



## DISRUPTIVE, IMPULSE–CONTROL, AND CONDUCT DISORDERS

### PYROMANIA

#### What it is:

Pyromania is a disorder in which an individual has multiple episodes of deliberately and purposely setting fires. Individuals with this disorder experience tension or emotional arousal before setting a fire. The individual will display a fascination, curiosity, or attraction to fire, its uses and its consequences. These individuals are also often “watchers” at fires that may take place in their neighbourhood, or they may set off false alarms regarding fires. They may also have an obsession with institutions, equipment or personnel associated with fires, such as firefighters. They may spend time around their local fire station, set fires in an attempt to be affiliated with the fire department, or become firefighters themselves.

Individuals with pyromania experience relief, gratification or pleasure when setting a fire, watching its effects, or participating in its aftermath. The fire setting is not done for monetary gain, to express anger or enact revenge, to cover up criminal activity or in a response to a hallucination or delusion. The fire setting does not result from impaired judgment, for example intellectual disability. A diagnosis of pyromania will also not be made if the fire setting is better explained by conduct disorder, a manic episode, or antisocial personality disorder.

#### Common symptoms:

1. Deliberate setting of a fire on more than one occasion
2. Feeling tension or affective arousal before setting the fire
3. Feelings of fascination, curiosity, or attraction to fire and its uses and consequences
4. Feeling pleasure, relief or gratification while setting fires, or when witnessing or participating in their aftermath
5. The fire setting is not done for reasons such as monetary gain, to cover up a crime, as an act of aggression or revenge, or as an expression of political ideology
6. The fire setting is not done as part of a hallucination or delusion

7. The individual does not have impaired judgment due to an intellectual disability, neurocognitive disorder, or substance intoxication



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### **Causes:**

There is insufficient data to accurately identify potential risk or causal factors for pyromania. However pyromania has been found to occur more often in men than in women, especially in men with poorer social skills and learning difficulties. A high level of comorbidity other disorders such as substance use disorder, gambling disorder, depressive and bipolar disorder, as well as conduct disorders also exists.

**Remember to always consult a mental health or medical practitioner regarding any questions you may have about a mental health diagnosis and treatment options.**

This factsheet is based on information obtained from the DSM-5:  
American Psychiatric Association, 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition.*