



COURSE CODE: SST 205

COURSE TITLE: SOCIAL STANDARDS IN ABNORMAL AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS

COURSE UNITS: 3 UNITS.

MODULE 1

LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO ABNORMAL AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS

INTRODUCTION:

Understanding human behavior is essential in psychology, especially when it deviates from what is considered typical or socially acceptable. This lesson explores abnormal and anti-social behaviors, examining how they are defined, classified, and understood in psychological and social contexts.

Abnormal behavior refers to patterns of thinking, feeling, or acting that significantly differ from societal norms, cause distress, or impair daily functioning. These behaviors are often examined through psychological perspectives, including biological, cognitive, and socio-cultural approaches. Mental disorders such as anxiety, mood disorders, and psychotic conditions fall under this category.

Anti-social behavior, on the other hand, includes actions that violate social norms and harm others, such as aggression, deception, and disregard for societal rules. While some anti-social behaviors may be temporary or situational, others can indicate deeper psychological disorders, such as antisocial personality disorder.

Throughout this lesson, we will discuss how psychologists identify and classify these behaviors, the factors influencing them, and their impact on individuals and society. By the end, you will have a foundational understanding of abnormal and anti-social behaviors and their significance in psychological study.

LESSON OUTCOMES

By the end of each lesson, students will be able to explain:

1. Define abnormal and anti-social behaviours and differentiate them from normal variations in human behaviour.
2. Explain key psychological theories and models related to abnormal and anti-social behaviours.
3. Identify common types of abnormal behaviours and mental disorders, including their symptoms and causes.



4. Discuss the impact of anti-social behaviours on individuals, families, and society.
5. Analyze factors that contribute to the development of abnormal and anti-social behaviours, including biological, psychological, and environmental influences.
6. Examine historical and cultural perspectives on abnormal and anti-social behaviours.
7. Evaluate different methods used to assess and diagnose abnormal behaviours.
8. Explore various treatment and intervention strategies for managing abnormal and anti-social behaviours.
9. Discuss ethical considerations and societal responses to individuals exhibiting such behaviours.
10. Develop critical thinking skills in assessing media portrayals and public perceptions of abnormal and anti-social behaviours.

INTRODUCTION TO ABNORMAL AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS

Abnormal and anti-social behaviors are patterns of actions, thoughts, or emotions that deviate from societal norms and expectations. These behaviors can range from mild deviations to more severe actions that disrupt social harmony or indicate underlying psychological disorders.

Abnormal behavior is often defined in psychology as behavior that is statistically rare, maladaptive, or causes significant distress to the individual or others. It includes conditions such as anxiety disorders, mood disorders, and psychotic disorders. Psychological models, including the medical, behavioral, and cognitive perspectives, help explain the causes and manifestations of these behaviors.

Anti-social behavior, on the other hand, refers to actions that violate social norms and the rights of others. These behaviors can include aggression, deceit, theft, and disregard for societal rules. In extreme cases, they may be diagnosed as part of conditions like Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) or Conduct Disorder in younger individuals.

Understanding abnormal and anti-social behaviors requires a combination of psychological, social, and biological perspectives. Early identification and intervention can help manage and mitigate the negative consequences associated with these behaviors, improving both individual well-being and societal harmony.

DEFINITIONS AND KEY CONCEPTS

Abnormal Behavior – Any pattern of behavior, thought, or emotion that significantly deviates from what is considered typical or culturally acceptable. It often leads to distress,



dysfunction, or danger to oneself or others. Psychological disorders such as depression, schizophrenia, and anxiety disorders fall under this category.

Anti-Social Behavior – Actions that violate social norms, disregard the rights of others, and may involve aggression, deceit, or criminal activity. It includes behaviors like vandalism, theft, and physical violence. Severe forms are linked to disorders such as Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) and Conduct Disorder.

Key Concepts

1. **Social Norms** – Unwritten rules that dictate acceptable behavior within a society. Deviating from these norms can lead to a perception of abnormality or anti-social tendencies.
2. **Maladaptiveness** – A behavior is considered maladaptive if it interferes with an individual's ability to function effectively in daily life or society.
3. **Distress and Dysfunction** – Abnormal behavior often causes significant personal suffering or impairs a person's ability to maintain relationships, work, or perform everyday tasks.
4. **Dangerousness** – Some forms of abnormal and anti-social behaviors pose risks to the individual or others, such as self-harm, aggression, or criminal activity.
5. **Biopsychosocial Model** – A framework that explains behavior through biological, psychological, and social factors. Genetics, upbringing, and environmental influences all contribute to the development of abnormal or anti-social behaviors.
6. **Psychological Disorders** – Clinically recognized conditions that involve persistent patterns of abnormal behavior, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).
7. **Personality Disorders** – Long-term patterns of behavior that differ significantly from societal expectations, such as Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) or Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD).
8. **Legal and Ethical Considerations** – Laws and ethical guidelines help determine the boundaries between socially unacceptable behavior and criminal acts. Rehabilitation and treatment approaches are often used alongside legal consequences for anti-social behaviors.

Understanding these definitions and concepts helps in recognizing, diagnosing, and addressing abnormal and anti-social behaviors in both clinical and societal contexts.

DIFFERENTIATING ABNORMAL AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

1. Definition:



- **Abnormal Behavior** refers to patterns of thinking, feeling, or acting that deviate from societal norms and cause distress or dysfunction. It includes mental health conditions such as depression, schizophrenia, and anxiety disorders.
- **Anti-Social Behavior** involves actions that violate social norms and the rights of others, often causing harm or distress to society. Examples include aggression, deceit, and criminal activities.

2. Impact on the Individual and Society:

- **Abnormal Behavior** primarily affects the individual, often leading to emotional distress, social withdrawal, or difficulties in daily functioning.
- **Anti-Social Behavior** primarily affects others, causing harm to individuals, communities, or institutions through rule-breaking or harmful actions.

3. Psychological vs. Behavioral Focus:

- **Abnormal Behavior** is studied mainly within clinical psychology and psychiatry, focusing on diagnosing and treating mental disorders.
- **Anti-Social Behavior** is studied in both psychology and criminology, often linked to conduct problems and personality disorders such as Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD).

4. Presence of Harm:

- **Abnormal Behavior** does not always involve harm to others (e.g., phobias, anxiety, depression).
- **Anti-Social Behavior** often involves intentional harm, manipulation, or violation of societal norms.

5. Treatment and Management:

- **Abnormal Behavior** is treated through psychotherapy, medication, and supportive interventions.
- **Anti-Social Behavior** may require legal consequences, behavioral therapy, rehabilitation programs, and social interventions.

SUMMARY:

Abnormal and anti-social behaviors refer to actions that deviate from societal norms and may cause distress or harm to individuals or communities. Abnormal behavior is typically assessed using criteria such as statistical rarity, personal distress, maladaptiveness, and societal disapproval. It includes psychological disorders like anxiety, depression, and



schizophrenia. Anti-social behavior, on the other hand, involves actions that violate social rules and the rights of others, such as aggression, deception, and criminal activity. These behaviors can stem from biological, psychological, and environmental factors. Understanding them is essential for diagnosis, treatment, and intervention strategies aimed at promoting healthier social functioning.





SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. **What is abnormal behavior, and how is it typically defined in psychology?**

Answer: Abnormal behavior is any pattern of thoughts, emotions, or actions that deviate significantly from societal norms, cause distress, impair daily functioning, or pose a danger to oneself or others. It is often assessed using criteria such as statistical rarity, maladaptiveness, and violation of social norms.

2. **What are some common causes of abnormal behavior?**

Answer: Common causes include genetic factors, brain chemistry imbalances, traumatic experiences, environmental influences, and psychological conditions such as anxiety, depression, or personality disorders.

3. **How does anti-social behavior differ from abnormal behavior?**

Answer: Anti-social behavior specifically refers to actions that violate societal norms and the rights of others, such as aggression, deceit, or law-breaking, while abnormal behavior is a broader term that includes any psychological dysfunction that leads to distress or impaired functioning.

4. **What are some psychological disorders associated with anti-social behavior?**

Answer: Disorders commonly linked to anti-social behavior include Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD), Conduct Disorder (CD), and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), which involve persistent disregard for social rules and others' rights.

5. **Why is it important to study and understand abnormal and anti-social behaviors?**

Answer: Understanding these behaviors helps in early diagnosis, effective treatment, and prevention of psychological disorders. It also aids in reducing social harm and improving mental health interventions.



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LESSON 2: THEORIES OF ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR

INTRODUCTION:

Understanding abnormal behavior is a crucial aspect of psychology, as it helps us recognize, explain, and treat various mental health conditions. Throughout history, different theories have emerged to explain why individuals exhibit behaviors that deviate from societal norms. These theories offer unique perspectives on the causes and treatment of psychological disorders.

In this lesson, we will explore the major theories of abnormal behavior, including the biological, psychological, and sociocultural perspectives. Each of these approaches provides insight into the complexity of mental disorders and highlights different factors that contribute to abnormal behavior. By examining these theories, we can better understand how mental health professionals assess, diagnose, and treat psychological conditions.

As we move through this lesson, consider how each theory applies to real-life situations and how they influence modern approaches to mental health care.

LESSON OUTCOMES

By the end of each lesson, students will be able to explain:

1. What is the biological theory of abnormal behavior, and how does it explain mental disorders?
2. How does the psychodynamic theory explain abnormal behavior?
3. What is the main focus of the behavioral theory in understanding abnormal behavior?
4. theory contribute to understanding abnormal behavior?.
5. What is the humanistic perspective on abnormal behavior?

THEORIES OF ABNORMAL BEHAVIOR



Several psychological perspectives explain the causes and development of abnormal behavior. Each theory provides different insights into why individuals exhibit behaviors that deviate from societal norms.

1. Biological (Medical) Model

- Suggests that abnormal behavior results from biological factors such as genetics, brain chemistry, or neurological dysfunction.
- Disorders like schizophrenia and depression are linked to imbalances in neurotransmitters (e.g., dopamine, serotonin).
- Treatment approaches include medication, brain stimulation therapies, and medical interventions.

2. Psychodynamic Theory (Freud)

- Proposes that abnormal behavior stems from unconscious conflicts, often rooted in early childhood experiences.
- Freud's model focuses on the id, ego, and superego, where unresolved conflicts can lead to disorders like anxiety and personality disorders.
- Treatment involves psychoanalysis, free association, and dream interpretation to uncover unconscious thoughts.

3. Behavioral Theory (Watson, Skinner)

- Views abnormal behavior as learned through conditioning.
- Classical conditioning (Pavlov) explains phobias, while operant conditioning (Skinner) focuses on reinforcement and punishment shaping behavior.
- Treatment includes behavior modification, exposure therapy, and systematic desensitization.

4. Cognitive Theory (Beck, Ellis)

- Suggests that abnormal behavior results from distorted thinking patterns and irrational beliefs.
- Cognitive distortions, such as catastrophizing and overgeneralization, contribute to disorders like depression and anxiety.
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is an effective treatment approach.

5. Humanistic Theory (Rogers, Maslow)

- Argues that abnormal behavior occurs when an individual's self-concept is distorted due to a lack of unconditional positive regard.
- Emphasizes personal growth, self-actualization, and free will.



- Treatment includes client-centered therapy, focusing on empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard.

6. Sociocultural Theory

- Examines how cultural and social factors influence abnormal behavior.
- Factors like poverty, discrimination, and societal pressures contribute to mental health issues.
- Treatment approaches focus on community support, cultural awareness, and reducing stigma.

7. Biopsychosocial Model

- Integrates biological, psychological, and social factors to explain abnormal behavior.
- Recognizes that mental disorders result from a combination of genetics, cognitive processes, and environmental influences.
- Treatment is often holistic, combining medication, therapy, and social interventions.

Each theory provides a unique perspective on the causes of abnormal behavior, and modern psychology often integrates multiple approaches for a more comprehensive understanding and treatment.

Perspectives on Abnormal Behavior

1. Biological Perspective

The biological perspective views abnormal behavior as a result of genetic, neurological, or physiological dysfunctions. It emphasizes the role of brain structures, neurotransmitters, hormones, and heredity in influencing mental health.

- **Key Factors:**
 - **Genetics:** Some disorders, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, have hereditary components.
 - **Neurotransmitters:** Imbalances in dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine are linked to mood and anxiety disorders.
 - **Brain Structure and Function:** Damage or abnormalities in brain areas like the prefrontal cortex or amygdala can contribute to disorders.
 - **Medical Conditions:** Disorders like Alzheimer's disease or hormonal imbalances can cause behavioral changes.
- **Treatment Approaches:**
 - Medication (e.g., antidepressants, antipsychotics, mood stabilizers)
 - Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) for severe cases
 - Neurosurgery (rarely used today)



2. Psychological Perspective

This perspective focuses on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral factors that contribute to abnormal behavior. Different psychological theories provide various explanations:

- **Psychodynamic Theory (Freud):** Unresolved unconscious conflicts from childhood can lead to mental disorders.
- **Behavioral Theory (Skinner, Pavlov, Watson):** Abnormal behaviors are learned through conditioning and reinforcement.
- **Cognitive Theory (Beck, Ellis):** Distorted thinking patterns and irrational beliefs cause psychological distress.
- **Humanistic Theory (Rogers, Maslow):** Abnormal behavior results from a failure to achieve self-actualization or a lack of positive regard.
- **Treatment Approaches:**
 - Psychotherapy (e.g., cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychoanalysis)
 - Behavior modification and exposure therapy
 - Humanistic therapies focusing on self-growth

3. Sociocultural Perspective

This perspective examines how social and cultural factors influence abnormal behavior. It highlights the role of environment, relationships, and cultural expectations in shaping mental health.

- **Key Factors:**
 - **Social Norms and Stigma:** Different cultures define abnormality differently, affecting diagnosis and treatment.
 - **Economic and Social Conditions:** Poverty, discrimination, and social isolation increase mental health risks.
 - **Family and Peer Influence:** Dysfunctional family dynamics or peer pressure can contribute to disorders.
 - **Cultural Beliefs:** Some cultures view mental illness as spiritual or supernatural, affecting treatment-seeking behavior.
- **Treatment Approaches:**
 - Community-based interventions
 - Family therapy and social support programs
 - Culturally sensitive therapy



SUMMARY:

Each perspective on abnormal behavior offers a distinct way of understanding its causes, manifestations, and treatment options. The biological perspective focuses on the influence of genetics, brain chemistry, and physical health conditions. The psychological perspective emphasizes the impact of cognitive, emotional, and developmental factors, including past experiences and mental processes. Meanwhile, the social perspective examines the role of societal norms, relationships, and cultural influences. A holistic approach, like the biopsychosocial model, integrates these three perspectives, recognizing that abnormal behavior is multifaceted. By combining biological, psychological, and social factors, this model provides a more comprehensive and effective treatment plan for individuals.





SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Here are some lesson outcomes for *Theories of Abnormal Behavior*:

- **Define** abnormal behavior and explain the criteria used to determine psychological disorders.
- **Describe** major historical and contemporary theories of abnormal behavior, including biological, psychological, and sociocultural perspectives.
- **Compare and contrast** different theoretical models, such as the medical model, psychodynamic theory, behavioral theory, cognitive theory, humanistic theory, and biopsychosocial approach.
- **Analyze** how various theories explain the causes, symptoms, and treatment approaches for mental disorders.
- **Evaluate** the strengths and limitations of each theory in understanding and treating abnormal behavior.
- **Apply** theoretical perspectives to case studies and real-world examples of psychological disorders.
- **Discuss** the ethical considerations in diagnosing and treating individuals with mental health conditions.