INTRODUCTION

General and specific models of personality pathology reflect a theoretical structure in which self/interpersonal dysfunction manifests in different, characteristic trait styles.

A comprehensive model must account for nomothetic structure and interpersonal processes that define personality pathology clinically.

Variability is a necessary precondition for establishing the presence of process.

METHODS

N = 298 undergraduate students
n = 7,656 interactions

Dispositional measures:
Personality Inventory for the DSM-5 (maladaptive traits)
Levels of Personality Functioning Scale (general personality pathology)

10 day EMA protocol:
Ratings during interactions of dominant/ affiliative behavior, negative/ positive affect and behavior of other person.

RESULTS

Maladaptive traits are associated with less affiliative behavior, less perceived affiliation, more negative affect and less positive affect during interactions.

...But after accounting for covariation between traits, most of these associations are no longer significant suggesting these effects are driven by their shared variance.

General personality pathology is most distinguished from specific traits by variability in interpersonal behavior and perception.

Findings suggest processes (i.e., variability) underlying all maladaptive trait styles are associated with typically hostile interactions consistent with a core of interpersonal dysfunction.