

Mental Disorders: Case Study Review

Name: _____

Date: _____

Hour: _____

Classifying Abnormal Behavior

Descriptions of individuals displaying various kinds of abnormal behavior are given on this sheet. In each instance, attempt to classify the disorder in the basis of behavioral symptoms, using the descriptions in the textbook and other sources provided. For each description provide the major diagnostic category followed by subcategory. For example, “anxiety disorder – phobic disorder.” Also, provide notes from the person’s behavior that justify your answer.

These are hypothetical cases and rarely do clinical cases fit so neatly into one specific category.

Case #1

John, a patient at the state mental hospital, appears to be happy and elated. He frequently makes humorous remarks, laughs at them himself, and is successful in making others laugh too. In expressing his thoughts, he jumps from one topic to another without following any particular course. If, when he is talking about his family, the psychologist suddenly interjects a comment about the weather, John immediately switches his conversation to the weather or any other topic the psychologist introduces. Furthermore, he is hyperactive. He is either drumming his fingers, playing with a pencil, or engaging other in his rapid talk. There is no deterioration of intellectual or emotional faculties, however. His present state will probably be followed by a period of depression.

Disorder: _____

Notes: _____

Case #2

Jack has been hearing the same voice for several months, which makes derogatory accusations about his being a sexual pervert. This same voice often commands him to do such things as throw furniture out the window. His speech is monotonous except when he is talking about his troubles, at which time it becomes very animated and vehement. His sentence structure is often shattered and his statements are usually incoherent, because they consist of a sequence of apparently unconnected words. An example of his “word salad” is “The pipe tail on the bed, the TV said, a brown came out of the lawn, the flowers are board walk.” He also coins new words such as “lapicator,” which he said is an important chemical that will be used to purify the world.

Disorder: _____

Notes: _____

Case #3

Jane has been referred to a psychiatrist by her local physician, who can find nothing physically wrong with her. She complains, however, of feeling tense and apprehensive most of the time; she has difficult sleeping and experiences frequent headaches. Minor stresses that she once handled with ease, such as driving in traffic or presenting a paper in class, now make her extremely nervous. In addition, she has moment of terror during which she feels that something dreadful is about to happen to her. Jane has no idea of the source of her fears.

Disorder: _____

Notes: _____

Case #4

Margaret has become increasingly fearful of leaving the house by herself. She insists that her mother or sister accompany her when she goes to the store or even walks as far as the mailbox. The thought of being in a crowd so terrifies her that she no longer attends concerts or church (activities she once enjoyed) regardless of whether someone accompanies her. Her life is confined within the four walls of her home.

Disorder: _____

Notes:

Case #5

Bill is extremely orderly, clean, and stubborn person. He expects everything in the house to be spotless at all times. He insists that every chair, napkin, and ashtray be in its proper place. His wife loves him but finds it difficult to keep the house in the rigid order he demands. He tends to have some time-consuming rituals connected with dressing and personal care, such as arranging his toilet articles in a particular order, rinsing his face exactly five times after shaving, laying out all of his clothes in a fixed sequence and making sure that he puts them on in that order.

Disorder: _____

Notes:

Case #6

Ralph is a highly impulsive person who has difficulty making plans or sticking to a job for any length of time. He has been fired from several jobs because he was caught stealing or because frequent absences due to periodic drinking and gambling sprees. He always blames his employer for his dismissal and will not admit that his own behavior is responsible for his poor job history. Women tend to find him charming and personable, but they soon tire of his irresponsible behavior, frequent financial sponging, and general lack of consideration. His quick temper and disregard for social regulations have brought him into frequent brushes with the law, but he usually manages to charm his way out and has never been convicted of a crime. He appears to feel little guilt or anxiety regarding his behavior.

Disorder: _____

Notes:

Case #7

Following the breakup of her engagement to Fred, Martha has become very despondent. She shows little interest in her job (which previously she found stimulating and exciting) and often calls in sick. She spends a great deal of time alone in her room, sitting idly by the window or listening to the radio. When friends call to invite her out she usually refuses, pleading illness or fatigue. She complains that she feels continually tired, has to force herself to undertake such simple tasks as getting dressed or fixing a meal, and cannot concentrate enough to read a newspaper or magazine. Tears flow at the slightest provocation, and she feels worthless and inadequate. Her condition does not improve after several months have passed.

Disorder: _____

Notes: