

Psychology 202: Psychological Disorders (Chapter 14)

Tony Rosato suffered from “Capgras”

- Rosato was completely lucid however, family members are replaced by an identical-looking imposter and what they lack is the ability to link emotional responses to familiar faces
- Usually associated with schizophrenia or brain injury

How are psychological disorders conceptualized and classified?

- Psychopathology: sickness or disorder of the mind
- Was explained to be apparent “madness” which resulted from possession or evil spirits
- Back in the day, those with psychopathology were removed from society so they would not bother others
- Asylum: understaffed, overcrowded, mental institutions... chained up and lived in filthy living conditions
- Hippocrates (founder of modern medicine): classified psychopathologies into mania, melancholia and phrenitis (mental confusion)
 - Melancholia: extreme sadness or depression
 - Melancholy: use to describe ppl who are sad
- Psychopathology is now known as a medical condition (now reflects dysfunction of the body, particularly the brain)
- Biological and environmental factors are important (both interact)

Psychopathology is different from everyday problems:

- Common around the globe, in all countries and societies
- Greatest proportion of disability, surpassing cancer and heart disease
- 1 in 2 Americans will experience some psychological disorder in their life (most commonly depression, attention-deficit, anxiety, addiction or substance abuse)
- Only 7% of US population is severely affected and usually suffers from multiple disorders (EX: anxiety and depression AND abuses alcohol)
- Enormous sex differences... women= depression and anxiety, men= antisocial personality and autism)
- Sex differences reflect culture and biology
- Sex may differ in their predispositions to psychological disorders, but cultural values influence how often different disorders are diagnosed for men and women

Psychological disorders are maladaptive:

- It can be challenging to decide if a given behavior is caused by psychopathology ... a behavior has to be reviewed in the context of the situation
- Many behaviors that seem normal in one setting may be considered deviant in other settings
- To decipher whether someone has a psychological disorder...
 - 1) Does the person act in a way that deviated from cultural norms for acceptable behavior?
 - 2) Is the behavior maladaptive? (Does the person's ability to respond to appropriately in different situations?)
 - 3) Is the behavior self-destructive, does it cause the individual personal distress or does it threaten other people in the community?
 - 4) Does the behavior cause discomfort and concern to others, this impairing a person's social relationship?
- Hard to define so now it is defined as thoughts, feelings and behaviors that are maladaptive rather than deviant
- Diagnostic criteria for all the major disorder categories stipulate that the symptoms of the disorder must interfere with at least one aspect of the person's life (such as work)

Psychological disorders are classified into categories:

- Etiology: factors that contribute to the development of a disorder (also investigate in possible treatments)
- Psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin recognized that not all patients with mental disorders suffer from the same disorder

- Identified that mental disorders on the basis of groups of symptoms that occur together... he separated disorders of mood from disorders of cognition
- Latter disorder: dementia praecox (now known as schizophrenia)
- Categorizing mental disorders was not officially adopted until 1952 when the American Psychiatric Association published DSM (still goes through revisions)
- In DSM, disorders are described in terms of observable symptoms (a client must meet specific criteria to receive a particular diagnosis)
- Three sections... 1) an introduction with instructions for using the manual 2) diagnostic criteria for all of the disorders, which are grouped so that similar categories of disorders are located near each other and 3) a guide for future psychopathology research, which includes conditions not yet officially recognized as disorder (EX: misuse of caffeine)
- 1 problem with DSM: implies that a person either has a psychological disorder or does not
- It has the either/or evaluation known as a categorical approach
 - The diagnosis is categorical and a person is either in the category or not
- This approach fails to capture differences in the severity of a disorder
- Dimensional approach: consider psychological disorders along a continuum in which people vary in degree rather than in kind (recognizes that many psychological disorders are extreme versions of normal feelings)
- Researchers indicate that personality disorders can be viewed as maladaptive extremes of the big 5 personality traits
- Another problem with DSM: people seldom fit neatly into the precise categories provided (psychological disorders occur together even though DSM treats them as separate disorders)
- Comorbidity: occurring together such as depression and anxiety (people found to be depressed should be examined for comorbid conditions)
- Though people can be diagnosed with 2 or more disorders, a dual diagnosis offers no advantages in terms of treatment because both conditions usually will respond to the same treatment

Psychological disorders must be assessed:

- Disorders are detected by medical tests, such as blood test
- Assessment: Examination of a person's mental state to diagnose possible psychological disorders
- Diagnosis: verified confirmation of what is wrong
- Prognosis: After appropriate treatment is provided, the course and probable outcome will depend on the particular disorder that is diagnosed
- Assessment does not stop at diagnosis, ongoing assessments continue to see what is causing the disorder and what progress is being made with the treatment
- The method of initial assessment sometimes depends on how a person comes into contact with mental health workers
- Mental health workers administer a mental status exam to provide a snapshot of the patient's psychological functioning (this exam involves behavioral observation, evaluation on grooming, eye contact, tremors, moods, thoughts, content and memory)
- Mental status exam is also useful for determining whether the mental impairments are due to a psychological condition or an acute physical condition such as stroke vs. head injury
- Many symptoms developed over long periods of time
- Psychologist's first step in assessment is to ask the person about current symptoms and about recent experiences that might be causing distress
- Clinical interview: interviewer's skills determine the quantity and value of information obtained

Structured versus unstructured interviews:

- Most interviews have been unstructured (topics of discussions vary as the interviewer probes different aspects of the person's problems) *usually highly flexible and no two unstructured interviews will elicit identical information from the same client*
- Structured interviews: clinicians ask standardized questions in the same order each time which are coded according to a predetermined formula and the diagnosis is based on the specific patterns of responding

- Common structured interview: Structured Clinical Interview (SCID) used in DSM diagnoses according to DSM criteria
- Begins with general questions then proceeds to questions about the client's symptoms
- Valuable for treatment and research because the results obtained from the one group of clients will likely apply to other clients diagnosed with the same disorder

Observation and types of testing:

- Behavioral assessments are often useful with children
- Psychological testing: assessing personality or testing specific disorders
- Other measures assess both a broad range of psychopathology and general mental health
- Most common questionnaire for psychological assessment is Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)
- Consists of 567 true/false items that assess emotions, thoughts and behaviors
- Has 10 clinical scales (EX: paranoia, depression, mania, hysteria)
- Assessor generates a profile that may indicate whether the client has a particular disorder
- Common problem with self-report assessments... favorable impression, distorted truth
- MMPI includes validity scales in addition to the clinical scales... the validity scales measure the probability that respondents are being less than truthful when taking the test
- One type of validity refers to the extent that a dependent variable measures what it is suppose to measure (EX: in the MMPI, a variety of questions are used to judge whether the person's answers accurately reflect the respondent's true thoughts and behaviors)
- High score on this category would indicate an attempt to present a perfectly positive image (faking good)
- Other validity scales examine whether the test taker answers similar questions in the same manner each time and if they answer "true" to rare things or to a large number of negative things... fabrications of this kind are known as "faking bad" or pretending that one is more ill or disabled than is true
- MMPI are seldom the sole source of information (must get consistent results from psychological tests and structured interviews)
- MMPI is generally reliable and valid but is criticized in other countries and among groups (scores considered "normal" on the MMPI are based on studies in which such people are inadequately represented)
- Another assessment method: neuropsychological testing (client performs actions such as copying a picture, drawing a design from memory, sorting cards by color, shape or size)
- Each task requires an ability such as planning, coordinating and remembering (if the test is reformed badly, the client likely has problems with a particular brain region) (EX: difficulty sorting by shape rather than color = damage to frontal lobes)

Evidence-Based assessment:

- Choose assessment procedures based on their subjective beliefs and training rather than scientific studies (use critical judgment rather than formal method)
- Evidence-based assessment: approach to clinical evaluation in which research guides the evaluation of psychopathology which the selection of appropriate tests and methods (use critical thinking when making a diagnosis)
- Scientific research indicates that many disorders are comorbid, occurring together

Psychological disorders have many causes:

- Developing roles are important factors thought to play in disorders
- Diathesis-stress model: a diagnostic model that proposes that a disorder may develop when an underlying vulnerability is coupled with a precipitating event
- Can have vulnerability and predisposition (known as diathesis)
- Can be biological such as a genetic predisposition or can be environmental such as childhood trauma
- If the stress level exceeds the individuals ability to cope, the symptoms of psychological disorders will occur

Biological factors:

- Development and course of psychological disorders can influence