**Module 1: What Is Abnormal Psychology?**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

**1.1. Understanding Abnormal Behavior**

* Describe the disease model and its impact on the field of psychology throughout history.
* Describe positive psychology.
* Define abnormal behavior.
* Explain the concept of dysfunction as it relates to mental illness.
* Explain the concept of distress as it relates to mental illness.
* Explain the concept of deviance as it relates to mental illness.
* Explain the concept of dangerousness as it relates to mental illness.
* Define culture and social norms.
* Clarify the cost of mental illness on society.
* Define abnormal psychology, psychopathology, and mental disorders.

**1.2. CLASSIFYING MENTAL DISORDERS**

* Define and exemplify classification.
* Define nomenclature.
* Define epidemiology.
* Define the presenting problem and clinical description.
* Differentiate prevalence, incidence, and any subtypes.
* Define comorbidity.
* Define etiology.
* Define course.
* Define prognosis.
* Define treatment.

**1.3. THE STIGMA OF MENTAL ILLNESS**

* Clarify the importance of social cognition theory in understanding why people do not seek care.
* Define categories and schemas.
* Define stereotypes and heuristics.
* Describe social identity theory and its consequences.
* Differentiate between prejudice and discrimination.
* Contrast implicit and explicit attitudes.
* Explain the concept of stigma and its three forms.
* Define courtesy stigma.
* Describe what the literature shows about stigma.

**1.4. THE HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS**

* Describe prehistoric and ancient beliefs about mental illness.
* Describe Greco-Roman thought on mental illness.
* Describe thoughts on mental illness during the Middle Ages.
* Describe thoughts on mental illness during the Renaissance.
* Describe thoughts on mental illness during the 18th and 19th centuries.
* Describe thoughts on mental illness during the 20th and 21st centuries.
* Describe the status of mental illness today.
* Outline the use of psychoactive drugs throughout time and their impact.
* Clarify the importance of managed health care for the treatment of mental illness.
* Define and clarify the importance of multicultural psychology.
* State the issue surrounding prescription rights for psychologists.
* Explain the importance of prevention science.

**1.5. RESEARCH METHODS IN PSYCHOPATHOLOGY**

* Define the scientific method.
* Outline and describe the steps of the scientific method, defining all key terms.
* Identify and clarify the importance of the three cardinal features of science.
* List the five main research methods used in psychology.
* Describe observational research, listing its advantages and disadvantages.
* Describe case study research, listing its advantages and disadvantages.
* Describe survey research, listing its advantages and disadvantages.
* Describe correlational research, listing its advantages and disadvantages.
* Describe experimental research, listing its advantages and disadvantages.
* State the utility and need for multimethod research.

**1.6. MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, SOCIETIES, AND JOURNALS**

* Identify and describe the various types of mental health professionals.
* Clarify what it means to communicate findings.
* Identify professional societies in clinical psychology.
* Identify publications in clinical psychology.

**KEY TERMS**

**ABAB Design**: A research design used in psychology and behavior analysis to study the effectiveness of interventions by repeatedly alternating between a baseline condition (A) and a treatment condition (B).

**Abnormal Behavior**: Behavior that deviates significantly from culturally accepted norms or expectations, causing distress, dysfunction, or impairment in daily life.

**Abnormal Psychology**: The branch of psychology that studies unusual patterns of behavior, thoughts, and emotions, with a focus on understanding and treating mental disorders.

**Asylums**: Historical institutions or facilities that were often used in the past to confine and care for individuals with mental illnesses, though they had many shortcomings in terms of treatment and conditions.

**Case Studies**: In-depth examinations of specific individuals or cases, often conducted in abnormal psychology to gain insights into the nature and treatment of mental disorders.

**Cathartic Method**: A therapeutic approach that involves the release and expression of repressed emotions and traumatic experiences as a means of healing.

**Clinical Description**: The process of systematically describing and categorizing the symptoms and characteristics of a mental disorder, aiding in diagnosis and understanding.

**Clinical Psychologist**: A mental health professional with a doctoral degree (Ph.D. or Psy.D.) in psychology. They can provide psychological assessments, therapy, and counseling but typically cannot prescribe medication.

**Clinical Social Worker**: A mental health professional with a master’s degree (MSW) in social work. They provide therapy and support to individuals and families and can, in some states, be licensed to prescribe medication in certain situations.

**Comorbidity**: The co-occurrence of two or more distinct mental disorders or medical conditions in the same individual, often complicating diagnosis and treatment.

**Control Group**: In research, a group of participants who do not receive the experimental treatment or intervention. They are used as a comparison group to assess the effects of the treatment.

**Correlational Research**: A research method that examines the relationship between two or more variables to determine if they are associated with each other, without establishing causation.

**Courtesy Stigma**: The stigma experienced by individuals who are close to someone with a mental illness, such as family members or friends, due to their association with the affected person.

**Critical Thinking**: The ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information and ideas systematically, helping individuals make informed and rational decisions.

**Culture**: The shared beliefs, values, practices, and traditions of a specific group of people, which can influence how mental health and illness are perceived and experienced.

**Dangerousness**: A concept in abnormal psychology that refers to the potential for an individual with a mental disorder to pose a threat to themselves or others due to their behavior.

**Deinstitutionalization**: A mental health policy shift that began in the mid-20th century, aiming to transition individuals with mental illnesses from long-term psychiatric institutions (asylums) to community-based care.

**Dependent Variable**: In research, the variable that is measured and expected to be influenced by the independent variable. It represents the outcome or effect being studied.

**Descriptive Statistics**: Statistical techniques used to summarize and describe data, providing a clear understanding of its central tendencies and variability.

**Deviance**: Behavior, thoughts, or emotions that significantly differ from societal norms and expectations, often considered a criterion for diagnosing mental disorders.

**Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)**: A widely used classification system and manual in the field of mental health, published by the American Psychiatric Association. It provides standardized criteria for diagnosing mental disorders.

**Distress**: A psychological or emotional state characterized by significant discomfort, suffering, or anguish, often a component of mental disorders.

**Drug Abuse and/or Alcohol Counselor**: A mental health professional who typically holds a master's degree in counseling or a related field. They specialize in helping individuals with substance use disorders and addiction, providing counseling and support.

**Dysfunction**: Impaired or disrupted functioning in one or more areas of a person's life, often used as a criterion for diagnosing mental disorders.

**Epidemiological Study**: Research that focuses on the patterns, causes, and prevalence of diseases or conditions within a population, including mental health disorders.

**Epidemiology**: The study of the distribution and determinants of health-related conditions or events in populations, including the occurrence and impact of mental disorders.

**Etiology**: The study of the causes or origins of mental disorders, seeking to understand the factors that contribute to their development.

**Experimental Group**: In research, the group of participants who receive the experimental treatment or intervention being studied, in contrast to the control group.

**Exorcism**: A religious or ritual practice aimed at expelling evil spirits or supernatural entities believed to possess an individual and cause mental or physical disturbances.

**Generalizability**: The extent to which research findings or conclusions drawn from a study can be applied or generalized to a broader population or context.

**Heuristics:** Mental shortcuts or rules of thumb that people use to make quick decisions and judgments, which can sometimes lead to cognitive biases.

**Humanism:** A psychological and philosophical approach that emphasizes the importance of individual growth, self-actualization, and human potential in understanding behavior and mental health.

**Humors:** An ancient theory of medicine and psychology that believed human health and personality were influenced by the balance of four bodily fluids or "humors" (blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile).

**Hypothesis:** A testable statement or educated guess that proposes a relationship between variables and serves as the basis for scientific research.

**Incidence:** The number of new cases of a specific condition or disorder that occur within a defined population during a specified period of time, often expressed as a rate.

**Independent Variable:** In research, the variable that is manipulated or controlled by the researcher to examine its effect on the dependent variable.

**Inferential Statistics:** Statistical techniques used to draw conclusions and make inferences about a population based on data collected from a sample.

**Laboratory Observation:** Research conducted in a controlled laboratory setting to systematically observe and study behavior or phenomena under specific conditions.

**Label Avoidance:** A phenomenon in which individuals with mental health issues may avoid seeking help or disclosing their condition due to the fear of being stigmatized or labeled.

**Lifetime Prevalence:** The proportion of individuals in a population who have experienced a specific condition or disorder at any point in their lives up to the present.

**Literature Review**: A comprehensive analysis of existing research and scholarly works on a specific topic or research question to provide an overview of current knowledge in the field.

**Lycanthropy**: A rare psychiatric disorder characterized by the false belief that one can transform into, or has transformed into, an animal, typically a wolf.

**Managed Health Care**: A system of healthcare delivery that emphasizes cost control and efficiency through strategies such as utilization management and network restrictions.

**Marital and Family Therapist**: A mental health professional with a master's degree in marriage and family therapy who specializes in providing therapy and counseling for couples and families.

**Mass Madness**: A term used to describe situations in which a large group of people exhibit unusual and often irrational behavior, sometimes attributed to social or psychological factors.

**Mental Disorders**: Conditions that involve significant disturbances in thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, leading to distress or impairment in daily functioning.

**Mental Hygiene Movement**: A historical movement that promoted mental health awareness and advocated for better treatment of individuals with mental illness, contributing to improved mental health care.

**Mesmerism**: A pseudoscientific practice popular in the 18th century, involving the use of hypnotic techniques by Franz Mesmer, which later laid the foundation for modern hypnosis.

**Moral Treatment Movement**: A historical reform movement that emphasized humane and moral care for individuals with mental illness, rejecting harsh treatments and advocating for therapeutic approaches.

**Multicultural Psychology**: The study of how cultural factors, including beliefs, values, and traditions, influence psychological processes and behavior in diverse populations.

**Multi-method Research**: A research approach that combines and integrates various research methods and data sources to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon.

**Naturalistic Observation**: A research method in psychology that involves observing and recording behavior in its natural setting without intervention or manipulation by the researcher.

**Nomenclature**: The system of naming and classifying mental disorders or other phenomena, typically following established criteria and terminology.

**Observation**: The systematic process of watching and recording behavior, events, or phenomena to gather data or information for research or assessment.

**Occupational Therapist**: A healthcare professional with specialized training in helping individuals regain or improve their ability to perform daily activities and tasks following injury, illness, or disability. Occupational therapists typically do not have prescription privileges for medication.

**Pastoral Counselor**: A counselor or therapist who integrates spiritual or religious principles and practices into their counseling services, often working within a faith-based context. They may not have prescription privileges, as it depends on their specific training and credentials (typically they do not).

**Period Prevalence**: The proportion of individuals in a population who have a specific condition or disorder at any point during a defined period, often expressed as a percentage.

**Placebo**: A substance or treatment that has no therapeutic effect but may be used in research or medical practice to evaluate the effectiveness of a treatment with active ingredients.

**Point Prevalence**: The proportion of individuals in a population who have a specific condition or disorder at a particular point in time, often expressed as a percentage.

**Positive Psychology**: A branch of psychology that focuses on studying and promoting aspects of well-being, happiness, resilience, and positive emotions, rather than solely addressing pathology and mental illness.

**Prevalence**: The total number of cases of a specific condition or disorder in a population at a given point or period, often expressed as a rate or percentage.

**Prevention**: Efforts and strategies aimed at reducing the occurrence, development, or impact of mental disorders or other health-related issues through proactive measures.

**Prognosis**: Prognosis refers to the predicted course and outcome of a specific condition or disorder, including the likelihood of recovery or improvement.

**Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner**: A mental health clinician with an advanced nursing degree (usually a Master of Science in Nursing or DNP) who is authorized to diagnose, treat, and prescribe medication for mental health conditions.

**Psychiatric or Mental Health Epidemiology**: The study of the distribution and determinants of mental health disorders within populations, examining factors that contribute to mental health outcomes.

**Psychiatrist**: A medical doctor (MD) with specialized training in the diagnosis, treatment, and prescription of medication for mental health disorders. Psychiatrists can provide therapy and medication management.

**Psychopathology**: The study of abnormal or disordered mental processes and behavior, often focused on understanding the causes and symptoms of mental disorders.

**Psychological or Psychogenic Perspective**: A perspective in psychology that emphasizes the role of psychological factors, such as thoughts, emotions, and experiences, in the development and manifestation of mental disorders.

**Public Stigma**: The negative attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes held by the general public toward individuals with mental health issues, contributing to social discrimination and exclusion.

**Random Assignment**: A research method used to ensure that participants in a study have an equal chance of being assigned to different experimental groups, reducing bias and increasing the validity of findings.

**Research Design**: The overall plan or structure of a research study, outlining how data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted to address research questions.

**Saint Vitus’s Dance**: In Europe during the Middle Ages, a mania in which large numbers of people had an uncontrollable desire to dance and jump for long periods of time, sometimes until physical exhaustion and death. This behavior is also referred to as tarantism.

**Schema**: A mental framework or cognitive structure that organizes and interprets information, influencing how individuals perceive and process new experiences and information.

**School Psychologist**: A mental health professional typically holding a master's or doctoral degree in school psychology. They work in educational settings to assess and support students' academic, emotional, and social well-being. School psychologists do not prescribe medication.

**Self-Stigma**: The internalized negative beliefs and attitudes that individuals with mental health issues may develop about themselves, often as a result of experiencing social stigma.

**Single-Subject Experimental Design**: A research approach used to study the effect of an intervention on an individual subject's behavior over time, often involving repeated measurements and comparisons.

**Social Cognition**: The study of how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to social information, including the understanding of others' thoughts, emotions, and intentions.

**Social Desirability**: A tendency for individuals to provide responses that they perceive as socially acceptable or desirable, rather than expressing their true thoughts or feelings, often in research or assessment.

**Social Identity Theory**: A psychological theory that explores how individuals define themselves in terms of group memberships and how these social identities influence their behavior and attitudes.

**Social Norms**: Shared and accepted expectations and behaviors within a specific social or cultural group, which influence individual behavior and conformity.

**Statistical Significance**: A statistical term indicating whether an observed effect or relationship in data is likely to be meaningful and not due to chance.

**Stereotypes**: Overgeneralized and often simplified beliefs or perceptions about a particular group of people, based on shared characteristics such as ethnicity, gender, or age.

**Stigma**: Stigma refers to negative attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes, and discrimination directed at individuals or groups with mental health issues, often leading to social exclusion and reduced opportunities.

**Surveys/Self-Report Data**: Research methods that involve collecting data directly from individuals through questionnaires, interviews, or self-report measures to gather information about their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

**Syndromes**: A collection of symptoms and signs that frequently occur together and may suggest a specific medical or psychological condition or disorder.

**Tarantism**: An historical phenomenon in which individuals believed they were bitten by a tarantula and responded with frenzied dancing, often associated with psychological and cultural factors.

**Theory**: A systematic and organized explanation or framework that seeks to understand and predict phenomena by proposing relationships between variables and concepts.

**Treatment**: The interventions and approaches used to address and alleviate the symptoms and effects of mental disorders or medical conditions, aiming to improve well-being and functioning.

**Trephination**: An ancient medical procedure involving the removal of a portion of the skull, sometimes used in the past to treat various conditions, including mental illness.