

There are several clues that someone may have BDD. The items listed here aren't required for the diagnosis of BDD, and not everyone with BDD does all of the things in this list. However, many people do one or more of the following, which may be a clue that they have BDD.

TABLE 3-3 Clues to the Presence of BDD

1. Do you often check your appearance in mirrors or other reflecting surfaces, such as windows?
2. Do you frequently check your appearance without using a mirror, by looking directly at the disliked body part?
3. Do you frequently compare yourself to others and often think that you look worse than they do?
4. Do you often ask—or want to ask—other people whether you look okay, or whether you look as good as other people?
5. Do you try to convince other people that there's something wrong with how you look, but they consider the problem nonexistent or minimal?
6. Do you spend a lot of time grooming—for example, combing or arranging your hair, tweezing or cutting your hair, applying makeup, or shaving? Do you spend too much time getting ready in the morning, or do you groom yourself frequently during the day? Do others complain that you spend too much time in the bathroom?
7. Do you pick your skin, popping pimples or trying to get rid of blackheads or blemishes, because you're trying to make it look better?
8. Do you spend a lot of time or money on finding beauty products (e.g., makeup, hair growth tonics, acne treatment) or clothes to try to solve your appearance problem?
9. Do you often change your clothes, trying to find an outfit that covers or improves disliked aspects of your appearance? Do you take a long time selecting your outfit for the day, trying to find one that makes you look better?
10. Do you try to cover or hide parts of your body with a hat, clothing, makeup, sunglasses, your hair, your hand, or other things? Is it hard to be around people when you haven't done these things?
11. Do you try to hide certain aspects of your appearance by maintaining a certain body position—for example turning your face away from others? Do you feel uncomfortable if you can't be in your preferred positions?
12. Do you tan to try and fix a problem with your skin color, acne or blemishes, or another appearance problem?
13. Do you frequently measure parts of your body, hoping you'll find they're as small as, as large as, or as symmetrical as you'd like?
14. Do you spend a lot of time looking for information or reading about your appearance problems in the hope that you'll reassure yourself about how you look or find a solution to your problem?
15. Have you wanted to get cosmetic surgery, dermatologic treatment, dental treatment, or other cosmetic treatment to fix your appearance when other people (for example, friends or doctors) have told you such treatment isn't necessary? Have doctors been reluctant to give you the treatment because they say the defect is too minor or they're afraid you won't be pleased with the results?
16. Have you had cosmetic surgery or dermatologic treatment and been disappointed with the results? Or have you had multiple surgeries, hoping that with the next procedure your appearance problems will finally be fixed?
17. Do you work out excessively to improve your appearance?
18. Do you spend a lot of time lifting weights or give up important activities to make time for lifting?
19. Do you diet, even though others tell you it isn't necessary?
20. Do you often touch disliked body areas to check if they look okay?
21. Do you avoid mirrors because you dislike how you look?
22. Do you avoid having your picture taken because you think you look so bad?
23. Do you get depressed or anxious because of how you look?
24. Do you feel more comfortable going out at night or sitting in a dark part of the room, because your appearance flaws will be less visible?
25. Do you have panic attacks or get very anxious when you look in the mirror because of how you look?
26. Have you felt that life wasn't worth living because of your appearance?
27. Do you get very frustrated or angry because of how you look?
28. Have you ever hurt yourself because you feel so angry or hopeless over how you look?
29. Do you get down on yourself because of how you look?
30. Have you been aggressive toward property or people because you're so angry over a problem with how you look?
31. Does it take you longer to do things because you're distracted by appearance worries or related behaviors such as mirror checking?
32. Do you have trouble concentrating because you're distracted by appearance worries?
33. Do you have trouble doing school work or your job because of appearance worries? Or are you unable to go to school or hold a job for this reason?
34. Do appearance worries cause problems with other people—such as your partner, family, or friends?
35. Do you avoid dating because of how you look?
36. Do your appearance worries interfere with managing your life, leisure activities, caring for others, or self-care?

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