, and I'll be damned if I'm looking after anybody else's kids. Do you know what I've not seen them since..... No... no... no..., like I said, this disorder it is scary, but when you see people on one then it's time to leg it, cause like I said it's like a Jekyll and Hyde, and it can upset people. I don't want that. I don't like upsetting people. That's why I don't talk about it. I'd rather be up and doing something, even if it's making a disgusting, horrible cake, I'm doing something not to think about what I've got to do. I have to find ways of coping with this so that it doesn't get far beyond a joke with it. Like I said, it's not a nice thing to have, and it is and it can be scary..... (tails off)</p> <p>I: Thank you.</p>	
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Interview Transcript "George"

Emergent Themes	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
	<p>I: Could you tell me about how you came to receive a personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: um... I was first diagnosed with bipolar disorder um, when I was doing a lot of stressful work for um... a company that deals in robots that work in laboratories. Um...and after, my behaviour started to become quite risky um with self-harm um.... um... overdoses um... behaviour like going across the (name) bridge and ending up in the water, that kind of stuff, and um...um...um...I don't know how to....it must be eight years ago, it must, because I had the hard times with it for the last ten years or so. Um...I don't know, I'm sorry...what was the question?</p> <p>I: It's ok. You were talking about when you got the personality disorder diagnosis...</p> <p>P: that was Dr (name), um...and he figured that um...it was a cross between bipolar and borderline personality disorder, that was his diagnosis and then he went on holiday for a long period of time and I never saw a psychiatrist or psychologist properly and ended up um...being asked by an interim psychiatrist would I like to change from Dr</p>	

	<p>(name) because he wasn't there, I just said well yes please. She went then to another diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder, something like that...um...and....um...I've just gone between all three, and there's another one somewhere around, but all three or four. Um...it would be nice to be able to pin it down to one thing but....it....I...I'm.... they say that I'm complex, which is a nice way of saying we don't know what the hell you've got, that's my understanding of it anyway. Yeah, but when I was first told about it...I was compos mentis enough to be able to be told about all the different aspects of it. I understood that it was...um...highly likely that was it but...when I got brought in, I think I was about 9 stone or something like that...and then they gave me...um...I hadn't eaten for a month, and they gave me um... ECT...um...and that was Dr (name) again. After 5 sessions of ECT I was um... I was much better, but they stopped it and I think they stopped it too soon, which is a...it's a scary thing to go through because the...I can't think of the word...it's um...it's more scary to hear about than to go through... but...um... um...I went through that and I started eating again and um...I don't remember sorry</p> <p>I: that's ok</p>	
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	<p>P: I can't remember...</p> <p>I: Do you remember how it felt to receive the diagnosis?</p> <p>P: I didn't like the title because I didn't understand what it meant, Borderline Personality Disorder...what does borderline mean and why is it a personality disorder? Until I realised that there were many different facets underneath that title. Um...and...I think it was a blurry answer to a blurry question, I don't really know how else to put it other than that. It didn't bother me because...the only thing that bothered me was that people outside would go 'uh, what's that then?' You know, so, if someone says... you know, if you're ill, you've got a broken leg or you've got a stomach ulcer or whatever, you can answer the question whereas if you say borderline personality disorder, people just go 'well what's that?' Or if you just go bipolar disorder or manic depressive, they go 'oh yeah', but there's still the huge stigma attached with any label of mental health, which I think is just incredibly wrong, and more people need to understand that things like borderline personality disorder are a very real threat to people and people just don't seem to get how serious it is. I've taken god knows how many overdoses, god knows how many</p>	
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	<p>times I've sliced my body open with very sharp implements...and um I can't even take my top off now...I can take my top off on the ward because it's full of people who have similar things, but if I go out to the swimming pool or something I've got to wear a long sleeved t-shirt...and...if somebody saw, it's obvious that nobody else has done that to me, it's obvious that you've done it to yourself, you know, so...yeah...I used to have... nice looking arms when I was a bit younger, about 10 years ago... and now it looks like I've been mutilated.</p> <p>I: It sounds like you've been through a lot</p> <p>P: yeah, it was um...yeah it's....there's been a lot, there's been a lot that's thrown me in this direction, lots of things that have happened and...just um...I...yeah....I'm not very good at this....</p> <p>I: You're doing really well</p> <p>P: ok, cheers</p> <p>I: you mentioned earlier about stigma how there's a stigma around mental health difficulties, is that something that you have experienced?</p> <p>P: oh yeah. When I first came to see Dr</p>	
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	<p>(name)...um... he put me on a lot of medication, and I had a meeting with other engineers and I was going from foot to foot the whole time. I asked a colleague, who I thought was a good friend 'was it obvious me going from foot to foot?' and they said 'yeah, very very obvious' and um...all the people who were in that meeting treated me as if I was a...some sort of weird...it was not nice...and yeah...everybody who talked to me used to handle me with kid gloves... because I'd cracked...on the work floor, if you like...I was working in (place name) and they gave me these two robots to validate chemistry wise, and I'm not a chemist, I'm am IT specialist...and they gave me this job to do, and... it wasn't actually mine, it was somebody else's, and I said 'listen I'm not qualified to do this, I don't care that the other guy isn't, he was given this job to do'...and in the end I cracked under the stress and um...it started on the route of self harm, overdoses...jumping of bridges, all sorts of wild and wonderful high risk...um...if you can think about it I've probably done it, setting myself on fire, all sorts of stuff...just...just um... really risky behaviour. Saying that...over the last 4, 5 months I would say I've become...a little less risky, because I've spent time on the ward. It's like, it's a weird thing, it's...I'm making it sound like it's a choice, it's not a choice, it's</p>	
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	<p>'you will do this, you will do that'... but if I'm on the ward I...haven't got anything to cut myself with, I don't have tablets at my disposal. I could go out and buy a load of paracetamol, I could go out and buy a craft knife from somewhere, but...I'm only just starting to go out into the community now and experience bus travel again um...being around other people who are...who don't know what my arms look like, who don't know how I'm feeling inside. So...I'm at a beginning of a new learning curve, if you like, which is going to transport me away from this place and away from the diagnosis, so that I can utilise other services that are available for me on the outside, and I need to go and try and do that... that's my goal, to try and get out of here is one piece and stay in one piece when I'm out there, that's the thing, but.... (Tails off)</p> <p>I: It sounds like you are trying very hard to make changes</p> <p>P: yeah , yeah I am, very hard. Yeah...</p> <p>I: What does the borderline personality disorder diagnosis mean to you?</p> <p>P: It means I'm not well....um...it makes me understand, a little bit, that I tick slightly differently to other people um...and that</p>	
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	<p>ticking is not always very straight forward. It can be...somebody can say the most innocuous thing to me, or...I can have a dream, or I can have a day-mare, or a bad thought will jump into my head, a voice will come into my head...and anyone of those things can affect how I am the next day. For example today I had to go and say to (name) 'was I rude to you last night?' because I'd gone to sleep at 8pm or something, and I was just having really vivid nightmares, there were no voices, it was just nightmares... and in the morning I got up and I thought they were real, and just tried to separate...um, nightmares, day-mares, voices, separate what's fact from what's fiction, and sometimes it's really difficult, really difficult. I mean it's like, you'd be looking at something and think to myself my god did I really say that or actually approach them about what you're thinking about or what's been said to you. They go 'good grief, you never said that to me' and it's like, so where did it come from, where did it you know...and if it's not come from them and it's not come from me, where did this information come from? Overload occurred and why did it occur?...too much....I don't understand it.....</p> <p>I: it sounds like a tough place to be</p>	
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	<p>P: yeah...</p> <p>I: So, has this diagnosis influenced your life?</p> <p>P: yeah, um...um... I can't work like I used to be able to, my marriage is... over...um... um... my wife is divorcing me...</p> <p>I: I'm sorry to hear that</p> <p>P: It's ok, she's just...she's been a trouper, poor girl, she's been an absolute trouper. She's a wonderful mother to my daughter and she was a good wife but I wouldn't wish anybody living with.....um.....a mental health illness to be, put it onto their spouse, you know...just...it's a very selfish illness, that's the way I think of it because when people talk about it, the type of things that happen are very, they seem very selfish, just because...it all revolves around you and what's happening around you, and that to me isn't right, which is why...if I try and talk to somebody about it I...I don't know how to break it down...and say how it affects me directly but...she's...she deserves better, that's all I can think, and, you know,...I just don't....it must be like living with someone who has Alzheimer's or something, or worse...because you can't see it...you can't, you can't see it but you can see the...the</p>	
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	<p>outcome of it...it's um.. it's not nice... so yeah, the way it's affected my life is terribly so, it's destroyed my life, so... and I'm just, you know...I haven't heard from my work for over a year and a half now, I expect they'll be in contact with me soon but there's no way they'd ever put me back in frontline work again. I've been left behind for...2 to 4 years in technology and they wouldn't put me back into that kind of stress, and if they did (sigh) it wouldn't be very long before I cracked big time so I'm not planning on asking them if they'll have me back, I'm just going to ask them... if... I can just remain as, I don't know what...something in the background...but yeah in answer to your question it has screwed up my life.</p> <p>I: you talked a bit about your wife and work, is the diagnosis, the personality disorder diagnosis, something that you've talked about with them?</p> <p>P: They know about bipolar, borderline personality disorder, they might. They might know about schizoaffective disorder, I don't know um....</p> <p>I: and what has their response been to the personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: um...they wrote letters to um my</p>	
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	<p>psychiatrist, Dr (name) and he wrote to them back saying that I was very ill, and...when they received the letters saying they had spoken to their GP who is, who works for (company name) and deals with all these things, his name is Dr (name) and...they haven't contacted me since...um...they saw, they saw the scars on my...fresh cuts, when I was down there, how many years ago I don't know but when I self-harmed in work time, they saw the cuts on my arms...they were nothing in contrast to what I have now. Um...now, it looks like I've been hacked up with a machete, whereas then they were just small, inch, inch long cuts and stuff. So, things got a lot worse between that time and now, and when I say a lot worse I mean....just the amount of blood I've lost, the amount of times that I've....I mean my wife...she left me to die once when I had the overdose, and she said to me, I'm leaving you to die because....she couldn't cope any more, she couldn't cope with it anymore, and she left me on the floor in the bedroom, the ensuite and I was just throwing up....nothing because there was no liquid in my stomach, um I was just reacting to all of the lithium I took, and lithium is a bad drug to take if you want to overdose with it, very bad. Dr (name) said If I ever did it again...then he would take me off all medication, and I did do it again, he did take me off lithium but</p>	
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	<p>kept me on other stuff and then Dr (name) was the person who said do I need to go under another doctor, and I said ok if you will take over, and she took over and she put me on a depot, and then she took me off the depot as it didn't seem to be doing anything. Then she put me on...um...clozaril, yeah.... clozapine, that's it yeah...then she...I've been on that for, 350mg of that now for...it must be three, four months and it's helping but it's not helping enough now...I don't know...Sorry I don't know if I'm waffling too much?</p> <p>I: not at all, you're doing great. It sounds like you have been on a lot of different medication....</p> <p>P: oh my gosh, the strongest one I was on was quetiapine, seraquel, and I was on 1300 mg of that and the BNF cut off for that is.... It should be 800 but the maximum dosage is 1200 ...and the um, pharmacy were going nuts here with the amount of medication I was on. *Fire alarm goes off so interview was suspended *</p> <p>I: do you feel the diagnosis has influenced how other people relate to you?</p> <p>P: my family, yeah....</p>	
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	<p>I: In what way?</p> <p>P: My family started off with having no time....at all for anybody who had mental illness. Um...it was...it was a case of 'oh it's just in your head', well of course it is, its mental illness, that's the whole thing, it is in your head. It's to do with everything from the neck up, and...after a while I think they gathered, they got... the...especially after this admission, I think this has been the best admission I've ever had in people helping me and me actually um...interacting with the staff better...um...and they um...they now think the world of the staff here and they're really pro what the doctors are doing and stuff...because they can't...they're too old to look after me um, and I haven't got anywhere else to go, so...I've been given places in hotels and holiday cottages and stuff like that, and I've just messed them all up, usually through drinking, because I've used drink as a... an anaesthetic, a tool, however you want to put it, I've used it to self-medicate. The problem is though is that when I start to drink...all these feelings and problems get exacerbated, they get hugely diluted and it makes things....it makes things like proper rational thinking very hard, which is... my own fault for doing the drinking, but at the same time it does help</p>	
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	<p>too, the same way that cutting helps. Um, I can cut when I'm drunk and I can cut when I'm not drunk. Usually that cutting ...ends up in me cutting so deep that I um.... I end up um in casualty or somewhere like that and...they all sort of think 'oh, it's just (name) he's cutting himself again' the psych team comes up and says 'it's (name) he's just cut himself again', but the thing is for me is that cutting myself is a huge cry for help, it's a massive cry for help. It's case of I don't know what to do, I'm stuck... I need help now... and can you provide it for me please because I don't know how to say this to you in any other way except for ... cutting myself, so if they haven't got that, which they do now I think, um, I think that, I think that's probably significant. What was it you were asking? You were asking about my family weren't you? And other people?</p> <p>I: yeah, I'm interested in hearing if since you've had the borderline personality disorder diagnosis if people have related to you differently?</p> <p>P: I've lost all of my friends, they've all gone...all gone...actually I tell a lie, one friend has stuck by me through thick and thin, a guy called (name) who's always been there for me. I haven't been in touch with him for the last four, five months though, he's got</p>	
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	<p>enough problems of his own, but we'll pick up where we left off and I wish I could do that with my other friends as well, I've only got a couple of good mates...but they've gone by the wayside. A lot of people that I find I do have relationships with are... there's a guy on the ward named (name) um...we just hit it off, um similar personalities, similar outlooks, that kind of stuff. I've made a few friends on the ward but I don't like to ...um... I don't like to... if the friendship is non-psychiatric talk, I prefer it, as if you make friends with people who are mentally ill, it can affect you as well , because they're talking usually about stuff that's depressing, and if you're in a bad place and trying to be of help to somebody and they're constantly depressed and there's nothing you can do to stop them then that becomes depressing for you, as you can't help them, so you then enter this spiral where whatever you say or do with this person is negative and it's, it's not a good relationship. Whereas with (name) we're quite elevated in our relationship, we have a laugh, we have a joke. (name), another friend of mine, she's...she's quite ill and she lives away from her kids and stuff like that, same as me, I live away from my daughter (name), so we have an understanding, but when...when I'm feeling really bad and she texts me and texts me and texts me ad texts me, it becomes</p>	
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	<p>difficult when I can't turn around and say to her and say can you leave me alone for a bit please? I just can't say it as she's ill herself, so I just ignore the texts and...text one, I'm not very well and that's it. So, friendship wise I'm, my view on it is simply that people don't understand, they can't understand and they don't want to understand, and if it's your family then...I'd hope.....some of my childhood was like marred with....things that happened with my parents and school, when I was a young kid and a teenager...those things that marred that time um....my mum and dad didn't need to send me away but they did and I ended up having an horrific time in school and...that scarred me for life that did, until I started to do...um...very high risk outdoor pursuits like kayaking from grades five to six rivers and stuff like that. Um...um...I was a survivor, they used to let me go first down the waterfalls and if I came out at the bottom then it was safe....which is funny but at the same time it was the risk factor that I was looking for, so having used that and the adrenaline, and then utilising alcohol in the evenings, I was self-medicating myself. Then I started to work with (company name), I stopped exercising so I put on loads of weight, and because they kept on feeding me more and more stuff to do, I just cracked in the end and once I'd cracked...nobody wants to know you</p>	
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	<p>because they think 'ugh, he is mental' and nobody knows about (hospital name) or (hospital ward) or borderline personality disorder or bipolar, they don't know what any of those things, are apart from (hospital name) is a nuthouse, he's lost it, we'll put him in there and that's it. So, the stigma is still very much one of stay back, you know, and that's, that's hard to live with that is, that is very hard to live with.</p> <p>I: how does that make you feel?</p> <p>P: It makes me feel low and rejected, very very, very much rejected, much like the way that I feel rejected by my wife, like I feel rejected by everybody that I meet more or less. Apart from people like yourself who are working in the, what would you call it? an industry, because it is... not an industry it's an environment, I can't think of the right word. Um...but...(sigh)... sorry I've forgotten the last question.</p> <p>I: that's ok. You were talking to be about how your friends and family might have sort of backed off, and you were talking about stigma</p> <p>P: that's it...well...yeah...as I said the stigma is still there. There's more talk about it with this government than any other that I've</p>	
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	<p>seen for a long time um and I hope that that starts to show in the way that they deal with it in the National Health because at the moment all I can see is cut back, after cut back, after cut back, which is wrong because, you know, it's one in four people, something like that and that to me says put some finances into this to help the people who are suffering, you know it's not fair, it's just not fair. It is not fair at all. There's a lot of people out there who suffer badly and they just get thrown back into the community, yes, sometimes they get aftercare but, you know, if you're on, what is it, a 117 it doesn't mean very much it just...you know...I've had the police come around to my house where I was living with my wife and they said...'don't worry about anything, we're just coming around because we've had a call that there's somebody who fits your description has been around here and they're unwell and we just thought we'd come and check if you're ok', and I thought that was very nice, I know they had to do it but...the very fact that they've gone 'oh, I wonder if it's (name)'um made me think, you know, yeah....I need the support or I need the help, 'cos at this moment in time, this morning, this afternoon or whatever it was, I've done nothing but think of self-harming and that's all I've wanted to do today, and they gave me some PRN earlier on and that helped</p>	
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	<p>um....but.....(tails off)</p> <p>I: are you ok to carry on?</p> <p>P: yeah, yeah. What's left on the list?</p> <p>I: I just want to check that you're ok.</p> <p>P: I'm fine. I'm always going to feel like this if I'm digging up all this.</p> <p>I: as long as you know that you can stop at any time</p> <p>P: sure, sure, yeah, thanks</p> <p>I: well, in terms of the personality disorder diagnosis, has it changed the way you think or feel about yourself?</p> <p>P: (6 second pause) I think of myself as weak um...mentally weak...um...I never thought about...I never really thought of myself as being anything else but that...so ... I guess not really, it's the way I've always been. So... I don't know....I don't know if I have an answer for that sorry</p> <p>I: that's ok</p> <p>P: Because it's always been there in some form or some way, just weak.</p>	
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	<p>I: has the diagnosis been helpful in understanding yourself?</p> <p>P: I think so yes, I think it has been. Seeing it down in writing...all these booklets and forms you get given, but seeing it in writing and seeing points one through eight or whatever it is and you think you yourself... they're all too close to home to be ignored, so....yeah if that's the general consensus or opinion of mental health and that's what they're matching me up against then...yeah it's...finally there's an answer. Um...but if you say borderline personality disorder to someone who doesn't know they'll be like 'oh, he's just borderline, he's just borderline', you know, and that's not what it means, is it. So....the terminology in itself...I don't know if it needs addressing or what. For the people under the mental health teams that are around it makes perfect sense but to the people who are not clued up or are not interested...it would just be nicer to ...just be nicer to um...know what's going on.....(tails off) sorry.</p> <p>I: It's ok. I just have one more question for you. So how important has the diagnosis been for you? How important has getting that diagnosis of borderline personality disorder been for you?</p>	
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	<p>P: um, very, because if you...it's been important in that it's helped me understand partially what I'm going through and gives psychiatric teams, people, CPNs etc., it gives them a point of contact, where to start at. Um...and they all know that, you know, even the psychiatrists, will throw together many different titles and they don't always have one that is associated with you. Perhaps you, you might be more than just borderline personality disorder, like I am....that's very confusing but in saying that it's a different thing with mental health, you can have two or three diagnoses within mental health because of, I suppose, the complexity of the human mind, I presume that to be, maybe it's a big presumption, but that's the way I think about it is that they're all right, they're all right, there's a little bit of everything going on inside there, but I don't, I don't...it has been important to me but I have to admit up until this meeting with you I haven't really dwelt on it much because ... you know the last one was... um... Asperger's ...um that was Dr (name), that was the last. Bipolar, Borderline, um... Asperger's and Schizoaffective disorder, I don't know if I'm saying that right, but that's the four. Um...I used to be able to...when I used to deal with robots and software problems I can see patterns in things really quickly. So if I have a, you know where's wally?</p>	
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	<p>I: yeah</p> <p>P: I can see him straight away, you know, just...</p> <p>I: you're straight on him</p> <p>P: yeah (laughs) straight on him. And it's the same thing with computer programs, if there's a problem with something I can usually see it pretty quickly because I can pick out patterns that've gone wrong. So they said to me that's Asperger's syndrome, people have that kind of ability to pick up things like that, somewhere on the spectrum that's what they said to me. I don't know how truthful that is or whatever but it seemed to me that they were fitting... a diagnosis onto something that might not have been there, and I was like... 'I'm not sure where you're coming from with this', so I've got to the stage now where if someone says you've got this, you've got that... (sighs) just put it in the pot. So, it just...I'm not sure of any of it to be honest with you but I do know that a lot of the symptoms from bipolar and borderline personality disorder are very similar but I do swing more to the borderline personality disorder than I do to the bipolar or the...you know, so yeah and I think... Dr (name), I'm pretty sure he would</p>	
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	<p>agree with me, but he's not one for...putting people into categories, is he.</p> <p>I: what do you think of that approach? Not putting people in categories?</p> <p>P: I think categorisation can be helpful but I think it's more helpful to people on the outside world that it is for the patient because again you go and they say what's wrong with you? And you go I don't know. It's like trying to make them understand but you can't. That's, that's hard...and I mean there's no right time or wrong time for things but I mean my wife could have picked a better time to divorce me. Maybe it's the right time actually, maybe it's better that I'm in here now, but anyway, there we go.....</p> <p>I: Well, thank you so much P: I'm sorry if I've been a bit waffly I: no, you've been brilliant, thank you.</p>	
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Emerging Themes	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
	<p>I: can you tell me how you came to receive a personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: Through a psychiatrist...um...because I was going ill all of the time, I was going with depression. I was acting...not quite normal, how I shouldn't be acting. And...um...well...I was just, I was just going into these depths of depression and I can't get out of it. And I won't eat I won't sleep....and this doctor diagnosed me with a personality disorder, but I've not got...I don't think I've got a personality problem. 'Cos I get on with anybody that's alright with me. But through alcohol I can be um... different. Perhaps me personality problem comes through when I've had alcohol, perhaps, you know... I change. And um....I won't just start on anybody, somebody's got to trigger me off, and then I won't give in and I don't remember, I get alcoholic blackouts... I don't remember. I say some terrible things, I do some terrible things and I don't remember I've done it. And one day I could end up in prison for the rest of me life, for doing something I won't remember. I have been to prison 6 times in the past, through alcohol abuse through police assault. I've never thieved or anything like that. And...um... yeah through police assault and that. I've been on 4 remands and 2 sentences but what the first one is I was stuck in a one</p>	

	<p>room attic flat in (place name) with me little daughter (name), she was only young, through this ex-partner that I was with. And we went from a caravan, we went to this house, and to a caravan and back and I'd just bought this house in (date) and there was no water, no sanitation here or anything and I went to a friend in a caravan park 2 miles from the main road and um I just.... How did I start that then?</p> <p>I: you were telling me about how you came to receive your diagnosis</p> <p>P: yeah, I think it was about 30 years ago.... I think I received it. Personality disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, I remember them saying that.</p> <p>I: Do you remember how you felt when they said that?</p> <p>P: I felt terrible. I remember coming out and I thought what are they talking about? I haven't got a personality problem, I get on with everybody, and I do. And...um... I thought they've got me misdiagnosed here and I just left. I was so ill I just let it carry on I think because you're so ill you just can't be bothered what they call you at the time. And I pondered over it for a few days and I asked one of the nurses, I said I haven't got a personality problem? 'no, no, no' she said, 'it's just their</p>	
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	<p>way of analysing things'. I said I haven't got a personality problem. I don't agree that I have got a personality problem but if they say that it can be associated with alcohol, well, yes I have, but other than that, no.</p> <p>I: was it explained to you at the time?</p> <p>P: no, never explained to me, not by a psychiatrist, no. Never explained a thing to me, they just kept putting me on this medication, and then they found out that I was susceptible to medication, which I've known that for years. And um...like I told you I've got a serotonin syndrome, I remember having about 6/7 years ago having the shakes I the hospital. I had a pain in my stomach and then I had the shakes, and I was scratching for 2 weeks solid, and I ripped my body apart with scratching and they said that um...it was me nerves, it was me nerves and I knew it wasn't me nerves. Then I went in one night and I said I want to see I doctor, it was about 11 o clock at night, I can't stand this, I was scratching, and I'd been scratching for two weeks, a week and a half it was and then the on call doctor said this girl wants to see a dermatologist, she must see one in the morning, and the dermatologist did come and his words were 'I've never seen it that bad in my clinic' and he gave me pethidine, antihistamine, and I think something to stop me being sick, injections. And then um it</p>	
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	<p>stopped but the itching didn't stop, the itching continued and then it finally went. And I was bathing and bathing and all underneath I was like a man, it was terrible, I was scratching, oh I'll never forget it as long as I live. And then I went in again about 2 years later and I had it again, they said to me it was pethiadine, the coating on the pethiadine caused it, I was allergic to it. I went two years later and again Dr (name) re-prescribed me pethiadine and um... I never bothered, I was ill so I took it and I got this pain right here (points to stomach) like something stabbing me. This male charge nurse, not a charge nurse he was a nurse carer and I said I don't feel well you know, I'm sure I'm getting this thing that I had before 'oh it's alright, go and drink some warm water' he said to me, 'you'll be all right'. Anyway I done what he told me to and the scratching started and (name) nurse, a male nurse remembered me from two years previously as having this thing, the scratching, and he got the doctor straight away and he gave me 6 little steroid tablets, pink they were but it still didn't stop the scratching, it took the pain away but never stopped the scratching. And um that was sorted out then and he took me straight off the pethiadine and I said to Dr (name) you know that I'm not supposed to, why are you giving me these tablets that are not agreeing with me? Everything he was giving me I was either feeling....I was feeling outside me body. It was</p>	
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	<p>the most horrendous feeling I'd ever experienced, especially with lithium. And now I find out it's on that chart I'm not supposed to have it, it could kill me. Cocaine, I never took cocaine, I never took drugs in me life, only prescribed drugs, I've never took heroin, I've never took cocaine, I've never took these E's or whatever they are, I've never took them sort of drugs. But it says in there that if I took cocaine I could be dead....it could kill you within 24 hours, this syndrome. But I've never really been explained what this borderline thing is, this borderline personality disorder, I've never been explained it, only by nurses that say it's just their way of analysing things. But I think as times gone on over the years I've been in and out of psychiatric units, they've been analysing...they've been saying that people have got this that and the other and they've been finding out years later that they've not got that. The psychiatrists... when I was first sent to hospital when I was 17, Dr (name) refused to give me medication, but I was in for four months and then I became better. My mother looked after my little girl and I was sent home but I was very paranoid because I'd been to there, it was in like (date) and I thought people would think I was mad cause I'd been in this (name) place. And I was frightened to go out and things, and it's a small community (name). People thought I was in prison, people thought I was... you know...people make up their own</p>	
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	<p>assumptions don't they. But I wasn't, I was in hospital. And from then on I, I went a good few years, until I was about 20, then I went back in again, into (hospital name). I can't count how many times I've been in (hospital name) and I can't count how many times I've been in the (hospital name) unit, but I've been in a lot. Over the years, sometimes I think am I institutionalised? I've been in psychiatric units, I've been in prison, I've been in bail hostels...you know I think to myself am I institutionalised, I don't know. I've gone to now I don't go out. I hardly leave this house.</p> <p>*section of interview omitted as it identifies details of the death of her daughter and would breach confidentiality *</p> <p>This is since the (date) last year since he was released from prison, who killed me daughter. Like I said he showed no remorse to the judge, the judge asked him, he put his two fingers up to the cameras. I didn't think it would affect me that much but I went really ill from the (date) last year. I just deteriorated...and um then I was on pregablin, dihydrocodeine up to a year...summer gone. And this oxycontin and oxynarm. And then he decided to stop me on the dihydrocodeine because he'd had his knuckles wrapped because of these people on these drugs, which is like heroin. And... I was</p>	
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	<p>on a 150mg a day of dyhydrocodeine, 150 pregablin. I found out they are a drug too, this pregablin because I was watching a programme about American prisons and they were saying, one was saying that they used to bring pregablin in and I thought I'm on them. Anyway the doctor stopped the pregablin, I was on 6mg of valium a day. He stopped the dyhydrocodeine and the pregablin and the valium and the antidepressants all in one go like that. Never reduced me, just banged me right off them. Well here, I was very ill here last summer, I went really ill through it, I was really bad. And then I wasn't going out then either, and um... I was just depressed constantly, depressed. And then um they must have just worn out of me system, I don't know what happened and then um this year... he stopped me because of this serotonin syndrome he said I'm going to cut your oxycontin down from 30mg to 10. I said Dr (name) you can't do that it's too fast, you know can't you just cut me down 5 and 5 and 5, not straight down to 10. 'no, I'm doing it this way', that's what he done, he cut me down to 10 and then I was ill all last summer again through it. And from the (date) to the summer I can count on me hand what...6 times I went to town, and I was in town everyday....and I wasn't doing me chores...I wasn't eating, not sleeping, as I am now. This is nothing to do with you coming here today; this has been going on for months. I am on sleeping</p>	
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	<p>tablets. I changed from temazepams because I heard they were a controlled drug, 'cos the nurse went into the treatment room and the light went on there so I said why has the light gone on there? She said 'oh, temazepam is a controlled drug' oh I said I don't want them. So they changed them to, what they called? Oh, sleeping tablet, god I know the name, me memory's bad.....zopiclone, that's what I'm on now, 7.5...but they don't make me sleep. They don't make me sleep at all. But as regards this borderline personality disorder, I don't know where they've got it from. Plus they say I'm post-traumatic stress disorder.... which I can understand that one because when the nurse worked it out post which is the past, the traumas you've been through in the past, stress disorder, which, that sort of registers with me really. I think that's what it is. It stems from your childhood I think. I really do think it comes from your childhood as to how you act in life.</p> <p>I: so what does the personality disorder diagnosis mean to you?</p> <p>P: It makes me feel horrible. It doesn't make me feel normal because.... I don't think I've got a personality problem. I think they just label people with these things just to sort of either shut them up or.....I've known a lot of people who've been labelled with things and they've</p>	
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	<p>found out they've labelled them wrong. But it used to worry me but it doesn't worry me so much now. Because I just know I've not got a personality problem...if I don't drink...and I don't. I gave up drink for 14 years and then when I lost my daughter (name) (number) years ago I started slipping and sliding again.....but at the moment I'm not drinking. But on the television they're showing drink all the time and drink all the time and it just makes you feel....you only get the buzz for an hour and then the melancholy sets in. Do you understand what I mean?</p> <p>I: yeah</p> <p>P: So I don't bother about this personality problem anymore. Too old to bother about it.</p> <p>I: yeah. So, has the diagnosis influenced your life?</p> <p>P: yes it has. 'Cos I think you over power yourself with people because you want them to like you but not everybody likes everybody, I've learnt that in life but I wanted everybody to like me and ...I'm genuine with people, I've helped people in the past. I can't count on one hand how many people have come in this house that I've helped over the years...and it affects me that.... I've asked people do you think I've got</p>	
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	<p>personality problems? 'no', you know people I've known for years 'no I don't think you've got a personality problem. Many a person has said that to me. So I don't know where it's come from. What does it mean?</p> <p>I: so are you saying that it's had an effect on how you feel about yourself?</p> <p>P: yeah, I felt really low and not normal, not normal. You know, thinking that I had this personality problem. I think I overpowered myself to make sure that I haven't got a personality problem. I get on with everybody. So why are they saying this about me? Oh, and I'm bipolar, they've diagnosed me with bipolar....and manic depressive, they've diagnosed me with that in the past. But I just don't understand where they're coming from. Um... I have been through a lot in my life. I had a fire in (date) when we were nearly killed, me and my eldest daughter. Um...my mother when I was (age) was raped at (age) he only got 5 years, no he attempted to murder me first and um me daughter was here and he half murdered me. He had charges of attempted murder, me face was like the elephant man. How I never lost me, I have me own teeth, how I never lost me teeth, I haven't got a proper bite, but how I never lost me teeth I don't know to this day. But the police were even frightened of him, he's a well-known nutcase which I</p>	
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	<p>um...so have I got a personality problem? Everyman I've met there's always been something wrong somewhere. Like (daughter's name) father (name) he was a drinker....and I was with him from 16 to 26. Then I met this evil one who done this to me mum but he was in prison 7 years out of the 10 years I was with him because he attempted to murder me and he got 3 years and he got 12 months for (daughter's name). But....I took him back....I took him back.... And then in not very long he did that to me mam and he only got 5 years for that....,and happened, it all happened in this house. (daughter's name) father, me little girl that died, he died at 35 with an overdose, they found him in (place name). He was an amphetamine taker, no I never took that in me life ...and um this girl had sold him 27mg of methadone and he died in a friend's house in (place name), he was only 35. (Daughter's name) was only 8 at the time that had a ...well um ...the year that (daughter's name), in the (date) when (daughter's name) was (age) I saw the change in her and um she took an overdose of my valium. What I couldn't understand is they didn't put her out they made her very... 'cos my older daughter didn't believe she'd took them. But she had because we found the empty packets wedged between the wardrobe and she went to see a child psychiatrist called Dr (name), he's retired now in a place near (name) it was (date) she seen him and he said</p>	
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	<p>that (daughter's name) had bipolar and oh my god, that must mean she's got the genes from me and she was put in a psychiatric until for 5 ½ months. She lost twins at (age), one in the January and one in the February, she was convinced she couldn't have children but I think she made herself pregnant. I don't think she cared who the fella was to be honest with you, and she got pregnant, she was 14 weeks pregnant when she died. She was in... from a Monday to a Friday she was in (place name), a Psychiatric unit. Oh, there's so much I could tell you, it's unbelievable the things that have happened in me life and how I've got out of them I just don't know. But now I've come to the end of my tether now, I just can't take any more I really can't. Since I've lost (daughter's name), It's took part of me. (daughter's name) keeps saying, my eldest daughter, 'but you've got grandchildren here' but I just think I'm a burden to them. (begins to cry)</p> <p>*interview suspended as participant was distressed *</p> <p>I: so has the personality disorder diagnosis influenced how other people relate to you?</p> <p>P: no, not really no. No not really it hasn't, it's just that I tell them, I ask them 'do you think I've got a personality problem? and they say no. and um it hasn't really influenced people</p>	
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	<p>because I don't really discuss it like that in any case unless it's a friend and I might say do you think I've got a personality problem and they say 'I've known you for years and no you haven't, you are a bit crazy in drink' they say that to me. I think everything comes out when I've had a drink, everything comes out...me mind...goes fast. I wonder if this is anything, perhaps I'm producing too much serotonin in the brain that's your happy part of your brain isn't it? He said it's like a cup, he drew a picture Dr (name), it's a cup he said and yours is overflowing with serotonin. I have took overdoses, a lot of overdoses...but I took this err... I took 80ml of methadone 3 years ago. I died outside in the ambulance. They injected me but I were gone. He said they put me neck back and a tube down my throat and then they injected me again and my heart started beating and I was in intensive care for a week and then I got pneumonia and then they put me on the main ward for 2 weeks and then they sectioned me in the (place name) for 6 weeks. As regards to personality problem, I'm not sure about this. I think it's wrong to label someone like that. You know... I have attacked...I have attacked Dr (name), I have gone for him, and then I struck him off me list, and then I was under Dr (name) he was a marvellous psychiatrist, he was a good one but he's gone to (place name) now. So I don't know who me psychiatrist is, and nobody has sent me an appointment to see a</p>	
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	<p>psychiatrist. So, they're just letting the people go through the net...and it's not on, Emma, It's not on. So and then I had an appointment to see Dr (name) again! After all these years...Dr Death I call him because there's so many people who died underneath him. It's not because he's black, I'm not prejudiced against him or anything you know, but he's labelled me with it, Dr (name), personality....borderline personality problem...I remember it now...but I don't, I don't know...I don't really know. Have I got it, haven't I got it? I don't know. I don't know, because I'm never nasty with anybody...unless they're nasty with me...I will fight to the end...I used to fight to the end to get what belongs to me, but I seem to...I seem to be always in these positions of...there's something going on somewhere, something's happening. And it affects me brain, I get I call them rolling heads...that things are for me....I can remember everything from me childhood but I can't remember yesterday. I can remember everything, it's so weird that I can remember everything that's happened, so many things have happened in me life Emma. I'm not covering up for what I am, I'm just had so many things happened in me life. I've been beaten up I've been attacked, I've been raped...all sorts have happened to me and yet I've got out of it. But this one with my daughter I can't get out of. This is just stuck. Perhaps I have got a personality problem, I don't know. I don't know</p>	
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	<p>what's wrong with me, I know I've got depression, I know I've got that.</p> <p>I: yeah. So, has the diagnosis changed the way you feel about yourself or the way you think about yourself?</p> <p>P: It used to, not now. Not now. I would really like...I was supposed to see a psychologist, when I don't know, I really don't know. But like I was saying they're not helping people, they're just letting people go through the net. They're not helping anybody who really needs the help. There's loads of them in (place name), and this is just a small community, god knows what it's like in the main.....what about all these people in foreign countries that can't have anti-depressants, how do they cope? With all their families being killed and...god it's beyond me. I worry about them.</p> <p>*section of interview omitted due to detailed discussion of daughter's death which would breach confidentiality*</p> <p>I: Do you see yourself differently now than before you had the personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: Do I see myself differently? Yes. Very different.</p>	
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	<p>I: In what way?</p> <p>P: That I'll never change. I'm too old to change and I'll never change. I'll never change me outlook on life or anything like that. Yeah I am different, especially since I lost me daughter, I am definitely, and that will never go away. Yeah I have changed..... (Tails off)</p> <p>I: Has the diagnosis been helpful in understanding yourself?</p> <p>P: no, no, not at all, no.</p> <p>I: can you tell me a bit more about that?</p> <p>P: I don't understand....I don't understand how I think, why my head rolls. Why I get all these thoughts in me head, I get thoughts of suicide terrible and I could just do it on the spur of the moment and not think that I was doing it I don't think. I've took overdoses when I've drank and I've also took overdoses when I haven't drank.</p> <p>I: yeah, so the diagnosis hasn't been helpful?</p> <p>P: no, no it hasn't, no. I don't really know what's wrong with me. I just think it stems from me childhood, how me father treated me mother. He did treat her really bad. She only had quarter of an hour to live with him once. And he came to the hospital and she had nobody to</p>	
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	<p>look after me....and his brother never drank, there was three brothers working and he just said here's half a dollar, I'm going for a pint. And me mam was all stitched here, he'd put a glass in her face, she was bleeding to death. That was the only night I'd ever woke up and me uncle (name) came through in the morning and he said 'where's (name) what have you done to her this time? You effin bastard' I've never heard him talking like that before and he took us to the hospital. And there's all spots all over the... spots of blood everywhere all over the... where the fire was, the coal fire. And I think that's what it is it's stemmed from me childhood, and I was an only, I was an only child because (brothers names) are older than me, and they were to another fella. She met him, she met me dad in (place name) on the way to (place name) it was a 6 week trip them and she met him through a nurse and then she got there her husband was with another woman. So she tried to work for passage back but she met me dad and me dad got in touch with her and they courted and the inevitable happened and if she'd have waited 6 weeks I'd have been a (place name) subject. But I think, I just think it stems from your childhood, how you were treated and ....me mum was a good woman, she wasn't an alcoholic like, she was a good woman. She fed me with the right food, she was kind to me. Me dad never physically hit me but it was mental torture with my father,</p>	
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	<p>real mental torture, 'cos I couldn't sleep and me reports said I was sleeping in class, school reports. I went to a nun school, where they had the strap, and they were cruel them nuns, very cruel. But no I don't think I'll ever change. And it's too late now for me to ever change, but if I can help anybody else to change, by all means you know, If this programme can help them. And they haven't got enough people to help the people. There's so much...I don't understand shutting a ward down, there was only 3 there in any case. Oh, they put me in (name) the lock up ward when I lost me daughter. They locked me up, it was terrible I couldn't go anywhere.... and fed me drugs...kept drugging me, drugging me, drugging me. I don't think they gave me a chance to grieve 'cos they fed me so many medications. And now I'm not on anti-depressants.....I see different outlook on, I see things different. I'm not allowed them, I've got to suffer with depression and I'm not allowed to take medication for it. 'Cos they can't medicate me for the syndrome as it is. I don't know what's going to happen Emma, I really don't. I'm scared, I'm very frightened. I am scared.... if they I hadn't have come that Sunday I'd have had a seizure....(begins to cry)</p> <p>I: let's leave it there.</p> <p>*Interview terminated due to participant distress*</p>	
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Interview Transcript "Kate"

Emerging Themes	Original transcript	Exploratory comments
	<p>I: Can you tell me how you came to receive your personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: um....it was most likely by um ...um...um... the psychiatrist (name)um.....when I first came here (place name), well after a short time of me being here, I may have been diagnosed with it before then but um... she confirmed it and stuff.</p> <p>I: Can you tell me a bit more about what happened around that time?</p> <p>P: Well, I'd been um... remanded to (name) prison for committing arson and um... that I was given the choice of either coming here to (name) or going to (name) prison. And....um....that I weighed it up that although I might have got out of prison quicker, well got out quicker is that then being here... but I didn't put much faith in, not that I'd ever seen a psychiatrist in Prison or anything or any doctor, um....that um...because I never really had much... when I was out at home and stuff in (place name) and I'd seen a psychiatrist there and they were rubbish. Um, to me they didn't really... weren't really helping us to... um... if they knew the diagnosis or whatever they didn't seem to be really... um... well...</p>	

Interview Transcript "Kate"

	<p>supporting the person to that. There was once, well initially, before the crime, well actually a day or so before the crime that I was feeling suicidal and I felt really down and ...um...I had an appointment or I went to see the psychiatrist and um my CPN was there and I said to them .....that I needed help and I needed to go back into hospital. He said that they were of the mind that it was really not doing anything for me, that it wasn't really...um... making much headway because I was still at times... overdosing or whatever. So... um ....but he was of the mind 'oh we could give you a weekend in the (hospital name)'. A weekend I says?! What do think this is? well what do you think this is Butlin's Holiday Camp? Um...um... send me for the weekend? A lot of good that is. I just didn't have a great understanding of what my diagnosis was, or of what was going on because of the state of mind and um...um... so I said if you want my death certificate on your desk I will be quite happy to put it there and um...obviously it wouldn't be me putting it there, but for it to be there. So um... I said so just go ahead, don't bother... you're a waste of time and um I marched out and um...I was upset and worked up and that in my mind I thought to myself how can I stop these ideas, ideations of um... stopping overdosing... and self-harming and um ...stop my mood going up or all over the place? and apart from seeing my CPN and that silly doctor, that Psychiatrist it was as much of no use and um.... I didn't... there was</p>	
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Interview Transcript "Kate"

nothing else. And so it came to my mind, well I'm not into murdering folk, I'm not you know.... I thought to myself a lot of things are going around in my head ...what I could do to stop it all and um.... it was that I day I went to (place name) with a knife and I thought if they saw me with a knife, if somebody in a shop saw me with a knife I would get locked up but it was like they weren't bothered. It was like I was invisible, anyway so I went home um... and um I happened to read the newspaper about somebody doing a, making a, causing a fire....and um I thought that's what I could do, I could cause a fire. I didn't want to cause anyone any harm ...and um ....I didn't know what to set on fire but um... so I set um, I don't know how I came to the conclusion about my neighbour, putting my neighbours rubbish on fire. I mean his house was not in a very good state it was a bit, quite run down and I'd seen him going to work every morning so I knew that he wasn't in the building and he lived alone and um... so I set his rubbish on fire. Of course it just rolled on from there with getting arrested and stuff. That um... it did what I wanted to stop me... you know.

I: It sounds like you were having a difficult time.

P: yeah

I: You mentioned earlier that when you were seeing the psychiatrist he wasn't very clear

Interview Transcript "Kate"

	<p>about diagnosis?</p> <p>P: well, it's that..... I don't know if I ever asked or things like that. They were trying different medications to, I don't know, nothing seemed to make much difference, nothing. If it did make any difference then it only did for a bit. I stuck with the venoflaxine but for some reason my mood was still a bit all over the place and um...um... cause I didn't have any other support from anywhere, no friends, um... and I had a troubled past...um... from an unbalanced family and stuff. (long pause) The first doctor I had, can't remember, she was a lady and she was nice and stuff, and she seemed a lot clearer in... what she could do to help me and stuff...but then it was passed over to this bloke.</p> <p>I: Can you tell me about when you got your personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: It was um.... when I came to (Place name) and I um I can't remember exactly but I think they said we're of the mind that you've got borderline personality disorder.....um.....</p> <p>I: Can you tell me a bit about what this diagnosis means to you?</p> <p>P: Well I did sort of look into it, well the psychologist gave me a piece, a sheet of paper with um the things from the...diagnosis...</p>	
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Interview Transcript "Kate"

diagnosis on... I think it was from..... um ....some psychiatric medical book or something they put down in writing what it was and it gave me a better idea of how it all, how it's.... how they came together, how they thought I was, my illness, and it's a lifetime illness. It um .....I suppose that's when it became clear really because I'd seen it on paper or written down.

I: Can you tell me how it made you feel when you read that?

P: well, that um.... it um.... helped me identify the ....what um..... different things that have happened in my life and stuff. That they seemed to put it together in one way or another. Um...and most people that have been abused and got families of what do they call it? something...um ....it's not just a difficult background, my family is really weird, is it um.... is it um....I've got 3 sisters that are half-sisters, let's say.... and that mother and father divorced, I was abused,.... (long pause) um.... um... I got married out of need feeling that ...that um ..... um.... that um.....it would sort of look after me, not out of love and it only lasted 10 years and I had 2 girls. Um...yeah...I just..... after much counselling, after about a year of counselling I realised that just going around with my head in the sand It just sort of like going along with it, not 'cos I loved him or that, it's just that he was working all the time from nine in the morning till



Interview Transcript "Kate"

	<p>nine at night and when he got home at lunch time he was home for a few hours, he had his lunch and then he had a sleep and then head go out again so it was like that all the time for 5 days, so and at the weekend..... in order to cope with the two girls he would look after the one and I would look after the other, sometimes we would be together but not very often but he was very, quite um religious and intent on actually going to church and stuff. Um... I was of the mind that um...I had been fooling myself for long enough that... um... how long do I keep up with this and stay for the two girls' sake and it took a lot of courage to divorce him. But what I didn't plan on was my oldest daughter decided to, she was intent on going to stay with her dad and when the oldest one went then obviously the youngest one wanted to go. So then I had no kids because the kids were... all I ever knew was to look after them all the time... um... and that um... then I was in (Place name). Because they kept on....even though I got custody of them... I couldn't ... I couldn't cope with the ...um...with the pressure that he was putting on them for them to go and live with him and I thought I've just got to let them go.</p> <p>I: it sounds like you went through a lot?</p> <p>P: Yeah</p> <p>I: You've talked to me a bit there about your</p>	
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Interview Transcript "Kate"

family and children and your wider family, has the diagnosis influenced how other people relate to you?

P: Um, not really no, no I don't think so. I don't think they've got a grasp as to what it is, what it means really in depth.... um..... they just put it under one big label of depression. My cousin she was schizophrenic and um... so ... but um.... they were quite shocked at me causing a fire... and getting sent to prison. So... but they just put it down to the depression and what I'd been going through, the divorce and stuff and the kids. Because I felt my home was like a revolving door, they'd come and see more for a little while, only for a few hours and then they'd go home again and then it would be a few days or weeks before I would see them again and then it would just be the same thing, staying for a few hours and then going home. I thought... I just didn't plan my life. Well, you don't exactly plan your life but my mood just escalated up and down even more so I thought I just had to put an end to it. Somehow, one way or another, I even set fire to my feet... just to give me a feeling of what it was like so I could, if I wanted to, set the whole of myself on fire, I'd get an indication of what it was like.

I: It sounds like you've been through so much.

P: yeah

Interview Transcript "Kate"

	<p>I: you mentioned a bit there about how your family put your diagnosis more under the umbrella of depression</p> <p>P: Yeah</p> <p>I: Since you've received the diagnosis is this something that you've talked to them openly about?</p> <p>P: No... because there's, I don't know, there's always been I never ending string of problems in my family, so ...that um... it's difficult to explain to them ... um... what it all meant.</p> <p>I: yeah. So, has the diagnosis influenced your life?</p> <p>P: Well I've actually forgotten, 'cos my memory has got worse as times gone on um... I'm... I have a different, there again I don't seem to be very good at decisions on things. I got married 3 about 3 and a half years ago and that has been a mess.</p> <p>I: I'm sorry to hear that</p> <p>P: Now I've parted from the second husband... we see each other now and again, once or twice a week and phone calls but I couldn't cope with living with him.</p>	
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Interview Transcript "Kate"

	<p>I: Yeah. So, has the personality disorder diagnosis changed the way you see yourself?</p> <p>P: As I say that um... because I um read about it and stuff obviously with that sheet um my memory wasn't so bad then, but since I've got married and had a catalogue of problems since then, I just can't remember anything about what's it about, about the diagnosis, it's like ppphhh, apart from the title that's all I can remember I can't remember what it's all about um... because my heads just a mess at the moment... with um... what's going on.</p> <p>I: yeah. I can see that it is difficult for you to remember at the moment, but I was wondering if you could tell me how important this diagnosis has been to you?</p> <p>P: well at the time, at the time... it was um... I suppose it made things a bit clearer....um... how things are evaluated to the, how things, I suppose it's like um ..... (long pause) when people ask you um....what's wrong with you?... it just seems, well it's a bit more in depth and complicated. I certainly wasn't going to be telling them my history and things so I just said depression and that um ... that um... there seemed to be, what was it called..... um... abuse in the family and that um...my father was an abuser , his brother was an abuser, and my</p>	
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Interview Transcript "Kate"

	<p>brother was an abuser because he had been abused, and we didn't know that until not long ago, so... um.... and that um.... it's like a family, I forget what name they give it .....not just a difficult background but extremely complicated, more than usual, given that three of the four sisters are of different fathers... and none of us can seem to bond.</p> <p>I: yeah. Are you saying that some of the things you've just talked about were explanations for the diagnosis?</p> <p>P: well they never really talked about it. They never went into any depth about my diagnosis. Never explained anything to me they just said that you've got a diagnosis of, you've got borderline personality disorder. No...but they didn't really explain it to me. It wasn't until the psychologist a couple of years later um...um...told me about it then I started to see the lady and she told me about it or rather gave me a sheet about it but um.....</p> <p>I: you mentioned that it made a bit more sense to you when you had the sheet?</p> <p>P: well yeah..... you can sort of put a bit more together of how they can come to that conclusion.</p> <p>I: So after you'd read the information and you</p>	
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Interview Transcript "Kate"

	<p>knew a bit more about the diagnosis did you see yourself differently than before you'd had the diagnosis?</p> <p>P: No, well, I didn't know what was happening... um... why my mood was so erratic, my mood was really high and then would come down really fast ...um .....(long pause).....(begins to cry).</p> <p>I: shall we leave it there?</p> <p>P: nods</p> <p>I:Thank you very much</p>	
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Emergent themes	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
	<p>I: Can you tell me about how you came to receive a personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: Well I can't remember that much but reading from um the files and everything that I have, apparently when I was a little, when I was much younger I was busy lashing out and hating authority and everybody in it. Um I believe this is because of my past history, as they call it, which was a traumatic childhood with abuse, a controlling father, domineering and abusive, and what they termed at the time as a weak mother who couldn't stand up because she was too afraid to do so. The emphasis of the looking after or the mother role if you like became in reverse from what I understand from the documents. So as a young child I was a person who was a protector. Um... I began lashing out at everybody, I was angry at the world and hated the world because they left us in this position and termed it as domestic violence I think or domestic abuse, so they wouldn't or couldn't do anything. And then that then came as the child becoming, with hating the world and everything, actually lashing out and getting</p>	

	<p>into trouble with the police and getting a diagnosis made, yes. So, Um there's a long time span, these are from records what I am telling you, not from memory as I can't remember it which maybe isn't a bad thing, I don't know. I read the records now and think they're not talking about me but they're talking about a different person.</p> <p>I: Can you tell me a bit more about that?</p> <p>P: Well, I have a condition now as a result of an attempted suicide in (year) where I jumped 40 foot off a bridge onto a dual carriageway. I had no shoes on my feet and I landed on my feet and bounced up and smashed my head open, the back and front of my head and face and now as a result of this I have a condition called ABI which is acquired brain injury. I also have associated disabilities including mobility difficulties and also um what they term as a non-functional left hand ,which, or left arm which although it's paralysed, and in fact I can move it its classed as non-functional, which means I can't use it basically. Um, I went through an operation where I had to have a metal plate put in and I also have other difficulties as well including lesser known ones such as foreign accent syndrome and things like this... dysphagia... all the usual ...they're just labels you know.</p>	
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	<p>But I just see me as me, I'm not different to anybody else, I just have difficulties. But...um... that causes a different set of problems mainly due to other people's perceptions ...but...um... as for the personality disorder diagnosis I have fought this diagnosis recently and I have got it knocked down to um having the diagnosis but not displaying the behavioural traits, symptoms. The diagnosis I believe I'm now having is emotional instability which of course is related to the past ...um... but because I cannot remember it (the past) it's not an influence in my life. So, I have done my own research into personality disorders and looked at the different sections that make up the diagnosis and this was to challenge a psychiatrist...um...whether or not this diagnosis was still valid. The psychiatrist was um... quick to avoid the questions and moved onto something else at the time...but looking at it now I don't have the diagnosis...the behavioural traits associated with the diagnosis of an emotional personality disorder, my difficulties I see are due to my brain damage ...they call injury but injury doesn't get better with the brain so we call it brain damage.</p> <p>I: So how did it feel the psychiatrist acknowledging that the diagnosis is there</p>	
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	<p>but there are no behavioural traits?</p> <p>P: That was the second psychiatrist, the first psychiatrist refused to even engage in the conversation and was very quick to avoid. The second psychiatrist has said that I have the diagnosis but don't display the symptoms. To me the diagnosis is very much built on influences around you when you were younger, because when you are a child your only adult influences around you are usually your parents or maybe siblings, older siblings. I did not have these but my childhood if you like was almost quite traumatic if you look at the records. Um...but now because I cannot remember this I don't see how it can be relevant and used in a diagnosis. That's just my own personal view, I get very suspicious of people who try and cling on to my past, if you like, because I can't remember it myself. But if you're going to try to tell a psychiatrist that they usually say you're avoiding the situation, putting it on to avoid the situation, which I have had said as well.</p> <p>I: yeah. So, what does the diagnosis mean to you?</p> <p>P: (laughs) nothing really ...um... the diagnosis itself and the associated behavioural traits ... a lot of them can be</p>	
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	<p>confused with the ABI if you like, because of the frustration if I can't do something. I have trouble with doing things or sometimes speaking, I get my words jumbled up ...um... this causes frustration. I was put into HMP (name) for two years for arson, two and a half years, after this happened and trying to fit into a system where you don't even understand why you are there causes frustration. You become upset. You don't get a lot of help in prison, you have to clean your cell or whatever, you are expected to do and I had to learn to adapt to do this. For instance you put yourself on the floor to mop, sweep and mop your own cell, whilst other people who stand and do this normally sort of think it's good to ridicule. So this of course causes problems then with emotions and cause frustration so you can understand it is easy to confuse. That's what I think has happened, people have clung onto the past records and not to the here and now as they call it. Um ... one of the things I was taught in the hospital I've been discharged from was about DBT. This is associated with personality disorder diagnosis as a way to cope. When I first heard of this I thought it was complete and utter bullshit to tell you the truth, and I also recently helped the clinical psychiatrist there with the teaching he was doing. I gave a patients perspective on this. There are many different adaptations</p>	
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	<p>to DBT and one of them in hospital is called screaming therapy which I consider to be attention seeking behaviour, purely because I always try to adapt my situation in a hospital setting to a community. So if I went outside my bungalow and started screaming I'd be arrested (Laughs) Do you see what I mean?</p> <p>I: yeah</p> <p>P: I informed one of the ladies who does DBT there (Name and role) and I told her that I thought it was attention seeking behaviour. She did not understand my perspective and at first I could not understand hers because to do this they telephone the police to let them know, and to me that's just attention seeking - bringing attention to yourself. Now if I was to do that outside my house, stand outside and screamed, I'm likely to be arrested (Laughs) or carted off in a white van. This is why I say this but she did not see my perspective at first (laughs). And the other things with emotional instability is also, which I have witnessed in hospital, is clinginess and the manipulation in order to feel valued or wanted in somebodies life. Very different behaviours which can go into the extreme and this is something I have witnessed myself and I've not been able to believe some of the things I have seen and</p>	
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	<p>heard, done or said. And also how clever these people are at this, at making the staff who are supposed to be trained to actually believe that what they are saying or doing. Obviously this manifests in different ways, but I chose not to adopt this behaviour myself and stick my little nose up in the air so that I could get away from the hospital. Um... I've had battles with different people, including psychologists, which I actually used to relish because I could not understand how they could relate this diagnosis in the here and now to myself, which is why I think it got much lesser- in the way that I have this diagnosis but I don't display the behavioural traits. It's just a safety net for them more than anything else (laughs). It's quite an interesting thing, but I also find that my perception of mental illness and disorder, to me, are different, because personality disorder is not a mental illness. There is a dramatic difference although obviously the lay person, as I call them, become confused with this, and become frightened. Therefore people's perceptions of or behaviour towards people with these diagnoses can reinforce a person's insecurities. This happens with myself sometimes in a different respect, such as if I can't do something or I ask somebody for help, or because I am not good at speaking sometimes I am spoken down to</p>	
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	<p>and treated in a pathetic manner or.. I don't know the word I am looking for ...um not pathetic but ... spoken down to... patronised... I am patronised most and I have a habit of turning around and letting the person know that it's not because I can't think or speak for myself, I just have difficulty doing so. Unfortunately my mouth gets me into trouble at times (Laughs). But I have had many a battle with different people, including DBT, I thought it wouldn't be any good for me. The one thing it did help me do was to learn things from different perspectives, to look at other peoples perspectives , but even that I began to question because it was like I was then looking to make excuses for other people's either failings or incompetence because I have found very much that if you stand up to question things too much you come up with excuses for it, not reasons. So that also got me into trouble! (laughs). Which I was in most of the time! (laughs) I didn't have to try either. But anyway so my thoughts on it are very mixed up in a way, very jumbled and this I blame on DBT because it's made me look at things slightly differently.</p> <p>I: Yeah. So, how would you say the diagnosis has influenced your life?</p>	
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	<p>P: When I was younger... I don't know .... All I know is that I became very angry with authority, I hated authority, I wouldn't trust anybody, very suspicious, never talked to anybody, never got close to anybody. Apparently I used to smile at people then hit them, to make them go away from me to keep them away. You know, I wasn't anybody who could be nice and if you got too close to me you could get battered...that sort of thing, that sort of attitude. From this it's obvious again from the records. I think now if it was me, as I say, is due to the self-preservation, because I'd been hurt in the past. You know, I cannot speak about it from memory or knowledge because I can't remember, I can just read the files and see a very angry child who hated the world, hated authority, couldn't trust or respect or like anybody, didn't want to get hurt again and kept pushing people away because it was safer for her to do so, that's all I see I don't see any other sort of psychological or psychiatric rubbish that people keep coming up with, and by that I mean what's based in the records. Lots of 'she did this because...'</p> <p>To me that is total rubbish, the facts are there in the records. So it's very very difficult to speak as somebody who suffers with or has that diagnosis and can remember their behaviour because I can't, but all I can do is say what I know the records say. I was very</p>	
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	<p>angry and hated the world and acted that out basically, trying desperately to get somebody to listen but no-one would. It was easier then to turn and walk away, to make the child a victim, more so than when the child becomes an adult to make that adult into more of a victim and to hold the adult responsible for everything that wasn't her fault. Which apparently I spent years blaming myself for anyway. So I can't really even tell you what that was like or what it felt like because I don't know but that's what I got from the records when I read them. So to me it's as simple as that, the failings of the authority are then put back on the child who then blames themselves in a way and in adulthood becomes a bigger victim than they were as a child. That's far easier than anybody taking responsibility, isn't it?</p> <p>I: yeah. So, what about in terms of how other people relate to you? Does having this diagnosis of a personality disorder influence how other people relate to you, such as your family and friends or any other people?</p> <p>P: Well my mother, for instance, I have recently bought a house and needed help to furnish it and my mother has been extremely supportive with this. If you look at the records, again we spent a lot of time falling out and this and that. The records are</p>	
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	<p>also false in some respects because they don't tell the truth. This was confirmed by my mother recently who made appointments to meet two of the previous consultants at the hospital and the transcript that came back from the meeting was nothing that was reflective of what was said. Um.. my mother has been one of my biggest supporters, if you like. She constantly worries, this is more to do with the ABI than anything else, she constantly fusses and worries and things like that but she's always there to help. The hospital didn't want to know. But it's funny how the hospital are paid to support didn't want to know but yet the mother who is supposed to have this awful frightened, fear of her daughter was her best support and help. Because at the time of buying a house for instance, it's the most stressful time isn't it?</p> <p>I: yeah, it is</p> <p>P: You know my mother laughs at this herself, she would give me twice of anything I could give her, believe me, but she has been my biggest support in all this. Um ... so I cannot understand where all this comes from, to me what is done is done and you move on anyway. The fact I cannot remember it makes it easier for me to do so. I was speaking with my probation officer the</p>	
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	<p>other day and I was explaining that my mother had shown me some photographs of my father, I have no memory of him. I didn't know who he was in the photograph. This was also done with some other relatives who I was supposed to have, but I don't know who they are. Obviously this is not upsetting to me as I cannot remember, but it is to my mother. Somebody said how do I feel about that and I said there's no good crying over something you can't remember. Because it's not going to make it happen, If you can't remember it you can't remember it simple as that. Um ...so again I can't understand how this diagnosis can now be relevant in any way shape or form, even in its name only because the past that's made me behave like this isn't there anymore. The influences that were there aren't. And my frustrations and my tears and my tantrums and my anxiety, if you like, comes from the ABI and not the mental health or mental disorder diagnosis. Um... so it gets difficult in that respect because you get people turning around and saying well it's because you have this diagnosis, and I say no its not! Now instead of having somebody against the wall and battering them I will try and fight them in a different way. This was again proven in the hospital I was in, I was known for challenging people, even managers and that, which I actually enjoyed (laughs) even</p>	
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	<p>challenging somebody in respect to their role- you're a staff nurse not a doctor how can you say that when the doctor has not said it- that sort of thing. And that was very hard for me to say to the person that I said it to because I actually liked the person as a person but as a bunch of nurses I thought they were rubbish. They're all right as people (laughs) sort of! (laughs)</p> <p>I: Yeah. You talked a bit there about the professionals, the way they responded to you, do you think they related differently to you because of the personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: I think if I displayed the behavioural traits associated with that then yes I think they would...um...they would have related to me a lot differently they would have treated me like the mentally ill pathetic that they treat people like that with that diagnosis. That's from what I've seen recently um in the way that staff members are manipulated by patients who are absolute experts in getting what they want in any way, any extreme they can go to to do this. Um.. I think it's very very hard in the... in things I have seen recently, they have opened my eyes into how people can force others to believe something that isn't true ... and its really opened my eyes in different ways</p>	
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	<p>because to me ...years ago you would not have questioned the doctor. You would have respect for the doctor or police person. Now there is nothing, there is none of this. The professionals I think, the professional sector, the mental health sector if you like would have related to me much differently but I didn't display the symptoms of the personality disorder. So...um... to me... if you react to something that isn't true you are reinforcing that thought in the first place, but you try and explain that to a professional and you haven't a hope in hell because they work from textbooks, very much probably like you do. They have a set sort of behavioural thought pattern if you like and if you work in that place...that system for a long time then everybody is the same. You have to be aware of everybody as everybody with this diagnosis will do this, everybody will say this and they will all do this. You are never an individual, you are always generally treated, you are not treated as an individual. And it throws the professional sector off as well because you don't display the behavioural traits for the diagnosis you have so they're completely thrown. For example you go up to a nurse and you ask for something and you talk normally, the nurse expects you to swear, to threaten, to lash out to abuse. If you say ok, will you make me some time to talk about this and</p>	
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	<p>try to resolve this then you get a sort of a 'what?' (laughs) because you are giving them the reaction that they don't expect. Because you are suddenly turning around and being the adult um... they don't expect it at all, they sort of look at you like you're an alien! (laughs) I've done this one a couple of times because to me that is the way I work, you know. Someone upsets me and it bothers me enough I'll ask to speak to them about it and I put them right on something, if it bothers me bad enough, if it doesn't then it doesn't matter. Um... but again if you go through the records and you see... oh... say in 2000 or in 1999 she did this, and she did that, you will see that there is a dramatic change in the things... and I think the people who have to change their attitude is mostly those in the professional sector because as I said they generalise everything and no-one is an individual. So very few people will stand by what they see as opposed to what is written down in records, because they are always expecting them to revert to that, and don't sort of see any different . The other thing with personality disorder is that your priorities change and you can grow out of it, it is like spoilt brat syndrome (laughs) then again that's my own perception ...no professional has said that to me (laughs) it is very much like spoilt brat syndrome in that if you can't get what you want then you</p>	
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	<p>throw a tantrum. In psychiatric services a tantrum is thrown in a more adult way but it's still a tantrum (laughs) um... for the benefit of getting what you want, and to sit back and deal with this from a professional view is absolutely amusing as hell... maybe I shouldn't say this but it is (laughs). You will get them with the compromises and the 'what can we do to help you behave' and 'if you meet this target then...' they will always change it from what it is into what is wanted if you see. And this again I have laughed at many times ...quietly (laughs) and sometimes not so quietly. But I have found now that I can read people very well. There are many different ways of manipulation, for instance you have a false front, you have two faces, whatever you want to say. You speak with such venom but inside you have different feelings. It's very very dramatic, very extreme, it drives me mad. Now I think too much (laughs). That is the fault of the DBT (laughs), see, I am transferring blame quite happily (laughs).</p> <p>I: yeah. So, you talked about the professionals and you talked about how your mother has responded to you, what about anyone else in your life or in your community?</p> <p>P: I have a partner who is mentally ill she</p>	
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has mental health diagnosis. Um... it is very hard... her diagnosis... I'm not sure if its schizophrenia or not, I can't remember what it is she's diagnosed with. She's recently been in the hospital with overdoses and such like. At the time I was going through hell myself. I was in limbo, waiting for the parole board, and I was waiting for this and I was waiting for that and at the time I needed that support from these people around me but they were all dealing with their own things. So it got very very difficult.

I: Yeah. How does she relate to you in terms of your diagnosis?

P: my diagnosis! (laughs) you'll have to excuse me, to me that's just laughable. How I relate to her though is in that situation I pull right back and say I do not understand your diagnosis or how you behave, I don't understand it and don't want to be part of that and I'm going to give you some space where you can go into hospital or whatever and you can think about what you want. Because I could make the situation 20 times worse by going just fuck off and get on with it. You say that to some people and it can crack them up even more because they will make you take notice, know what I mean. But to me that's how I deal with things, I kick myself in the bottom. But with other people

	<p>you have to sort of see quickly how they will cope with that because for some people it doesn't work and it makes them worse. Um... so what I did is I pulled right back and said right, I can't deal with this at the moment. You're going through hell, that's your hell, it's got nothing to do with me and I can't do anything about it. She understood that and so I said when you're feeling better... you can keep in touch with me, I'm not going to refuse to speak to you or anything... but I cannot become involved in your illness as I don't understand it. I think it's time to let the professionals do what they do and then I will take a back seat and that's what I did and that's how I coped with it. She actually related to that as she knew I was going through hell whilst I was waiting for this decision about this and this decision about that and it was like a was in limbo and I needed these people around me to be supportive to me but they couldn't as this person was having their own issues and difficulties. And that's the other thing that makes me laugh about the emotional instability thing, because if I was going to be cracking that would have been the time it would have happened, wouldn't it (laughs). You know the pressure and the stress is supposed to be making you crack up isn't it? Anyway, it was hard and it was hell but you know, now, it couldn't have worked out</p>	
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	<p>better for me. My stance worked better for me at the time and worked for (partners name) because she understood where I was coming from, she had the space she needed to work with the professionals. And the other thing I found out was that if a relative is trying to make an enquiry about a person in their family's illness, you end up hitting a blank wall. You're not informed of anything; even though you will be you are never informed. Um... and the one thing that made me laugh was...whether rightly or wrongly was that she had to be transferred to (place name) because the local psychiatric unit was full (laughs) which is a source of amusement for me, but it is quite serious you know if you need help and you can't get it but I had to laugh because I couldn't believe that people are wanting to be in these places. I fought like hell to get out of there so can't believe that people want to be there. There was a young lady in the hospital I was in who had been there for quite a while and was scared to go out on her own. She couldn't live on her own. I used to talk with her quite often about it and the only way I could relate to this was that... well...she didn't have to be around people all of the time but if she went out on her own then there was somebody she could talk to. But I still couldn't understand why she would want to actually be there. To me sometimes</p>	
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	<p>you sit around at home and sometimes you are lonely, sometimes you are fed up, but that's part of life. You can't have people around you all the time. And if people are paid to be there for you, its false security as they are not there because they want to be they are there because they are paid to be. It's different, so there's no genuine feelings there at all, it's a paid job. Their coming in to work to earn money to feed their families. You are not part of that, you are work. You're not their friend, you're not their family, but to most patients you talk to in hospital that is how they see it. Very hard for me to understand. Um... I spent all my time pushing everybody away, ending up being hated because of it, and not caring very much at all what they thought. um... but to speak with people who want to be in that position... and apparently again according to the records that is something I did! I cannot believe this, why would anyone want to be in hospital or prison or anywhere. You know, you go through hard times, you sit and cry in your house or bungalow or your flat or wherever because you're upset. You know, not all the time is anyone going to be there to talk to you, and yet these hospital patients think they should be because they care but they don't, it's a job. And I think that is a mistake that is also made by some insecure members of staff as well because people</p>	
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	<p>have been there a long time and they all work on the same area, wards if you like so they come into the same people, and I think it then compromises the authority aspect of it so if someone wants to become a member of authority they can't be a person's friend. This is something I raised in the DBT training, which didn't go down that well (laughs) I'm not a very popular person, very opinionated and not very popular! (laughs) I don't care. But it's what got me through. It's what helped me to get through. Turning my back on them all and saying up yours I'm not staying here I've got other ideas! (laughs)</p> <p>I: yeah. So, this personality disorder diagnosis, has it changed the way you think or feel about yourself</p> <p>P: well as I can't remember my past very well I can't really answer that, I don't know. Um..</p> <p>I: what about at the moment, because as you've said the diagnosis is still there in name</p> <p>P: it's a pain up the arse! Pphhhh....me myself would just want to get on with it um...I appreciate that obviously years ago I must have been very disturbed and I can see why that was. You know you read the</p>	
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	<p>record, and you can't think anything else, obviously. Um...but... like I said that part of it is not there anymore, I can't remember it so I don't know. I um... for me, I'm just me and nobody else. I laugh at things even when sometimes they can be hurtful because, not to put a brave face on for others, because if I allow myself to be upset it makes it worse. If I can laugh about something it makes me happier, endorphins make you feel better. Even if it's something tragic, something personal. I find very much that to question things helps me, some people think I'm loopy, well I saw a lady with light blue, sort of turquoise hair the other day. Even when I came out of prison for the first time and I had a brain injury, I looked at people with different coloured hair and I was absolutely gobsmacked, how do they go around like that? Then I started to think if I was younger I would probably do the same thing. I went through a stage where I wanted to but...um... it's like for me now that I died in (year of suicide attempt) and then I came alive again. It's very much like that because from (year) to now I have basically been baby to adult, that's how it feels to me. So I really can't relate to any of these things in the past because I don't remember them (laughs). My mother can sometimes talk about my father, apparently I hated him as well, controlling or whatever it is, I didn't recognise him from</p>	
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	<p>the photographs, very handsome man, chronic alcoholic, yeah, obviously difficulties there. Well he's gone, that's gone I mean he's been burnt for god knows how many years and I have no memories of him at all, so that part of my life where I was a disturbed little brat who was an attention seeker, as the services labelled her anyway, and other things, isn't there. But you read the records and if you can see the records without the psychiatric training you can see a very disturbed child who desperately wanted to get some help, couldn't understand why no-one bothered and spent the rest of her blummin life lashing out , trying to be the adult and to get someone to help her and they wouldn't. You know, that's all I can say for it 'cos that's all I know. But I don't know about anything else. But you know you sometimes sit and talk to doctors and you try to explain that you can't remember. The psychiatric profession mock general profession because in psychiatric profession you are putting on difficulties so that you don't have to face your past. In general profession you have medical diagnosis of post traumatic amnesia. But the two conflict because the psychiatric profession won't admit that the general profession is right and the general profession won't admit that psychiatric profession is right. There is one person caught in the middle of this and that</p>	
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	<p>is me. So you spend your life now fighting a very different battle but doing it so differently from how these things were done in the past. I would imagine the difference now is obvious. I still get upset, I still sometimes come out with ... I was told in um... a hearing that I must not say I want to throttle somebody as it could be seen as a threat . But it is general talk, people say it all the time but because I'm on licence conditions when this happens, I cause alarm. I don't spend that much time thinking before I open my mouth, unfortunately. When (probation officer name) phoned me to tell me I'd got my parole I said do you want to come out and get drunk? she said 'you can't say that, it's too early!', but it was a joke! But, (sighs) you sometimes wonder about saying things to people because they don't see it as you do and that's really what's underlying all this isn't it. You know these potential concerns and all this they don't see things as you see them so you could say something quite innocently and somebody else could take it the wrong way</p> <p>I: do you think that's related to the diagnosis in your records?</p> <p>P: which one (laughs)</p> <p>I: the personality disorder diagnosis</p>	
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	<p>P: Other people's perceptions, I am not responsible for their perceptions or their views. A lot of these records that the hospital write are views and opinions, they're not necessarily based on fact because that dispute, if you remember, is it brain damage versus personality disorder. The personality disorder I probably wouldn't have disputed for when I was much younger, the behaviours are present aren't they in the files and everything else. But since this happened they've not been present so when you're trying to explain something as somebody who has ABI to a psychiatrist or a nurse then the nurse or psychiatrist is thinking mental health, behavioural traits, you know, must write it down! Put it under certain sections! And you're sitting there thinking what an asshole! Which unfortunately I told them a lot as well, to their faces (laughs) not a very popular person (laughs) I did, I told them they were a bunch of assholes! Quite regularly as well! But that was my view, I mean I didn't get in trouble for that one, not much. Unfortunately I called the doctor an asshole in an email which got me into much trouble (laughs)</p> <p>I: was this following you voicing your concerns about the diagnosis that you had?</p>	
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	<p>P: something like that yeah, (laughs) I believe if you tell somebody something straight there is no room for misperception or misinterpretation or whatever they call it. If you are straight with someone there is no room for misinterpretation. If the other person has got a problem with you they can talk to you about that there and then can't they. So you can sort it out, if they say what do you mean by that. If they turn away and throw a tantrum at you, or walk off or whatever, that's fine but if they want to sort it out they can, you have that opportunity to sort it out. I don't happily go around telling everybody they're assholes, it was just the nursing profession at (hospital name). They never really questioned it; they must have known (laughs). But I was quite regularly someone who would sit there and call them a bunch of assholes to their faces. I don't believe in saying things behind people's backs because then it becomes the Chinese whisper effect but now you see, you say something to somebody, they have the chance to come back at you if they want to or something. If you say that behind their back them they don't. Then it becomes all wrapped up and embroiled and you've got a long list of things you haven't said or meant but that person thinks you have. So you say it to their face and you become known for saying it to their face, even you know a little</p>	
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	<p>thing like sitting in a meeting and calling them a bunch of assholes. It was said to their face and not behind their back, so they, you know, had no illusions about what I thought or saw (laughs).</p> <p>I: yeah. So, has the personality disorder diagnosis been helpful in understanding yourself?</p> <p>P: now you are taking the piss! (laughs) sorry, um... No. If I wanted to understand myself from the mental health world, if you like, I don't think I ever could. The difficulties I have now I understand what causes them. Um... I understand why they happen when they happen ...um... I can get frustrated because I cannot do something, I am upset. I cannot always make myself understood because of my speaking difficulties and word finding difficulties, that is because of the ABI. So I can understand that side of me. All this babble about this personality disorder I cannot make sense of because like I said you read the different sections that make up the diagnostic tool, the criteria if you like, and none of them relate. The frustration, the outbursts or whatever are due to frustration which is linked to the mental health aspect of it but the root cause is something different. So... you're fighting....well you're fighting a</p>	
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	<p>system again really in a different respect to that, something they know about because that is what they have trained to do, but they are also trained to see everything in generalised ways. So a person is attention seeking, the person wants me to go and talk to them because the person in the past won't admit to the fact that they were mentally ill, the person needs time and attention, the person is attention seeking, it's not always the case but in um... in the nursing aspect from textbooks you know about mental health illness or personality disorders, it's there isn't it, black and white, emotional instability they don't look beyond that. They don't know how it feels to only have one working hand after a few years. I've been the rest of my life perfectly normal and I could do anything I wanted. They can't understand what it's like to suddenly become handicapped or physically impaired. They don't know; they never bothered to ask because their job is mental health. Personality disorder comes under that sort of label if you like but they can't see it from my perspective. So I'm in my room for instance and can't do something and on hearing swearing or shouting...nurse, mental health trained.... attention seeking behaviour. Me ...I'm getting frustrated because I can't do something and I'm getting angry with myself. Emotional instability, can</p>	
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	<p>you understand the mix up? That's why I'm calling them a bunch of assholes (laughs).</p> <p>I: I can see how that would be very frustrating for you</p> <p>P: Yes, trying to make them understand something they are not qualified to do... you haven't got a hope in hell because again it's another specialist area. You don't have a hope in hell.</p> <p>I: yeah. Thank you, you've spoken to me about a number of different things in relation to your diagnosis. One last thing I wanted to ask you is how important has this personality disorder diagnosis been to you?</p> <p>P: I think if it's given in the right setting with the right behavioural traits analysed properly, I think it's invaluable because some personality disorders you can't treat with medication. As you grow up in life you're priorities change, you meet a partner, you may have a family, you have bills, your responsibilities, so your priorities in life change don't they. Um... so people have the possibility of being able to grow out of it. People who are treated with medication, although the medication is basically for psychiatric use which is mental health illness, it does have some value in</p>	
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	<p>personality disorders. I think a diagnosis in the right respect of the behavioural traits being analysed properly, is invaluable. Um... people... anybody could lose their temper, anybody could shout, anybody can hit anybody else. You don't have to have a mental health diagnosis for that one. But I think it's invaluable in that somebody gets the right help, but it has to be proper help. As far as I am concerned I did not get the proper help because people were too ready to jump on a past diagnosis and not look at what is really the root cause. And I've found over the last few years that I have been fighting a lot of people to try and make them understand my difficulties whilst they may mimic mental health or personality disorder behavioural traits, they are due to something else. So that diagnosis is not present anymore, although obviously in the past it was. But I think it does have an invaluable place in society but for proper diagnosis with proper help. Not suppression, not control but help and support, and this is what the staff at (hospital name) are employed to do help and support but you find them often in a position where they are taking that far out of context and being controlling. So I don't know if ever the right balance is going to be met, I think it's a very difficult thing to negotiate, to weigh up because some people need more than others,</p>	
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	<p>some people don't need more than others. You get a room full of patients; two of these patients are making much noise and threats, acting out, swearing, violent, and everything else. There's one person sitting in the corner quietly, not bothering anybody, never really does. Who do you give our attention to, the one person in the corner who actually needs it more than the two acting out. But that doesn't happen in hospital settings because they have to minimise the effects of violent behaviour for other patients and other staff. So that person sitting in the corner who is most needy out of all of the room, including the two who are swearing and shouting and everything else, is left. So that person then sees somebody smacking somebody else getting all the attention, because any attention is good attention. If somebody is being held down, restrained, and jabbed , or whatever, they are getting the attention, they are getting taken notice of, they get preferential treatment because they are first to go out because they might kick off, they might lash out, they might do this they might do that. The whole ward then is disrupted... so if we take that person out and pacify that person, then everybody else suffers, because they are not going to react, 'cos you know they just sit there. So I think it needs to be properly sorted because the way they do things, who do you pacify, the aggressive,</p>	
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	<p>violent, gobby little shite who is acting out all of the time, or the quiet one sitting in the corner who is not taking any notice, you know, wrapped up in their own selves . Which is the worst potential risk? The one that is sitting in the corner. Try telling that to one of the psychiatric nurses at (hospital name), it doesn't happen, you are then labelled as a trouble maker cause you're causing trouble. You're daring to question their authority. Um... so I've learnt all this by watching other people in that situation. If I had this diagnosis I could have adopted this behaviour for attention seeking purposes, to receive attention. I didn't, I chose to challenge everything and purposely push people away. Not because of personality disorder behavioural traits but because when I'm out in the community I haven't got these people around me all of the time. But again, in a psychiatric setting you can see how that is misinterpreted ...nobody will ask you why, they assume. They can ask you, you can tell them but are they going to believe you? So it is...um... very difficult ...somebody like me in a setting like that.</p> <p>I: It sounds like a difficult place to be.</p> <p>P: sometimes it is easier to adopt the behaviour around you than to stand out and be different because to stand out and be</p>	
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	<p>different does cause problems. You have to have.... I used to talk to a couple of the ladies there and when I knew I'd got my parole I said look you know when I came in here I was a no hoper, I was never going to get out, you know IPP and all that, I was never going to get out. They thought they could keep me in here for ever, I thought differently. This is where I am now, you've got to get on with it, you've got to keep your head down and if possible your gob shut. They all sort of looked at me 'cos I never did that one either (laughs) but you know what worked for me could work for them. And I feel it's better sitting them down rather than patronising people saying 'you can do it if you try', well it's not about that. People don't want to get out of bed in the morning and have their wash or whatever, well why should they have meals brought up for them. You see my attitude of caring for somebody in that situation would probably be seen as a breach of their human rights these days (laughs). I would do it differently. But there is nothing to say I'm right either, it's just the way I would do it. So I don't think much of the hospital setting as you have probably gathered (laughs) I have a habit of saying so as well which gets me into much trouble sometimes. But it's a very difficult one to get right I think with different things with the various mixture of needs, of different levels.</p>	
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	<p>You know, there is such a diverse mixture and that also complicates it as well. So.... I think they need to look at things more from a patient's perspective than from the text book perspective to be able to have an insight into what's happening. But I can't tell them that, I'm a loony! I'm opinionated, someone once told me I'm not gobby, I have views and opinions, and I don't mind verbalising them. That's what I was told to say in my parole hearing (laughs) the first time I did but the second I didn't. But somebody who questions things and challenges things and is different, as you probably see every day in life anyway is treated not the same. If I was in hospital and I acted in the way that they thought I should have done, I would have received a lot more help and support, but I wouldn't have got where I was. I'd have become institutionalised and all that. My way was to turn around and say no, you're not taking me anywhere because I'm going to go by myself. You think you're going to come with me, you've got another thing coming. Somebody would have to come with me because that is what the doctor said so I said ok, but anything that happens in this hospital in these gates we do not talk about it when we are out of the hospital. You know I had to do that and believe me I was thought of badly because of it. But it's got me out and it's got</p>	
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	<p>me wanting to be out. I've not at any one time thought ooh I'd like to be back in the hospital, I have to do something to get back in the hospital. I've not thought like that because I don't want to, but they never saw that. They saw somebody that wouldn't accept that they needed help. So I think it's a very hard thing to weigh up and to ...not weigh up right... that sounds ...I'm no professional but if people start to see things from a patients perspective as opposed to text book perspective they would get a damn sight further in trying to understand the human behaviour rather than just knowing of it. When you read, it it's all laid out for you in black and white, you actually miss it and it's a different story all together. So good luck with your doctorate! (laughs)</p> <p>I: (laughs)Thanks!</p>	
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Interview transcript "Tom"

Emergent Themes	Original Transcript	Exploratory Comments
	<p>I: Can you tell me how you came to receive a personality disorder diagnosis?</p> <p>P: well, I was under a psychiatrist in (place name) um...since (date) and I was diagnosed with all sorts in between but then we moved up to (place name) in (date) and then I was transferred to here (CMHT), and then it was Dr (name) that diagnosed me with Borderline Personality Disorder.</p> <p>I: How did that make you feel receiving that diagnosis?</p> <p>P: um.... To be honest she didn't tell me for 6 months, until they put me in therapy. Um... afterwards it made a lot of sense. You know, 'cos I'd been searching and searching, trying to find out what was up with me um.....I suppose it's a relief more than anything else because....um...I got the impression that when I was living in ( place name) that I was wasting their time. Um...</p> <p>I: In what way?</p> <p>P: Well nothing was happening. All I was getting</p>	

	<p>was more medication, more medication and I was diagnosed with chronic depression and then I was diagnosed with PTSD, which I have got. Um... query bipolar 'cos it's in my family. Um... and then towards the end, just before I came here, a new psychiatrist took over and um...he's not really au fait with personality disorders and he just said 'there's nothing more I can do, I'm going to discharge you'. But then I came here and um...that's when it went from there</p> <p>I: Can you tell a bit about what this diagnosis means to you?</p> <p>P: um...it gave me hope because I knew...I knew I was on the right track now and well...because of the diagnosis I got the right medication, I got the right therapy and...um...I've been hiccough free for about 12 months or so now, over 12 months. I have bad days but you know...but nothing like they were. So...yeah it's it's helped a lot... it's helped me, it's helped me and my wife together because we had issues. Um... and it enabled me to get the DBT which I use every day really so...</p> <p>I: You've talked a bit there about your relationship with your wife, I was wondering if having this diagnosis has had an effect on how people relate to you?</p> <p>P: I'm still a bit...choosy who I tell. I mean people, people I've been around for a long time...as far as they're concerned I've still got depression, and</p>	
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	<p>that's as far as it goes. It's only people that I really trust that I tell and to be honest there's probably...about 8 people that actually know. Um...purely because the way the media portrays people with personality disorders. Um... you get it...I don't know, people think when you've got a personality disorder that you...you're mad, you're bad and all that business, and it's not true, it's not true, we're just, we're just people same as anybody else. I have borderline personality disorder, I am not borderline personality disorder, if you know what I mean. Um...so yeah...um...I'm still a bit choosy who I tell basically. Um... my wife, it's made a difference for her because obviously I've received the right treatment now, so it's made things a lot better between us. Um...yeah, that's all I can say on that really...</p> <p>I: you mentioned there about the media and portraying people with a personality disorder diagnosis as mad or bad, how does that make you feel?</p> <p>P: Angry...because people believe what they see on the TV, even if it's a film. Someone with a personality disorder is always the one that's the mad axe man or the murder or whatever. I'm not saying I've not had bad days and .... been in difficult situations shall we say but I've never been the mad bad man with the... chasing people with a knife or anything. So... it's just not true and</p>	
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	<p>people believe the hype... and um... I think people are very blinkered because of...they form their opinions by what they see. It's nothing like...I'm not saying there aren't people in um...Broadmoor, for example, have got some personality disorders but we're not all the same. So...I've just taken a KUF um...training course for awareness and I've applied to go on a train the trainers' course now to tell people what it's about, to help spread the message.</p> <p>I: That sounds great</p> <p>P: When I was doing the KUF training course I was the only service user amongst all these professionals, probation officers, mental health nurses. Not one of them knew... nobody knew what it's really like...um...which was shocking to me really and that's why I decided to apply for this post. If I'm successful then something good's come out of something bad if you know what I mean. Next (laughs)</p> <p>I: (laughs). So, has the diagnosis influenced your life?</p> <p>P: In regards?</p> <p>I: in regards to the way you see yourself or the way you behave, that sort of thing?</p> <p>P: um... only the fact that...now after all the</p>	
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	<p>therapy and the right medication and stuff I am a different person, I really am. And um... yeah It's given me a new lease of life, the fact that I was diagnosed and treated. I am a different person. I spent years with um...living with suicidal ideation, you know... going to sleep hoping that you don't wake up and then when you do wake up planning ways of...of...um...shall we say ending my life, but it's not the case now. Not... completely gone, especially when you have bad days. I mean I'm not naïve enough to think that I'm cured...but I think I've got it realistically under control, for now anyway.</p> <p>I: It sounds like you've worked really hard</p> <p>P: I have worked hard, very hard.</p> <p>I: So, do you see yourself as different now that you've received the diagnosis to how you saw yourself before?</p> <p>P: yeah, and only because...I know there's something wrong with me now and I know what it is. When you're being told, you've got this, you've got that, you've got the other for 20 odd years um... it's soul destroying because all you're doing is being passed from pillar to post. Until I came here (CMHT) apart from when I very first came and saw a locum...but that was only once...but in my time in (CMHT name in place name) I think I had 7 or 8 psychiatrists. Being passed... and ...I</p>	
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	<p>hated starting again, going through all of it, you know, 'what do think's happened? What do you think is causing this and this?', yeah I've got my issues and...because of what happened to me as a child...even now when it's come on the news that it's happened to somebody else, it's a bit... but before...before I had coping mechanisms if you like um....it wasn't so easy. All it did was stir up bad memories. So, yes I'm a different person, for the better I hope, well, my psychologist and my psychiatrist, sorry ex-psychiatrist um...seem to think so anyway.</p> <p>I: it sounds like you've come a long way</p> <p>P: I have, I feel I have, everybody else seems to think I have, but I personally feel I have. I've had a hell of a journey but it's nice to see light at the end of the tunnel.</p> <p>I: Yeah. So has the diagnosis been helpful in understanding yourself?</p> <p>P: yeah, definitely because it helped me understand why things were the way they were and to some extent still are. Um... it helped me understand about the rapid mood swings....and outbursts of anger and stuff. It helped me understand that it wasn't just me being a pain in the arse to live with or just in general but there was an actual root cause for it. Which has actually proved itself because I'm different now to how I</p>	
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	<p>was...(tails off)</p> <p>I: how does it feel to have some of that understanding about yourself?</p> <p>P: um... good because I'm getting to know myself, I'm getting to know who I am and who I should be, not who I was, if you know what I mean. Because although it was me, it wasn't really me. Um... believe me it's a horrible, when times are bad it's horrible to live like that. You see a lot of professionals think people with um personality disorder diagnosis, still to this day think you're malingering. They still think you're malingering, they still think you're attention seeking and stuff. Which is not good for people like me because it does make you feel like giving up, which is....which went a long way to me being how I was with this suicidal thoughts and.. if they couldn't help me and I was thinking what is there to do? where is there to go? Um...so yeah I quite like the new me, the me that I should be.</p> <p>I: you mentioned about professionals accusing people of malingering. Can you tell me a bit more about that? About your experiences?</p> <p>P: well they never say it to your face. Um... but I don't know, it's not even paranoia because I know other people who have felt the same. You do feel like you're wasting your time, they make you feel like that.</p>	
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	<p>I: In what way?</p> <p>P: well they're very abrupt with you. They're very um ... well they just don't seem arsed. Um...they just don't seem to want to know, because you're not, you've not got schizophrenia or something then you, with a personality disorder, although at this time I didn't know I had a personality disorder but I'm sure ...even if they did know Emma it's not in my records, um...but they did treat me like I was just malingering and um.. it's not good, it's not good. Unfortunately it still goes on. I think it was 1997 or something like that that it was classified as a mental illness or was it 1995 one or two, because it wasn't actually classed as a mental illness before was it. Well you know more about that than I do. I've read the DM 5s and all them you know, DSM whatever it's called. Diagnostic and Statistical... DSM 5.</p> <p>I: What was it like reading that?</p> <p>P: It made a whole lot of sense, although I fit into category B personality disorder, borderline. I also have traits of A and C as well. I think we all do, even if you haven't got an illness I think we all have traits of what's in the diagnostic thing. In fact I think we have all the bits, all disorders along the line to be honest. In a nutshell, I know you're going to ask me more questions, but on one hand it sucks but on the other hand it's ok when you</p>	
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	<p>know what's wrong with you and you can do something about it.</p> <p>I: Can you tell me a bit more about how it sucks?</p> <p>P: you want to know about the illness?</p> <p>I: You said in one way getting the diagnosis sucks and in other ways it is good</p> <p>P: Yeah in one way because the sucks side of it, the bad side of it, if you like, is what you have to go through, being personality disordered. Um...but on the plus side once you've got a diagnosis you can do something about it. You can work towards living an almost, whatever normal is, a normal life. But actually having the disorder is not fun at all. I'm not very good at this! (laughs)</p> <p>I: You're doing really well! So what does the diagnosis mean to you?</p> <p>P: what does it mean to me? On a personal level you mean? What does it mean to me? It's going to cover the same ground again. The diagnosis meant that I could get well again.</p> <p>I: you mentioned that by getting the diagnosis you could access the right treatment like DBT</p> <p>P: yeah. I mean this is the um.... (psychiatrist name) is the only person that deals with it in this</p>	
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	<p>area. So when I was in the (county) catchment area there was no specialist. I came here and I was fortunate, like I said I saw a locum but the (psychiatrist name) came and took the full time job and that's her speciality. So it all just fitted into place nicely if you like. Yeah, so it's helped me get well having a diagnosis, and not be who I was for 20 odd years and longer. There was something wrong for years before I had a breakdown. Um...but I um got through life working all the hours that god sent and if I wasn't working I was drinking, if I wasn't drinking I was smoking pot, self-medicating if you like. Um... but that was my life, and then in (date)...um... (date) I just couldn't get up, I just had a complete mental and physical breakdown. Um... and then I was in and out of the system, in and out of hospital for a while. Well um... in two years I spent 18 months in hospital with little breaks in between, well like three months in and then a couple of weeks out and back in for a couple of weeks and so on and so forth. Um...I've forgotten what the question was now!</p> <p>I: you were just talking about how the diagnosis has influenced your life, and how you went a long time going in and out of the system and how long it took for you to finally get the diagnosis.</p> <p>P: It's too long, there's not enough help. I'm really glad that you're doing this, is that going to be your speciality is it, personality disorder?</p>	
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	<p>I: It's an area that I'm interested in, definitely.</p> <p>P: because there's just not enough help.</p> <p>I: can you tell me a bit more about that?</p> <p>P: Which part?</p> <p>I: about there not being enough help.</p> <p>P: There's not enough help. Um... I've been to a couple of service user meetings up in (place name) about um...the SHARDS group, I don't know if you know about those?</p> <p>I: yeah</p> <p>P: and the other one is called TAITH I think it is,</p> <p>I: yeah</p> <p>P: It's all one big meeting. I'm not allowed to go to the individual meetings just their general meetings. Um...there's so little help for people in this area, and this is why (psychiatrist name) is trying to start up a group for people like us but service user led. um... I think they call this (area name) here, um this is the only place, there's nothing until you get to (place name) and (place name) don't have the facilities they have here. They only deal with CBT and I think that EMR... is</p>	
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	<p>it something like that?...rapid eye, you know what I mean.....</p> <p>I: EMDR?</p> <p>P: Yeah, but there' nothing, no help as such in (place name) it's not good. I saw two psychologists when I was in (place name). Unfortunately the person I was seeing first left for another job in (speciality) but the other person I saw, I only saw twice, I couldn't deal with it. They were what you call a dynamic psychologist and it just didn't bode well at all, sitting there saying nothing, I just couldn't handle it at that time. I think it would be different now but at that time...no. But yeah, there's not enough information. As I said when I did that course, there was a psychiatrist there from (place name) and he hadn't even done the course before, and they deal with people like myself day in and day out, and of course the nursing staff they're exactly the same, they don't know that much about personality disorder because it's...it was always classed as the diagnosis of exclusion and um.. that's how you were treated. I had a bad time once when I was in hospital and um...I was talking to one of the nurses and then I overheard them in the office talking afterwards telling them that I was just attention seeking or what have you. I'll be honest it was that bad that I went to my room and I broke open a razor and slashed my wrists.</p>	
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	<p>I: how did it feel to hear them say that?</p> <p>P: Awful, because at that time I really wasn't well, but for them to think that I was just attention seeking, unreal, and at that time I didn't even know what was wrong with me. I was just told I had chronic depression. I think there's a word for it...I forget what the word is now...but yeah, that's how it affected me. It wasn't the only occasion and I don't know how many people were on that ward with me on the different occasions that had the same thing as was wrong with me, but to hear that it's not good, it really isn't good. 'Cos you're already at your lowest ebb when you're in hospital, so to hear people thinking that you're just wasting your time, that you're attention seeking. Not good at all, as I said it drove me to slashing my wrists, and taking copious amounts of paracetamol.</p> <p>I: what was their response to that?</p> <p>P: To be honest I had, I had to have some blood tests done to make sure that I was...that the paracetamol hadn't affected me. But apart from that they stitched my wrists up and that was it. And at the time um...yeah I wanted to die, I really wanted to die, and it wasn't even a cry for help, I just wanted to go, I just wanted out and I mean that's been one of the factors, I mean the times I've taken overdoses and stuff, it's unreal. But it's not until you've got to the stage now where you</p>	
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	<p>realise that... um...something like that is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. If I'd have had the right sort of help, I think I could have been a different person for many years not just the last few years.</p> <p>I: how does that make you feel?</p> <p>P: Angry. Bitter. I lost everything when I got ill. Um...my daughter was born on (date) and I got ill, if you like, on (date), and ...I was in and out of hospital and then my second daughter came along and by the time my second daughter was nine months old, gone, I'd lost my wife, lost my kids...everything. And I'm sure things would have been different if I'd had the right help. I'm married again now and I have been in my kid's lives, all their lives, you know what I mean, but it took so much away from me. I've only just been actually discharged in (date) from services, although I can just ring up anytime in the next three years and stuff. Um...but I've not been able to work and so I think I've lost a lot. Although I've gained a bigger insight into myself, all that stuff I've lost. I've lost my kids growing up and I was divorced by the time I was..... (age), you know, so I lost my home, I left the family house, all I had was a holdall, that's all I had to show for it. So it's been shit, I'm sorry but it's been shit, there's no other words for it.</p> <p>I: In receiving this diagnosis later on looking back</p>	
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	<p>does it help to explain how things were?</p> <p>P: it helps to explain how things were but it doesn't...it doesn't help me with the fact that I should have been getting this help a long time ago. And things quite possibly could have been different, I can't say for sure they would have been different but if I was then how I am now, almost certainly things would have been different. I may not have ended up getting divorced. I may have lived with my kids rather than seeing them at weekends or every other weekend if I was well enough, you know. So it makes me quite angry when I think of how much time I spent in the system and..... there you go.</p> <p>I: So has the diagnosis changed the way you feel about yourself?</p> <p>P: not really because although it explains why things were like they were and even today how things are sometimes um... I don't think labelling is helpful anyway. I don't walk around saying I'm borderline personality disorder, I mean like I said before I know I have it but it's not me, I'm still me, I've just got something a bit wrong with me that's all. So no it hasn't changed me, only going back to your other questions, it's been beneficial, a long time coming but beneficial.</p> <p>I: You mentioned there that you don't really agree with labelling people, can you tell me a bit more</p>	
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	<p>about that?</p> <p>P: Well...we're people, we're all human beings and if you want you can categorise me as being Welsh, you can categorise me as being a man, but don't put me in the basket in the corner because there's something wrong with me, that I've got a mental health problem. I don't...I don't think....because people look at labels rather than... and when people don't know, like I said before about the media when they portray what they portray about people with mental health problems, we're all labelled the same and I don't think that's helpful at all. But that's just me personally, you might find it easier to label, this is my BPD group, this is my depression group...I just....in everyday life I don't think it's helpful, I don't think it's helpful at all.</p> <p>I: You've talked about a lot of different experiences and things that you have been through, I was just wandering overall how important has this diagnosis been for you?</p> <p>P: Very, it's changed my life. I mean I don't know if you'll ever get to speak to my psychiatrist about me or to um...the CPNs here or the psychologist I was under, I don't know if you'll ever get to speak to them about me but they will tell you that I am not the same person that I was when I came into therapy, so yes it's been life changing. I am not the same person as I was and I know I keep repeating myself but I'm not who I was. I am physically but</p>	
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	<p>not mentally, I'm not the same person. I'm stronger, more confident...instead of getting angry now I tend to take a deep breath and step back and think about the situation. And if I can't do anything about it then don't worry about it. There's going to be some things I can't change. I spent too long...just either feeling angry or feeling sad depending on which way I reacted to whatever was going on...and sometimes the anger made me sad and sometimes the sadness would make me angry, and you know it's just a vicious circle. What more can I say?</p> <p>I: Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences of receiving the diagnosis?</p> <p>P: yeah. Initially I would imagine it would take, not just myself but anyone else, it would take you a back because until you look into it, 'cos obviously once I got the diagnosis and while I was going through therapy and everything, we have google haven't we, and we also have books on prescription from the library and um I did a lot of research and it made me feel...I don't know what the words are...normal, it made me feel like...I wasn't just alone, it wasn't just me and there are so many people. I've even joined a couple of online groups, one I don't...I just tend to read because it appears in your public profile, you know in your newsfeed and stuff but the other one is a closed group and that one I will comment</p>	
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	<p>on and I don't mind sharing my story or I don't mind giving a bit of advice, if I can help. So...yeah, I know I'm not alone anymore, but it's only when you delve into it that it makes sense, that everything I've been through makes sense. You can't really see it when you're ill and you can't see what's the matter with you because it's not like a broken leg, it's invisible, it's like having a heart attack, nobody can see it and so people do tend to think that you're taking the piss. I'm sorry about my coin of phrase but sometimes it's the best way I can express myself, I'm not short of vocabulary, it's just how I feel.</p> <p>I: Yeah, of course</p> <p>P: um...I've forgotten what I was saying, before I apologised for swearing</p> <p>I: you don't have to apologise for swearing, it's fine! You were saying that you can't see mental health difficulties, not like a broken leg...</p> <p>P: No, so it's not only the doctors who think that you're malingering, other people think that, and the amount of times someone has said 'pull yourself together'! I aint surprised I got angry so often. If you could you would. Trust me if you were in my shoes you wouldn't chose to live like that. We all have problems, but not like that. I think any mental health problems, 'cos when I first got ill I was so severely depressed it was</p>	
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	<p>unbelievable and even though you're on loads of pills and stuff, um...it's not, it's not clear, it's just not clear. I think drinking as much as I was drinking as well, every day I was drinking and um....even before I got ill for years I was like, before I was working, a teenager, um...smoking weed, taking pills, you didn't even know what you were taking, you would just go into somebody's house and if there mum and dad had some pills in the cupboard, yeah just try some of them. And it wasn't, it wasn't the fact that we were taking drugs, I was just trying to get into a different place, just leave where you were, just change your mood, your mindset, that's all it was about, and that went on for years. But I stopped doing the pills and stuff carried on drinking a lot and smoking a lot of weed and then I stopped drinking but then I was still smoking the weed. And then I just stopped smoking the weed as well.</p> <p>I: It sounds like you were trying hard to find different ways to cope?</p> <p>P: I was. I just wanted to be in a different place. Um... I used to self-harm a bit but I've not got so many scars now. You know they're healing over quite well. It came to a point where my eldest daughter, she was about 2 I think she was, and she asked me what the marks on my arms were, and that's when it changed. So, if you like, I hurt myself in other ways, by drinking, by smoking too much. 'Cos this illness not only altered my life but</p>	
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	<p>it's altered my kid's lives as well and my ex-wife's life, I mean she had to move on without me. Terrible illness, and I'm...even though I've read lots of stuff about it I know some people are predisposed to it but I'm not sure if what happened to me as a kid actually made this come to light or whether I'd have been ill anyway, I don't know, I really don't know. I just knew there was something different.</p> <p>I: Thank you, is there anything else you'd like to say?</p> <p>P: not really, I just hope this is worthwhile and if you do write a paper and it does get published then I hope it helps. We need more help, people like myself. It's wrong that in a 50 mile radius, this is the only place that treats people like myself, it's not right at all. What more can I say?</p> <p>I: yeah, thank you very much</p>	
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