

Exercise walk-through

Explaining and Classifying Psychological Disorders ■ 5.3

eXercise

You must be able to

- state the criteria commonly used to identify a disorder
- explain the **biopsychosocial** 生物心理社会 model
- describe the purpose and limits of a **classification system** 分类系统
- discuss the effects of **stigma** 污名 and **labelling** 标签

Method — What counts as a disorder

Behaviour is usually considered disordered when it involves significant **distress** or **impairment of functioning**, and departs from what is typical or expected in the person's culture. No single criterion is sufficient alone.

Method — The biopsychosocial model

Disorders are explained by biological, psychological and social factors acting together. The model is now standard because single-factor accounts predict poorly.

Method — Classification and its limits

A shared system allows clinicians to communicate, researchers to compare samples, and treatments to be matched to conditions. Its limits are that categories are imposed on continuous variation, comorbidity is common, and criteria change between editions.

Method — Stigma and labelling

A diagnosis can open access to treatment and to explanation. It can also become an identity others apply to everything the person does, and evidence of that effect is one reason clinicians are careful about how diagnoses are communicated.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State two criteria used in deciding whether behaviour is disordered.

Solution 2.1

Method: What counts as a disorder

Worked steps

any two of: significant distress; impairment of functioning; departure from what is typical or expected in the person's culture **B2**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Explain what the biopsychosocial model claims.

Solution 2.2

Method: The biopsychosocial model

Worked steps

disorders arise from biological, psychological and social factors acting together **B1**, because single-factor accounts predict poorly **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

A clinician is reluctant to give a diagnosis to an adolescent.

- (a) State one benefit of a diagnosis.
- (b) State one risk.

Solution 2.3

Worked steps

(a) it gives access to treatment and an explanation **B1**. (b) it may become a label others apply to everything the person does **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

A limitation of categorical classification is that

- A** it prevents communication
- B** it imposes categories on continuous variation
- C** it cannot be used in research
- D** criteria never change

Solution 3.1

- A it prevents communication
- B it imposes categories on continuous variation** 
- C it cannot be used in research
- D criteria never change

Worked steps

B. real variation is continuous while categories are discrete.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Judging behaviour against what is expected in a person's culture matters because

- A** all cultures are identical
- B** the same behaviour may be typical in one setting and not another
- C** culture is irrelevant to diagnosis
- D** distress is unnecessary

Solution 3.2

Method: What counts as a disorder

- A all cultures are identical
- B the same behaviour may be typical in one setting and not another 
- C culture is irrelevant to diagnosis
- D distress is unnecessary

Worked steps

B. what is typical depends on the setting, so context is part of the judgment.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A person's colleagues reinterpret their ordinary behaviour after learning a diagnosis.

- (a) Name the effect.
- (b) Explain one way clinicians reduce it.

Solution 3.3

Method: Stigma and labelling

Worked steps

(a) labelling / stigma **B1**. (b) communicate the diagnosis as a description of current difficulties rather than an identity **B1**, and share it only with the person's consent and where it serves their care **B1**.