

# Sociopathic Tendencies

An above average intelligence, quick thinking, loads of self confidence couple with cold, disposition and lack of empathy or remorse for their unethical behaviour are some to the sociopathic tendencies, their causes and treatments available.

It is not difficult to be charmed by an intelligent, glib talker. However, this could only be a few of the sociopathic tendencies of an individual. More correctly cited as a result of antisocial personality disorder, sociopaths are characterized by their utter disregard for the rights of others. They exude superficial charm that may easily attract others. However, within a short period of being associated with them, their lack of empathy for other's feeling and manipulative behaviour becomes evident. Sociopathic tendencies in adults find roots during childhood or adolescence that continue and find firm grounding in adulthood.

## Sociopathic Tendencies – Causes

Although no definite reason behind sociopathic tendencies have yet been conclusively found, genetic and environmental factors are cited as the causes of sociopathic behaviour. Environmental factors seem to play a major role in sociopathic tendencies in children. A strong correlation has been found between children with sociopath behaviour and those that lacked maternal affection during the first 5 years of their lives. However, this is only a correlation and not a cause. Child abuse or trauma in early childhood is also believed to play role in the development of sociopathic tendencies in children. The role of genetics is also not ruled out behind sociopathic characteristics emerging in individuals later in their lives.

## Sociopathic Tendencies in Adults

There are certain typical sociopath traits that makes identifying such individuals easy. Initially one may be charmed by their wit and verbal tact. However, soon one realizes that beneath the façade lies a cold, self centered individual. Here are some traits that can be used as a sociopathic tendencies checklist to determine if an individual suffers from this disorder or not:

- Disregard for rights of others
- Considerable superficial charm
- Above average intelligence
- Incredible glibness
- Inflated sense of self that convinces a sociopath that whatever he does is his right.
- Conning and manipulative



- Lack of empathy. Rather views pain of his victims with contempt and takes advantage of their distress.
- Failure to relate emotionally and promiscuous behaviour. Even if they do appear committed, it would be superficial. They would use such relation for ulterior motives.
- Lack of remorse or shame. They view everyone around them as objects and opportunity to achieve their goals. Hence sociopaths keep violating other's rights without any guilt.
- Streak of violence.
- Pathologically ego centric and self centered.
- Impulsive behaviour. Their belief that they are always right and inability to submit to authority makes them impulsive. These people hardly stay on a job for long.
- Addiction to drugs and alcohol.
- Unreliable and irresponsible.

## **Sociopathic Tendencies in Children**

Sociopathic tendencies may also be present in children. Below is a sociopathic tendencies checklist for children most of which would sound like early indicators of the problems that would surface in adulthood. The symptoms of sociopathic behaviour in children are:

- Bedwetting
- Speech and learning disabilities
- Poor self control
- Inability to develop relationship with peers
- Argumentative and manipulative
- Violent behaviour (Juvenile delinquency)

## **Sociopathic Tendencies – Treatment**

Efforts to deal with sociopaths have shown that these traits are very resistant to change and may not be curable at all. However, there are certain treatment for sociopathic behaviour that are successful in reducing the incidence of antisocial behaviour in such individuals even if not entirely wipe them out. The earlier the treatment, the better are the results. Psychotherapy like cognitive behavioural therapy and psychoeducation is most heavily relied on in treating sociopaths. These modes of treatment involve helping the individuals understand the

repercussions of their unethical behaviour. Although medicines are not effective in treating the symptoms of a sociopath, they may be effective in dealing with depression and mood swings often associated with this personality disorder. Besides all these treatments, co-operation of the family and parents (in case of children with sociopathic tendencies) is crucial. Although no cure is still visible for this mental illness, knowing how to deal with a sociopath is very important to help the individual and to minimize the harmful effects of living in close proximity of such a person.