ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

- Also referred to as Psychopathology (literally: “pathology of the mind”) is the study of abnormal behavior.
- It is the application of science in the study of mental disorders.
- It is the study of individuals with mental, emotional, and physical pain.

DEFINING NORMALITY

- Normal Behavior – definitions of what is considered normal behavior describe it as behavior that is socially acceptable to the standards of the society. In short, if behavior is socially acceptable or conforming to the standards of society, then that behavior is normal.

Criteria for Normality

1. Normality is average – what is accepted by the majority is considered normal. A problem in this definition is that not everything that is accepted by the majority can be considered normal.

2. Normality is social conformity – Anyone who conforms to the standards of the society is considered normal. Two main problems in this definition put consideration to the Problem of Criminality and the Problem of Social Standards.

3. Normality is personal comfort – If a person feels/experiences pleasure or comfort, then the behavior is considered normal. Likewise, if a person feels/experiences displeasure or discomfort, then that is considered abnormal. Issues with this definition include the Problem of Objective and Subjective Symptoms, the Problem of Individual Reactions to Discomfort, and the Problem of Social Consequences.

Other definitions for normality:

1. Normality is Ideal
2. Normality is a process

Criteria for Stating what is Abnormal Behavior

1. Cultural Relativism - the view that there are no universal standards or rules for labeling a behavior as abnormal. Behaviors can only be considered abnormal based on or relative to cultural norms.

   Although there are rejections to the cultural relativist tradition, it is important to note that culture and gender play an influence on the way abnormal behavior is expressed and the way they can be treated:
   a. Culture and gender may affect how people express their symptoms.
   b. Culture and gender may influence people’s willingness to admit certain behaviors.
   c. Culture and gender can determine the types of treatments or interventions that are deemed acceptable or helpful.

2. Unusualness – behaviors which are considered unusual or deviant are considered as abnormal behaviors. This is tied to cultural relativism since the culture dictates what is usual or unusual.

3. Distress – behaviors should be considered abnormal only if the individual suffers distress and wishes to be rid of the behaviors.

4. Mental Illness – behaviors are not considered abnormal unless they are a part of a mental illness.
Four D’s of Abnormal Behavior

1. **Dysfunction** – behavior causes impairment in social and occupational functioning. This means that the behavior interferes with the person’s ability to form and maintain relationships or hold a job.

2. **Distress** – Behaviors and feelings that cause *distress to the individual or to others* around him or her are also likely to be considered abnormal.

3. **Deviance** – deviant and unusual behaviors lead to the judgment of abnormality.

4. **Dangerousness** – some behaviors and feelings are of potential harm to the individual, such as suicidal gestures, or to others, such as excessive aggression. Such dangerous behaviors and feelings are often seen as abnormal.

The accepted definition of abnormality/psychological disorder, used the DSM-5, describes behavioral, psychological, or biological dysfunctions that are unexpected in their cultural context and associated with present distress and impairment in functioning, or increased risk of suffering, death, pain, or impairment.¹

Summary of the DSM-5² Definition of Mental Disorders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defining Characteristics:</th>
<th>Conditions Excluded from Consideration</th>
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<tr>
<td>A behavioral or psychological syndrome (groups of associated features) that is associated with:</td>
<td>This syndrome or pattern must not be merely:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Current distress (painful symptoms), or</td>
<td>1. An expectable and culturally sanctioned response to a particular event (such as the death of a loved one)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Disability (impairment in one or more important areas of functioning), or with</td>
<td>2. Deviant behavior (such as the actions of political, religious, or sexual minorities)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. A significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain, disability, or an important loss of freedom</td>
<td>3. Conflicts that are between the individual and society (such as voluntary efforts to express individuality)</td>
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HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ABNORMALITY

Throughout history, there have been three theories or models which attempt to explain the causes of abnormal behavior. First, the Biological Theories saw that abnormal behavior is similar to physical disease, which is caused by a breakdown of the systems of the body. Because of that, the cure for abnormal behavior was to restore bodily health. Second, the supernatural theories saw abnormal behavior as a result of divine intervention, curses, demonic possession, or personal sin. To rid the person of such, they turn to religious rituals such as exorcism, confession, and atonement. Lastly, the Psychological theories saw abnormal behavior as a result of traumas such as bereavement or chronic stress. In this model, rest, relaxation, and a change of environment can be helpful.

**Biological Tradition**

**Hippocrates**
- Father of modern medicine
- Abnormal behavior had natural causes, not because of demonological accounts.
- He and his associates: Hippocratic Corpus - Suggested that psychological disorders can be treated like other diseases. Can be caused by brain trauma or genetics.
- All problems are caused by imbalance in the body
- Treatment is aimed at balancing

**Galen**
- Physician who continued on the work of Hippocrates

¹ Adapted from Nolen-Hoeksema (2011)
² Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders Fifth Edition, APA
Hippocratic-Galenic Approach: HUMORAL THEORY
- Four Humors: Blood, Black Bile, Yellow Bile, Phlegm

The 19th Century
- Syphilis - STD caused by a bacterial microorganism entering the brain. Behavioral and Cognitive Symptoms include believing that everyone is plotting against you or that you are God, as well as other bizarre behaviors. Cure for syphilis: penicillin
- John P. Grey - Champion of the BT in the US, his position is that the cause of insanity is always physical, mentally ill patients are to be treated as though they are physically ill

Supernatural Tradition
Demons and Witches
- Supernatural causes of psychological disorders
- Work of the devil or Witchcraft
- Treatment: Exorcism, Shaving a cross pattern in the hair, or securing sufferers to a wall near the front of a church

Stress and Melancholy
- Insanity was a natural phenomenon, caused by mental and emotional stress, and is curable
- Communal treatment for the insane
- Nicholas Oresme
  - Adviser to the King of France
  - Bishop and Philosopher
  - Melancholy is the source of bizarre behavior not demons

Treatment for Possession
- AIDS: divine punishment for homosexuality
- Exorcism: Reliable, if not, other methods are used such as beating and confinement
- Other approaches: Hanging people over a pit full of poisonous snakes or Dipping on icy water

Mass Hysteria
- Large-scale outbreak of bizarre behavior during the Middle Ages wherein people go out running in the streets, dancing, shout, rave, and jump
- They lent support to the notion of possession
- Also called Saint Vitus’ Dance and Tarantism
- Believed to be a reaction to insect bites

Moon and Stars
- Paracelsus - Rejected possession and suggested that the movement of the moon and the stars had an effect on human behavior
- Lunatic

Psychological Tradition
Plato
- He suggested that causes of maladaptive behavior were the social and cultural influences and the learning that took place in that environment. This belief was a precursor to modern psychosocial approaches

Moral Therapy
- 19th century psychosocial approach to mental disorders
- Moral = emotional or mental
- Treating patients as normally as possible
- 16th century Asylums
**Psychoanalytic Theory**

- Patients were hypnotized
- Anton Mesmer
- Suggested to his patients that their problem was caused by an undetectable fluid found in all living organisms called “animal magnetism,” which could become blocked
- Jean Charcot - started the practice of hypnosis as treatment modality
- Freud and Breuer:
  - Hypnosis: Unconscious
  - Catharsis
  - Anna O.

**Humanistic Theory**

**Behavioral Approaches**

**PSYCHOPATHOLOGY IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

- Europe in the Middle Ages: “lunatics”, “idiots”
- Family, not community responsibility
- 1600s to 1700s = insane asylums
- Change is societal perspective
- Early asylums: human warehouses
- 19th Century: Moral treatment movement
- Large institutions led to the development of new professions such as psychiatry
- Worcester Lunatic Hospital: A Model Institution
- Woodward’s ideas about the causes of disorders represented a combination of physical and moral considerations.
- Invention of public mental hospitals: systematic observation and scientific inquiry
- Psychiatry as a professional group
- Expanded public concern on solving problems of mental disorders
- Some misguided and naïve aspects of 19th century psychiatry
  - Masturbation leads to mental disorders

**PRESENT PERSPECTIVES**

- Pharmacotherapy - Use of drugs in therapy
- Psychotherapy
- Problems: Deinstitutionalization
- Deinstitutionalization - Move to integrate patients with their communities: community-based treatment facilities
  - **COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER**
    - Team of social workers, therapists and physicians
  - **HALFWAY HOUSES**
    - Long-term treatment
    - Structured and supportive environment
  - **DAY TREATMENT CENTER**
    - Treatment during the day, live at home during night

**PROFESSIONALS WITHIN PSYCHOPATHOLOGY**

**Clinical and Counseling Psychologists**

- PhD in Psychology
- PsyD

**Psychiatrists**

- MD with Psychiatry Residency
Psychiatric Social Worker
- Master’s Degree in Social Work
- Specialized Practice in Psychiatry

Psychiatric Nurses
- Nursing Graduates
- Advanced training in psychiatry

Marriage and Family Therapists
- Master’s Degree in Counseling
- Training

The Present
- Scientific Method
- Integrative Approach
- Scientist-Practitioner Model

DETERMINANTS OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
- Behavior is determined.
- Determinants of behavior – factors that cause a particular behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predisposing Factors</th>
<th>Precipitating Factors</th>
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<tr>
<td>A factor that makes someone prone or susceptible to a certain pathology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remote Effect – does not come out at an early stage, only when triggered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Factors that trigger the onset of a certain disorder</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immediate Effect</td>
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Biological Determinants of Behavior
- Can be predisposing or precipitating factor
  A. Genetic Factor
  B. Biological Deprivation
  C. Obnoxious Agents
  D. Accidents
  E. Body Constitutions
  F. Biochemical Factors

Psychological Determinants of Behavior
- Can be predisposing or precipitating factor
  A. Stress
  B. Frustration
  C. Over-Use of Defense Mechanisms
  D. Psychological Deprivation

Socio-cultural Determinants of Behavior
- Precipitating factor
  A. Poverty/Unemployment
  B. War
  C. Racial Discrimination
  D. Rural-Urban Setting
  E. Residential Mobility

REFERENCES