

Exercise walk-through

5.3

Explaining and Classifying Psychological Disorders

AP Psychology

Assessment needs context

CRITERION	WHAT IT ASKS	CONTEXT AND LIMIT
DEVIANCE	is it unusual in this culture?	an unusual talent is also unusual
DISTRESS	does it cause suffering?	some conditions cause the person none
DYSFUNCTION	does it impair functioning?	assess functioning in context
RISK ASSESSMENT	a separate clinical task	not a fourth diagnostic requirement

Assessment needs context and evidence; the three considerations are not an all-three checklist.

Unusual does not by itself mean disordered

Unusual preference

An uncommon hobby may differ from a social norm without causing distress or impairing functioning.

Assessment question

What is the person experiencing, how is functioning affected, and what is the cultural context?

Specialised training and evidence-based criteria are needed for diagnosis.

Classification has uses and consequences

Potential benefits

A diagnosis can support communication, treatment planning and access to help.

Possible costs

Labels may carry **stigma** and discrimination. Effects vary with the person and social setting.

Classification and explanation are different tasks. A label does not establish a single cause.

Classification and explanation differ

Classification tools

The DSM and ICD provide frameworks for classifying disorders using evidence-based criteria. Diagnosis requires specialised training.

An explanatory question

Why did a particular person develop difficulties? A category name alone cannot establish biological, psychological or social causes.

Use a framework to organise assessment; use evidence to investigate causes.

Explain one scenario through two perspectives

Behavioral account

A learned association can link a situation with fear; avoidance may continue through its consequences.

Cognitive account

A person's interpretation of the situation can influence emotional responses and behavior.

These are possible explanations to investigate, not proof of a cause from a short vignette.

Exercises 2.1-2.2

2.1 State two criteria used in deciding whether behaviour is disordered. [2]

2.2 Explain what the biopsychosocial model claims. [2]

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State two criteria used in deciding whether behaviour is disordered. [2]

2.1

- any two of: significant distress; impairment of functioning; departure from what is typical or expected in the person's culture
-

2.2 Explain what the biopsychosocial model claims. [2]

2.2

- disorders arise from biological, psychological and social factors acting together, because single-factor accounts predict poorly

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 A clinician is reluctant to give a diagnosis to an adolescent.

(a) State one benefit of a diagnosis.

[1]

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(a) State one benefit of a diagnosis.

[1]

(a)

- it gives access to treatment and an explanation

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 A clinician is reluctant to give a diagnosis to an adolescent.

(b) State one risk.

[1]

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 A clinician is reluctant to give a diagnosis to an adolescent.

(b) State one risk.

[1]

(b)

- it may become a label others apply to everything the person does

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 A limitation of categorical classification is that

[1]

- ☐ **A** it prevents communication
- ☐ **B** it imposes categories on continuous variation
- ☐ **C** it cannot be used in research
- ☐ **D** criteria never change

3.2 Judging behaviour against what is expected in a person's culture matters because[1]

- ☐ **A** all cultures are identical
- ☐ **B** the same behaviour may be typical in one setting and not another
- ☐ **C** culture is irrelevant to diagnosis
- ☐ **D** distress is unnecessary

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 A limitation of categorical classification is that

[1]

- ☐ A it prevents communication
B it imposes categories on continuous variation
C it cannot be used in research
D criteria never change

3.1 B

- real variation is continuous while categories are discrete

3.2 Judging behaviour against what is expected in a person's culture matters because^[1]

- ☐ A all cultures are identical
B the same behaviour may be typical in one setting and not another
C culture is irrelevant to diagnosis
D distress is unnecessary

3.2 B

- what is typical depends on the setting, so context is part of the judgment

Exercise 3.3 (a)

3.3 A person's colleagues reinterpret their ordinary behaviour after learning a diagnosis.

(a) Name the effect.

[1]

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3.3 A person's colleagues reinterpret their ordinary behaviour after learning a diagnosis.

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[1]

(a)

- labelling / stigma

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A person's colleagues reinterpret their ordinary behaviour after learning a diagnosis.

(b) Explain one way clinicians reduce it.

[2]

Exercise 3.3 (b)

3.3 A person's colleagues reinterpret their ordinary behaviour after learning a diagnosis.

(b) Explain one way clinicians reduce it. [2]

(b)

- communicate the diagnosis as a description of current difficulties rather than an identity, and share it only with the person's consent and where it serves their care