

# When the Mind Diverges: Diagnosing and Treating Abnormal Behavior

Ruchi Swinal\*

Department of Basic Psychology, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal

## Introduction

The study of abnormal behavior has long been a central concern in psychology, psychiatry, and mental health care. As human beings, we all exhibit behaviors that range from common and socially acceptable to those that may be seen as unusual, distressing, or deviant from cultural norms. When these behaviors become disruptive to an individual's daily functioning or cause significant distress, they may be classified as abnormal, potentially signaling the presence of a mental health disorder. Understanding and diagnosing abnormal behavior is a complex task that involves distinguishing between what is typical and atypical, considering the broader context of an individual's life, and identifying underlying psychological or biological factors that may contribute to their symptoms. Diagnosing abnormal behavior requires a delicate balance of scientific evidence, clinical judgment, and cultural sensitivity, as mental health issues are deeply influenced by social, environmental, and biological factors. In this complex field, treatment can range from psychotherapy and counseling to medication and alternative therapies. While treatments have evolved significantly over the years, the stigma surrounding mental health conditions and the challenges of accessing adequate care continue to be important issues. As our understanding of the mind and its disorders deepens, so too does our capacity to better diagnose and treat abnormal behavior, offering hope and healing to individuals struggling with mental health issues. The journey from diagnosis to treatment is multifaceted, requiring a collaborative effort between the individual, mental health professionals, and society at large [1].

## Description

The study of abnormal behavior has fascinated psychologists, psychiatrists, and medical professionals for centuries, as it touches on the complexities of the human mind and the difficulties people face when their thoughts, emotions, or behaviors deviate from what is considered typical or socially acceptable. Abnormal behavior is a term used to describe patterns of thoughts, emotions, or actions that are atypical, distressing, or dysfunctional, often leading to impairment in an individual's ability to function in everyday life. The vast range of behaviors classified as abnormal includes conditions such as anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, eating disorders, and various forms of addiction. Understanding and diagnosing abnormal behavior involves not only recognizing deviations from societal norms but also exploring the underlying causes and providing appropriate treatments to help individuals manage or overcome these challenges. The complexity of abnormal behavior demands a nuanced approach that takes into account the intricate interplay of genetic, biological, psychological, and environmental factors, all of which

contribute to the development and persistence of mental health disorders. Abnormal behavior is inherently difficult to define in a universal sense because what is considered "normal" varies widely across cultures and societies. Behaviors that might be seen as abnormal in one culture can be regarded as perfectly acceptable or even desirable in another [2].

Traditionally, mental health professionals have used various models and frameworks to diagnose abnormal behavior. The medical model is one of the most widely used approaches in diagnosing mental illness. This model views psychological disorders as diseases that have identifiable causes and symptoms, often with a biological basis. In this context, abnormal behavior is seen as the result of underlying physical or biological factors such as genetic predispositions, chemical imbalances in the brain, or structural abnormalities in brain functioning. The medical model is particularly influential in psychiatry, where mental health conditions are often diagnosed based on a set of criteria outlined in diagnostic manuals, such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). The DSM provides a standardized classification system for mental disorders, outlining specific symptoms and diagnostic criteria for various conditions, ranging from mood disorders and anxiety disorders to psychotic disorders and personality disorders. While the medical model has been instrumental in helping to identify and categorize mental disorders, it has also faced criticism for oversimplifying the complexities of human behavior. Critics argue that by focusing exclusively on biological factors, the medical model neglects the psychological, social, and environmental influences that contribute to mental illness [3].

The psychodynamic model, which originated with the work of Sigmund Freud, posits that abnormal behavior is the result of unconscious conflicts, often rooted in early childhood experiences. According to this view, individuals may develop psychological disorders as a way of coping with repressed memories or unresolved conflicts between different parts of the psyche, such as the id, ego, and superego. For instance, a person who experiences traumatic events during childhood may suppress these memories and develop symptoms such as anxiety or depression as a result. The psychodynamic model emphasizes the importance of exploring unconscious processes and gaining insight into past experiences as a way of understanding and addressing abnormal behavior. Techniques such as free association, dream analysis, and transference are commonly used in psychodynamic therapy to help individuals uncover repressed memories and conflicts that may be influencing their current behavior. While the psychodynamic model has been influential in the field of psychotherapy, it has been criticized for its lack of empirical evidence and its reliance on subjective interpretations of unconscious processes. Many of the concepts put forth by Freud and his followers are difficult to measure or test scientifically, which has led some critics to question their validity. Additionally, the psychodynamic model tends to focus heavily on the past and unconscious influences, which some argue can be limiting in addressing present-day concerns or practical coping strategies for individuals struggling with mental health issues [4].

In contrast to the psychodynamic model, the cognitive-behavioral model focuses on the role of thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors in the development and maintenance of abnormal behavior. According to this model, abnormal behavior is often the result of distorted or maladaptive thinking patterns, which lead

\*Address for Correspondence: Ruchi Swinal, Department of Basic Psychology, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal, E-mail: swinal.ruchi@minho.edu

Copyright: © 2025 Swinal R. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Received: 01 April, 2025, Manuscript No. abp-25-165742; Editor assigned: 03 April, 2025, PreQC No. P-165742; Reviewed: 15 April, 2025, QC No. Q-165742; Revised: 22 April, 2025, Manuscript No. R-165742; Published: 29 April, 2025, DOI: 10.37421/2472-0496.2025.11.312

individuals to misinterpret or react inappropriately to situations. Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is based on the premise that by identifying and challenging these negative thought patterns, individuals can learn healthier ways of thinking and behaving. For example, a person with generalized anxiety disorder may experience excessive worry and irrational thoughts about potential dangers, even in safe situations. Through CBT, the individual can learn to recognize and reframe these thoughts, thereby reducing their anxiety and improving their overall functioning. Additionally, while CBT has been shown to be effective for many individuals, it may not be suitable for everyone, particularly those with more complex or severe mental health conditions. A supportive environment can help individuals cope with stress and adversity, while a lack of support can contribute to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, leading to the development of abnormal behavior [5].

## Conclusion

In conclusion, diagnosing and treating abnormal behavior is a multifaceted process that requires a comprehensive understanding of the many factors that contribute to mental health disorders. While biological, psychological, and social influences all play a role, the ultimate goal of treatment is to improve an individual's quality of life and help them function more effectively in their daily activities. By taking a holistic approach and combining various therapeutic methods, mental health professionals can help individuals navigate the complexities of abnormal behavior and work toward recovery. However, overcoming the stigma surrounding mental illness and improving access to care will be essential in ensuring that those affected by abnormal behavior receive the support they need to lead fulfilling lives.

## Acknowledgement

None.

## Conflict of Interest

None.

## References

1. Zhang, Tianhao, Waqas Aftab, Lyudmila Mihaylova and Christian Langran-Wheeler, et al. "Recent advances in video analytics for rail network surveillance for security, trespass and suicide prevention—A survey." *Sensors* 22 (2022): 4324.
2. Castanedo, Federico. "A review of data fusion techniques." *Sci World J* 2013 (2013): 704504.
3. Vogels, Annick, Jenneke Van Den Ende, Kathelijne Keymolen and Geert Mortier, et al. "Minimum prevalence, birth incidence and cause of death for Prader-Willi syndrome in Flanders." *Eur J Hum Genet* 12 (2004): 238-240.
4. Descheemaeker, Mie-Jef, Veerle Govers, Peter Vermeulen and Jean-Pierre Fryns. "Pervasive developmental disorders in Prader-Willi syndrome: The Leuven experience in 59 subjects and controls." *Am J Med Genet Part A* 140 (2006): 1136-1142.
5. Hirschfeld, Robert MA, Lydia Lewis and Lana A. Vornik. "Perceptions and impact of bipolar disorder: How far have we really come? Results of the national depressive and manic-depressive association 2000 survey of individuals with bipolar disorder." *J Clin Psychiatry* 64 (2003): 161-174.

**How to cite this article:** Swinal, Ruchi. "When the Mind Diverges: Diagnosing and Treating Abnormal Behavior." *Abnorm Behav Psychol* 11 (2025): 312.