

Somatoform Disorders

- Psychological difficulties that take on a physical form without a medical cause
 - Body Dysmorphic Disorder - Intense obsession over a flaw in appearance which may be minor or imagined
 - Hypochondriasis - Constant fear of illness and preoccupation with health; believe every day aches and pains are the symptoms of disease
 - Conversion disorder - A condition in which a person has blindness, paralysis, or other neurologic symptoms that cannot be explained by medical evaluation
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Dissociative Disorders

- Rare psychological dysfunctions characterized by the separation of different facets of a person's personality that are normally integrated
 - Cause: Dissociating key parts of who they are can help people keep disturbing memories or perceptions from reaching conscious awareness; this reduces anxiety
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Dissociative Disorders Cont.

- Dissociative identity disorder (DID) - Displays characteristics of two or more personalities, identities, or personality fragments (formerly called multiple personality disorder)
 - Dissociative amnesia - Significant, selective memory loss occurs
 - Dissociative fugue - The person takes sudden, impulsive trips and may assume a new identity
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Mood Disorders

- Major Depression - Severe forms of depression that interferes with concentration, decision making, and sociability; may have no clear trigger
 - About 15 million Americans suffer (6-10% of US population is clinically depressed)
 - 15% of college students are diagnosed with depression
 - Women twice as likely to experience it as men
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Causes of Mood Disorders

- Neurotransmitters serotonin and norepinephrine, as well as genetic factors, seem to play a role in depression (neuroscience/biological approach)
- Result of feelings of loss or anger directed at oneself (psychoanalytic approach)

- Stresses of life produce reduction in positive reinforcers, so people withdraw (behavioral approach)
 - Learned helplessness: a learned expectation that events in one's life are uncontrollable and one cannot escape from the situation (cognitive approach)
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Schizophrenia

- A class of disorders in which a severe distortion of reality occurs
 - Decline from a previous level of functioning
 - Disturbances of thought and language
 - Delusions : Firmly held, unshakable beliefs with no basis in reality
 - Hallucinations : Perceiving things that do not actually exist (ex.: hearing voices); other perceptual distortions
 - Emotional disturbances
 - Withdrawal
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Causes of Schizophrenia

- Biological
 - Genetics seem to produce at least a susceptibility to developing schizophrenia
 - Dopamine Hypothesis : Schizophrenia occurs when there is excess activity in the areas of the brain that use the neurotransmitter dopamine; also, the neurotransmitter glutamate may be a major contributor
 - Structural abnormalities in the brain and patterns of activity during hallucinations.
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Schizophrenia Cont.

- Environmental
 - High Levels of expressed emotion (interaction style of criticism, hostility, and emotional intrusiveness) in families of schizophrenics
 - Family communication patterns
 - Predisposition model of Schizophrenia : Individuals may inherit a predisposition to develop schizophrenia - they are more vulnerable to environmental factors
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Deinstitutionalization

- Deinstitutionalization : Transfer of former mental patients from institutions to the community

- Resulted in a number of homeless people with psychological disorders - about a third to half of all homeless people are thought to have a major psychological disorder
 - Positive result was telephone hotlines
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Focus on Prevention

- Community Psychology : A branch of psychology that focuses on the prevention and minimization of psychological disorders in the community
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Personality Disorders

- Antisocial Personality Disorders : Individuals show no regard for the moral and ethical rules of society or the rights of others (sociopathic personality)
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Personality Disorders (cont.)

- Borderline Personality Disorder : Individuals have difficulty developing a secure sense of who they are; rely on relationships with others to define their identity
 - Narcissistic Personality Disorder : An exaggerated sense of self-importance
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Childhood Disorders

- Depression: 2.5% of children and more than 8% of adolescents suffer from depression; symptoms may include exaggerated fears, clinginess, avoidance of everyday activities, or delinquency
 - Attention-Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) : Inattention, impulsiveness, a low tolerance for frustration, and a great deal of inappropriate activity
 - Autism : A severe developmental disability that impairs children's ability to communicate and relate to others
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