Week 1: Abnormal Psychology

Chapter 1

- Abnormal psychology: the scientific study of abnormal behaviour undertaken to describe, predict, explain and change abnormal patterns of functioning.
  - Involves "functioning" including social, emotional and ADL (activities of daily living).
  - Pattern of behaviour (4 D's) deviance, distress, dysfunction and danger.
    - DEVIANCE:
      - Thoughts and behaviours that differ greatly from society's norms and functioning.
      - Society's norms stem from culture
      - Emotions in context
    - DISTRESS:
      - Distress may not always be present in abnormal psych
    - DYSFUNCTION
      - Interferes with daily functioning
      - Not all dysfunctional behaviour is abnormal psych EG monks who don't eat for days
    - DANGER
      - Dangerous to oneself or others
- Clinical practician roles are to detect, access and treat.
- Psychological abnormalities are very hard to define, vague and subjective.
- If a behaviour is familiar enough, society may fail to recognise it as devious, dangerous, dysfunctional or distressing.
- Eccentric: a person who deviates from common behaviour, replacing it with odd or unusual behaviour EG Lady Gaga
- Treatment:
  - Treatment: a systematic procedure designed to change abnormal behaviour, also called therapy.
  - Features of therapy:
    - Suffer seeks relief from healer
    - Socially accepted healer whose expertise is socially accepted
    - Series of contacts between the healer and sufferer.
  - Therapists are not in agreement of what constitutes as a successful outcome.
  - Different views to abnormality and treatment
    - Therapy is a procedure that helps cure illness
    - Therapists are teachers of functional behaviour and thought.
- Past treatment of abnormality
  - Ancient times
    - Abnormal behaviour was the work of evil spirits
    - Trephination (object was used to cut a circular hole in skull) was used to release evil spirits (debatable)
    - Exorcism
  - Greek and Roman views
    - Imbalance of humours (yellow bile, black bile, phlegm and blood)

- Focus on internal causes for abnormal behaviour

- Middle ages
  - Demonology
    - Religious beliefs were superstitious
    - Deviant behaviour was seen as Satan's influence
    - Mass madness: large numbers of people shared delusions and hallucinations. EG lycanthropy (werewolves)
- Renaissance
  - First beliefs that the mind was as susceptible to illness as the body
  - Religious shrines were devoted to the humane treatment of people with a mental disorder
  - First community health programs were developed in Belgium
  - Asylums were created as there was not enough housing and hospitals for the need
    - Many became prison like, treated in terrible conditions
- 19th Century
  - Treatment began to improve (moral treatment)
    - Perceived as productive human beings whose mental functioning had broken down under stress
  - By 1850's treatment began to decline again
    - Money and staff shortages
    - Overcrowding
    - Recovery rates declined
    - Not all people were treated with moral treatment, some needed extra help
    - Emerging prejudice against people with mental disorders- shipped away to hospitals, public seen them as strange and dangerous
- 20th Century
  - 2 opposing perspectives
    - Somatogenic perspective
      - Abnormal functioning has physical causes
      - EG humours in Greek and Roman times
      - New biological discoveries EG certain diseases led to poor mental functioning
      - Treatments included: tooth pulling, lobotomy and sterilisation.
    - Psychogenic perspective
      - Main cause of abnormal functioning is psychological
      - Hypnotism demonstrated the potential of the psychogenic perspective
      - Hypnotic suggestion could cause and cure physical dysfunction
      - Freud is a major figure in this perspective
        - Psychoanalyses
- Current trends

- Psychotropic medications: drugs that mainly effect the brain and reduce symptoms of mental dysfunctioning
- Private psychotherapy: an arrangement in which a person directly pays a therapist for counselling services.
- Outpatient treatments
- Psychological problem devoted programs such as suicide prevention centres, rehab for drugs, alcohol and eating disorders
- Prevention: interventions aimed at deterring mental disorders before they can develop
- Positive psychology: the study and enhancement of positive feelings, traits and abilities EG coping skills
- Multicultural psychology: examines the impact of culture, race, ethnicity and gender on behaviours and thoughts and focuses on influences such as origin, nature and treatment of abnormal behaviour.

- Leading theories today
  - Digital world provides easy access to gambling, social media/bulling, paedophiles etc.
  - Perspectives include: biological, cognitive, humanistic, sociocultural.
  - Cybertherapy: the use of computer technology to provide therapy.