

“On Being Sane in Insane Places”

Rosenhan’s Questions

- ❑ Rosenhan wanted to know that if the patients were misdiagnosed, what the consequences were.
- ❑ Can mental health professionals really tell the difference between mental illness or no mental illness?
- ❑ Eight pseudopatients (5m/3f,) from various backgrounds pretended to be mentally ill and tried to gain admittance into various psychiatric institutions.



The main building of St Elizabeths Hospital (1996), located in Washington, D.C., now boarded up and abandoned, was one of the sites of the Rosenhan experiment





Psychiatry

- ❑ Participants faked symptoms to gain admittance to mental institutions. Upon admittance they immediately stopped showing any symptoms of abnormality.
- ❑ All but one were diagnosed to have schizophrenia.
- ❑ The length of hospitalization was 7 to 52 days with an overall average of 19 days.
- ❑ The study also showed in certain situations the label becomes self-limiting and self-confirming.
 - ★ Most of all Rosenhan's Studies proved that the hospital could not distinguish the mentally sane from the insane.



Abnormality vs. Insanity

- *Insanity is a legal term*
- The *insanity defense* is used to argue that a mentally ill person should not be held responsible for his or her actions.
- Not everyone diagnosed with a mental disorder would be able to claim insanity - that designation is determined by judges and juries.



Labeling Psychological Disorders

"The hospital itself imposes a special environment in which the meaning of behavior can be easily misunderstood."

D. L. Rosenhan, 1973

Labels can bias perceptions and change reality.

Labels can be arbitrary and betray value judgments.

Labels can serve as self-fulfilling prophecies

Labels can stigmatize people with disorders and add to stereotypes

BUT.....

Labels are helpful for healthcare professionals when communicating with one another and establishing therapeutic goals and plans.

The DSM may contain the information to **correct** inaccurate perceptions of mental illness.

Misconceptions



- Mental health patients stereotyped as homicidal (Hannibal Lecter from *Silence of the Lambs*)
- 9 out of 10 people disorders are NOT dangerous, in fact they are more likely to be a victim of violence than to perpetrate it.
- If they can steer clear of alcohol and drugs, those released from a mental hospital are no prone to violence than their neighbors.

Two Major Classifications of disorders:

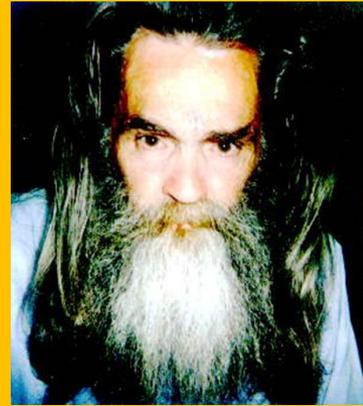
Neurotic Disorders

- **Distressing, but one can still function in society and act rationally.**

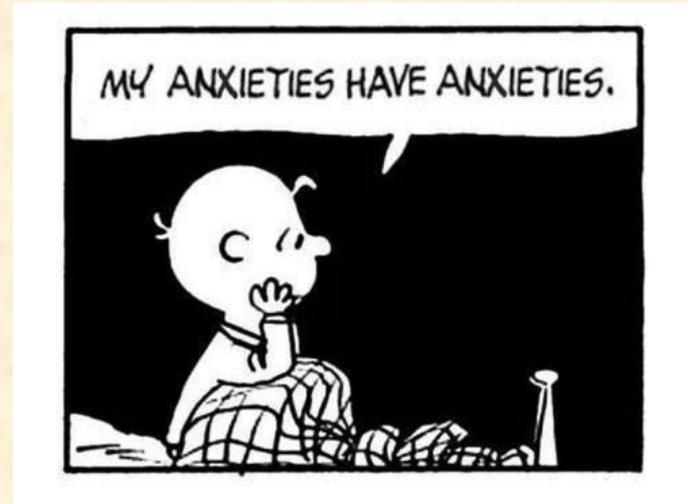
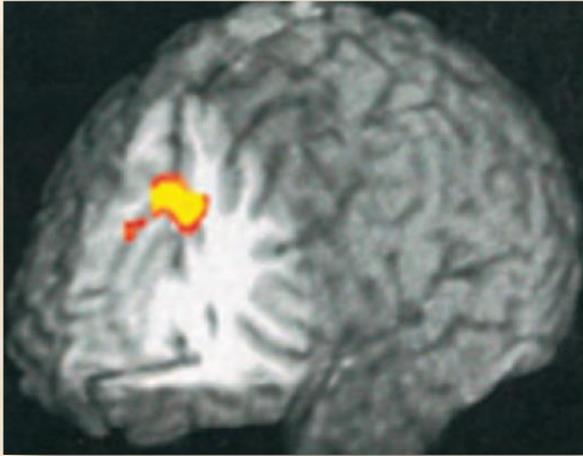
Psychotic Disorders

- Person loses contact with reality, experiences distorted perceptions.

We will cover psychotic disorders later in the chapter.



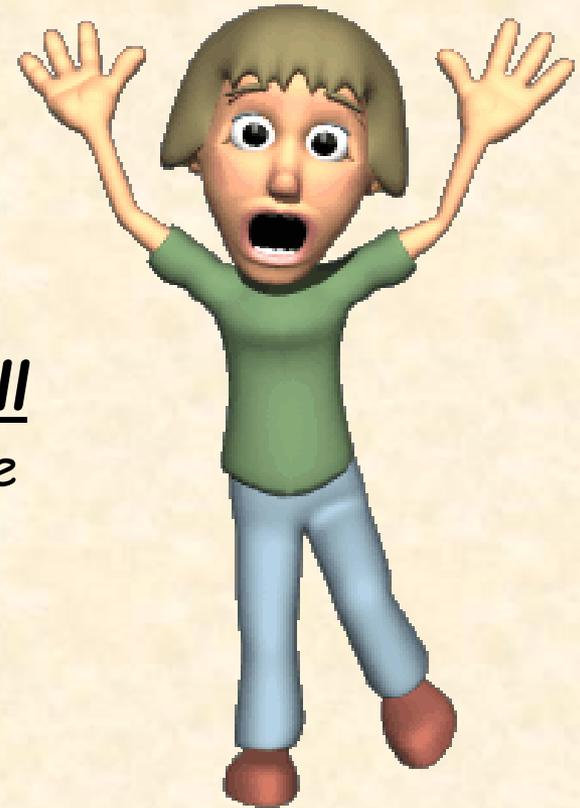
What is anxiety?



What is anxiety?

a neurotic disorder

- It is a state of intense apprehension, uneasiness, uncertainty, or fear.
- The primary symptoms in this group of conditions consist of anxiety itself or defenses against anxiety.
- The patient fears something awful will happen to them. (*Fear of what the future may bring.*)
 - Generalized Anxiety Disorder
 - Panic Disorder
 - Phobias
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder



Anxiety as portrayed in Bob's Burgers



Generalized Anxiety Disorder

- An anxiety disorder in which a person is continuously tense, apprehensive and in a state of autonomic nervous system arousal.



The patient is constantly tense and worried, feels inadequate, is oversensitive, can't concentrate and suffers from insomnia.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) as portrayed in *What About Bob?*

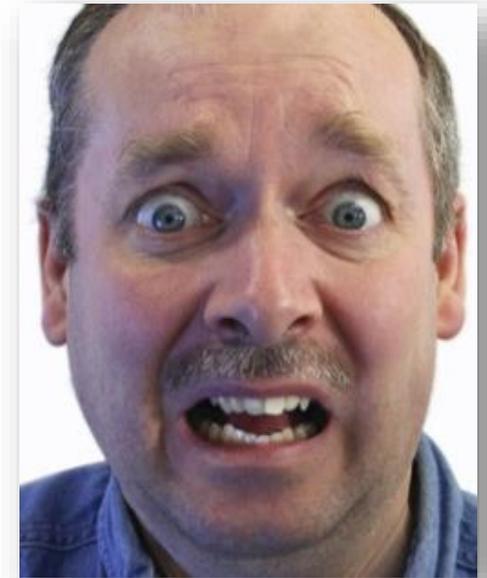


Panic Disorder: “I’m Dying”

A panic attack is not just an “anxiety attack.” It may include:

- many minutes of intense dread or terror.
- chest pains, choking, numbness, or other frightening physical sensations. Patients may feel certain that it’s a heart attack.
- a feeling of a need to escape.

Panic disorder refers to repeated and unexpected panic attacks, as well as a fear of the next attack, and a change in behavior to avoid panic attacks.



Panic attack as portrayed in Mad Men – Don Draper thinks someone is on to his con



Agoraphobia

Panic disorder may cause secondary disorders, such as **agoraphobia**.

- An intense fear and anxiety to a real or anticipated place or situation where escape might be difficult. (often end up housebound)
- People with agoraphobia may avoid situations such as:
 - being alone outside of the home
 - traveling in a car, bus, or airplane
 - being in a crowded area
 - being in enclosed spaces such as shops and cinemas
 - being on a bridge or in an elevator



Agoraphobia as portrayed in Shameless



Thought experiment

- What are 3 of your biggest fears?

Coulrophobia



Fear of
Clowns



Specific Phobia

- A specific phobia is more than just a strong fear or dislike. A specific phobia is diagnosed when there is an *uncontrollable, irrational, intense desire to avoid the object or situation.*
- Even an image of the object can trigger a reaction--"GET IT AWAY FROM ME!!!"



Phobia as portrayed in *Awakenings*

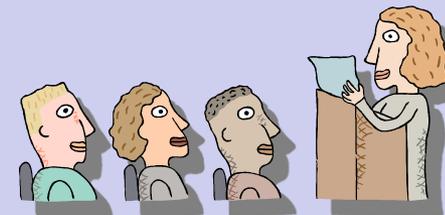


My Extreme Animal Phobia





Social Phobia



- Fear of being in social situations in which one will be embarrassed or humiliated.

Top Three Fears - U.S. Population,
percent according to Statistic Brain

