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ANTISOCIAL PERSONALITY DISORDER (ASPD): AN INFORMATION GUIDE

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- **What is ASPD?** Antisocial Personality Disorder is a mental health disorder characterized by a long-term pattern of disregarding or violating the rights of others.
- **Diagnostic Criteria:** The diagnosis is typically made in individuals over 18 and includes a history of some symptoms of conduct disorder before the age of 15.

Symptoms and Behaviours

- **Disregard for Right and Wrong:** Persistent lying, deceitfulness, and manipulation for personal gain or pleasure.
- **Impulsive Behaviour:** Inability or failure to plan ahead, make considered decisions, or think about the consequences of actions.
- **Irritability and Aggressiveness:** Frequent involvement in fights or assaults, and a tendency to be irritable, angry, and aggressive.
- **Lack of Empathy:** Disregard for the safety and feelings of others, lack of remorse after harming others.
- **Repeated Unlawful Actions:** A significant tendency to engage in illegal activities and behaviours that are grounds for arrest.

Causes and Risk Factors

- **Genetic Factors:** A family history of mental health disorders, including personality disorders or antisocial behaviours.
- **Environmental Factors:** Exposure to violent or abusive situations during childhood, unstable or chaotic family life during formative years.
- **Brain Factors:** Differences in brain functioning and structure, particularly in areas responsible for impulse control and regulation of emotions.

Treatment and Management

- **Psychotherapy:** Although challenging, therapy can focus on improving communication skills, relationships, and impulse control.
- **Medication:** There are no specific drugs to treat ASPD, but certain medications can help manage symptoms like aggression or mood swings.
- **Long-term Outlook:** Treatment is often complicated due to the nature of the disorder, but long-term therapy and support can improve symptoms.

Challenges in Treatment

- **Lack of Insight:** Many with ASPD do not see their behaviour as problematic, which can make them reluctant to seek or engage with treatment.
- **Manipulative Behaviours:** Tendency to manipulate or deceive, which can pose challenges in a therapeutic setting.

Living with ASPD

- **Support Systems:** Strong support networks, including family, friends, and community resources, can provide necessary support.
- **Ongoing Therapy:** Continuous engagement with mental health professionals is crucial for managing symptoms.

Conclusion

Antisocial Personality Disorder presents unique challenges, both for those diagnosed with the disorder and for their loved ones. Understanding ASPD is crucial for effective management and support. It's important for individuals with ASPD and their families to work closely with healthcare professionals to develop a comprehensive treatment plan.