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Understanding Abnormal Psychology\*\*

#### What is Abnormal Psychology?

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), abnormal psychology is "the study of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that deviate significantly from societal norms and may cause distress or impairment." This field examines the causes, symptoms, and treatment of mental disorders.

#### **Theories of Abnormality**

Various theories attempt to explain the nature and causes of abnormality, including:

- **Biological theories:** Focus on physiological and genetic factors that contribute to mental disorders.
- **Psychodynamic theories:** Emphasize the influence of unconscious conflicts and early childhood experiences on behavior.
- Behavioral theories: Propose that abnormal behavior is learned through operant conditioning.
- Cognitive theories: Examine how faulty thinking patterns contribute to mental health problems.

#### **Abnormal Psychology Today**

The field of abnormal psychology has evolved over time and is now commonly referred to as **clinical psychology**. This shift reflects the focus on the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental disorders.

## **Citing Abnormal Psychology Resources**

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#### Why Study Abnormal Psychology?

Studying abnormal psychology provides:

- Insights into mental health conditions and their impact.
- Knowledge of diagnostic criteria and treatment options.
- A foundation for understanding and reducing mental health stigma.
- The ability to provide informed mental health support to individuals in need.

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