

## Abnormal Psychology

- Abnormal Psychology
  - refers to the subject area concerned with the nature, causes, and development of abnormal behavior, thoughts, and feelings.
  - “Abnormal” is relative; it varies across time, place, and culture.

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## The Study of Abnormal Behavior

What is Abnormal?  
What do you think?

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## Myths and Misconceptions About Abnormal Behavior

- No Single Definition of Psychological Abnormality
- No Single Definition of Psychological Normality

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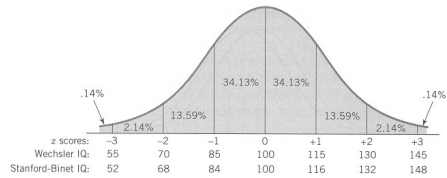
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## Identifying Abnormal Behavior: Basic Standards

- **Statistical Infrequency:** Behavior is abnormal if it is rare




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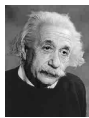
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## Identifying Abnormal Behavior: Basic Standards

- **Statistical Infrequency**
  - Paranoia, hallucinations, clinical depression
  - But:




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## Identifying Abnormal Behavior: Basic Standards

- **Psychological Dysfunction**
  - Breakdown in cognitive, emotional, or behavioral functioning
    - Paranoia (cognitive)
    - Can't keep a job (behavioral/social).
    - Unprompted mood swings (Emotional)
    - Hard to define "dysfunction"




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## Identifying Abnormal Behavior: Basic Standards

### • Personal Distress

- Suicidal thoughts
- Upset at own behavior (excessive elation, cleanliness)
- But: sometimes distress is expected and normal - loss of a loved one.
- Charles Manson - no remorse; MR, TV



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## Identifying Abnormal Behavior: Basic Standards

### • Maladaptive Behavior

- Inability to reach personal goals
- Interfering with social functioning
- Alcoholic argues with family, loses job, doesn't provide for family
- Sometimes maladaptive is good - Nazi Germany; Spouse abuse



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## Identifying Abnormal Behavior: Basic Standards

### • Deviation from an Ideal

- Failing to achieve a personal/cultural ideal
- Vague: Whose ideal?



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## Identifying Abnormal Behavior: Basic Standards

- **Medical Disorder**
  - Abnormality exists when there is a physical disease.
  - Implies “health” = “absence of disease”



WHO: “Health...is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity” (Zubin, 1961).

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## Identifying Abnormal Behavior: Basic Standards

- **Atypical or Not Culturally Expected**
  - Shouting at strangers, public nudity
  - Social reformers/protesters would be labeled as abnormal
  - Norms aren’t stable over time: Homosexuality



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## Identifying Abnormal Behavior: Basic Standards

- **Atypical or Not Culturally Expected Response**
  - **Cultural relativity**: Diversity makes it difficult to identify a violation
  - **Culture-bound** - Behaviors limited to a specific culture
    - Anorexia Nervosa - Western, upper middle class
    - Waiitiko - Possessed by spirit; depression and cannibalistic thoughts
    - Tajin kyofusho - Japan. Intense fear that body is offensive / embarrassing to others
  - **Culture-general** - Nervousness, insomnia:  
Found in all societies

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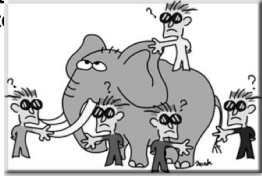
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## Conclusions

- All of the above definitions are incomplete



- We all have a definition in our heads, whether we can clearly state it or not.

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## Conclusions

- Scientifically, need to be as explicit and comprehensive as possible, acknowledging limitations.
- Definition in this course is multifaceted, taking into account many of the above standards...

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## Abnormal Behavior Defined

- A Psychological Dysfunction Associated With Distress or Impairment in Functioning That is not a Typical or Culturally Expected Response
- The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV)
  - DSM Contains Diagnostic Criteria
- Psychopathology is the Scientific Study of Psychological Disorders

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## The Science of Psychopathology

- **Mental Health Professionals**
  - The Ph.D.'s: Clinical and counseling psychologists
  - The Psy.D.'s: Clinical and counseling "Doctors of Psychology"
  - M.D.'s: Psychiatrists
  - M.S.W.'s: Psychiatric and non-psychiatric social workers
  - MN/MSN's: Psychiatric nurses
- **United by the Scientist-Practitioner Framework**

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## To Become a Psychologist

- -Ph.D. or Psy.D.
- -4-7 yrs graduate study (the range is probably more like 5-9 years).
- -1-year pre-doctoral internship in APA accredited hospital or mental health facility.
- At least 1 year of supervised post-doctoral experience for licensure (varies by state)

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## Difference between Ph.D. & Psy.D

- A Ph.D. is trained to:
  - conduct research, teach
  - assess & diagnose mental disorders
  - conduct therapy
- A Psy.D
  - limited to clinical practice.
  - Modeled after the M.D. degree.

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## Psychiatrist

- 4 yrs Medical school (M.D.)
- 4-5 yr residency in hospital
- \*\*\*Can prescribe medication for mental disorders-because of M.D. training.
  
- Recent development: Psychologists are gaining limited prescriptive authority in some states... e.g. Louisiana, New Mexico

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## History of Psychopathology

- Mental illness was thought to be the result of **supernatural forces** (angry Gods, possession by demons).
- Scholars, theologians, and philosophers believed a troubled mind was the result of displeased Gods or possession.



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## Demonology

- Abnormal behavior (hallucinations, delusions, paranoia) resulted from demon possession.



- **Treatment:** drive the evil spirits out of the body.
- -stone-age: trephination



- -exorcism rituals: prayers, vile brews, flogging, starvation, etc.



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## Mental illness: a biological problem?

- By 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., mental illness-- thought to be result of physical disease (e.g. Hippocrates and unbalanced humors).
- -The idea that deviant behavior occurs because of disease in the body is referred to as “**Somatogenesis.**”
  - Contrasted with “**Psychogenesis,**” which holds that deviant behavior occurs because of aberrant mental processes.

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## The Dark Ages

- With decline of Roman & Greek civilizations/ rise of Church as dominant power in Europe
- Demonology makes a come-back!!
- \*Treatment- exorcisms

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## Mental illness: witchcraft (1300s)

- Hallucinations & delusions--evidence of witchcraft.
- Most not mentally ill, but forced to “confess” symptoms
- **Treatment:** beatings/death by hanging or burning.



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## Mentally ill housed in asylums (1500s+)

- After crusades, mentally ill were confined to asylums.
- Asylums (originally leprosariums), were converted after crusades when leprosy was on a decline.
- Most **famous**: St. Mary's of Bethlehem in London (founded in 1243). Called "Bedlam."
- Deplorable conditions- little food, little patient care, blood letting practices, & spread of diseases.

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## Asylums became "attraction."

- Bedlam- became hot tourist spot, where London's mentally ill were placed on display for all to see.
- Treatment- patients were drained of blood & purposely "frightened."



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## Moral Treatment (1790s +)

- Philippe Pinel – humane treatment of mentally ill in asylums.
- Patients formerly chained & shackled were released & free to roam the buildings.

Treatment: cannabis, opium, alcohol.



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**Current conceptualizations in modern psychiatry**

Mental illness– Most are a combination of biological, psychological, and sociological causes

Treatment: somatic therapy (drugs, ECT) or psychotherapy

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