

# HPS308 Topic Summaries

## Contents

Topic 1: Classification, diagnosis and an integrative approach to psychopathology

Topic 2: Cross-cultural approaches to psychopathology

Topic 3: Schizophrenia & other psychotic disorders

Topic 4: Eating disorders

Topic 5: Anxiety disorders, Trauma and Stressor-Related, and Obsessive- Compulsive and Related Disorders

Topic 6: Mood disorders and suicide

Topic 7: Somatic symptom and dissociative disorders

Topic 8: Substance-related and addictive disorders

Topic 9: Personality disorder

Topic 10: Neurodevelopmental disorders

Topic 11: Mental health services: legal, ethical, and professional issues

# Topic 1: Classification, diagnosis and an integrative approach to psychopathology

## 1. Key elements in the current conceptualisation of **abnormality** or psychological disorder

Accepted **DSM-5 definition**:

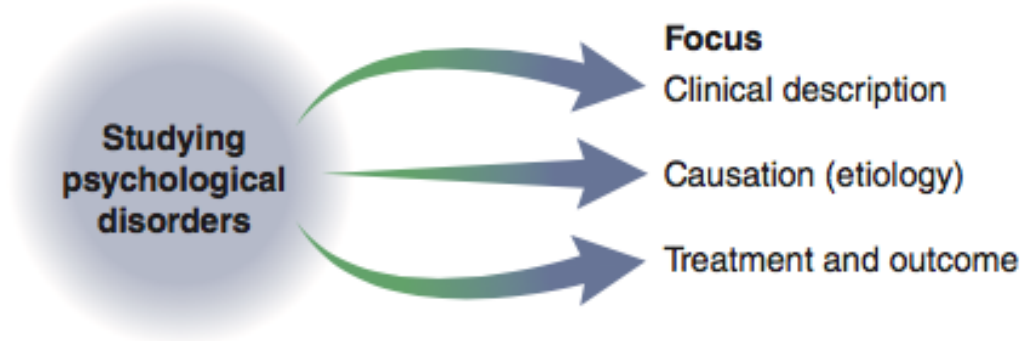
- **Dysfunctions** (behavioral, cognitive, emotional)
- **Distress** and/or **impairment** in social or occupational function
- **Atypical response** –Unexpected in cultural context

## 2. The **scientist-practitioner** approach to psychopathology;

Features of the **scientist practitioner** approach:

- **Consumers of the science**: keep up with the latest scientific developments and therefore use the most current diagnostic and treatment procedures.
- **Evaluate** their own assessments/treatment procedures to see whether they work. Accountable to patients, government agencies and insurance companies, therefore must demonstrate treatment efficacy.
- **Conduct research**, often in clinics or hospitals, that produces new information about disorders or their treatment.

## 3. The **three major categories** of focus underlying the **study** and **discussion** of **psychological disorders**



## 4. Limitations of **one-dimensional models** of psychopathology;

### One-Dimensional Models

- Views a single cause, operating in isolation
- A very linear causal model, not accounting for graded influences of interconnected variables
- Ignores critical information

### Multidimensional Models

- Systemic - any particular influence contributing to psychopathology cannot be considered out of context (part of a system)
- Accounts for many independent inputs that become interdependent
- Causes cannot be considered out of context

## 5. Genes and behaviour, genes and environment, and the nongenomic “inheritance” of behaviour

### The diathesis–Stress model

- Individuals inherit a susceptibility (diathesis) to developing a disorder, which, when the right kind of life event occurs, such as a certain type of stressor, the disorder is developed.

### The gene–environment correlation model

- Genetic influences increase the probability of engaging in certain behaviour which puts the person at higher risk for developing a disorder. For e.g., a genetic predisposition to seek out difficult relationships could lead to result in the person being at higher risk for suffering from depression.

### Epigenetics and the Nongenomic “inheritance” of Behavior

- Environmental factors can influence the expression of certain genes, which may, for example, off-set a genetic predisposition to developing a particular disorder.

## 6. Major neurotransmitter systems and their involvement in abnormal behaviour;

### Amino-acid Class

- Glutamate—excitatory
- GABA—inhibitory

### Monoamine Class

- Serotonin (5HT)
  - ✓ Widespread, complex circuits
  - ✓ Regulates behaviour, moods, thought processes –Low levels and vulnerabilities  
Implicated in several psychopathologies
- Norepinephrine
  - ✓ Stimulation of alpha- and beta-adrenergic receptors
  - ✓ Respiration, reactions, alarm response
  - ✓ Implicated in panic (‘surge of adrenaline)
- Dopamine
  - ✓ “Switch” function in brain circuits
  - ✓ Interacts with other neurotransmitters
  - ✓ Roles in motor control, motivation, arousal, cognition, and reward, as well as a number of basic lower-level functions including lactation, sexual gratification, and nausea.
  - ✓ Implicated in schizophrenia
  - ✓ Implicated Parkinson’s disease
  - ✓ Implicated in ADHD

## 7. The influence of psychosocial factors on brain structure and function;

- Psychosocial factors influence **neurotransmitter activity** (different effects for different circumstances) and **levels**.
- **structure of neurons** themselves, including the **number of receptors** on a cell, can be changed by learning and experience during development which have implications on future susceptibility to anxiety and mood disorders.

## 8. Psychological influences on abnormal behaviour: theories of **conditioning, learned helplessness, social learning, and prepared learning**

- **Conditioning** that occurs by way of associating two temporally proximal stimuli with one another enables us to develop working ideas about the world.

- **Learned Helplessness** occurs when an organism encounters conditions over which it has no control. If an animal learns their behavior has no effect on their environment, e.g., sometimes they get shocked and sometimes they don't, no matter what they do, they give up attempting to cope and seem to develop the animal equivalent of depression. Human parallels are perceived in overwhelming experiences of stress which they perceive as beyond their control.
- **Social learning** also known as modelling and observational learning – the processes by which we learn by observing others which involves a range of cognitive processes which are important in psychopathology.
- **Prepared learning** posits that we have a predisposition to learn about certain objects/situations due to our evolutionary development for its survival promoting utility, e.g., more readily fear snakes/spiders than trees/plants.
- **Emotions** have a direct and dramatic impact on our functioning and play a central role in many mental disorders. Mood, a persistent period of emotionality, is often evident in psychological disorders.

## 9. The social and interpersonal factors in psychopathology.

### Social Effects on Health and Behaviour

- Frequency and quality are critical
- Low social contact associated with higher mortality and higher psychopathology, lower life expectancy
- Social connectedness key to overall psychological health
- Suggested to be mediated by sense of meaning, i.e., purpose to overcome difficult circumstances.

### Social Stigma

- Psychological disorders continue to carry a substantial stigma.

## 10. define idiographic, nomothetic, taxonomy, nosology, and nomenclature;

- **Idiographic strategy**: Close and detailed investigation of an individual emphasizing what makes that person unique such as individual's personality, cultural background, or circumstances.
- **Nomothetic**: Relating to the study or discovery of general scientific laws. nomothetic strategy involves the identification and examination of large groups of people with the same disorder to note similarities and develop general laws
- **Taxonomy**: the classification of entities for scientific purposes, such as insects, rocks, or—if the subject is psychology—behaviors.
- **Nosology**: a psychological or medical taxonomic system.
- **Nomenclature**: describes the names or labels of the disorders that make up the nosology (for example, anxiety or mood disorders)

## 11. define what is meant by classical categorical, prototypical and dimensional classification approaches;

- **Classification**: refers to any effort to construct groups or categories and to assign objects or people to the categories on the basis of their shared attributes or relations.
- **Categorical approach to classification**: classify disorders into distinct categories that have unique features not exhibited in other disorders. The **classical categorical** approach sought to identify a single set of causative factors per disorder. The classical categorical approach is clearly inappropriate to the complexity of psychological disorders.
- **Dimensional classification approach**: based on a quantified measure of the variety of cognitions, moods, and behaviors with which the patient presents and quantify them on a scale.

**Prototypical approach to classification:** identifies certain essential characteristics of an entity so that you (and others) can classify it, but it also allows certain nonessential variations that do not necessarily change the classification. The approach of the DSM-5.

**12. Issues relating to reliability and validity as they apply to classification systems**

- **Reliability:** the ability of a classification system to yield consistent diagnoses across the clinicians using it.
- **Validity:** whether the classification system measures what it is designed to measure.
- **Construct validity** → relates to the degree to which the symptoms chosen as criteria for the diagnostic category are consistently associated together. **Predictive validity** → the ability of the diagnosis to provide predictive insight into the course of the disorder and effects of treatment. **Content validity** → the degree to which a classification criteria actually identifies the intended disorder as opposed to another which shares some features.

**13. importance of considering social and cultural factors in the DSM-5;**

- Cultural considerations are made in the DSM-5 in making a diagnosis and planning treatment. There is no research support yet for the use of these cultural formulation guidelines.

**14. DSM approach, including advances from previous editions (DSM-III through to DSM-5)**

- Atheoretical, focuses purely on presenting symptomology
- Comprehensive
- Clear inclusion and exclusion criteria
- Broad categorization headings
- Empirically grounded
- Prototypic classification approach