Week 9 Summer Essay

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**Essay 1**

A psychological disorder, also known as mental disorder, is characterized by abnormal feelings and behaviors, causing distress for the person experiencing it. However, it is a great debate to define what is normal or abnormal as it depends upon one’s perception. The branch of psychology that studies mental illness including depression, anxiety, and other abnormal behaviors is known as abnormal psychology (Coleman, 1950). However, most of the psychologists do not agree with this definition specifically the part where it mentioned abnormal behavior because abnormality is subject to perception and is therefore very vast field. Some of the approaches to define abnormality are as follows:

* Biological approach: This approach is focused on the medical issues that are the reason for causing mental illness. The treatments to these kinds of mental illnesses require proper medication.
* Psychodynamic approach: According to this approach abnormality is the result of divergence between conscious and subconscious urges. Psychodynamic therapists are usually focused upon the early childhood incidents and examine dreams to understand the real reason for mental illness that may be suppressed in the patient’s memory.
* Behavioral approach: This approach involves studying the behavior of a person to understand his or her condition by using methods like rewards and punishments. However, this approach only focuses on improving the behavior of a person rather than the real issue that underlies the mental illness.
* Cognitive approach: According to this approach abnormality is just a patient’s thought process as to how one perceives something is a key to understand the condition one is suffering from.
* Statistical approach: According to this approach if an individual’s trait is above or below the standard level of society then he or she is considered abnormal.

Moving on towards normality, it is a behavior that is common among people or the absence of any mental illness. The factors involved in normality are having ideal mental health, social norms, the normal anatomy of the brain (nervous system), etc.

Some traits can be viewed as both normal and abnormal for instance if a person is highly intelligent then according to the statistical approach he is considered as abnormal while all the other approaches suggest he is normal.

**Essay 2**

Multiple personality disorder (MPD) or dissociative identity disorder (DID) is a mental disorder that includes the presence of two personalities that take control of the person’s behavior. People having multiple personality disorder often have acute amnesia. Most psychologists consider severe trauma in childhood as a cause of this order (Barach, 1991). Typically, females are more prone to this disorder than males because of the physical or sexual abuse they face during their childhood. However, there are certain controversies or myths that people have about this disorder. Some of them are:

* MPD is not real: Although this order is recognized as a mental disorder yet still the diagnosis of this disease is controversial among many professionals because there is no certain method to ensure that symptoms that people experience are real or not.
* MPD is schizophrenia: People are often confused between these two disorders as some of the symptoms like hallucinations, memory elapse, etc. are the same but schizophrenia does not alter the personality.
* MPD and violence: It is assumed that people having multiple personality disorder are always violent. However, as portrayed in many TV shows the alter personality is not always evil people with MPD are already traumatized and assuming them as violent can make them re-traumatized.

Moving on towards the diagnosis of MPD, it is another controversial subject. According to the “mental health establishment” MPD is also classified as a type of DID yet the concept of this mental disorder is still not stable. As there is no test to diagnose this disorder and it is often very tough to separate fiction from facts. Similarly, there is no legal process through which this disorder can be diagnosed as it totally depends upon psychiatrist and how he or she perceives things. Moreover, having complete information about a person's past can help in diagnosing MPD yet still there is no proof that all the traumatic incidents can cause MPD.

**References**

Barach, P. M. (1991). Multiple personality disorder as an attachment disorder. *Dissociation: Progress in the Dissociative Disorders*.

Coleman, J. C. (1950). Abnormal psychology and modern life.