

# Historical perspective of abnormal psychology assignment

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Historical Perspective of Abnormal Psychology DeVonne Peoples University of Phoenix July 19, 2010 The study of the mind and behavior is the core or basic concept to the school of psychology. An individual's mind and how it functions has spawn over a several dozen of theories, schools of thought and scientific methodologies on how to shape or predict human behavior. The most curious of them all is the aspect of normal and abnormal psychology. What exactly is normal and abnormal psychology? What constitutes and defines what should be deemed a health mind versus an unhealthy one is the difference between normal and abnormal psychology.

Brief History of Abnormal Psychology Hippocrates of Cos (ca. 460??? 377 BC), a Greek physician who lived on an island called Cos, off the coast of present day Turkey has been referred to as the " Father of rational medicine. " Hippocrates ushered in a new practice of treatment which was based on physical causes; which were opposite of the norm of the times where illness was attributed to supernatural beliefs and religion. Hippocrates helped in redirecting the focus on mental illness as one the stemmed from chemical imbalances in the brain rather than animistic forces.

Another earlier thought of abnormal psychology was the disorder known as hysteria. This was considered among the Greeks as a disease suffered primarily by women, and it was believed that its symptoms traveled around the body causing " hysteria" to whatever area it resided. Although this was the belief among the ancient Greek physicians, a paradigm shift has bridged cultures and worldviews to a more scientific approach to abnormal psychopathology. As the cultures change so has the historical context as it

relates to the growing knowledge and scientific advancements of exploring and explaining psychopathology.

#### Abnormal Psychology/Scientific Paradigm/Socio-cultural Theoretical Models

According to Thomas Kuhn, the science of abnormal psychology has progressed by “revolution” as opposed to systematic evolution, making the boundaries between scientific “fact” and unscientific “superstitions” blurred than ever before (Hansell and Damour, 2008, pg. 32). The shift from out-of-date beliefs and myths have been replaced with applied scientific knowledge that combines biological facts with modern science and theories that contribute significantly to the shift in further explaining the causes of mental dysfunction.

Along with this paradigm shift, cultural and historical relativism remains to be a constant reminder of the historic context as the new focus of explaining mental illness has moved toward the principle of multiple causality. Multiple causality basically describes a combination of multiple causes and theoretical perspectives that give cause to a particular mental disorder.

There are precipitation causes that give an immediate trigger or precipitant to an occurrence, and then there is the predisposing cause which is the underlying process that helps to create the conditions that make it possible for the precipitating cause to trigger and event.

When both causes interact that is also known as the diathesis-stress model.

For example, John hears his father refer to him as impotent, nothing, weak and inept; his response at home is to suppress his feelings and anger by acting as if those words do not bother him. However, in school when John

reserved demeanor, low-countenance, depressed and withdrawn self image is ridiculed by other boys at school, John's response to the similar taunts by the boys remind him of the abuse and ridicule he gets from his father whom he reverences causes him to lash out violently and aggressively toward the boys in school causing bodily harm.

Now, John is perceived as being a violent out of control in one instance and shy and withdrawn in the other. This kind of behavior can be labeled disturbed and abnormal, especially for John's norm. Complex factors contribute to adolescents experiencing depressive symptoms, including developmental stressors (e. g. , peer relationships, school accomplishments, physical and emotional changes) and environmental and contextual stressors (e. g. , poverty, crime, family separation, discrimination). How adolescents cope, or respond, to these stressors influences their well-being.

Some adolescents "cope" and demonstrate resilience in response to overwhelming negative stressors; other adolescents need very little "stress" to plunge into a depressive episode (Garcia, 2010, pg. 167).

Psychosocial/Biological/Medical When an individual develops that are stages of growth that can potentially be affected that will impede self-actualization or high self-efficacy. Many deficits in psychological health begin with psychosocial development. Theorist Erik Erikson developed the psychosocial stage theory which is the development of the ego identity.

Erikson's belief is that a person's sense of competence helps to motivate a person's behaviors and actions. If this stage of ego identity is developed positively the individual will feel a sense of poise and self confidence,

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however, if this stage is poorly developed, the person can be left with a feeling of inadequacy. There are some disorders that have an overt behavior that fits the criteria of abnormal psychopathological, however, the cause is not solely mental at all; it has a biological or biochemical origin that affects the brain functions which directly affects a person's outwardly behavior as seen with schizophrenia disorders.

There are other behaviors that are deemed mental disorders, hallucinations and paranoia; however that cause can be contributed to defects in a person's neurological system that directly affect communication with neurotransmissions, such as one who suffers from the disease syphilis over a very long period of time. Abnormal psychology is the study of mental disorders or mental behaviors that fall outside of the "norm" of common practice of behavior.

When a person's behavior or thought process becomes a overt and noticeable deviance of normal behaviors for that time and culture it can be surmised that one could very well suffer from a form of abnormal psychology. However, the measured behavior should be considered extreme or unusually common. Not every unique personality or behavior can be deemed as a mental disorder; however, it is the mental behaviors that are acutely rare and irrational. Abnormal psychology can originate from many different stages in development, and can be contributed from many stressors, and psychosocial influences in a person's environment.

Understanding the differences and identifying the proper origins of psychopathology can help to increase the quality of life for many who suffer

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mental illness. References <http://delano.com/Articles/Hippocrates.html>

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