FORUM POST: PART 2 (My Response)

Abnormality can be defined as a condition in which certain group of individuals think or act differently to the extent that it breaks the pre-established norms of society. Every society develops certain benchmarks of normality encapsulating the dos and don’ts of everyday life. Some benchmarks have universal acceptability i.e., one who demonstrates anti-social tendencies towards his fellows and exhibits frequent temper tantrums and violence is universally unacceptable, regardless of the society he belongs. On the other hand, some definitions of abnormality are holistically culture specific in nature as some behaviors are completely acceptable in some cultures and some are not; a person who shows body image concerns and controls his eating habits accordingly is said to be perfectly normal in some places whereas in other cultures this condition is termed as eating and other associated disorders. Abnormality can be defined as a deviation from the norms and etiology lies in the genetic, biological, neurological, psychological and social factors. Although all of these factors contribute to the abnormal behavior of individuals yet I personally favor cognitive and neurological model because it hits nail on my head. The cognitive approach suggests that abnormality is based on maladjusted thoughts, perceptions and rationality that contribute to psychological disorders with respect to every demographic i.e., age, gender, socio economic status, race and religion. On the other hand, neurological model stresses on the inappropriate or inadequate structure and function of brain and its associated structures such as neurotransmitters and hormones. Hence, these two compelling models enabled me to conceptualize the etiology of abnormality in my mind which can be changed as I would go through this course in future thoroughly. In psychological terms, abnormality can be depicted in form of psychological disorders i.e., mood, anxiety, personality, somatic, childhood, substance use, somatic and neural disability disorders. I wonder how the classification of mental disorders helps establishing an appropriate treatment plan for the affected individual.

**Response 1 to Tami Sloan**

Your personal life is an inspiration because there are so many lives that are being nurtured by you. You not only look after your children but also numerous pets and children in foster care homes. This notion depicts your pro-social orientation. Moreover, you explained abnormality with respect to all the possible models i.e., biological, behavioral, cognitive and psychodynamic. You started this discussion from presenting multiple etiologies behind abnormal behavior that is strictly situation dependent in nature i.e., sometimes abnormal behavior is caused by single factor whereas there might be incorporated so many etiologies in other situations. In some instances, individual commits certain actions and behaviors knowingly whereas in some instances he is driven by unconscious motives such as repressed thoughts, feelings and emotions. Moreover, it can be biological in nature too as individual might have neurological imbalance by birth and his brain finds it hard to function just like other individuals. Moreover, environmental factors might cause mental disorders as well as a soldier returning from war and having nightmares, a primary school individual being bullied by his classmates and a person suffering from constant rejection. In a nutshell, this post presented a through overview about abnormality and classification of mental health disorders.

**Response 2 to Elias Duarte**

Elias! Your intention behind studying abnormal psychology is quite captivating; understanding the cause of it, comprehending how psychopathology may help getting rid of it and to pass with Grade A. I would like to say that surprisingly, your third aim synchronized best with that of many of us. We all are here to learn and demonstrate this performance in terms of grade A and it is quite healthy to aim so for keeping ourselves motivated. Jumping towards your conceptualization of abnormality, you termed the behavior of majority of individuals as normal because it is socially acceptable. And those who show behavior that deviates from the norms is called abnormal; let me raise a point here; if this is actually the definition of abnormal behavior, do you think a person stealing things frequently would be termed as abnormal? The answer is no! Although stealing things is socially unacceptable behavior which is opposed by the majority; no one calls a thief as maladjusted or abnormal person. Hence, calling a behavior that is committed by a bunch of individuals and is unacceptable for society cannot be termed as abnormal. Moreover, highly intelligent individuals show deviated behaviors from the norms which must be called abnormal according to your definition that is not the case actually. However, I completely agree with the rest of your points that abnormality has multiple etiologies.

**Response 3 to Kristen Pitlock**

You propounded the most intriguing notion about the nature of normality; either it is personal or subjective in nature and human beings are the primary instruments to measure it because everyone experiences maladjustment with his own magnitude and intensity. Some people experience a very little stress but report higher magnitude of it whereas those with good coping skills control their out-of-proportion perception of immense stressful situation as less threatening and good to go. Hence, the definition of abnormality is highly subjective in nature. You also suggested that abnormality might have multiple etiologies which is completely true. In simple words, he stressed the diatheses model of stress that individual who has genetic predisposition regarding any maladjustment can lead a normal life is environment factors support his wellbeing; soon after environment factors or interpersonal relationships intervene the wellbeing of individual, he stats developing the same condition gradually. Besides this, I liked your question; is there any disorder that has single etiology? I guess no, because human being is the product of his genetics and environment; both of these factors affect his wellbeing and maladjustment. We cannot assume any disorder originating from single cause; if not genetic, personal and environmental factors might affect abnormal behavior to a greater degree.

QUIZ:

