

what is abnormal psychology as defined by comer 2014

Abnormal psychology is a branch of psychology that focuses on the study of abnormal behavior, thoughts, and emotions, aiming to understand the nature of psychological disorders. Defined by experts in the field, including David Comer in his 2014 text, abnormal psychology encompasses a wide range of mental health issues, their causes, treatments, and the societal implications surrounding them. In this article, we will explore the definition of abnormal psychology, its historical context, key concepts, classifications of disorders, and the various approaches to treatment.

Understanding Abnormal Psychology

Abnormal psychology is not merely about studying behaviors that deviate from the norm; it is a comprehensive field that seeks to define, understand, and treat various psychological disorders. Comer (2014) emphasizes that the understanding of abnormal psychology is rooted in several core principles, including the significance of cultural context, the impact of biological factors, psychological processes, and social influences.

The Definition of Abnormal Psychology

According to Comer (2014), abnormal psychology can be defined as the scientific study of abnormal behavior, which includes:

1. Identifying abnormal behaviors: Understanding what constitutes as "abnormal" varies between cultures and societies, which makes it essential to consider cultural context.
2. Exploring the causes: Investigating the biological, psychological, and social factors that contribute to psychological disorders is crucial for understanding their origins.
3. Developing effective treatments: Abnormal psychology aims to provide therapeutic interventions that can alleviate the symptoms of mental disorders and improve individuals' quality of life.

Historical Context of Abnormal Psychology

To fully appreciate the scope of abnormal psychology, it is essential to examine its historical evolution. The field has undergone significant changes throughout the years, influenced by various societal, cultural, and scientific advancements.

Early Perspectives

1. **Demonology and Supernatural Explanations:** In ancient times, abnormal behavior was often attributed to supernatural forces or demonic possession. Treatments included exorcisms or other religious rituals.
2. **The Medical Model:** The 19th century saw the emergence of the medical model, which proposed that psychological disorders were illnesses that could be diagnosed and treated through medical intervention.

Modern Perspectives

In the 20th century, the understanding of abnormal psychology continued to evolve:

1. **Psychoanalysis:** Sigmund Freud's theories on the unconscious mind and childhood experiences introduced a psychological perspective to the understanding of mental disorders.
2. **Behaviorism:** This perspective emphasized observable behaviors and the learning processes that shape them, leading to the development of various therapeutic techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT).
3. **Biopsychosocial Model:** This contemporary approach integrates biological, psychological, and social factors, recognizing that mental health disorders arise from a complex interplay of influences.

Key Concepts in Abnormal Psychology

Abnormal psychology is built upon several key concepts that help to define and categorize psychological disorders:

The Four D's of Abnormality

Comer (2014) outlines the "Four D's" which are often used to determine whether behavior is considered abnormal:

1. **Deviance:** Behavior that deviates significantly from societal norms.
2. **Distress:** Emotional suffering experienced by the individual, which may impact their daily functioning.
3. **Dysfunction:** A significant impairment in an individual's ability to perform daily activities or fulfill social roles.
4. **Danger:** Behaviors that pose a risk to the individual or others.

Cultural Considerations

Cultural context plays a vital role in defining abnormal behavior. Different societies have varying norms and values, which influence what is deemed acceptable or abnormal. For example, behaviors considered normal in one culture may be viewed as abnormal in another. Therefore, clinicians must be culturally sensitive and aware of these differences when diagnosing and treating psychological disorders.

Classification of Psychological Disorders

Abnormal psychology categorizes mental health disorders into several classifications, facilitating diagnosis and treatment. The most widely used classification system is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), published by the American Psychiatric Association.

Categories of Disorders

The DSM outlines various categories of psychological disorders, including:

1. Anxiety Disorders: Characterized by excessive fear or anxiety, including generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and specific phobias.
2. Mood Disorders: Involves disturbances in mood, such as depression and bipolar disorder.
3. Personality Disorders: Enduring patterns of behavior that deviate from cultural expectations, including borderline and antisocial personality disorders.
4. Psychotic Disorders: Includes severe disorders such as schizophrenia, which is characterized by delusions and hallucinations.
5. Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders: Involves intrusive thoughts and compulsive behaviors, such as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).
6. Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders: Disorders that arise following exposure to traumatic or stressful events, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Treatment Approaches in Abnormal Psychology

The field of abnormal psychology emphasizes the importance of effective treatment for psychological disorders. Various treatment modalities have been developed to address the diverse needs of individuals struggling with mental health issues.

Psychological Treatments

1. Psychotherapy: A broad category that includes various therapeutic approaches, such as:

- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT): Focuses on identifying and changing negative thought patterns and behaviors.
- Psychodynamic Therapy: Explores unconscious processes and childhood experiences.

2. Humanistic Therapy: Emphasizes personal growth and self-actualization, with a focus on the individual's subjective experience.

Biological Treatments

1. Medication: Psychiatric medications, such as antidepressants, antipsychotics, and anxiolytics, are often prescribed to manage symptoms.
2. Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT): A treatment option for severe depression that involves electrically inducing seizures to provide relief.

Conclusion

In summary, **abnormal psychology** is a vital field that seeks to understand, diagnose, and treat various psychological disorders. As defined by Comer (2014), it encompasses a complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors, all of which contribute to the understanding of abnormal behavior. By studying the historical context, key concepts, classifications of disorders, and treatment approaches, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the challenges faced by individuals with mental health issues and the importance of effective interventions.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is abnormal psychology according to Comer 2014?

Abnormal psychology is the branch of psychology that deals with the study of abnormal behavior, mental disorders, and the associated treatments.

What are the main focuses of abnormal psychology as defined by Comer?

Comer emphasizes understanding the nature, causes, and treatment of psychological disorders.

How does Comer define 'abnormal' in the context of psychology?

Comer defines 'abnormal' as behavior that deviates significantly from societal norms and expectations, often leading to distress or impairment.

What criteria does Comer suggest for determining abnormal behavior?

Comer outlines several criteria, including statistical rarity, violation of social norms, personal distress, and maladaptive behavior.

What role does culture play in abnormal psychology according to Comer?

Comer highlights that cultural context is crucial in defining what is considered abnormal, as norms and values differ across societies.

What are some common mental disorders discussed in Comer's definition of abnormal psychology?

Comer discusses various disorders, including anxiety disorders, mood disorders, personality disorders, and psychotic disorders.

How does Comer address the treatment of abnormal behavior?

Comer discusses various therapeutic approaches, including psychotherapy, medication, and community support as methods to treat abnormal behavior.

What is the significance of research in abnormal psychology as per Comer?

Comer emphasizes that research is vital for understanding mental disorders, improving treatment methods, and reducing stigma.

How does Comer differentiate between normal and abnormal psychology?

Comer differentiates them by stating that normal psychology encompasses behavior that is typical and adaptive, while abnormal psychology involves atypical and often maladaptive behaviors.

What is the historical perspective on abnormal

psychology mentioned by Comer?

Comer discusses how the understanding of abnormal psychology has evolved over time, from supernatural explanations to more scientific approaches focusing on biological, psychological, and social factors.

[What Is Abnormal Psychology As Defined By Comer 2014](#)

What Is Abnormal Psychology As Defined By Comer 2014

Related Articles

- [what is economic gain](#)
- [what is khp in chemistry](#)
- [what did the math teacher have for dinner](#)

[Back to Home](#)