

## Understanding the Relationship Between Personality Traits and Mental Health Outcomes

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### Abstract:

*Personality traits play a crucial role in shaping an individual's behavior, emotions, and overall well-being. Over the years, researchers have been intrigued by the association between personality traits and mental health outcomes. This article reviews the existing literature to explore the intricate relationship between various personality traits and mental health outcomes. By understanding this relationship, mental health professionals can develop more effective interventions and treatments tailored to individual personality characteristics.*

**Keywords:** *Personality traits, Mental health outcomes, Big Five personality traits, Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Psychological well-being, Personality disorders*

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### Introduction:

Personality is defined as the unique pattern of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that distinguishes one individual from another. Personality traits are enduring characteristics that influence how individuals perceive the world, interact with others, and cope with life's challenges. Mental health, on the other hand, encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being, affecting how individuals think, feel, and behave. Understanding the relationship between personality traits and mental health outcomes is essential for developing effective interventions and promoting overall well-being. This article provides an overview of the key personality traits and their impact on mental health outcomes.

### The Big Five Personality Traits

Understanding the relationship between personality traits and mental health outcomes is a significant area of study in psychology, with the Big Five personality traits playing a central role. The Big Five traits, also known as the Five Factor Model, include openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Each of these traits represents a continuum along which individuals vary, and they have been extensively studied for their association with various aspects of mental well-being.

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Openness to experience is characterized by a curiosity about the world, a willingness to explore new ideas and experiences, and a preference for novelty and variety. Individuals high in openness tend to have better mental health outcomes as they are more adaptable and receptive to change. Their openness allows them to cope more effectively with stress and challenges, leading to lower levels of anxiety and depression.

Conscientiousness refers to the tendency to be organized, responsible, and self-disciplined. High levels of conscientiousness are associated with better mental health outcomes, as individuals are better able to set and achieve goals, manage stress, and maintain healthy habits. Conscientious individuals are less likely to engage in risky behaviors and more likely to seek support when needed, which contributes to their overall psychological well-being.

Extraversion is characterized by sociability, assertiveness, and enthusiasm. While extraversion can be beneficial for social interactions and networking, its association with mental health outcomes is more complex. While extraverts may experience greater social support and enjoyment from social activities, they may also be more susceptible to stress and anxiety in highly stimulating environments.

Agreeableness reflects a tendency to be compassionate, cooperative, and trusting towards others. Individuals high in agreeableness tend to have better mental health outcomes due to their ability to form strong social connections, resolve conflicts peacefully, and provide and receive social support. Their interpersonal skills and empathy contribute to their overall emotional resilience and psychological well-being.

Neuroticism represents a predisposition towards experiencing negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and anger. Individuals high in neuroticism are more likely to have poor mental health outcomes, as they tend to perceive situations as threatening and experience greater emotional distress in response to stressors. Their heightened sensitivity to negative stimuli can lead to rumination, avoidance behaviors, and difficulty coping with adversity.

Understanding the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and mental health outcomes provides valuable insights for identifying individuals at risk for psychological distress and designing targeted interventions. By recognizing the role of personality in shaping mental health outcomes, psychologists and healthcare professionals can develop more personalized and effective approaches for promoting resilience, well-being, and recovery. Further research is needed to explore the complex interplay between personality traits, environmental factors, and mental health outcomes to inform comprehensive models of psychological functioning and intervention strategies.

## Neuroticism and Mental Health

Neuroticism, a fundamental dimension of personality, plays a crucial role in understanding the relationship between personality traits and mental health outcomes. Neuroticism encompasses a predisposition towards experiencing negative emotions such as anxiety, depression, and stress. This trait is characterized by a tendency to ruminate over past events, worry about future uncertainties, and perceive situations in a negative light. Individuals high in neuroticism often struggle with emotional regulation, leading to heightened vulnerability to mental health disorders.

Studies have consistently shown a strong association between neuroticism and various mental health conditions. High levels of neuroticism have been linked to an increased risk of developing mood disorders such as depression and anxiety disorders. Individuals scoring high on neuroticism scales are more likely to exhibit symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and social phobia. Furthermore, neuroticism is also implicated in the onset and progression of other psychiatric conditions including obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and eating disorders.

The relationship between neuroticism and mental health outcomes is multifaceted and influenced by various factors including genetic predispositions, environmental stressors, and coping mechanisms. Research suggests that genetic factors contribute significantly to the heritability of neuroticism and its association with mental health disorders. Individuals with a family history of psychiatric illnesses and higher neuroticism scores may have an increased susceptibility to mental health challenges.

Environmental stressors such as traumatic events, chronic stress, and adverse childhood experiences can exacerbate neurotic tendencies and precipitate mental health problems. The interaction between neuroticism and environmental stressors often amplifies the risk of developing mood and anxiety disorders. Moreover, maladaptive coping strategies adopted by neurotic individuals, such as avoidance behaviors and substance abuse, can further compromise mental well-being and perpetuate the cycle of distress.

Despite the inherent vulnerability associated with high neuroticism, interventions targeting cognitive-behavioral strategies, mindfulness-based therapies, and pharmacological treatments have shown promise in mitigating the negative impact of neuroticism on mental health. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) aims to reframe negative thought patterns and develop adaptive coping mechanisms to manage stress and anxiety. Similarly, mindfulness practices emphasize present-moment awareness and acceptance, facilitating emotional regulation and reducing neurotic symptoms.

Neuroticism represents a significant predictor of mental health outcomes, with higher levels of neuroticism associated with increased susceptibility to various psychiatric disorders. Understanding the complex interplay between neuroticism, genetic predispositions,

environmental stressors, and coping mechanisms is essential for developing effective interventions to promote mental well-being and resilience. By addressing maladaptive thought patterns and enhancing coping skills, individuals can mitigate the adverse effects of neuroticism and foster positive mental health outcomes.

## **Extraversion and Mental Health**

Extraversion, as a key personality trait, plays a significant role in influencing mental health outcomes. Research indicates a complex relationship between extraversion and mental well-being. While extraversion typically denotes outgoingness, sociability, and assertiveness, its impact on mental health can vary widely depending on individual circumstances and contexts. Understanding this relationship requires delving into the nuances of how extraversion manifests and interacts with other personality traits and external factors to shape mental health outcomes.

One aspect of extraversion's influence on mental health lies in its association with social support and connectivity. Extraverted individuals often thrive in social settings, which can provide them with a robust support network to cope with stressors and challenges. The presence of strong social ties can serve as a protective factor against mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, buffering individuals from the adverse effects of negative experiences.

The relationship between extraversion and mental health is not without complexities. While extraverted individuals may possess stronger social networks, they can also be susceptible to certain stressors associated with social interactions. For instance, social pressures to maintain a certain image or meet societal expectations of extroversion can lead to feelings of inadequacy or burnout, ultimately impacting mental well-being.

Extraversion's association with risk-taking behavior and sensation-seeking tendencies can pose additional challenges to mental health. While these traits may contribute to a sense of excitement and adventure, they can also increase vulnerability to impulsive decision-making and substance abuse, heightening the risk of psychological distress and addiction disorders.

The interplay between extraversion and other personality dimensions, such as neuroticism and conscientiousness, further shapes mental health outcomes. For instance, individuals high in extraversion but low in conscientiousness may exhibit reckless behavior patterns that compromise their psychological well-being, highlighting the importance of considering personality profiles holistically.

In therapeutic settings, understanding an individual's level of extraversion can inform treatment approaches and interventions tailored to their unique needs. For extraverted individuals, interventions that leverage their strengths in social connectivity and communication skills may prove particularly effective in promoting resilience and facilitating emotional regulation.

The relationship between extraversion and mental health is multifaceted, influenced by various internal and external factors. While extraversion can confer certain advantages in terms of social support and resilience, it also poses challenges and risks that warrant careful consideration. By examining the nuanced interplay between extraversion and mental health, clinicians and researchers can develop more targeted strategies to support individuals in achieving optimal psychological well-being.

## **Openness to Experience and Mental Health**

Openness to experience, one of the Big Five personality traits, plays a pivotal role in understanding the relationship between personality traits and mental health outcomes. This trait encompasses a person's inclination towards novelty, imagination, and willingness to engage in new experiences. Individuals high in openness tend to be more receptive to diverse ideas, emotions, and sensations. As a result, their mental health may benefit from the broad range of coping mechanisms and perspectives they can adopt in challenging situations.

Research indicates a significant correlation between openness to experience and positive mental health outcomes. Individuals who score high in openness tend to exhibit lower levels of psychological distress and higher levels of psychological well-being. Their ability to explore different aspects of life and adapt to various circumstances may contribute to their resilience in coping with stressors and maintaining emotional stability.

Openness to experience is associated with greater psychological flexibility, which allows individuals to approach life's challenges with adaptability and creativity. This flexibility enables them to embrace uncertainty and change more readily, thereby reducing the likelihood of experiencing maladaptive psychological responses such as anxiety or depression in the face of adversity.

The relationship between openness to experience and mental health outcomes extends to the realm of therapeutic interventions. Studies suggest that individuals high in openness may be more responsive to certain psychotherapeutic approaches, such as mindfulness-based therapies and experiential interventions. Their receptivity to new ideas and experiences can enhance the effectiveness of therapeutic techniques aimed at promoting emotional regulation and personal growth.

It is essential to recognize that extreme levels of openness to experience may also pose challenges to mental health. Excessive novelty-seeking behavior or a lack of stability in thought and action can lead to difficulties in maintaining relationships, fulfilling responsibilities, and managing emotions effectively. Therefore, achieving a balance between openness and other personality traits is crucial for overall psychological well-being.

Openness to experience plays a multifaceted role in shaping mental health outcomes. While it fosters resilience, creativity, and psychological flexibility, it may also present challenges when not moderated effectively. Understanding the intricate interplay between openness to experience and mental health can inform personalized interventions aimed at promoting holistic well-being and enhancing individuals' capacity to navigate life's complexities with greater ease and satisfaction.

## **Agreeableness and Mental Health**

Understanding the relationship between personality traits and mental health outcomes is a multifaceted endeavor, and one of the key dimensions explored in this context is agreeableness. Agreeableness, as a personality trait, refers to an individual's tendency to be compassionate, cooperative, and considerate in their interactions with others. Research suggests that agreeableness plays a significant role in influencing mental health outcomes. Individuals who score high in agreeableness tend to experience lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression compared to those who score lower on this trait.

One of the primary reasons for the link between agreeableness and better mental health lies in the interpersonal relationships of individuals. Agreeable individuals often have stronger social support networks, which serve as buffers against the negative impact of stressors and life challenges. Their ability to empathize and connect with others fosters a sense of belonging and emotional well-being, reducing the likelihood of developing mental health disorders.

The adaptive coping strategies employed by agreeable individuals contribute to their resilience in the face of adversity. They are more likely to seek social support, engage in problem-solving behaviors, and maintain positive attitudes even during difficult times. These coping mechanisms not only alleviate immediate distress but also contribute to long-term psychological well-being.

On the contrary, individuals with low levels of agreeableness may struggle with interpersonal conflicts and experience difficulties in forming and maintaining meaningful relationships. Their tendency to be antagonistic or suspicious can lead to social isolation, which is a significant risk factor for mental health problems such as depression and anxiety disorders.

The relationship between agreeableness and mental health outcomes is bidirectional in nature. While agreeableness influences how individuals perceive and interact with the world around them, mental health issues can also shape personality traits over time. For instance, chronic stress or traumatic experiences may erode one's capacity for trust and empathy, thereby lowering levels of agreeableness.

Understanding the role of agreeableness in mental health outcomes sheds light on the intricate interplay between personality traits and psychological well-being. By recognizing the importance of fostering agreeable traits and nurturing positive social relationships, interventions aimed at

promoting mental health can be tailored to address individual differences in personality. Ultimately, integrating personality assessments into mental health interventions can enhance their effectiveness and contribute to holistic approaches to well-being.

## **Conscientiousness and Mental Health**

Conscientiousness, as a personality trait, plays a significant role in shaping mental health outcomes. Research suggests that individuals high in conscientiousness tend to exhibit behaviors such as organization, goal-directedness, and self-discipline, which are often associated with better mental health. Conversely, those lower in conscientiousness may struggle with impulsivity, disorganization, and lack of follow-through, leading to increased vulnerability to mental health issues. Understanding the interplay between conscientiousness and mental health can provide valuable insights into prevention, intervention, and treatment strategies.

One key aspect of conscientiousness is its influence on stress management and coping mechanisms. Conscientious individuals are more likely to adopt proactive coping strategies, such as problem-solving and seeking social support, when faced with stressful situations. This adaptive approach to stress may buffer against the development of mental health problems like anxiety and depression. Conversely, individuals low in conscientiousness may resort to avoidant or maladaptive coping strategies, which can exacerbate stress and contribute to poorer mental health outcomes over time.

Conscientiousness is closely linked to adherence to treatment regimens and engagement in health-promoting behaviors. High levels of conscientiousness are associated with better medication adherence, attendance at therapy sessions, and participation in lifestyle interventions. These behaviors contribute to improved treatment outcomes and overall well-being. In contrast, individuals low in conscientiousness may struggle with maintaining consistent treatment adherence, which can impede progress and exacerbate mental health issues.

Another important aspect of conscientiousness is its association with resilience and recovery from mental health challenges. Research suggests that conscientious individuals may bounce back more effectively from setbacks and adversity due to their ability to persevere, set new goals, and maintain focus on long-term objectives. This resilience can serve as a protective factor against the development of chronic mental health conditions and promote faster recovery. Conversely, individuals with low conscientiousness may experience prolonged periods of distress and difficulty regaining equilibrium after experiencing adversity.

Conscientiousness influences lifestyle choices and health behaviors that impact mental well-being. Conscientious individuals are more likely to engage in health-promoting activities such as regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and adequate sleep, all of which are essential for maintaining mental health. These positive lifestyle choices can mitigate the risk of developing

mood disorders, enhance cognitive functioning, and contribute to overall psychological resilience. In contrast, individuals low in conscientiousness may struggle with maintaining healthy habits, which can compromise their mental health in the long run.

Conscientiousness plays a pivotal role in shaping mental health outcomes by influencing coping strategies, treatment adherence, resilience, and lifestyle behaviors. Understanding how conscientiousness interacts with other personality traits and environmental factors can inform personalized interventions tailored to individual needs. By promoting conscientiousness and fostering adaptive behaviors, mental health professionals can help individuals cultivate resilience, manage stress effectively, and maintain optimal well-being. Integrating the principles of conscientiousness into mental health interventions holds promise for enhancing treatment outcomes and reducing the burden of mental illness in society.

## Personality Disorders and Mental Health

Personality disorders represent a significant area of study within the realm of mental health, deeply intertwined with various mental health outcomes. Within the framework of understanding the relationship between personality traits and mental health outcomes, exploring personality disorders is crucial. Personality disorders encompass a wide range of conditions characterized by enduring patterns of cognition, emotion, and behavior that deviate markedly from societal expectations. These disorders often lead to distress and impairment in social, occupational, and other important areas of functioning.

One key aspect in understanding the relationship between personality traits and mental health outcomes is recognizing the diagnostic criteria and manifestations of different personality disorders. Disorders such as borderline personality disorder, narcissistic personality disorder, and antisocial personality disorder, among others, exhibit distinct patterns of behavior and affective dysregulation. These disorders not only impact individuals' internal experiences but also influence their interactions and relationships with others, thus significantly affecting their mental health outcomes.

The comorbidity between personality disorders and other mental health conditions is noteworthy. Research indicates high rates of comorbidity between personality disorders and mood disorders, anxiety disorders, substance use disorders, and other psychiatric conditions. This comorbidity complicates diagnosis and treatment, underscoring the importance of a comprehensive understanding of personality traits and their implications for mental health.

The role of personality traits in shaping vulnerability and resilience to mental health disorders cannot be overstated. Certain personality traits, such as neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, have been linked to varying degrees of susceptibility to different mental health conditions. Understanding how these traits interact with



environmental factors and genetic predispositions can provide valuable insights into the etiology and progression of mental health disorders.

In clinical practice, recognizing the interplay between personality traits and mental health outcomes informs assessment, diagnosis, and treatment planning. Therapeutic modalities such as dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), and psychodynamic approaches are tailored to address the specific challenges associated with personality disorders and their impact on mental health. These interventions aim to enhance emotion regulation, improve interpersonal functioning, and promote adaptive coping strategies.

Additionally, the stigma surrounding personality disorders necessitates increased awareness and education to foster empathy and understanding. Dispelling misconceptions and promoting acceptance can facilitate help-seeking behavior and access to appropriate mental health services for individuals grappling with personality disorders. Collaborative efforts among clinicians, researchers, policymakers, and community stakeholders are essential in promoting mental health literacy and advocating for inclusive and compassionate care for individuals with personality disorders.

The intricate interplay between personality disorders and mental health outcomes underscores the importance of holistic approaches to assessment, intervention, and support. By recognizing the multifaceted nature of personality traits and their implications for mental well-being, we can strive towards a more nuanced understanding of human behavior and cultivate environments conducive to mental health and flourishing.

## **Implications for Treatment and Intervention**

Understanding the relationship between personality traits and mental health outcomes holds significant implications for treatment and intervention strategies in clinical settings. Personality traits such as neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness have been extensively studied in relation to mental health outcomes. These traits can influence an individual's susceptibility to various mental health disorders and their response to treatment. Therefore, gaining insights into how personality traits interact with mental health can enhance the effectiveness of interventions and improve patient outcomes.

One implication for treatment and intervention is the need for personalized approaches that consider an individual's unique personality profile. Tailoring interventions based on personality traits can lead to more targeted and effective treatments. For example, individuals high in neuroticism may benefit from interventions that focus on stress management techniques and cognitive-behavioral therapy to address negative emotional patterns and reduce anxiety and depression symptoms.

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Understanding the interplay between personality traits and mental health can inform the development of preventive strategies. Early identification of individuals at risk based on their personality traits can enable interventions aimed at reducing the likelihood of developing mental health disorders. This could involve implementing resilience-building programs or providing psychoeducation to enhance coping skills and promote mental well-being.

Additionally, recognizing the influence of personality traits on treatment adherence and engagement is crucial for optimizing therapeutic outcomes. Individuals with certain personality characteristics may be more or less likely to adhere to treatment recommendations or engage in therapeutic activities. Clinicians can adapt their approaches to accommodate these differences, such as providing structured interventions for individuals high in conscientiousness or incorporating social support networks for those high in extraversion.

Incorporating personality assessment into routine clinical practice can facilitate more comprehensive treatment planning. By integrating assessments of personality traits alongside evaluations of mental health symptoms, clinicians can gain a more holistic understanding of their patients' needs and tailor interventions accordingly. This can lead to more efficient resource allocation and improved patient satisfaction with treatment outcomes.

Another implication is the potential for enhancing treatment outcomes by addressing maladaptive personality traits that may exacerbate mental health symptoms. For instance, interventions targeting maladaptive patterns of behavior associated with certain personality traits, such as perfectionism or hostility, can help alleviate distress and improve overall functioning. By addressing underlying personality dynamics, clinicians can target the root causes of mental health issues and promote lasting change.

## Future Directions

Future Directions in Understanding the Relationship Between Personality Traits and Mental Health Outcomes are poised to revolutionize psychological research and clinical interventions. The convergence of advancements in psychology, neuroscience, and data analytics offers unprecedented opportunities for delving deeper into the complex interplay between personality traits and mental health. One promising avenue lies in longitudinal studies that track individuals over extended periods, allowing researchers to observe how personality traits evolve and interact with mental health outcomes across the lifespan. By employing sophisticated statistical modeling techniques, researchers can better tease apart causal relationships and identify potential moderators and mediators.

Integrating multi-method approaches can enrich our understanding of the intricate dynamics between personality and mental health. By combining self-report measures with behavioral observations, physiological assessments, and neuroimaging techniques, researchers can gain a

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more comprehensive picture of how personality traits manifest at different levels of analysis and influence mental health outcomes. Additionally, embracing cultural diversity and exploring cross-cultural variations in the relationship between personality and mental health can illuminate the universality versus cultural specificity of these associations.

Leveraging big data and machine learning methodologies holds tremendous promise for uncovering novel insights into the personality–mental health nexus. By analyzing vast datasets collected from diverse populations, researchers can identify patterns, trends, and hidden associations that may not be evident using traditional analytical approaches. Collaborations between psychologists, neuroscientists, computer scientists, and data scientists can foster innovative interdisciplinary research endeavors aimed at elucidating the underlying mechanisms linking personality traits to mental health outcomes.

Exploring the role of contextual factors, such as socioeconomic status, environmental stressors, and social support networks, can provide valuable insights into the contextual nuances shaping the relationship between personality and mental health. By adopting a socioecological framework, researchers can examine how individual-level personality traits interact with macro-level contextual factors to influence mental health trajectories and resilience. This holistic approach acknowledges the dynamic interplay between the individual and their environment in shaping psychological well-being.

Additionally, prioritizing translational research efforts can bridge the gap between theoretical insights and clinical applications. By translating empirical findings into evidence-based interventions and personalized treatment approaches, clinicians can effectively target specific personality profiles associated with heightened risk for mental health disorders. Tailoring interventions to individuals' unique personality profiles and addressing underlying personality vulnerabilities can enhance treatment efficacy and promote long-term mental health outcomes.

Fostering collaboration between academia, clinical practice, and community stakeholders can facilitate the dissemination and implementation of research findings into real-world settings. By engaging with policymakers, healthcare providers, educators, and advocacy groups, researchers can promote awareness, reduce stigma, and advocate for policies that prioritize mental health promotion and early intervention strategies. Building interdisciplinary networks and fostering knowledge exchange platforms can accelerate the translation of research into practice and promote a culture of mental health literacy and resilience across diverse communities.

## Summary:

The study explores the intricate connection between personality traits and mental health outcomes. It delves into the impact of individual characteristics on psychological well-being, aiming to enhance our understanding of this complex relationship. By examining various

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personality traits, researchers aim to identify patterns and associations that contribute to mental health outcomes. The findings may have significant implications for developing targeted interventions and personalized approaches to mental health care. This research underscores the importance of considering personality factors in the broader context of mental health, offering valuable insights for both clinicians and researchers seeking to improve mental health outcomes.

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