

PSYC 1023 ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

Week 1

Lecture 1: What is “abnormal”?

Define, Assess, Research and Treat Psychopathology

Definition of Psychopathology

- The scientific study of mental disorders

Definition of clinical assessment

- The systematic evaluation of psychological, biological and social factors in a person with a possible mental disorder

Definition of Psychological Dysfunction

- A breakdown in cognitive, emotional and behavioural functioning

Definition of Abnormality

- Factors
 - Violation of social norms
 - Statistically (fall outside of range would be considered abnormal)
 - Distressing behaviours
 - Disability of ambitions

There are always exceptions (athletes fall out of norm)

- DSM-5
 - Significant difficulty in thinking, feeling or behaving
 - Maladaptive, distressing, disability
 - Violation of social norms

Week 1 Lecture 1 Readings

- How do psychologists define a psychological disorder?
 - Understanding Psychopathology
 - The scientific study of psychological disorders
 - What is a psychological disorder?
 - Psychological disorder is a psychological dysfunction within an individual associated with distress or impairment in functioning and a response that is not typical or culturally expected.
 - Psychological Dysfunction
 - Psychological dysfunction refers to a breakdown in cognitive, emotional, or behavioral functioning.
 - Distress or Impairment
 - Distress
 - Unpleasant feelings or emotions that impact your level of functioning
 - Impairment
 - Limits one or more major life activities
 - Atypical or not culturally accepted
 - An Accepted Definition
 - Behavioral, psycho- logical, or biological dysfunctions that are unexpected in their cultural context and associated with present distress and impairment in functioning, or increased risk of suffering, death, pain, or impairment.

PSYC 1023: Abnormal Psychology

- Deviating from the average” doesn’t work well as a definition for abnormal behavior.
- EXTENSION QUESTIONS:
 - What are some behaviours that may be considered “abnormal” by the above definitions but do not constitute a psychological disorder?
 - Masai tribes in East Africa kill goats all the time
 - Lady Gaga having blood across her clothes at a concert
 - Do the words “abnormal” and “pathological” necessary mean the same thing? Can you be one without being the other? Is abnormality an “either-or” construct, or is it better thought of as a continuum?
 - Knowing where to draw the line between normal and abnormal dysfunction is often dif cult. For this reason, these problems are often considered to be on a continuum or a dimension rather than to be categories that are either present or absent. This, too, is a reason why just having a dysfunction is not enough to meet the criteria for a psychological disorder.
- What is a scientist practitioner
 - Keep up with the latest scientific developments in their field and therefore use the most current diagnostic and treatment procedures
 - Evaluate their own assessments or treatment procedures to see whether they work. They are accountable not only to their patients but also to the government agencies and insurance companies that pay for the treatments
 - Might conduct research, often in clinics or hospitals, that produces new information about disorders or their treatment

Week 1 Lecture 2: DSM classification and assessment

American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders- 5th Edition (DSM-5)- updated periodically

- Advantages
 - Common language- Ensures terms have the same meaning worldwide
 - Same diagnosis
 - Recognises cultural differences- Affects the way we experience or express psychological dysfunction.
 - Evidence based treatment- Finds which treatment works best
 - Legal and administrative ramifications- Can someone get compensation?
 - Can be liberating- alleviate confusion
- Disadvantages
 - Could create stigma
 - Adopt diagnosis into sense of self and prevent their own recovery

Conceptualises disorders as

- Polythetic- A number of symptoms (need not sure every single symptom)
- Categorical- disorder is either present or absent

Mental Status Exam

- To determine if a psychological disorder might be present

Comorbidity: The occurrence of one or more disorders in the same person (symptoms shared by different disorders)

Nosology: the branch of medical science dealing with the classification of diseases.

How do we measure variables in a clinical setting

- Operational definition: how is variable designed and measured

Depression (5 or more symptoms for more than 2 months, endure for most of the day)

- Depressed mood (must include one of the two)
 - Anhedonia
 - Significant change in appetite or weight
 - Insomnia or hypersomnia
 - Psychomotor agitation or retardation
 - Fatigue or loss of energy
 - Feelings of worthiness or excessive, inappropriate guilt
 - Diminished ability to think, concentrate or make decisions
 - Recurring thoughts of death, suicidal ideation or a specific plan for committing suicide or a suicide attempt
 - Must not be due to medical condition or substance use
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- Show a bias to look at faces that are sad

How to differentiate from different disorders with similar symptoms

- Typical age of onset
- Prognosis
- Prevalence
 - How many people in the population as a whole have the disorder?
 - If sister has depression- you are 2-3 times more likely to develop a mood disorder