

Introduction to Abnormal Psychology

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1. Definition

- Abnormal psychology is the branch of psychology that studies unusual patterns of behavior, emotion, and thought that may or may not be understood as a mental disorder.

2. Criteria for Abnormality

- **Statistical deviance:** behavior far from the average.
- **Personal distress:** the individual is suffering.
- **Maladaptiveness:** behavior interferes with daily functioning.
- **Violation of social norms:** behavior breaks unwritten cultural rules.

3. Historical Perspectives

- Supernatural explanations (possession, punishment from spirits).
- Biological explanations (Hippocrates' four humors).
- Psychological explanations (Freud's psychoanalysis, behaviorism).

4. Modern Approach

- Uses the biopsychosocial model, combining biological, psychological, and social factors to explain and treat disorders.

5. Why It Matters

- Understanding abnormal psychology helps in accurate diagnosis, reduces stigma, and guides effective treatment planning.