

Abnormal psychology study guide

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Abnormal Psychology: Key Elements and Perspectives**

Study of Abnormal Psychology

Abnormal psychology is the scientific study of unusual and maladaptive mental, emotional, and behavioral patterns that deviate significantly from societal norms and cause distress or impairment for individuals.

Goals of Studying Abnormal Psychology

The primary goals of studying abnormal psychology include:

- Understanding the causes and mechanisms of mental disorders
- Developing effective diagnostic and treatment methods
- Reducing stigma and increasing support for individuals with mental illness

Elements of Abnormal Psychology

Abnormal behavior can be characterized by four key elements:

- **Significant deviation from social norms:** Behaviors that are highly unusual or socially unacceptable.
- **Personal distress:** Symptoms that cause psychological or emotional suffering for the individual.
- **Functional impairment:** Behaviors that significantly interfere with daily functioning.
- **Dangerousness:** Behaviors that pose a risk to the individual or others.

Perspectives of Abnormal Psychology

There are seven major perspectives in abnormal psychology that offer different explanations for mental disorders:

- Biological
- Psychodynamic
- Behavioral
- Cognitive
- Humanistic-Existential
- Social
- Transpersonal

Types of Mental Disorders

Mental disorders are classified into seven major categories:

- Anxiety disorders
- Mood disorders
- Schizophrenia spectrum disorders
- Personality disorders
- Trauma-related disorders
- Obsessive-compulsive and related disorders
- Feeding and eating disorders

Indicators of Abnormality

The four major indicators of abnormality used to assess psychological well-being are:

- Deviance
- Dysfunction
- Distress
- Dangerousness

Dimensions of Abnormality

Three dimensions of psychological abnormality include:

- **Mental disorder:** A diagnosable condition that meets specific criteria.
- **Subclinical disorder:** Symptoms that do not fully meet diagnostic criteria but cause distress or impairment.
- **Developmental abnormality:** Patterns of behavior that are atypical for a particular stage of development.

Key Points of Abnormal Psychology

- Abnormal behavior is determined by multiple factors, including biological, psychological, and social influences.
- Different perspectives offer varying interpretations of the causes and treatments of mental disorders.
- Diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders require a comprehensive understanding of the individual's symptoms, history, and cultural context.
- Stigma and discrimination against individuals with mental illness remain significant challenges in society.

Types of Psychologists

Psychologists specializing in abnormal psychology may focus on specific areas such as:

- Clinical psychologists
- Counseling psychologists
- School psychologists
- Forensic psychologists
- Neuropsychologists

Ways to Define Abnormal Behavior

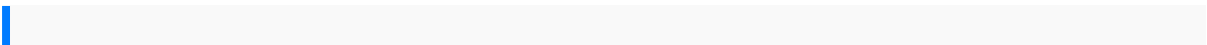
Abnormal behavior can be defined in four ways:

- **Statistical infrequency:** Behaviors that occur rarely in the population.
- **Deviation from social norms:** Behaviors that violate societal expectations.
- **Personal distress:** Behaviors that cause subjective discomfort or impairment.
- **Dangerousness:** Behaviors that threaten the safety of the individual or others.

Criteria for Determining Abnormality

The four criteria used to determine abnormality include:

- **Deviance:** Departure from expected norms.
- **Subjective distress:** Feelings of anxiety, depression, or other negative emotions.
- **Maladaptiveness:** Interference with personal, social, or occupational functioning.
- **Dangerousness:** Potential for physical harm to oneself or others.



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