

When is a Psychological Disorder a Disability?

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Goals for presentation

- *To review DSM-V criteria for some of the most frequently diagnosed psychological disorders.
- *To examine the difference between the DSM-V criteria for the disorders and the criteria for the disorder to be considered "a disabling condition."
- *To review diagnostic tools commonly used in making a diagnosis of the disorders.

What is a mental disability?

- The DSM-V is most often considered that authoritative guide regarding the diagnosis of mental disorders.
- According to the DSM-V, an individual with a mental disorder must exhibit one or more of the following criteria:
- 1. The individual experiences subjective distress (i.e. painful psychological symptoms such as anxiety or depression).

What is a mental disability?

- 2. The individual is impaired in one or more important areas of life functioning, such as the capacity to work, raise a family, or care for personal health.
- 3. The individual may experience a significantly increased risk of disability, injury, or loss of freedom.
- 4. The behavioral symptoms are not an expected response to a normal (yet stressful) life event (i.e. such as normal bereavement).

Disabling mental conditions according to SSA

Must have medical documentation as well as:

- *Demonstrate an impairment in understanding, remembering, or applying information
- *Demonstrate an impairment in interacting with others
- *Demonstrate an impairment regarding the ability to concentrate, persist, or maintain pace.
- *Demonstrate an impairment in the ability to adapt or manage oneself.

From www.ssa.gov/disability

Disabling mental conditions, cont.

○ OR-

The person must demonstrate that they have a "serious and persistent mental disorder" which must be medically documented over a period of two years.

DSM-V Disorders

- The DSM-V has over 300 psychological diagnoses; however, not all of these are considered by SSA (Social Security Administration) to be disabling conditions.
- However, it should be noted that whether or not a condition is deemed disabling by the SSA does not impact that individual's protection under the ADA.

DSM-V Disorders-Depression

- *Sad mood* OR *loss of interest or pleasure (anhedonia)*
 - Symptoms are present nearly every day, most of the day, for at least 2 weeks
 - Not due to normal bereavement (present in DSM-IV-TR but removed in DSM-5)
- PLUS four of the following symptoms:
 - Sleeping too much or too little
 - Psychomotor retardation or agitation
 - Poor appetite and weight loss, or increased appetite and weight gain
 - Loss of energy
 - Feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt
 - Difficulty concentrating, thinking, or making decisions
 - Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

Depression as a disabling condition

- Depressive, bipolar and related disorders,
- Depressive disorder, characterized by five or more of the following:
 - Depressed mood;
 - Diminished interest in almost all activities;
 - Appetite disturbance with change in weight;
 - Sleep disturbance;
 - Observable psychomotor agitation or retardation;
 - Decreased energy;
 - Feelings of guilt or worthlessness;
 - Difficulty concentrating or thinking; or
- Thoughts of death or suicide.

DSM-V Bipolar Disorder

- Three forms:
 - Bipolar I, Bipolar II, and Cyclothymia
 - Mania defining feature of each
 - Differentiated by severity and duration of mania
 - Usually involve episodes of depression alternating with mania
 - Depressive episode required for Bipolar II, but not Bipolar I
- Mania
 - State of intense elation or irritability
 - Hypomania (hypo = "under"; hyper = "above")
 - Symptoms of mania but less intense
 - Does not involve significant impairment, mania does

Bipolar as a disabling condition

- Bipolar disorder, characterized by three or more of the following:
- Pressured speech;
- Flight of ideas;
- Inflated self-esteem;
- Decreased need for sleep;
- Distractibility;
- Involvement in activities that have a high probability of painful consequences that are not recognized; or
- Increase in goal-directed activity or psychomotor agitation.

DSM-V Schizophrenia

- Two or more symptoms lasting for at least 1 month; one symptom should be 1, 2, or 3:
 - 1) Delusions
 - 2) Hallucinations
 - 3) Disorganized speech
 - 4) Abnormal psychomotor behavior (catatonia)
 - 5) Negative symptoms (blunted affect, avolition, asociality)
- Functioning in work, relationships, or self-care have declined since onset
- Signs of disorder for at least 6 months; at least 1 month of the symptoms above; or, if during a prodromal or residual phase, negative symptoms or two or more of symptoms 1-4 in less severe form

Schizophrenia as a disabling condition

- Medical documentation of one or more of the following:
- Delusions or hallucinations;
- Disorganized thinking (speech); or
- Grossly disorganized behavior or catatonia.

DSM-V Anxiety Disorders

- Anxiety disorders in the DSM-V include:
- GAD
- Specific Phobia
- OCD
- Panic Disorder

Anxiety disorders a disabling condition

- Anxiety disorder, characterized by three or more of the following:
- Restlessness;
- Easily fatigued;
- Difficulty concentrating;
- Irritability;
- Muscle tension; or
- Sleep disturbance.
- Panic disorder or agoraphobia, characterized by one or both:
- Panic attacks followed by a persistent concern or worry about additional panic attacks or their consequences; or

Anxiety disorders as disabling

- Disproportionate fear or anxiety about at least two different situations (for example, using public transportation, being in a crowd, being in a line, being outside of your home, being in open spaces).
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder, characterized by one or both:
- Involuntary, time-consuming preoccupation with intrusive, unwanted thoughts; or
- Repetitive behaviors aimed at reducing anxiety.

Intellectual Disability

- Formerly known as Mental Retardation in DSM-IV-TR
 - Not preferred due to stigma
 - Followed the guidelines of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)
- The AAIDD Definition of Intellectual Disability:
 - Intellectual disability is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills
 - This disability begins before age 18
 - *Five Assumptions Essential to the Application of the Definition*
 1. Limitations in present functioning must be considered within the context of community environments typical of the individual's age, peers, and culture
 2. Valid assessment considers cultural and linguistic diversity as well as differences in communication, sensory, motor, and behavioral factors
 3. Within an individual, limitations often coexist with strengths
 4. An important purpose of describing limitations is to develop profile of needed supports
 5. With appropriate personalized supports over a sustained period, the life functioning of the person with intellectual disability generally will improve

Intellectual Disability

- This disorder is characterized by significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, significant deficits in current adaptive functioning, and manifestation of the disorder before age 22. Signs may include, but are not limited to, poor conceptual, social, or practical skills evident in your adaptive functioning.
- The disorder that we evaluate in this category may be described in the evidence as intellectual disability, intellectual developmental disorder, or historically used terms such as "mental retardation."

Other disorders

- Neurocognitive disorders
- Autism
- ADHD
- Substance Abuse

When a disorder is not a disability...

- Reasonable accommodations
 - 15 or more employees
 - Cannot cause undue hardship on the employer (i.e. cannot cause an undue financial burden on the employer's resources or cause a significant change in structure of the business).
 - Cannot lower the quality or production standard of the business

Reasonable accommodations

- Flexible scheduling to allow for Dr. appointments or therapy
- Partitions to minimize sounds
- Additional time to learn new tasks
- Providing a job coach
- Allowing tape recordings of meetings



The End
