

BORDERLINE FEATURES, REJECTION SENSITIVITY, AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS: A DAILY
DIARY STUDY OF ROMANTIC PARTNERS

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ABSTRACT

Investigators theorize that those with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) have a distinct style of relating to others typified by interpersonal hypersensitivity. The current project seeks to refine this characterization of interpersonal dysfunction in BPD through examination of romantic conflict and trait rejection sensitivity (RS). In this study, two groups of participants (20 BP trait +, 38 BPD trait -) and their romantic partners (total N=116) carried an electronic diary for one week and reported on daily mood and interpersonal interactions. I found no statistically significant difference in trait RS between B+ participants and B- participants. BPD features measured dimensionally were modestly correlated with RS, however. RS was positively associated with a higher proportion of negative behaviors to positive behaviors during conflict for the B+ group, while individuals in the B- group demonstrated a negative association between RS and negative conflict behaviors. Positive behaviors were not associated with RS. Concerns that the romantic partner would end the relationship were associated with both actor and partner reports of conflict, but not with RS. Momentary-reported conflict-related negative cognitions were not well-explained by RS or group status.