

There is a manifest similarity between the disorders of deficient attention and borderline psychopathology as they are described in the DSM IV. In my experience, those with borderline psychopathology have a history of problems with attention. This study seeks to explore the experiential link between the two disorders and how deficient attention acts as a precipitant factor in the development of borderline psychopathology. Ten interviews were conducted with adults diagnosed as having borderline personality disorder with a history of deficient attention. The interviews were unstructured, audiotaped and transcribed. The transcriptions were analysed according to the method of thematic content analysis. The transcriptions were also re-represented in the testimonial form of life history. The data produced seven categories of experience, set in an overall context of trauma. Attention formed only one of these categories. The others were incoherence, incompetence, discord, refraction, dispossession and persecution. The categories, together with existing literature, were linked to form a traumatogenic model of the development of borderline psychopathology. This constitutes an extension of existing literature and is intended to contribute to the prevention and treatment of both disorders.