

Essentials of understanding abnormal behavior



PsychopathologyThe study of mental or behavioral disorders

Abnormal PsychologyThe scientific study whose objectives are to describe, explain, predict, and modify behaviors that are considered strange or unusual.

ONESSENTIALS OF UNDERSTANDING ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR SPECIFICALLY

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PsychodagnosisAssessment and description of an individual's psychological symptoms, including inferences

about what might be causing the psychological distress. **Therapy**A program

of systematic intervention whose purpose is to improve a person's

behavioral, affective (emotional), or cognitive state. **Abnormal behavior**A

behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that reflects an underlying psychological dysfunction, is associated with distress or disability, and is not

merely an expectable response to common stressors or losses. **Culture**The

configuration of shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that is transmitted from one generation to another by members of a particular

group and symbolized by artifacts, roles, expectations, and institutions.

Cultural universalityThe assumption that a fixed set of mental disorders

exists whose obvious manifestations cut across cultures. **Cultural**

relativismThe belief that lifestyles, cultural values, and worldviews affect the

expression and determination of behavior. **Psychiatric epidemiology**The

study of the prevalence of mental illness in a society. **Prevalence**The

percentage of individuals in a targeted population who have a particular

disorder during a particular period of time. **Incidence**Number of new cases of a disorder that appear in an identified population within a specified time

period. **Lifetime prevalence**The percentage of people in the population who

have had a disorder at some point in their lives. **Trephining**A surgical method from the stone age in which part of the skull was chipped away to provide an

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opening through which an evil spirit could escape. Exorcism Treatment method used by the early Greeks, Chinese, Hebrews, and Egyptians in which prayers, noises, emetics, flogging, and starvation were used to cast evil spirits out of an afflicted person's body. Brain pathology A dysfunction or disease of the brain. Mass madness Group hysteria in which a great many people exhibit similar symptoms that have no apparent physical cause. Tarantism A mania or form of mass hysteria prevalent during the middle ages, characterized by wild raving, jumping, dancing, and convulsing; also known as St. Vitus's dance. Humanism A philosophical movement that emphasizes human welfare and the worth and uniqueness of the individual. Moral treatment movement Movement instituted by Phillippe Pinel that resulted in a shift to more humane treatment of people who were mentally disturbed. Spiritual being A person's animating life force that speaks to the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to a transcendent state or one's capacity for creativity, growth, and love. Biological (organic) viewpoint The belief that mental disorders have a physical or physiological basis. Syndrome Certain symptoms that tend to occur regularly in clusters. Psychological viewpoint The belief that mental disorders are caused by psychological and emotional factors rather than organic or biological ones. Cathartic method A therapeutic use of verbal expression to release pent-up emotional conflicts. Multicultural psychology An approach that stresses the importance of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, age, socioeconomic class, and other similar factors in its effort to understand and treat abnormal behavior. Positive psychology The philosophical and scientific study of positive human functioning in the strengths and assets of individuals, families, and communities. Optimal human functioning Qualities such as subjective well-

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being, happiness, optimism, resilience, hope, courage, ability to cope with stress, self-actualization, and self-determinism. Spirituality The animating life force or energy of the human condition that is broader than but inclusive of religion. Managed health care The industrialization of healthcare, whereby large organizations in the private sector control the delivery of services.