

According to the DSM-5, what paraphilic disorders all have in common for the sufferer is that the disorder causes clinically significant distress or impairment in their lives. The definition of pedophilic disorder is someone who experiences strong sexual desire from children more than they would from someone who is an adult if at all. They will either act on this desire or suffer severe distress for not doing so. As abnormal as it is, the person who has the disorder experiences emotional distress the same way another person would if they had an unsatisfied sexual drive to behave promiscuously with an adult.

A typical individual with this disorder are people who are emotionally immature and never developed normally concerning their sexual thinking. Their social and sexual skills were hindered due to sexual abuse or neglect of nurturing and close relationships when they were children. They don't know what it means to have vulnerable feelings without anxiety especially feelings they should be able to have with grown adults their age. Although they are grown adults, inside they are still children so therefore their sexual satisfaction needs to come from children. The satisfaction can come from something as simple as children's underwear ads or as extreme as child pornography. If they have committed an act with a child their thinking is so distorted that they justify the act saying to themselves that the child either enjoyed it or it was their fault for being around a person who could not control themselves.

A type of therapy used to treat pedophilic disorder is cognitive-behavioral therapy. The person with the disorder is taught to look carefully at their triggers such as thoughts or situations that cause the abnormal arousal. They are taught to identify them and then either change them or avoid them altogether. They learn strategies on how to change the associations. If they cannot avoid the situation they learn how to cope with it more effectively. This cognitive-behavior approach is specifically known as relapse-prevention training. It is used to also treat people with substance abuse disorders.

