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| **Psychopathology Learning Table 1: Definitions of Abnormality** |
| **AO1** | **AO3** |
| **DEVIATION FROM SOCIAL NORMS** *Social Norm = behaviour or belief that most people within a society stick to. E.g .shaking hands to greet each other or being fully dressed in public.* Social norms come from the people who make up a society. When someone does not follow the norms of their society, we are likely to notice their behaviour and be wary of that individual. When behaviours go against the moral values shared by a whole society we often class this behaviour as abnormal. For example, if somebody was naked in public, this behaviour would be classed as abnormal.  | P: One issue with deviation from social norms as a definition for abnormality is that social norms **vary and evolve over time**. E: For example, Nymphomania referred to middle class women who were attracted to working class men. This would have been seen as completely against the social norms of society at the time and therefore classed as abnormal, however relationships between classes are seen as much more acceptable in modern society and therefore this is no longer classed as abnormal.E: This means that our definition of abnormality must also evolve and vary over time.L: As a consequence, the internal validity of this definition is reduced because abnormality is being defined in a variety of ways depending on what is accepted in society in a given point in time.  |
| **FAILURE TO FUNCTION ADEQUATELY**Another way in which to define abnormality is to assess whether the person is able to live a ‘normal’ life. This method takes into account the individual’s wellbeing rather than imposing our standards on them. According to this definition, someone is classed as abnormal when they can no longer cope with the tasks of day to day living. For example, somebody with an eating disorder is classed as abnormal as they cannot do an everyday task such as eating breakfast without an intense feeling of anxiety. This would make them likely to avoid eating and therefore they fail to function adequately. Defining abnormality this way also involved the Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF). This is a scale that measures how adequately somebody is functioning. This helps to indicate how much support they need and to plan treatment. | P: Another criticism of this definition is that some **people may appear to function quite well**, but be classed as psychologically abnormal. E: For example, people who live with a disorder such as Tourettes Syndrome, Dyspraxia or ADHD can still carry out day to day activities and function perfectly well in an everyday situation.E: However, this means they would still be classed as living with a psychological disorder.L: Therefore, failure to function adequately ignores other aspects of abnormal behaviour such as the social acceptability of the abnormal behaviour displayed.  |
| **IDEAL MENTAL HEALTH**Jahoda (1958) looked at the physical health model to understand mental health. We look for a diagnosis of illness when criteria for good health, such as normal temperature, blood pressure, energy levels are not met. Jahoda suggests that we can look at mental health in the same way. Jahoda created 6 criteria to define ideal mental health. If people do not meet all the criteria, they will be classed as psychologically abnormal. 1. Healthy self attitudes including good self esteem.
2. Personal growth, fulfilling ones potential.
3. Integration, the ability to cope with stress.
4. Autonomy and independence.
5. Accurate perception of reality.
6. Environmental mastery, the ability to have relationships, manage work, enjoy leisure, adapt to changing circumstances.
 | P: However, this definition can be criticised on the grounds that Jahoda’s criteria is **culturLLY SPECIFIC**. E: Jahoda created the criteria in a Western Society, using desired behaviour of the Western (Individualist) cultures. Therefore not all the criteria are desired in other cultures. For example, collectivist cultures do not value independence or personal growth is a concept desired by individualistic cultures and frowned upon by collectivist cultures.E: As a consequence, we cannot generalise this definition of abnormality to other cultures. We cannot judge whether people from a collectivist culture are abnormal against Jahoda’s criteria. L: This means this definition of abnormality is not universal, and cannot be used to assess patients from other, non-western cultures.  |
| **STATISTICAL INFREQUENCY**This definition aims to define abnormality according to the number of times we observe a behaviour. Someone is classed as abnormal if their behaviour is uncommon in the general population. According to this definition any usual behaviour is considered normal, whilst any unusual behaviour is considered abnormal. For example, we say that at any one time only a small number of people will have an irrational fear of butt | P: One weakness of statistical infrequency as a definition of abnormality is that it does not consider that **UNUSUAL BEHAVIOURS CAN BE POSITIVE.** E: For example, IQ scores over 140 are just as unusual as those below 70 but we wouldn’t think of super-intelligence as an undesirable characteristic that needs treatment. E: This is an issue because just because very few people display certain behaviours does make the behaviour statistically abnormal but doesn’t mean it requires treatment to return to normal. This is a serious limitation of the definition as it means it can never be used alone to make a diagnosis of abnormal behaviour. L: As a consequence, this reduces the usefulness of this definition of abnormality.  |