

Week 1-2, Chapter 1: Conceptual issues in abnormal psychology

In Australia 2007

- 1/2 Australians experienced anxiety, affective or substance use disorder
- 1/5 experience mental disorders
- woman and old people more likely to use services
- GP's used most

Abnormality

- Several elements used to define abnormality
 - *Statistical rarity*: people who possess a characteristic rarely found in society (not always negative)
 - *Deviance or norm violation*: behaviour deemed socially unacceptable Cannot be solely relied on because it can be used to repress non-conformist behaviours ie homosexuality
 - *Distress*: does the behaviour cause distress
 - *Dysfunction*: is the behaviour maladaptive/debilitating Like norm violation, its limitation is that the norms may be wrong and not necessarily the behaviour itself
- It is the accumulation of these elements that assists in defining abnormal behaviour

Mental disorder

- According to DSM: A syndrome characterised by clinically significant disturbance in and individuals cognition, emotion regulation or behaviour.....
- Wakefields harmful dysfunction analysis
 - Involves factual component (dysfunction) and a value component (harmful) – factual component implies an internal dysfunction
 - Must have both to be classified
 - The Internal dysfunction specification helps demarcate mental disorder from social deviance
 - Mental disorders therefore lie between physical disorder and social deviance
 - Limitation: some psychological experiences have no evolutionarily obvious function and therefore difficult to determine whether something is dysfunctional ie sadness/depression.