Paranoid Personality Disorder

**Definition:** A personality disorder characterized by a pervasive pattern of distrust and suspicion of others resulting in a tendency to attribute the motives of others to malevolence.

**Symptoms:** Excessively mistrustful and suspicious, hypersensitive, hostile, controlling, isolated, believes everyone is out to get them.

**Stressors:** Stressors can be very simple for this disorder. The person can be disturbed by loud noises or talking which can cause the person to believe another is plotting against him/her, even though it is not relative. If the person is confronted about their paranoid personality, he/she can become even more upset and then mistrust the questioner even more so than before.

**Causes:** The causes of this disorder are still very unclear. The behavior can be attributed to childhood experiences, a weakened ego, or poor adaptive functioning.

**Treatment:** It is very difficult to proceed with treatment because the person is unwilling to unlock any information based on trust issues. In therapy, the patient would most likely be asked why he/she believes that a present danger exists. Then the therapist would resume in explaining to the patient that that behavior is not necessary.

**Diathesis:** More common in men than women and single or divorced than married individuals. The disorder is also more likely to occur if relatives suffer from schizophrenia or unipolar disorder.

Extreme paranoid personality disorder is also known as Schizoid personality disorder, which can be relative to major depression and treated with certain medications such as antidepressants or schizophrenia.