

20. Abnormal Psychology

Objectives

- List and explain factors that characterize abnormal behavior
- List and explain the major types of psychological disorders
- Discuss the biological and psychological issues that may trigger psychological disorders

Vocabulary

affective disorder	compulsions	hallucinations	psychotic disorders
amnesia	delusions	insanity	schizophrenia
anxiety disorders	dissociative disorders	obsessions	somatoform disorders
autistic disorder	dysthymic disorder	personality disorders	unipolar
bipolar disorder	etiology	phobias	

Background

In this chapter, students learn that people suffer from many types of psychological disorders and mental illnesses. These vary in cause, but have in common the fact that a person's behavior deviates from the norm. Psychologists use sets of specific criteria to gauge a person's mental state. There are five different perspectives on the causes of mental illness and disorders tend to vary from culture to culture.

Students proceed by reviewing ways in which mental illnesses are assessed and classified. Whether developed at birth or caused by the environment or a medical condition, all disorders are judged by the same five aspects.

Students now study common types of psychological disorders, beginning with anxiety disorders, which affect about 10 to 15 percent of the U.S. population. They review symptoms and causes of anxiety disorders, including phobias, generalized anxiety, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Students learn that the next type of disorders, somatoform disorders, have physical symptoms that arise from psychological causes. They review symptoms and causes of conversion disorder and of hypochondriasis.

Students move on to learn about dissociative disorders, which can cause great disturbance and stress in an individual's life. Students will recognize the term *amnesia*, and will come to understand dissociative fugue and dissociative identity disorder as other disorders in this category.

Mood changes are a part of everyday life for most people, but students find out that some people live with more severe mood changes called affective disorders. These include dysthymic disorder, major depression, and bipolar disorder, all of whose causes are thought to be similar to those of major depression.

Students move on to learn about psychotic disorders, probably the most debilitating group of psychological disorders. This category includes different types of schizophrenia and delusional disorder. Finally, students study personality disorders and disorders of childhood, and then consider the issue of the insanity defense in criminal trials.

Further Resources

- Costello, Timothy W. and Joseph T. Costello. *Abnormal Psychology*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1992.
- McMahon, Judith W., Frank B. McMahon, and Tony Romano. *Psychology and You*. St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Company, 1995.

For Discussion

Review

1. What criteria do psychologists use to identify abnormal behavior?
2. What five aspects are used to assess mental health?
3. Name the five different types of anxiety disorders.
4. What are psychotic disorders? Name the two types.

Critical Thinking

1. What reaction do you think that most Americans have to psychological disorders?
2. Through much of history what was "bizarre behavior" blamed on?
3. What is unique about conversion disorder?
4. What is the difference between dysthymic disorder and major depression?
5. What is the difference between schizophrenia and delusional disorder?

Activities

1. Identifying Mental Illnesses

Divide students into groups and ask members to take turns presenting lists of symptoms to other members for diagnosis, based on the content of this chapter. Other group members compete to identify the mental illness being presented.

2. Mental Health in the U.S.

Ask students to contact national and local mental health organizations for statistics on mental health in the U.S. and to learn about how these groups promote mental health in the community and the nation.

3. Internet: Care for Mental Patients

Ask students to use the Internet to learn about care for mental patients in the U.S. Ask them to find data on private patient care, mental health institutions, and drug treatments. What complaints do patient advocate groups have about care?

4. Special Sources: Follow Your Interests

Ask students to use library resources to research and report on any psychological disorder that interests them.

Name _____

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As you read Chapter 20, write an answer to each question below.

1. How are somatoform disorders different from many other psychological disorders? Name the two somatoform disorders.

2. Explain dissociative disorders and what makes them different in a cultural context.

3. What makes personality disorders different from other psychological disorders? Name the two types.

4. What are antisocial personality disorder and borderline personality disorder?

5. What are the causes of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder?

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Find the best answer for each item. Then circle that answer.

1. What characterizes an affective disorder?
 - a. it has only one affect or symptom
 - b. an individual's moods are extreme enough to interfere with regular life activities
 - c. loss of vision
 - d. persistent incoherent speech
2. What characterizes anxiety disorders?
 - a. fear that danger or misfortune is looming, with physical symptoms such as rapid heart rate
 - b. nervousness but without physical symptoms
 - c. brief bouts of depression
 - d. long-term, ongoing physical disability
3. What characterizes dysthymic disorder?
 - a. dysfunctional, irrational behavior
 - b. severe but brief depression
 - c. severe anxiety
 - d. moderate depression lasting for at least two years
4. What is bipolar disorder?
 - a. a disorder in which one goes to opposite extremes, such as mania and depression
 - b. a disorder involving sudden agitation
 - c. a disorder in which a person is manic at all times
 - d. a disorder alternating a normal state with depression
5. What characterizes schizophrenia?
 - a. light-headedness and confusion
 - b. loss of memory and confusion
 - c. confused thoughts, incoherent speech, delusions, hallucinations, flat or inappropriate emotions, paranoia, or disturbances of movement
 - d. loss of vision and ability to talk
6. What characterizes personality disorders?
 - a. persistent anxiety symptoms
 - b. long-standing maladaptive personality traits that are often more disturbing to others
 - c. unshakable beliefs that are not true
 - d. repetitive, ritualized behaviors
7. What characterizes somatoform disorders?
 - a. psychological symptoms arise from physical causes
 - b. a person has recurring, unwanted thoughts
 - c. a person has irrational or inappropriate fears
 - d. physical symptoms arise from psychological causes
8. What characterizes psychotic disorders?
 - a. an individual loses contact with reality
 - b. problems with self-image
 - c. memory disturbances
 - d. interpersonal and communication difficulties
9. What characterizes dissociative disorders?
 - a. sufferers escape a painful situation by disconnecting from certain parts of themselves
 - b. severely regressive behavior
 - c. major depression
 - d. cognitive impairment
10. What characterizes autistic disorder?
 - a. mild, persistent depression
 - b. intense, unstable interpersonal relationships
 - c. severe communication and interpersonal difficulties and cognitive impairment
 - d. unfocused, persistent anxiety

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Read each description, and write the letter of the correct term on the line.

- The etiology of a disorder is _____.
 - the treatment
 - the cause
 - the data
 - the effect
- Behavioral psychologists stress that _____.
 - life experiences condition us to respond to events or situations in a particular way
 - disorders arise from faulty thoughts
 - disorders arise from the unconscious
 - each person can reach personal fulfillment
- In Latin America, individuals might develop *susto*, in which _____.
 - people laugh, shout, and bang their heads
 - people have bad dreams and hallucinations
 - a person is possessed by spirits
 - unhappiness and sickness occur when the soul leaves the body after a frightening event
- In the nature vs. nurture twin and adoptee studies, it showed in many cases that _____.
 - only biology was involved
 - only the environment was involved
 - biology and the environment were involved
 - the unconscious was involved
- A specific or simple phobia causes a(n) _____.
 - inappropriate fear of an object or situation
 - short-lived, quick onset attack of anxiety
 - inappropriate fear of only inanimate objects
 - inappropriate fear only of particular situations
- Hypochondriacs tend to focus on _____.
 - their internal anxieties
 - normal variations in bodily functions as a sign of serious illness
 - other people's opinions about them
 - their feelings of unhappiness
- One symptom of dissociative identity disorder is an individual _____.
 - feels hopeless and worthless
 - fears heights
 - withdraws from all social interaction
 - has two or more distinct identities or personalities that alternate control of his or her consciousness and behavior
- Schizophrenics may have a great deal of trouble _____.
 - interacting with others on a regular basis
 - eating and sleeping regularly
 - communicating, stringing together words by sound or association rather than meaning
 - staying interested in their activities
- Substance abuse is a psychological disorder and often results in or brings about _____.
 - other psychological disorders
 - physical symptoms of anxiety
 - alternation of the unconscious
 - lack of emotion
- Abnormal behavior is sometimes difficult to assess in children because _____.
 - children can't fully express themselves
 - children develop at different rates
 - children don't always follow directions
 - children are naturally active

Essay Question

Do you think that psychological disorders ever can be eliminated from society? Why or why not?