

## **Adults With Trauma Histories Who Struggle With Anxiety & Depression, And Who Have Difficulty Moving Forward With Their Lives**

**The members of this Cluster appear to be functioning reasonably well at home and in the community. However, the great majority experience considerable interference in their daily lives from anxiety, depression, and the inability to move ahead with their life goals. These problems may be the result of earlier experiences involving physical or sexual abuse, trauma, or dysfunctional family histories.** Some Cluster members fear being abandoned by those close to them and may interpret any negative responses (even from providers) as forms of rejection. Many seem to lack motivation to initiate activities or follow through on commitments. They give up easily and don't want to be pushed to go beyond what they feel comfortable doing. For a smaller number, psychiatric symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions, obsessive thoughts, compulsive behaviors and inappropriate expressions of anger may also be problems. For many Cluster members, their problems interfere regularly with their ability to interact with family and peers, undertake work or training opportunities, set goals for the future, make decisions, and/or take on new challenges in their lives.

**Members of this Cluster have good basic living skills, can structure their time appropriately, and most can use community resources on their own to meet their needs.** While some Cluster members have medical problems, the vast majority has little or no interference from health-related issues. In general, Cluster members get their regular health care needs met.

**The members of this Cluster typically have found a level of functioning at which they feel comfortable and don't want anything to happen, or to take any risk, that might change their situation.** They are unsure of their own abilities, want to be accepted, and even want approval for their psychiatric conditions. Their illness gives them "secondary gains:" allowing them to get attention while avoiding having to do things they don't feel comfortable doing. Even though they have the intellectual abilities and skills to accomplish more things in their lives, Cluster members typically have "excuses" for not being able to make changes. Some may get angry when pushed to accept more responsibility or to do things that might increase their anxiety. Others may make suicidal gestures. Some Cluster members are very sensitive to changes in their living environment and may be easily disturbed by alterations to their daily routine. In some cases, Cluster members may feel overwhelmed most of the time.

**Members of this Cluster want to maintain the status quo in treatment, as well.** Many have been clients for a long time, some having received treatment in the private sector. On the surface they have favorable attitudes toward treatment and may appear extremely compliant. However, they seldom let their therapist or case manager really know them, and rarely ask for additional services. They don't follow through on suggestions from counselors, and if pushed may respond angrily that they are "trying as hard as they can." Most members of this Cluster seem much more stable than they really are. These individuals won't tell others about their fears or stress until they can't handle them any longer. Others, however, seem to be constantly living from crisis to crisis and may demand to be provided services immediately.

**While the vast majority of Cluster members live with spouses or their families, appropriate support from family and friends varies widely. Historical family issues may continue to affect many Cluster members and interaction with their families can be both positive and negative.** Because of their past experiences with abuse or trauma, many Cluster members have problems with relationships in general. Some have difficulty setting limits or establishing boundaries with others. Some may take on the responsibilities of others as if they were their own. Many Cluster members take criticism very personally and seem to need a great deal of praise. However, even when given, they are unable to accept praise because it puts more responsibility on them to perform. Some Cluster members seem to require more and more emotional support from others as time goes on.

**Many members of this Cluster are unemployed; however this is likely to be seen as inappropriate.** Many could benefit from supported or competitive employment opportunities. However their lack of self-esteem, their fears (e.g. of abandonment), their reluctance to take any risks, and their fear of losing public benefits, often prevent them from taking advantage of these opportunities.

**In general, the members of this Cluster are more fragile than they want to appear. However they have real potential for achieving life goals.** They are bright and many have a high school education or even more schooling. Some are creative people whose talents remain untapped. They are fighters who have had to use their energies to protect themselves from their pain. However this same energy and resilience can also be deployed to support their recovery.