

Avoidant Personality Disorder

Yasmine has struggled with extreme shyness and feelings of inadequacy since childhood. Now in her mid-thirties, these feelings have intensified along with her desire to get married and start a family. However, Yasmine feels like she is socially inadequate and thus avoids interacting with peers at work or engaging in hobbies that involve contact with others. She never talks to men because she thinks she is not appealing enough. Due to her fear of rejection, Yasmine feels like she will never be involved in an intimate relationship.

Someone with **avoidant personality disorder** may have an experience like the one above.

According to MedlinePlus, “avoidant personality disorder is a mental health condition in which a person has a lifelong pattern of feeling very shy, inadequate, and sensitive to rejection. People with this disorder cannot stop thinking about their own shortcomings. They form relationships with other people only if they believe they will not be rejected. Loss and rejection are so painful that these people choose to be lonely rather than risk trying to connect with others.”¹

According to MedlinePlus, **signs and symptoms** of avoidant personality disorder can include:

- “Be easily hurt when people criticize or disapprove of them
- “hold back too much in intimate relationships
- “be reluctant to become involved with people
- “avoid activities or jobs that involve contact with others
- “be shy in social situations out of fear of doing something wrong
- “make potential difficulties seem worse than they are
- “hold the view that they are not good socially, not as good as other people, or unappealing”¹

Bibliography

¹ U.S. National Library of Medicine, "Avoidant personality disorder: MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia." Last modified November 17, 2012. Accessed July 25, 2013.
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000940.htm>.