

Film Review Paper: Dwight Schrute

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Clinical Assessment

Dwight Schrute, age thirty-five, decided to come to therapy after crashing his car into a pole resulting in a concussion. After the incident happened, he began to question his mental health and decided to seek help. He was raised in a nine-bedroom, one bathroom house, on a 60-acre beet farm (The Office, n.d.). According to him, while in the womb, he had “resorbed” his twin brother, giving him not only the strength of an adult male, but also the strength of a little baby (The Office, n.d.). From the ages of four to six, Dwight admitted he was shunned by his family for not saving the residual oil from a can of tuna (The Office, n.d.). His parents used him and his siblings to help work on their beet farm, he stated that he would work from ten in the morning to “well after midnight” (The Office, n.d.). At a grade school spelling bee, he revealed that he misspelled the word “failure” in front of everyone (The Office, n.d.).

At work, where he spends most of his time, Dwight revealed that he hides various types of weaponry around the office, “just in case.” Types of weapons include, but not limited to, ninja throwing stars, knives, a nightstick, pepper spray and a poisonous dart (hidden in a toilet tank) (The Office, n.d.). The security in his office are not up to his standards, “I.D. Badges are long overdue. Security in this office park is a joke” (The Office, n.d.). Dwight disclosed the fact that he brought a spud gun, in a duffel bag, to work one day last year. “I sat at my desk all day, with a rifle that shoots potatoes at 60 pounds per square inch. Can you imagine if I was deranged?” (The Office, n.d.).

Dwight is Dunder Mifflin's number one paper salesman at the Scranton branch, although, he states that his co-workers (which he feels are his inferiors) have no respect for him. One co-worker, Jim Halpert, gets brought up a numerous amount of times. According to Dwight, Jim is

always playing tricks and pranks on him. Some of the pranks done to him include, having his personal belonging stuck in Jell-O, his desk moved into the men's bathroom, his desk converted into a miniature desk, and also his entire desk (including items on it) gift wrapped and falling apart when he unwraps it (The Office, n.d.). Dwight has a standing appointment every Friday at 4:00 pm with the Human Resources representative, Toby Flenderson, to place a complaint about Jim (The Office, n.d.). During a “conflict management” day, Dwight discovered that four years of his complaints about Jim were going unnoticed by corporate because Toby had just placed the paperwork in a box (The Office, n.d.).

One of Dwight's goals in life is to die in his desk while working for Dunder Mifflin (The Office, n.d.). During a self-reflection session, Dwight was asked to describe himself in three words; his response was, “hard working, alpha male, jackhammer, merciless, and insatiable” (The Office, n.d.). When asked to describe a hero, he replied, ““A hero kills people, people that wish him harm. A hero is part human and part supernatural. A hero is born out of a childhood trauma, or out of a disaster, that must be avenged” (The Office, n.d.).

According to the DSM Multi-Axial Assessment, Dwight's personality qualities and behaviors seem to suggest that he either has schizotypal personality disorder.

Diagnosis

Schizotypal personality disorder is characterized by odd beliefs, an unconventional appearance, behaviors, relationships and thoughts. Those with this disorder tend to believe in the supernatural and things or thoughts of magical phenomena (PsyWeb, 2012). These people also inclined to be suspicious or paranoid, which makes them lack close friends, other than blood relatives (Berenbaum et. al., 2008). Schizotypal personality disorder is a long-term (chronic)

illness. Depending on the severity of the illness, treatment can be done to help the patient become acclimated with other and improve their interpersonal relationships (Berenbaum et. al., 2008).

Dwight's most telling signs of a mental illness are his superstition and odd beliefs in peculiar fantasies. Out loud, he says he does not believe in supernatural things in reality, but when his co-worker, Jim, tries to convince him he has telekinetic powers, Dwight is enthralled in his story. "Ever since I was a little kid, I could sort of control things with my mind," Dwight responds: "I don't believe you, continue" (The Office, n.d.). Since Dwight is a fan of Star Wars, Star Trek and of course, Battlestar Galactica, he has hope that the same kind of supernatural phenomena exists in the real world. When a bat is discovered in the office ceiling, Jim decided to mess with Dwight's head, acting like he is transforming into a vampire. Dwight firmly starts to believe Jim is in transition, but decides not to intervene, only because his top priority is catching the creature responsible for possible vampire transformations. When Jim gets transferred to the Stanford branch, he had little contact with the Scranton branch. However, from time to time, he would send Dwight faxes signing them as "Future Dwight" (The Office, n.d.). This is another fantasy that Dwight believes. One fax stated, "Dear Dwight, Someone will poison the coffee this morning. Do not drink the coffee. More instructions will follow. From Future Dwight" (The Office, n.d.). Right after Dwight reads the fax, he sprints over to his co-worker, Stanley Hudson, and throws his coffee to the ground.

Dwight seems to be unaware of emotions and sarcasm in particular situations, indicating his behavior as inappropriate and narrow (Berenbaum, et. al., 2006). Although Jim is frequently playing jokes, Dwight does not seem to catch on to his antics. For instance, one morning, Jim

comes in dressed exactly how Dwight would dress, mustard color shirt and all, but does not catch onto what is going on until Jim states a false fact (bears eat beets) (The Office, n.d.). Once Jim says, “Bears, beets, Battlestar Galactica,” Dwight is thoroughly upset demanding to know what Jim is up to and immediately calls the regional manager, Michael Scott, to handle the situation (The Office, n.d.).

Everyday, Dwight has on a short-sleeve button-up that is always a shade of mustard. During a shareholder's meeting, Dwight specified that he obtained his shirts by the crate at a warehouse in New York (The Office, n.d.). Dwight has a very specific style that is unusual and eccentric, which is another criteria for diagnosing schizotypal personality disorder (Berenbaum et. al., 2006). Dwight also engages in odd behavior, often stating what kind of dialogue he is about to state. His use of the word “fact,” for example, when Michael starts to interact with Jim more, putting Dwight on edge, he notes, “Fact- You are talking to Jim. You never talk to Jim” (The Office, n.d.). Dwight has a hard time interacting with his coworkers. Since his behaviors and habits are more on the unconventional side, he thinks of ways to integrate himself more with his co-workers. Dwight brings his own water bottle to work, preventing him to make trips to the water cooler throughout the day. He notices that gossip is spread at the water cooler, so he moves the water cooler right beside his desk (The Office, n.d.).

Trying to talk to his co-workers more was not the only reason Dwight decided to move the water cooler, his ulterior motive is to find out if people are talking about him. Meeting another criterion of being suspicious and paranoid, not only must Dwight know everything about anything, he is also over protective of himself. Dwight keeps a journal, to keep secrets from his computer and he is constantly taking notes during meetings to ensure he remembers every detail.

In case things do not go as planned, he has assorted weaponry scattered throughout the office. He hid a knife in a folder in an accounting filing drawer, labeling the file “Mr. Knife,” ninja throwing stars underneath the kitchen table and poisonous dart in a toilet tank (The Office, n.d.). Dwight is also a purple belt in Goruju Karate and holds annual lessons, updating his co-workers on the art of karate. Going back to inappropriate and narrow affect, Jim convinces Dwight to beat himself up because no other person in the office would be able to fight Dwight, except for Dwight. Unfortunately, Dwight does not catch on to Jim's mockery.

Treatment

Researchers believe the cause of schizotypal personality disorder comes from the biopsychosocial model of causation- likely due to biological (genetic), psychological factors (personality and temperament), and social factors (early development and interaction with friends and family) (McClure, et. al., 2008). People with schizotypal personality disorder do not become distressed with their thoughts and behavior, it is their inability to form relationships, which poses a problem with therapists looking to help (Chmielewski, et. al., 2008).

The most common why to treat this disorder is through psychotherapy (Chmielewski, et. al., 2008). Psychotherapy focuses on increasing coping skills and improving social interaction, communication and self-esteem (Chmielewski, et. al., 2008). It also concentrates on the unconscious and its influence on human behavior (McClure, et. al., 2008). It prioritizes on the first six years of a person's life, determining how their life events formed their personality (McClure, et. al., 2008). Prescription medicines are not used to treat schizotypal personality disorder, however, if a person also suffers from an associated psychological problem, like depression, anti-depressants would be issued (Chmielewski, et. al., 2008).

What Dwight needs is to surround himself with “normal” people, rather than his cousin Moze. He should attend psychotherapy sessions to ease his paranoia, but should work on interpreting and executing appropriate responses to people's conversations. Maybe by working on his people skills will allow him to finally be Assistant Regional Manager instead of Assistant to the Regional Manager.

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