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ALLIANCE

**DRIVING**

**INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH TO  
LEAD TO NEW INSIGHTS  
INTO A SERIOUS  
MENTAL HEALTH  
DISORDER**

# DRIVING INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH TO LEAD TO NEW INSIGHTS INTO A SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is a severe psychiatric condition that affects 1-6% of the general population. Individuals with BPD do not only suffer from significant impairments in psychosocial functioning but are also known to have a poor quality of life, which often results in tragic behaviours such as suicide.

Our Alliance made it possible for researchers from philosophy, psychology and psychiatry to bring together their complementary expertise to change the way we diagnose and treat BPD. This international team have developed a novel theoretical approach to understanding social cognitive symptoms of BPD by tracing them back to a disruption of the sense of commitment to joint actions and relationships. Findings show that individuals with BPD have difficulties gauging the level of commitment that others consider appropriate or reasonable, leading them to form unrealistic expectations which frequently become disappointed and/or which others perceive as burdensome. The group now seeks to build a more effective and compassionate approach to the diagnosis and treatment of this complex disorder by focusing on interpersonal dynamics rather than individual deficits.

Our Alliance has also provided the springboard for a large-scale research project to further test and refine this groundbreaking approach. Not only will this have potential to positively impact mental health outcomes for many individuals with BPD, it will also benefit families and communities in general.

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## Project led by:

Department of Philosophy and School of Psychological Sciences, Monash University  
Department of Philosophy, Department of Psychology, WMG, University of Warwick

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