

2017-01-30

## What is a “Psychological Disorder”?

- There are *four* characteristics
  - **Atypical** = the behavior isn’t exhibited by most people
  - **Disturbing** = the behavior evokes a disturbed response from those who observe it
  - **Maladaptive** = the behavior is counter-productive to one’s welfare
  - **Unjustifiable** = the behavior cannot be reasonably pinned on a simple cause

## The Medical Model

- **Medical Model** = a theory of mental illness that emphasizes finding the causes for certain illnesses
  - Treatment is often rather hit-and-miss
    - \* Lots of different types of treatment
      - Psychoanalysis
      - Therapy
      - Medication
      - Electro-shock therapy
- **Philippe Pinel** = a french person that wrote about how madness was a response to severe stress rather than a demonic ailment
- **Thomas Szasz** = a person who wrote that mental illness is a *social* construct rather than a medical phenomenon
  - Is used to ignore problematic patterns of thought or behavior
- **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders(DSM-V)**  
= widely considered the central authority on what qualifies as a mental illness and how it should be diagnosed

## Prevalence

- About half of adults experience symptoms of a mental illness at one point in their life
- About 80% of those who experienced symptoms in the last year did not seek treatment
  - Generally, men are less likely to seek treatment because of the social stigma
- Though it is quite common, mental illness is not commonly severe enough to completely debilitate someone

- Women are more likely to experience depression and anxiety
- Men are more likely to abuse substances and experience antisocial personality disorder

### Neurotic vs Psychotic

- **Neurotic** = a term that describes mental illness that causes suffering to people but doesn't impair their ability to think rationally
- **Psychotic** = a term that describes mental illness that distorts people's perceptions of reality or capacity for rational thinking

### Classifying Mental Illness

- Labels make us feel like those afflicted aren't *human*
  - *e.g.* Suicide hotline will dispatch police if they believe you may harm yourself
    - \* The autonomy of the depressed person is pretty much ignored
- **David Rosenhan** = ran an experiment where people admitted themselves to a psychiatric hospital and pretended to hear voices
  - All of them were falsely diagnosed with Schizophrenia

### Anxiety Disorders

- **Anxiety Disorders** = a mental illness that is associated with distress, persistent feelings of anxiety or harmful behaviors that the person performs to reduce feelings of anxiety
  - People with OCD repeat certain behavioral patterns in order to cope with the feelings on anxiety
  - **Generalized Anxiety Disorder(GAD)** = a catch-all illness that is associated with the following
    - \* Tense
    - \* Apprehensive
    - \* Abnormally active nervous system