

Lecture02 : Psychopathology

Module: English for Psychology

Target Audience: 3rd Year Clinical Psychology Students

1. Defining Psychopathology

Psychopathology, also known as **abnormal psychology**, is the scientific study of the causes, symptoms, and treatments of mental disorders. To understand this field, we must define **abnormality** using four conventional criteria:

- **Statistical Deviance:** Behaviors that are rare or unique compared to the average.
- **Social Norms:** Behavior that defies cultural rules or social etiquette.
- **Personal Distress:** The level of psychological pain or suffering experienced by the individual.
- **Maladaptiveness:** The extent to which behavior interferes with the person's capacity to function in everyday life (e.g., work or social relationships).

2. Classification Systems: DSM-5 and ICD

To ensure a common language among professionals, two major systems are used:

- **DSM-5-TR (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders):** Published by the American Psychiatric Association, it provides standard criteria for classifying mental disorders.
- **ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases):** Produced by the World Health Organization (WHO), it covers both physical and mental health.

Historical Crossroads: Most current research is framed by categorical models (either you have a disorder or you don't). However, modern psychological science is moving toward **continuous models**, which view symptoms along a spectrum of severity.

3. Major Psychological Models

Different perspectives explain the origins of psychopathology:

- **Biological Model:** Views mental illness as a result of brain malfunctioning, chemical imbalances (neurotransmitters like Serotonin and Dopamine), or genetic inheritance.
- **Psychodynamic Model:** Based on Freud's work, it focuses on unconscious conflicts and repressed childhood experiences.
- **Behavioral Model:** Suggests that abnormal behaviors are learned through conditioning or social learning.
- **Cognitive Model:** Focuses on distorted thinking, irrational beliefs, and poor information processing.
- **Biopsychosocial Approach:** An integrative perspective where mental illness results from a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors.

4. Overview of Major Disorders

- **Anxiety Disorders:** Characterized by excessive worry or fear (e.g., Phobias, GAD, OCD).
- **Mood (Affective) Disorders:** Includes **Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)**, marked by persistent low mood and anhedonia, and **Bipolar Disorder**, which alternates between depression and mania.

- **Schizophrenia Spectrum:** A psychotic disorder involving a loss of contact with reality, characterized by **positive symptoms** (hallucinations, delusions) and **negative symptoms** (lack of affect, social withdrawal).
- **Personality Disorders:** Enduring, rigid patterns of inner experience and behavior (e.g., Antisocial, Borderline, and Narcissistic).

5. Clinical Assessment and Ethics

Clinicians use various tools to gather individual information:

- **Clinical Interviews:** Unstructured, semi-structured, or structured formats to evaluate mental status.
- **Psychological Tests:** Personality inventories like the **MMPI** or projective tests like the **Rorschach Inkblot** and **TAT**.
- **Ethics:** Clinicians must follow the **APA Code of Conduct**, emphasizing client welfare, informed consent, and confidentiality.

Key Vocabulary for Students (Terminologie)

English Term	Arabic Translation
Pathology	علم الأمراض
Comorbidity	(الاعتلال المشترك) وجود مرضين معاً
Etiology	المسببات / الأسباب
Hallucinations	الهلاوس
Delusions	الأوهام / الضلالات
Empirically Based	قائم على الأدلة التجريبية
Clinical Method	المنهج العيادي
Biopsychosocial	حيوي نفسي اجتماعي