




What is Abnormal?

Chapter One:
Overview to Understanding Abnormal Behavior

Chapter Objectives

- What is Abnormal behavior?
- What is the difference between abnormal behavior and a psychological disorder?
- What causes Abnormal Behavior?
- Theories about psychological disorders and historical perspectives



What percentage of the population do you think have a psychological disorder?

People tend to believe that psychological disorders affect a small percentage of people, but this is not so.

Surveys estimate that during a 1-year period, _____ have diagnosable mental disorders, according to reliable, established criteria.

The Human Perspective

- Psychological disorders are part of the human experience, touching the life—either directly or indirectly—of every person.
- You will learn about clusters of symptoms that characterize different psychological disorders, but most importantly PEOPLE suffer with these disorders everyday.
- As you read about these disorders and the people who suffer with them, you will find that most of these problems are treatable, and many are preventable.



How are people with psychological disorders portrayed in our culture?

Sensitivity Please!

The language we use when discussing psychological disorders is very important-people are not just their disorders!



Who's Abnormal?



- Get into groups of 4 and determine if the person is in the following scenario is "normal" or "abnormal".
- For each scenario list two questions you would want to know about the case to evaluate the behavior.

Who's Abnormal?

- A 10 year-old wants to have his entire body tattooed.
- Tom is uncomfortable riding escalators. As a result, Tom avoids using any escalator.
- Rachel has been caught urinating in the corner of her bedroom.
- A 35 year-old very happily married man enjoys wearing women's clothes and underwear on the weekends when he and his wife go out on the town.

Abnormal behavior is:

- _____
- Socially unacceptable
 - _____
- _____ to the person who exhibits it or to the people around them
- _____
 - Behavior that limits the ability to function or fulfill life responsibilities

The Normal-Abnormal

_____ must always be acknowledged because it is almost impossible to give an exact "cut-off"

What do we *call* people labeled as abnormal?



Labels, Labels, Labels...

These words are used to dismiss and dehumanize people who we consider different.



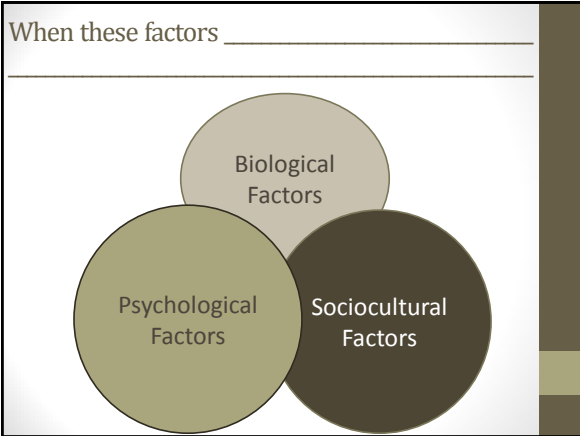


What Causes Abnormal Behavior?

Factors
(genetics, biochemistry, and brain structures)

(Personality traits, coping ability, and perception)

Sociocultural Factors
(Experiences throughout life, family dynamics, and your environment)



How do we define a psychological disorder?

- Abnormal behavior that involves disturbance of psychological function or behavior.
- Psychological dysfunction associated with distress or impairment that is not typical or _____

Criteria for a Psychological Disorder

- Clinical significance
- Distress
- Behavior cannot be a socially expectable response
- Psychological or biological disturbance
- Behavior cannot be defined in terms of social rebellion or deviance

Can any of these criteria be used solely to define a psychological disorder?



No. Using any of these in isolation is not adequate for a valid definition. As well as looking at the “average.”

The conclusion...it is difficult to define “abnormal” and “normal”

Research Methods in Abnormal Psychology



Psychologists must engage in careful systematic observation Systematic observation is setting up our study so that we eliminate or reduce bias.

Research Methods in Abnormal Psychology

Table 1.3

Type of Method	Purpose	Example
Survey	Obtain population data	Researchers working for a government agency attempt to determine disease prevalence through questionnaires administered over the telephone.
Laboratory study	Collect data under controlled conditions	An experiment is conducted to compare reaction times to neutral and fear-provoking stimuli.
Case study	An individual or a small group of individuals is studied intensively	A therapist describes the cases of members of a family who share the same unusual disorder.
Single case experimental design	The same person serves as subject in experimental and control conditions	Researchers report on the frequency of a client's behavior while the client is given attention (experimental treatment) and ignored (control condition) for aggressive outbursts in a psychiatric ward.
Behavioral genetics	Attempt to identify genetic patterns in inheritance of particular behaviors	Genetic researchers compare the DNA of people with and without symptoms of particular psychological disorders

Next class

Historical Perspectives on Abnormal Behavior

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