# Yes/No/Maybe for Mental Health Symptoms & Behaviors

People engaging in various forms of BDSM (Bondage, Discipline/Dominance/Sadism/Masochism) and power exchange often rely on Yes/No/Maybe lists of various kink activities to narrow down what they want to and do not want to do.

What is often not talked about is the underlying health and mental health of the players themselves. About one in five adults live with a mental illness. This rate is similar for adults engaging in BDSM and power exchange. There is a need to develop an effective way to talk about your illness and the illnesses of potential partners. Full, informed consent means that we can consider the risks of playing with people in various presentations of mental illness.

This is not a diagnostic tool. The presence of one or several of these behaviors, symptoms, and manifestations of illnesses and the medications which treat them does not mean you have a specific illness. If you are concerned you or a partner may have a mental illness which needs medical attention, seek medical advice. Looking for medical doctors and therapists trained to work with people in our community? Check out the [Kink Aware Professionals list](https://www.kapprofessionals.org/kap_directory/) created by the National Coalition of Sexual Freedom.

Below is a list of common symptoms of a variety of mental illnesses and common side effects of medications used to treat a variety of these illnesses. Please note that every person will have a unique presentation of their illness and response to treatments. This list is designed to help you figure out what you are willing to work with in a relationship, what you bring to a relationship, and what would you prefer to avoid.

Because may of these symptoms are a spectrum form daily to very infrequently, I list many of them along with frequency. For example, insomnia is common for many different illnesses (not just mental health issues). Are you okay if your partner has occasional insomnia but uncomfortable if it is very frequent? I have both “infrequent insomnia” and “very frequent insomnia” listed. You may have a different answer to each of these questions.

Remember, this is not set in stone once you fill it out. Like other Yes/No/Maybe lists, your answers will change over time and with your own experiences. This is just a starting point for conversations.

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| **Issue/Presentation** | **A Partner Has This** | **You Have This** |
| Accuses partner of cheating without proof | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Acts before thinking | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Always insecure | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Always on the look-out for a problem | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Always suspicious of others | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Always tired/fatigues | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Avoids situation/person which impact your ability to do things | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Belief they/you are a bad person | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Believes in conspiracies | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Cannot connect with emotions | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Cannot move past a slight harm in the past | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Cannot read social cues | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Changes/Cancels plans last-minute | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Chronic feeling of guilt | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Constantly stirs up drama | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Constantly talks about the same thing/event | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Cries a lot | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Cuts people out of life after small slight | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Disappears/Leaves without communication for at least 4 days | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Dislikes going out in public | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Dislikes going to social events | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Does not care about impact of their actions | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Does not tolerate being wrong/losing an argument | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Doesn’t feel connected to own identity | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Easily frustrated | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Easily influenced by others | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Excessively uses alcohol | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Excessively uses street drugs | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Fears having to take on any responsibilities | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Feels a need to “monitor” partner | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Feels useless | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Frequent bouts of sexual infidelity | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Frequent bowel issues | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Frequent difficulty focusing | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Frequent nightmares | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Frequently anxious | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Frequently doubts loyalty | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Frequently changes self-concept/identity | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Frequently feels in danger | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Gaslights | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Gets angry quickly | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Gets into fights | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Goes to a “self-help” group | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Hard time feeling joy | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Hard time taking care of themselves | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Has a history of boundary violations | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Has abused an intimate partner in the past | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Has been hospitalized for mental health | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Has been treated for addiction | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Has criminal record | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Has intrusive thoughts | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Has suicidal thoughts | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Has tried suicide | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Holds grudges | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Impulsive, risky behaviors (gambling a lot of money, racing car on freeway) | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Inability to cope with stress | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Inability to leave home/go outside | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Intolerance of other opinions/ways of doing things | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Is sober | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Lack of physical endurance | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Large fluctuations in weight | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Lies a lot | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Long history of short, unstable relationships | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Low tolerance for new situations | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Must follow rigid schedule | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Needs excessive praise | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Needs near-constant reassurance they are good enough | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Needs to be the center of attention | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Not good with last-minute changes | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Occasional infidelity | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Occasionally anxious | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Often worried about abandonment | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Overheats easily | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Overly sarcastic | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Paranoid beliefs/thinking someone is always out to get them | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Periods of rapid mood swings | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Rarely finishes a project | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Refuses to compliment others | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Refuses to see a therapist | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Refuses to use medication to manage condition | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Rigid belief system | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Sees a therapist | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Sees doctor or therapist frequently | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Self-harms | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Self-medicates with alcohol | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Self-medicates with drugs | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Shuts people out | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Speaks very rapidly | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Takes advantage of others | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Takes prescription medication | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Talks behind other people’s backs/gossips | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Things must always be symmetrical/lined up | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Thinks they are better than other people | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Unable to sense time passing | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Uncontrollable twitching/jerky movement | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Uses energy healing/reiki | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Uses herbal supplements | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Uses holistic treatments | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Very sensitive to criticism | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Very stubborn | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Wants to control other’s behavior (without consent) | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Will not say no even when they/you want too | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Withdraws | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |
| Yells | Yes/No/Maybe | Yes/No/Maybe |