PSYCHOEDUCATION HANDOUT

Understanding Personality

Clinician & client use

THE FIVE-FACTOR MODEL

The Big Five

Five dimensions that shape how we think, feel, and relate.

Personality isn't a set of boxes — it's a set of spectra. The Big Five (OCEAN) is the most extensively researched and replicated framework in personality science, describing five broad dimensions along which every person varies. Each is a continuum with no "good" or "bad" end — only differences in where we naturally tend to fall.

O	C	E	A	N
OPENNESS	CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	EXTRAVERSION	AGREEABLENESS	NEUROTICISM (Emotional Stability)

O Openness

the imagination dimension

Curiosity, imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, and openness to new ideas and experience.

LOWER: practical · conventional · routine-preferring

HIGHER: **curious · creative · novelty-seeking**

C Conscientiousness

the self-discipline dimension

Organization, dependability, planning, and follow-through toward goals.

LOWER: spontaneous · flexible · easygoing

HIGHER: **organized · reliable · goal-driven**

E Extraversion

the engagement dimension

Sociability, assertiveness, and drawing energy from interaction and activity.

LOWER (introversion): reserved · reflective · calm-seeking

HIGHER: **outgoing · energetic · expressive**

A Agreeableness

the compassion dimension

Warmth, cooperation, empathy, and trust in relating to other people.

LOWER: direct · competitive · skeptical

HIGHER: **warm · cooperative · empathic**

N Neuroticism

(Emotional Stability)

the resilience dimension

How strongly stress, worry, and mood swings register — its calm, resilient pole is Emotional Stability.

MORE NEUROTIC: sensitive · reactive · worry-prone

MORE STABLE: **calm · resilient · even-keeled**

Framework: the Five-Factor Model (OCEAN), grounded in the lexical tradition and refined by Costa & McCrae (NEO) and Goldberg (IPIP). Traits are dimensional, relatively stable across adulthood, and predict meaningful life outcomes. This handout is educational and descriptive — not a diagnosis.

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