

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

- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder(GAD)** = a catch-all illness that is associated with the following
  - Tense
  - Apprehensive
  - Abnormally active nervous system
  - More or less anxious about *everything*
  - Headaches
  - Stomach pains
  - Irritable

2017-01-31

### Panic Disorder

- **Panic disorder** = a condition characterized by relatively short periods of extreme dread and terror
  - Is often accompanied by
    - \* Chest pain
    - \* Sense of choking
    - \* Shortness of breath

### Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder(PTSD)** = an anxiety disorder that is caused by a traumatic experience
  - Often associated with
    - \* Flashbacks
    - \* Feelings of fear
    - \* Feelings of horror
    - \* Feelings of helplessness
    - \* Social withdrawal
    - \* Insomnia

### Why Do Anxiety Disorders Exist?

- **Learning perspective** = anxiety disorders are “learned” from the surroundings as one grows up
  - Explains how phobias can be passed on from parent to child without any genetic component
  - **Fear conditioning** = anxiety disorders arise from associations between harmful stimuli and harmless stimuli
  - **Stimulus generalization** = a phobia developed from conditioning can become broader than the stimuli that first caused it
    - \* *e.g.* a fear of a white rat can generalize into fear of white, fluffy things
  - **Reinforcement** = an effect of strengthening the association between a harmful stimulus and a harmless one by exerting effort to avoid the causing stimulus
- **Biological perspective** = anxiety disorders can be caused by genetic or physiological factors

- **Genetic** factors can predispose people to certain phobias
    - \* Perhaps natural selection is behind some of the most common phobias
  - **Physiology** = anxious symptoms actually manifest in physiological ways
    - \* Increased heart rate
    - \* Brain activity
    - \* Stress hormones
- 

2017-02-02

### Somatoform Disorders

- **Somatoform disorder** = a class of psychological disorders where sensations and symptoms have no discernible cause
  - **Conversion disorder** = a rare type of somatoform disorder with very specific genuine physical symptoms
  - **Hypochondriasis** = a somatoform disorder where normal sensations are misperceived as symptoms of a disease or illness
  - **Munchausens** = kind of a mix between a somatoform disorder and a personality disorder
    - \* Victims purposely inflict injuries on themselves for attention
    - \* **Munchausens by Proxy** = injuries are consciously inflicted on others for the attention

### Mood Disorder

- **Mood disorder** = a psychological disorder characterized by emotional extremes

### Major Depressive Disorder

- **Major depressive disorder** = a mood disorder characterized by phases of depressed moods for two or more weeks that isn't caused by any particular event
  - Diagnosis requirements
    - \* Persistent, durable symptoms over time
    - \* Does not improve for a period of two weeks

- \* **Global negativity** = a tendency to view stimuli in a negative way
- \* Low self-esteem
- What does it affect?
  - \* **Emotional**
    - Sadness
    - Hopelessness
    - Guilt
    - Ignoring friends and family
  - \* **Behavioral**
    - Dispondent facial expression
    - Disinterest in hobbies
    - Withdrawal from social situations
  - \* **Cognitive**
    - Reduced concentration
    - Inability to concentrate
    - Persistent suicidal thoughts
  - \* **Physical**
    - Changes in appetite
    - Change in sleep patterns
    - Low energy

### Dysthymic Disorder

- **Dysthymic disorder** = a psychological condition characterized by depressed moods that aren't extreme enough to qualify as major depressive disorder
  - Thought to be related to brain chemistry
    - \* Often treated with drugs
  - Can be caused by trauma
  - Doesn't increase in magnitude dramatically with time like major depressive disorder does

### Seasonal Affective Disorder

- **Seasonal affective disorder** = a psychological condition characterized by cyclical patterns of severe depression and normal mood
  - Cycles tend to align with seasons
    - \* As such, it's thought to be related to sunlight exposure
      - One of the most promising therapies is **light-exposure therapy**

- Unique symptoms
  - \* Increased hunger
  - \* Weight gain
  - \* Excess sleep
  - \* Depressive moods in evening

## Bipolar Disorder

- **Bipolar disorder** = a psychological disorder associated with alternating states of **mania** or **depression**
    - Used to be called **manic-depressive disorder**
    - **Mania** = an elated state characterized by hyperactivity and irrational optimism
    - **Unipolar** = a term that describes when one state dominates the other
    - Lithium carbonate is the most commonly used drug to treat bipolar
    - Rates of bipolar disorder don't differ substantially between sexes
    - Typically, the early symptoms appear at ages 15-25
- 

2017-02-06

## Explaining Mood Disorders

- There are two main causes for mood disorders
  - Neurotransmitter unbalance
    - \* Low levels of these neurotransmitters are thought to be related
      - Dopamine
      - Norepinephrine
      - Serotonin
  - Genetics
- Certain factors can exasperbate existing mood disorders
  - Grief following the death of a loved one
  - Unemployment
  - Loss of health
  - Financial troubles

## Cognitive Differences in Depressed People

- **A.T. Beck** = a researcher that studied this issue
  - He discovered that depressed people have overly negative views of
    - \* Themselves
    - \* Their world
    - \* Their future
  - Depressed people generally perceive situations as *more* negative
- **Hopelessness theory** = a model of explaining depression that emphasizes specific patterns of behavior or cognition
  - “Learned helplessness” = a term that describes how repeated exposure to negative stimuli decrease the likelihood that a person will look for ways to help their suffering

## Dissociative Disorders

- **Dissociative disorder** = a psychological disorder associated with a separation between conscious awareness and prior identity
- Symptoms typically start early
  - Often the result of abuse of trauma early on
  - Females are more prone to the disorder
- **Dissociative Identity Disorder** = a dissociative disorder wherein a person exhibits multiple distinct personalities that alternate between one another
  - The subject is still debated in psychiatry and psychology
  - Used to be caused “multiple personality disorder”
- **Dissociative amnesia** = a symptom of some dissociative disorders that involves memory loss
  - Also called “psychogenic amnesia”
  - Is often caused by trauma
  - **Global amnesia** = a complete loss of identity
- **Dissociative fugue state** = a state of consciousness characterized by global amnesia with a replaced identity
  - Also called “psychogenic fugue”
  - Is subject to much debate
    - \* Are the subjects just pretending to avoid responsibility?

## Schizophrenia

- **Schizophrenia** = a psychological disorder involved with many different kinds of symptoms
    - Translated as “split mind”
    - Symptoms
      - \* Disorganized or delusional thinking
      - \* Incorrect perceptions
      - \* Mismatched emotions or actions
      - \* Obstructed speech
        - **Word salad** = rapid alternation between sensible speech and nonsense
        - **Clanging** = unintentional rhyming
    - No disparity between sexes
      - \* Often, symptoms appear during adolescence
- 

2017-02-13

### Three Types of Schizophrenic Symptoms

1. **Positive symptoms** = an element of cognition that is *added* to the experience of a schizophrenic
  - **Hallucinations** = false perceptions
    - Can help reinforce **delusions**
    - Schizophrenics very often hear *voices*
      - \* Visual hallucinations are less pervasive
  - **Delusions** = false beliefs, especially of *persecution* or *grandeur*
    - **Delusions of persecution** = the belief that there are people that want to harm you
    - **Delusions of grandeur** = an overinflated ego
    - **Delusions of being controlled** = the belief that cognition itself is compromised by some external entity
2. **Negative symptoms** = an element of cognition that is *removed* from the experience of a schizophrenic
  - Poverty of speech = an inability to speak
  - Flat affect = a lack of emotional expression
3. **Disorganized symptoms** = an element of cognition that involves a perversion of an existing behavior or thought process



- **Erratic speech** = speech patterns that are irrational
  - **Word salad** = a seemingly random jumble of words that has intention but doesn't make sense
  - **Over-inclusion** = coherent thoughts that jump seamlessly from one disparate idea to another
    - \* Not like **word salad**, because each individual thought is actual coherent
  - **Paralogic** = faulty logic that reaches absurd conclusions but *feels* correct to the schizophrenic
  - **Clang associations** = unintentional rhyming while speaking
- **Disorganized behavior** = behavioral patterns that are irrational
  - Inadequate emotional expression
    - \* *e.g.* Laughing during a funeral
    - \* Often times, emotions are actually *reversed*, so sad things evoke a happy response
  - **Catatonic behavior** = a state of complete unresponsiveness
- In addition to these classifications, there are some other terms that used to describe symptoms of schizophrenia
  - **Chronic/Process** = a term that describes a pattern where symptoms emerge slowly and increase in magnitude over time
    - \* Generally, recovery from this kind of schizophrenia is unlikely
  - **Acute/Reactive** = a term that describes a pattern where symptoms emerge quickly and rise in magnitude very quickly
    - \* Generally, recovery from this kind of schizophrenia is much more likely

## Five Types of Schizophrenia

### 1. Paranoid schizophrenia

- Characterized by obsession with delusions and hallucinations, often with intense paranoia or an inflated ego

### 2. Disorganized schizophrenia

- Characterized by the disorganized symptoms
  - *e.g.*
    - \* Word salad
    - \* Flat affect

### 3. Catatonic schizophrenia

- Characterized by a *catatonic* state, extreme negativity, or mimicking other's actions

#### 4. Undifferentiated schizophrenia

- Kind of a catch-all term for schizophrenia that cannot be otherwise classified

#### 5. Residual schizophrenia

- Characterized by withdrawal following the cessation of hallucinations and delusions

### The Dopamine Theory

- A lot of scientists believe that an excess of dopamine can cause schizophrenia
    - As a result, many drugs that target schizophrenia act on reducing the activity of dopamine
    - Dopamine isn't the *sole* cause; other neurotransmitters seem to be related
- 

2017-02-14

### Schizophrenia risk: Genetics, Environment, Biology, and Culture

- Scientists believe there is a genetic factor to developing schizophrenia
  - People with no schizophrenic siblings have a 1% chance of developing symptoms
  - People with one schizophrenic sibling have a 10% chance of developing symptoms
  - People with an identical twin that is schizophrenic have a 50% chance of developing symptoms
    - \* Similarly, if *both* parents are schizophrenic, the child has a 50% chance of developing symptoms
- Scientists also believe there are some environmental factors that increase the risk of schizophrenia
  - Complications during birth
    - \* *e.g.* Oxygen deprivation
  - Viral infection during pregnancy
- Scientists also believe there are biological factors that indicate a high risk of schizophrenia
  - An excess or deficit of neurotransmitter

- **Dopamine theory**
  - Abnormal brain structure
    - \* Enlarged cerebral ventricles
    - \* Reduced tissue surrounding the cerebral ventricles
  - Abnormal brain activity
    - \* Reduced activity in frontal lobe
  - There appears to be *no* substantial difference between cultures
    - Industrialized nations have higher incidence and longer recovery times
      - \* That is thought to be related to stress level
    - Developing nations tend to treat it like a physical illness
- 

2017-02-22

## Treatment of Psychological Disorders

### Trephining

- **Trephining** = the act of deliberately creating a hole in the skull
  - Interestingly, this can be a treatment for a physical malady with the brain
    - \* *e.g.*
      - Fluid buildup
      - Hematoma
- Has been used since ancient times

### Therapy

- **Psychotherapy** = a method of treatment that involves an interaction between a trained therapist and a person suffering from a psychological disorder
  - So, psychotherapy is basically just any type of therapy for mental illness
    - \* It is not exclusively psychoanalysis; can be cognitive, behavioral, etc
  - Is often characterized by
    - \* Heavy emotional weight

- \* Complete honesty and confidentiality
- **Eclectic Approach** = the tactic of applying different therapy methods depending on a person-by-person basis
  - \* Like someone who uses cognitive psychology, biomedical tactics, and psychoanalysis depending on the circumstances

## Psychoanalysis

- **Psychoanalysis** = a method of psychotherapy developed by Sigmund Freud that analyses how repressed urges or impulses affect emotions and behaviors
  - Has a theoretical basis in his model of personality
  - Is seldom practiced in its original form today
    - \* Partially because it takes a much longer time to see results
- The essential aim is to surface unconscious motivations and desires
  - Freud believes that conflicts among the **id**, **ego**, and **superego** can cause anxiety
    - \* Bringing these conflicts to the conscious awareness can permit the patient to resolve the underlying cause of their problems
- According to Freud, *anxiety* is the chief causes for psychological disorders
  - Anxiety is thought to be created when sexual or aggressive impulses are forcefully repressed
  - Guilt is when those impulses are partially but incompletely expressed
- Modern psychoanalytic techniques are often called “psychodynamic therapy” or “insight therapy”
- **Displacement** = the act of directing impulses towards a less threatening or intimidating entity
- **Projection** = the act of justifying one’s conflicts by accusing others of having the same behaviors or conflicts
  - *e.g.* If you feel anxious or guilty about a behavior, you might accuse others of the same behavior in order to make yourself feel better
  - Is often a defense mechanism
- **Resistance** = a kind off barrier that barrs the conscious mind from dealing with certain subjects
  - Thought to be an indication of repressed impulses
- **Transference** = a directing of emotional content or conflicts onto the therapist
- **Interpretation** = the collaborative association of behavioral or cognitive patterns with symbolic meaning

## Humanistic Therapy

- **Humanistic Therapy** = a model of psychotherapy that emphasizes the fundamentally good nature of humans and the potential for **self-actualization**
    - **Self-actualization** = the state of fulfilling one's potential or resolving an ultimate question
  - Is often called **Client-centered therapy**
    - **Client-centered therapy** = a method developed by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow
      - \* Characterized by
        - Active listening
        - Genuine interest
        - Empathy
        - Total acceptance
      - \* Focuses on facilitating personal growth
    - This is because the therapy is more directed by the patient than the therapist
      - \* The patient can stop at any time, and the patient decides what to talk about
    - The relationship is more co-equal than in other models of psychotherapy
- 

2017-02-23

## Gestalt Therapy

- **Gestalt therapy** = a methodology of psychotherapy that attempts to combine psychoanalysis and humanistic methods
  - Developed by Fritz Perls
    - \* Thought that humanistic psychology didn't consider role of unconscious at all - Essential goal is to bring understanding to people's moment-to-moment emotions and motivations
    - \* Is sometimes called the "being state"
    - \* Characterized by perfect authenticity and perception of one's motivations and desires

## Behavior Therapy

- **Behavior therapy** = a methodology of psychotherapy that emphasizes how mechanisms of conditioning can be used to reprogram behavior and thoughts
- **Counter-conditioning** =
  - **Operant conditioning** = the technique of reinforcing behaviors through punishments and rewards
  - **Classical conditioning** = the technique of associating a two stimuli together to change behavior
    - \* *e.g.* A baby that observes a rat and hears a loud noise enough times will cry just when they see the rat
    - \* **Aversive conditioning** = using classical conditioning to reach a positive result
- Essential theory is that *all* behavior is learned
  - And, as a result, behaviors can be re-learned to something better
- Contrasts with both psychoanalysis and humanistic psychotherapy in that it *doesn't* focus on the causes of negative emotions
  - For example, the *cause* of your compulsive behaviors may be an abusive parent
    - \* But a behavioral therapist would simply retrain you to do a different behavior
- Phobia management techniques
  - **Exposure therapy** = a technique of behavioral therapy that emphasizes recurrent exposure to negative stimuli to desensitize
    - \* **Immersion** = recreating the negative stimuli in as much sensory detail as possible
      - Also called **flooding**
  - **Systematic desensitization** = a more gradual approach with the same mechanics as **exposure therapy**
    - \* The process of desensitizing yourself is approached as several steps
      - *first, look at a spider, then let it crawl on your hand, etc*
    - \* Process steps
      1. Progressive relaxation
      2. Organize a heirarchy of increasingly anxiety-inducing experience
      3. Progress through each element in the heirarchy
- **Token economy** = a method of operant conditioning that rewards people with an arbitrary currency

- Used to a great extent in all kinds of institutions
    - \* Schools, prisons, etc
- 

**2017-02-24**

### **Cognitive Therapy**

- **Cognitive therapy** = a methodology of psychotherapy that emphasizes the role thought patterns play in emotional responses
    - The essential role is to *correct* maladaptive thought patterns
  - Albert Ellis
    - **Rational-emotive therapy** = a sub-model of cognitive therapy that asserts strong emotions occur from irrational ideas
      - \* Thus, pressing for justification can make the patient realize that their emotions do not make sense
      - \* ABC Model
        - Activating event
        - Beliefs
        - Consequences
      - \* The elimination of irrational beliefs will resolve emotional turmoil
  - Aaron Beck
    - Believed that **negative cognitive bias** can result in distorted perceptions that affect behavior and mental health
      - \* **Negative cognitive bias** = the brain's propensity to fixate on negative things
    - By challenging that bias, one can prevent a downward spiral of negativity
- 

**2017-03-01**

### **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy**

- **Cognitive behavioral therapy** = a combination of cognitive therapy and behavioral therapy
  - Uses conditioning and correcting irrational beliefs to improve mental health

## System Therapy

- **System therapy** = a method of psychotherapy that emphasizes treating many individuals as one
  - Emphasizes the role that relationships affect emotional wellbeing
- Focuses on improving communication and building positive relationships
  - *e.g.*
    - \* Family therapy
    - \* Alcoholism group therapy
    - \* Couple therapy

## Incidence of Mental Illness

- Most people do not seek treatment
  - Mostly due to the social stigma
- Some report spontaneous remission
  - Usually caused by *something*, may be unknown to the patient
- Meta-analyses show that psychotherapy is consistently more effective than no treatment