

Susan Nolen-Hoeksema



# Abnormal Psychology

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## ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY

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# Preface

Writing this book has been a joy. It has provided me with the opportunity to integrate years of scholarly work and teaching in abnormal psychology into a tool that can help students understand abnormal psychology better. In writing this book, I have had the following goals:

1. To address students' various interests in taking a course in abnormal psychology.
2. To call attention to issues of gender as well as culture in discussions of psychological disorders.
3. To present ground-breaking biological research on abnormal psychology in an understandable way, and to provide students with an integrated bio-psycho-social understanding of each of the disorders.
4. To organize the book in a way that matches the approach that many instructors take in organizing their courses.
5. To give students a respect for traditional approaches to understanding abnormal psychology as well as an excitement for the new research and paradigms that are greatly expanding our knowledge.

## Addressing Students' Various Interests

Students take a course on abnormal psychology for various reasons. Some students find the phenomena of abnormal psychology interesting and want to know more about what science has discovered about these phenomena. Others think they may want to become mental health professionals who treat people with psychological problems. Still others want to gain an understanding of troubling behaviors or feelings that they or people close to them have experienced.

During my 12 years of teaching abnormal psychology, I have learned to address each of these motivations. It is not easy to maintain a scholarly research focus while addressing clinical issues and students' personal concerns; but I feel I have been fairly successful at attaining a balance, and my students have recognized and appreciated my efforts. In writing this book, I hope I have brought that balanced approach to students' various interests to the written page.

*Students interested in the science of psychopathology* will appreciate the research focus of this book. Discussions of the causes and treatments for each of the psychological disorders focus on those that have received the most empirical support. For many disorders, I describe critical experiments that have shaped our understanding of those disorders. These descriptions give students a sense of the excitement of doing ground-breaking research in psychology. Throughout each chapter are critical thinking questions, which are referred to as "Questions for the Mind." They are designated by the icon you see in the margin. These questions are designed to challenge students to think like a theorist and researcher of abnormal psychology.





*Students who want to become mental health practitioners* will appreciate the many case studies and autobiographical accounts of people with psychological problems. These are meant to give students a feel for what it is like to have these problems and to work with people who have these problems. The best treatments for psychological problems are described so that students know what types of therapy they will be learning if they become therapists. Excerpts of conversations between therapists and clients bring psychotherapies to life for students. Finally, throughout the book appear critical thinking questions, which are referred to as “Questions for the Heart.” They are designated by the icon you see in the margin. These questions challenge students to consider what it is like to be a person with a disorder, a close friend or family member of such a person, or a therapist trying to provide treatment.

*Students who come to this course to understand troubling feelings, thoughts, or behaviors in themselves or their families or friends* will appreciate the *Application* sections at the end of each chapter, which address personal questions or concerns students bring to this course. These sections aim to give students useful information that addresses their concerns, and many of them provide students with ideas for how to seek more information from mental health professionals about their concerns. Examples of some topics covered in the *Application* sections are “When You Wonder If You Are Abnormal” (Chapter 1), “Is Self-Assessment a Good Idea?” (Chapter 2), “How to Look for a Therapist” (Chapter 3), “Relaxation Exercises” (Chapter 4), “Seeing Oneself in the Personality Disorders” (Chapter 8), “If Your Parent has a Psychological Disorder” (Chapter 9) and “Promoting Responsible Alcohol Use in Young Adults” (Chapter 12).

## Focusing on Gender as Well as Culture

Many abnormal psychology textbooks now acknowledge the importance of gender and culture in shaping people’s experience of psychological problems. In many textbooks, however, issues of gender and culture are raised only sporadically and are often relegated to “boxes” as if they are peripheral issues. In addition, most textbooks attend primarily to culture, and give only cursory attention to gender. This is unfortunate because there are substantial gender differences in the prevalence of most psychopathologies. Gender also influences the ways people manifest psychological problems and perhaps their response to certain treatments for disorders.

*A unique feature of this book is its attention to gender as well as cultural influences on abnormal psychology.* For example, in Chapters 1 and 2, I discuss how people’s gender and cultural background influence whether their behaviors are labeled as abnormal, and the particular diagnoses they might receive. Then in each of the chapters on specific disorders, I discuss the way that people’s gender and cultural background influence their vulnerability to the disorders, the manifestation of the disorders, and the effectiveness of treatments for the disorders.

I have integrated these discussions of gender and culture into each chapter. Information on the differences between genders or between people of various cultures in the experience of disorders can give us clues to the causes of disorders. Integrating this information into the ongoing discussions of the disorders will help students learn to treat this information as central to their understanding of the disorders and to their critique of various theories and treatments for the disorders.

I am in a unique position to bring in-depth discussions of gender into an abnormal psychology textbook. I have spent my career researching gender issues in psychopathology, writing and speaking about these issues for various audiences, and teaching students how to think critically about gender and mental health.

# Integrating Biology, Psychology, and Social Context

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Biological approaches are at the forefront of new work in abnormal psychology. This book emphasizes ground-breaking biological theories and treatments for psychological disorders, and makes these theories and treatments accessible and exciting for students, and easy for instructors to present. Chapters 2 and 3 describe the fundamentals of these theories and treatments, and some of the new methods used to research biological factors in abnormal psychology, including MRI, PET, and CT technologies. The remainder of the book includes discussions of biological approaches to each of the psychological disorders. These theories and treatments are examined critically in light of the evidence for and against them, rather than simplistically as some textbooks do. Throughout the book, the role of biology in producing the gender and cultural differences in psychological disorders is addressed.

Psychological and social factors also play roles in all psychological disorders. A theme throughout this book is that most psychological problems probably have multiple causes; they are the result of a complex interplay of biological, social, and psychological causes. For example, Chapter 6 discusses evidence that people with schizophrenia, a disorder strongly influenced by biological factors, show greater relapse rates if they live in families or cultures that do not provide positive social support. In addition, the fact that women with schizophrenia have a better prognosis than men with schizophrenia is discussed in light of psychological and social differences between the genders, as well as biological differences.

Throughout each chapter, and in the *Bio-Psycho-Social Integration* section at the end of each chapter, I weave together the strongest biological, psychological, and social theories into an integrated framework for understanding each disorder. These frameworks are not simply my own opinions about these disorders, but a description of the best integrative thinking about the disorders currently in the field.

## Organizing the Book's Chapters

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Students in an abnormal psychology course want to begin talking about disorders on the first day of class. Many textbooks, however, have several chapters of introductory material before getting to specific disorders. I have found that this arrangement of material frustrates students and instructors alike, particularly because the introductory material is repeated in chapters on the individual disorders.

I have condensed the introductory material on definitions of abnormality, historical perspectives, assessment, diagnosis, and overviews of biological and psychosocial theories into the first three chapters of this book, under Part I, "Understanding and Treating Abnormality." This section covers all the subject matter necessary to prepare students for the remainder of the book, without giving them a great deal of material that is unnecessary or better introduced in the context of specific disorders.

Part II, "Disorders of Anxiety, Mood, Psychosis, and Personality," covers the anxiety and mood disorders, schizophrenia, the dissociative and somatoform disorders, and the personality disorders. These disorders are grouped together because they are the ones that most instructors discuss in their classes, and because they form the major focus of many theories and research on abnormal psychology.

Part III, "Developmental and Health-Related Disorders," discusses the childhood disorders, eating disorders, sexual and substance use disorders, the role of personality and behavior in physical health, and cognitive disorders. These disorders are grouped together because they occur in a developmental context and often involve people's physical health as well as their mental health.



Part IV, "The Methods, Ethics, and Policy of Abnormal Psychology," addresses the methods and ethical questions in doing research on psychopathology and social policy issues in the field. I have put the chapter on research methods near the end of the book, rather than at the beginning, because some instructors choose not to teach this material directly but refer students to the material in the textbook. The chapter is written so that students can understand it whether they are reading it at the beginning, middle, or end of the course. The chapter on "Abnormality and Social Policy" highlights the roles mental health professionals are increasingly playing in family law (such as in child abuse cases), as well as the traditional issues of involuntary commitment, the insanity defense, and patients' rights.

The organization into 16 chapters should make the book easy to use in the average semester or quarter. Knowing how pressed students and instructors are for time, I have striven to include all the material necessary for students to gain a thorough understanding of abnormal psychology, without including a lot of peripheral material.

## Respecting Tradition While Pushing the Boundaries

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Abnormal psychology is a field deeply rooted in theoretical traditions that still influence practice today. It is also a field being reshaped and expanded by important new research on biology, cognitive processes, and the impact of contextual factors on abnormal psychology. This book presents a balanced view of the continuing impact of traditional theories in abnormal psychology and the emerging impact of new research and paradigms, and it integrates these traditional and emerging views wherever possible.

For example, Chapter 2 discusses the standard assessment methods that have been used in clinical psychology for years. It also discusses the role of state-of-the-art neuroimaging techniques in assessment and research. Later the chapter presents a detailed description of DSM-IV and its development, but this presentation includes questions that have been raised about gender biases in the development of the DSM-IV and the sociopolitical context surrounding the DSM-IV. In each of the chapters on disorders, DSM-IV criteria are presented as the basis for defining and describing the disorders, but issues of gender bias in the application of DSM-IV criteria are discussed when appropriate. Culture-bound syndromes and manifestations of disorders are discussed in each chapter as well.

Chapter 8 on "Personality Disorders" emphasizes the influence of traditional psychodynamic conceptualizations of personality disorders. It also describes newer ideas on how biological vulnerabilities (such as genetics and temperamental factors) might interact with early childhood experiences emphasized in psychodynamic theories to produce some of the personality disorders. Chapter 10 on "Eating Disorders" integrates traditional psychodynamic and family systems theories of anorexia and bulimia nervosa with more recent cognitive theories and new research on the biological contributors to disordered eating patterns.

As a final example, Chapter 13, "Personality, Behavior, and the Body," describes some of the historical perspectives on the effects of personality on physical health (such as the idea that repression is bad for your health), and then describes new, state-of-the-art psycho-biological research that is directly testing some of these perspectives. This chapter goes beyond the brief and often outdated treatment of health psychology given in many abnormal psychology textbooks and gives students an excitement for one of the fastest growing subfields in psychology.

Thus, throughout the book, I have attempted to give students a respect for the traditions in abnormal psychology, particularly those that still influence clinical theory and practice today. At the same time, I have attempted to give students a sense of the excitement many clinicians and researchers have over the new knowledge and paradigms that are changing our understanding of psychopathology.

# Pedagogical Features

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This book includes a number of pedagogical features designed to make learning easier and more enjoyable for students.

- **Annotated Chapter Outlines.** Each chapter begins with an annotated outline that provides students with a stimulating framework for approaching the chapter.
- **Key Terms Defined in Margin.** All of the key terms are defined in the margin near where they first appear in the chapter. The margin glossary provides students with an explicit definition of each term and a running glossary of important terms.
- **Gender and Cultural Influences Sections.** Although discussions of the roles of gender and culture are woven throughout the chapters, each chapter also has separate sections that explicitly bring together facts and hypotheses about the roles of gender and culture.
- **Case Studies.** Case studies are presented for almost every disorder to provide students with a better sense of how the disorder is manifested in real people. Rather than relying only on my own clinical experience to provide the most illustrative cases for each disorder, I have gleaned cases from dozens of colleagues, books, and articles, as well as from clients I have known.
- **Autobiographical Accounts of People with Disorders.** Several chapters highlight excerpts from autobiographies of people with a disorder (for example, Kay Redfield Jamison, Donna Williams, William Styron). These excerpts take students into the minds and lives of people living with psychological disorders.
- **“Heart” and “Mind” Critical Thinking Questions.** This book has two types of critical thinking questions. “Questions for the Heart” challenge students to reflect on the personal experiences of people with psychopathology, their family members, and therapists. “Questions for the Mind” challenge students to think analytically about specific theoretical or research issues.
- **Summing Up Sections.** Each major section of a chapter ends with a feature that summarizes, in bullet form, the major points of that section.
- **Chapter Summaries.** Each chapter ends with an integrative summary of the major points of the chapter.
- **Bio-Psycho-Social Integrations.** Distinctively designed sections at the end of each chapter explicitly integrate the various biological, psychological, and social theories and treatments described in the chapter.
- **Application Sections.** Practical sections at the end of each chapter address personal issues or concerns that students often bring to a course on abnormal psychology, such as fears that they are suffering from a disorder, the experience of having a parent with a disorder, and questions about how to achieve healthy behaviors and attitudes toward eating.

## Ancillary Package

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This book is supported by a number of ancillaries that will help students and instructors move through the abnormal psychology course.

*Clashing Views on Abnormal Psychology: A Taking Sides® Custom Reader* is a debate-style reader designed to introduce students to controversies in abnormal psychology. I have compiled issues of current concern to mental health professionals and lay people. Each issue is explored by two articles that represent “Yes” and “No” responses. By requiring students to analyze opposing viewpoints and reach considered judgments, *Clashing Views* actively engages students’ critical thinking skills.

The **Study Guide** provides students with a thorough review of the material in the textbook. Each chapter of the study guide includes learning objectives, a list of essential



ideas from the chapter in the textbook, a guided review through all of the major sections, a case example with questions about the case, a 20-item practice multiple-choice exam with answers, and a practice essay exam with answers. I coauthored this study guide with Robert Davis. Students can be assured that it accurately and thoroughly represents the most important material in the textbook.

The **Instructor's Course Planner** includes an overview of each chapter, learning objectives, suggestions and resources for lecture topics, classroom activities, between-class projects, suggestions for video and media that will enhance lectures and discussions, and essay questions that will help students think about material between classes. A special section of the planner includes an instructor's manual for the reader, *Clashing Views on Abnormal Psychology: A Taking Sides Custom Reader*. The course planner was written by Dr. Anita Rosenfield at Chaffey Community College. With more than ten years of teaching experience, Dr. Rosenfield has taught abnormal psychology at both California State University, Los Angeles, and Chaffey Community College.

The **Test Item File**, also compiled by Dr. Rosenfield, includes 1,600 multiple-choice and essay items. Multiple-choice items are classified as factual, conceptual, or applied, and referenced to the appropriate learning objective and textbook page number.

**Computerized Test Item Files** are available in MicroTest, a powerful but easy-to-use test-generating program by Chariot Software Group. MicroTest is available for DOS, Windows, and Macintosh. MicroTest enables you to select questions easily from the Test Item File and print a test and answer key. It also lets you customize questions, headings, and instructions, add or import questions of your own, and print your test in a choice of fonts if your printer supports them.

**Annual Editions: Abnormal Psychology 97/98** brings together a wide range of more than 40 carefully selected articles on topics related to the latest research and thinking on abnormal behavior, its causes, and therapies. Compiled by Joseph Palladino at the University of Southern Illinois, this volume's sources include *Scientific American*, *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, *Psychology Today*, and *Newsweek*.

**Psych Online 97: Abnormal, Clinical and Counseling Psychology Edition** is a reference guide that points students and instructors to electronic resources in abnormal, clinical, and counseling psychology. Prepared by Patricia Wallace, Director of Information Technologies and psychologist at the University of Maryland, *Psych Online 97* includes general help in using the Internet and specific sites for academic and professional resources as well as self-help and support.

**Videotapes** that can support the textbook include *DSM-IV Videotaped Clinical Vignettes*, as well as *The World of Abnormal Psychology*, *The Brain*, and *Madness* series. These videotapes are available to instructors based on the number of textbooks ordered from McGraw-Hill by your college bookstore.

## Acknowledgments

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Writing a textbook is a big undertaking. I am deeply grateful to the dozens of people who have provided me editorial, scholarly, technical, clerical, and emotional support as I wrote this book.

Michael Lange first approached me about writing an abnormal psychology textbook that dealt seriously with issues of gender as well as culture in psychopathology. His vision and enthusiasm made me think it was possible, and certainly interesting, to attempt this task while maintaining my research, teaching, and family life. Ted Underhill and Steven Yetter provided invaluable, persistent, and patient editorial advice and support. Sarah Lane and Julie Hall did a wonderful job in copy editing the manuscript. The McGraw-Hill team—Jane Vaicunas, Meera Dash, Jim Rozsa, Susan Kunchandy, Gloria Schiesl, Mary Christianson, Carrie Burger, and Sandy Ludovissy—put the finishing touches on the book. And I had a fabulous time working with Toni Michaels in choosing the photography for this book. Toni's great eye and quick wit made those hours and hours of looking at images pure fun, resulting in an attractive, compelling, and upbeat (for an abnormal psychology textbook) set of photos.

Reviewers contributed to the development of this book at every stage. The prospectus for this book was reviewed by instructors and researchers of abnormal psychology and by a focus group, and substantial changes in the organization and focus of the book were made as a result of these reviewers' comments:

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The first draft of each chapter was reviewed for both style and content by expert teachers and writers. Each chapter was then thoroughly rewritten to reflect these additional reviewers' suggestions for new pedagogical features and ways of making material more accessible to students:

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Writing a textbook requires endless computer searches for information, runs to the library, phone calls to researchers to follow-up on their written work, typing of manuscripts, tracking down references, and so on. Many people helped me with these tasks, most notably Robert Davis, Jennifer Schneps, Leslie Smithline, and Leonor Diaz. They were patient and diligent, and even managed to turn many tasks into fun learning experiences.

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Susan Nolen-Hoeksema  
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# About the Author

Susan Nolen-Hoeksema received her B.A. in 1982 from Yale University and her Ph.D. in 1986 from the University of Pennsylvania. She then taught at Stanford University for nine years, where she received tenure. Dr. Nolen-Hoeksema currently teaches in the Psychology Department at the University of Michigan. She is well-known across the world for her work on gender differences in mood disorders, coping with depression, bereavement, and childhood depression. During the last twelve years she has published four books and over thirty-five articles and chapters. Many of Dr. Nolen-Hoeksema's research and theoretical articles have been published in the leading journals in psychology, including the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, and *Psychological Bulletin*.

Dr. Nolen-Hoeksema has received numerous awards for her research and writing. These include the David Shakow Early Career Award from the American Psychological Association, the W. T. Grant Foundation Faculty Scholars Award, and an Independent Scientist Award from the National Institute of Mental Health. She serves on a panel that reviews research proposals at the National Institute of Mental Health, and as a Consulting Editor for the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*.

Dr. Nolen-Hoeksema has received two university-wide awards for her teaching of abnormal psychology. She is currently Director of the *Gender and Mental Health Training Program* at the University of Michigan. This program trains predoctoral and postdoctoral students to conduct research on the role of gender in mental health and to practice gender-sensitive interventions for people with psychological problems. Dr. Nolen-Hoeksema also gives workshops to more than 2,000 health care professionals each year, focusing on gender and mood disorders.



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