

Brief

Overview of Disorders

Defining abnormal behavior—statistically rare, violates cultural norms, personally interferes with day-to-day living, and legally may cause a person to be unable to know right from wrong (insanity).

Causes of abnormal behavior by psychological perspective:

- Psychoanalytic: unresolved internal conflict in the unconscious mind.
- Behavioral: maladaptive behaviors learned from inappropriate rewards and punishment.
- Humanistic: conditions of worth imposed by society, which cause lowered self-concept.
- Cognitive: irrational and faulty thinking.
- Biological: neurochemical and/or hormonal imbalances, genetic predispositions, and structural damage to brain parts, and/or faulty processing of information by the brain.

Brief descriptions of common psychological problems:

- **Anxiety**—a feeling of impending doom or disaster from a specific or unknown source that is characterized by mood symptoms of tension agitation, and apprehension; bodily symptoms of sweating, muscular tension, and increased heart rate and blood pressure; as well as cognitive symptoms of worry, rumination, and distractibility. Anxiety disorders include:

Generalized anxiety disorder—characterized by persistent, pervasive feelings of doom for at least six months not associated with a particular object or situation.

Panic disorder—unpredictable attacks of acute anxiety accompanied by high levels of physiological arousal that last from a few seconds to a few hours.

Phobia—irrational fear of specific objects or situations, such as animals or enclosed spaces.

- Obsessive-compulsive and related disorders include:

Obsessive-compulsive disorder—recurrent, unwanted thoughts or ideas or compelling urges (**obsessions**) to engage in repetitive, ritual-like behavior (**compulsions**).

Hoarding—persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions due to a perceived need to save the items and distress parting with them.

Stress/Trauma

- **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**—feelings of social withdrawal accompanied by atypically low levels of emotion caused by prolonged exposure to a stressor, such as a catastrophe; an individual may experience flashbacks and nightmares.

Somatic

- Somatic symptom and related disorders include:

Somatic symptom disorder—physical symptoms include pain, high anxiety about disease.

Illness anxiety disorder—preoccupation with mild or nonexistent symptoms such as nausea with high anxiety.

Conversion disorder—actual loss of bodily function, such as blindness, paralysis, or numbness, due to excessive anxiety with no physiological cause.

Dissociative

- **Dissociation**—experience of two or more streams of consciousness cut off from each other. Dissociative disorders involve loss of memory or identity. The Freudian explanation is hurtful situations too painful for the individual to deal with are repressed into the unconscious mind. Dissociative disorders include:

Dissociative amnesia—characterized by inability to remember repressed events or personal information. Dissociative fugue—“traveling amnesiac disorder” characterized by moving away and assuming a new identity, with amnesia for the previous identity.

Dissociative identity disorder (formerly known as multiple personality disorder)—rare disorder in which two or more distinct personalities exist within the same person.

Mood

Depressive

Bipolar

Schizophrenia

Personality

ADHD / Autism

• **Depressive disorders**—affective disorders characterized by extremely sad mood that affects normal perception, thought, and behavior. Depressive disorders include:

Major depressive disorder (single and recurrent episodes)—involves persistent and severe feelings of sadness and worthlessness accompanied by changes in appetite, sleeping, and behavior.

Premenstrual dysphoric disorder—recurs most months in the days preceding menstruation with symptoms such as the following: mood swings or increased sensitivity to rejection, marked irritability or anger, depressed mood, anxiety or tension, decreased interest in usual activities, perceived difficulty concentrating, lack of energy, change in appetite or food cravings, change in sleep pattern, sense of being out of control, and breast tenderness, joint or muscle pain, sensation of “bloating” or weight gain.

• **Bipolar disorder** (in a category of bipolar and related disorders)—characterized by extreme mood swings from unusual excitement (mania) to serious depression. Often treated with lithium.

Schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders characterized by psychosis includes schizophrenia and catatonia:

Schizophrenia—a serious mental disorder (psychosis) characterized by thought disturbances, hallucinations, anxiety, emotional withdrawal, and delusions.

Psychosis—disorder characterized by an apparent break with reality.

Delusion—fixed belief (such as being plotted against, being extraordinarily important, or being controlled by others) that is maintained even when compelling evidence to the contrary is presented.

Hallucination—false sensory perception such as hearing voices or seeing images that are not present.

Catatonia—characterized by bizarre or frenzied movements, or lack of movement, such as immobile stupor and *waxy flexibility*; and unresponsive behavioral interactions with others (mutism), negativism, meaningless repetition of words or sounds (echolalia) and/or withdrawal.

• **Personality disorders**—characterized by longstanding maladaptive thought and behavior patterns that are troublesome to others, harmful, or illegal. Personality disorders are grouped into three clusters: odd/eccentric (including paranoid, schizoid, schizotypal), dramatic/emotionally problematic (including histrionic, narcissistic, borderline, and antisocial), and chronic fearfulness/avoidant (including avoidant, dependent, and obsessive-compulsive).

• **Neurodevelopmental disorders** involve disturbances in learning, language, and motor or social skills showing up in infancy, childhood, or adolescence. Neurodevelopmental disorders include intellectual disability, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and autism spectrum disorder.

Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)—characterized by the inability to focus attention, distractibility, and impulsivity.

Autism spectrum disorder—characterized by impaired social interaction, poor communication, and limited activities and interests.