

What is Abnormal?

Chapter One:

Defining Abnormality: What is Psychopathology?

Class Objectives

Ψ What is ABNORMAL?

Ψ When does an abnormal behavior become a psychological disorder?

Ψ Historical perspectives and treatments

What percentage of the population would you guess 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

Ψ One of the most important objectives for this class is for students to recognize how psychological suffering is everywhere.

Ψ You will learn about clusters of symptoms that characterize different psychological disorders, but most importantly PEOPLE suffer with these disorders everyday.

Sensitivity Please!

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


For each scenario list two questions you would want to know about the case to evaluate the behavior.

Who's Abnormal?

- Ψ A 10 year-old wants to have his entire body tattooed.
- Ψ Tom is uncomfortable riding escalators. As a result, Tom avoids using any escalator.
- Ψ Rachel has been caught urinating in the corner of her bedroom.
- Ψ 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.

So, where is the line between normal and abnormal?

Emotional states (anxiety/depression) may be considered abnormal when they are not appropriate to the situation.



Abnormal behavior is characterized as:


- Ψ _____
- Ψ Socially unacceptable
- Ψ _____ to the person who exhibits it or to the people around them
- Ψ Maladaptive
 - 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"

How often does Tom have to avoid escalators before this behavior is considered a disorder?

Labels, Labels, Labels...

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



True or False?

Behavior deemed abnormal in one society may be perceived as normal in another.

Who decides what's "NORMAL"?

How do we define a psychological disorder?

Ψ Abnormal behavior that involves

Ψ *Psychological dysfunction* associated with distress or impairment that is not typical or culturally appropriate

Defining psychological disorders

Ψ Personal *distress* also contributes to defining psychological disorders.

- The concept of *impairment* is also useful in defining this.

Ψ One last factor is the question,

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

for a valid definition. As well as looking at the “average.”

The conclusion...it is _____ “abnormal” and “normal”

Psychopathology

Ψ Psychopathology is the scientific study of

Ψ This area studies the causes () and possible of psychological disorders

Ψ This area is also involved the and treatment of these disorders

What's Next?

Assessing Psychological Disorders
