

Exercise walk-through

Selection of Categories of Psychological Disorders ■ 5.4

eXercise

You must be able to

- state the defining feature of an **anxiety** 焦虑 disorder
- state the defining features of **depressive** 抑郁 and **bipolar** 双相 disorders
- describe the main features of **schizophrenia** 精神分裂症
- distinguish a category from a normal reaction to circumstances

Method — Anxiety disorders

Persistent, excessive fear or worry that is out of proportion to the actual threat and impairs functioning. The distinguishing feature is not the presence of fear but its persistence and disproportion.

Method — Depressive and bipolar

A **depressive** disorder involves persistent low mood or loss of interest with associated changes in sleep, appetite, energy and concentration. **Bipolar** disorder additionally involves periods of markedly elevated, expansive or irritable mood with increased activity.

Method — Schizophrenia

Features include disturbances of thought and perception — delusions and hallucinations — disorganised speech, and reductions in motivation and emotional expression. It is a disorder of thought and perception, not of having “two personalities”.

Method — Category against reaction

Grief after a bereavement, or fear before a genuinely dangerous event, is not by itself a disorder. Duration, disproportion and impairment are what distinguish a disorder from an expected reaction.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State the defining feature of an anxiety disorder.

Solution 2.1

Method: Anxiety disorders

Worked steps

persistent, excessive fear or worry **B1** that is out of proportion to the actual threat and impairs functioning **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

State one feature that distinguishes bipolar from depressive disorder.

Solution 2.2

Method: Depressive and bipolar

Worked steps

bipolar disorder additionally involves periods of markedly elevated, expansive or irritable mood **B1** with increased activity **B1**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

A person experiences low mood for two weeks after a bereavement.

- (a) State why this alone is not a diagnosis.
- (b) State one feature that would raise concern.

Solution 2.3

Method: Category against reaction

Worked steps

- (a) grief after bereavement is an expected reaction, not by itself a disorder **B1**.
- (b) any one of: persistence well beyond the expected period; severe impairment of functioning; symptoms disproportionate to the loss **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

Delusions and hallucinations are most characteristic of

- A** an anxiety disorder
- B** a depressive disorder
- C** schizophrenia
- D** bipolar disorder without psychosis

Solution 3.1

Method: Schizophrenia

- A an anxiety disorder
- B a depressive disorder
- C schizophrenia 
- D bipolar disorder without psychosis

Worked steps

C. disturbances of thought and perception define schizophrenia.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

The claim that schizophrenia means having “two personalities” is

- A** accurate
- B** a common misunderstanding
- C** part of the diagnostic criteria
- D** true only in children

Solution 3.2

Method: Schizophrenia

- A accurate
- B a common misunderstanding 
- C part of the diagnostic criteria
- D true only in children

Worked steps

- B. it is a widespread misunderstanding of the condition.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 2 marks

A student feels intense fear before every presentation and avoids courses that require them.

- (a) State the two features that suggest a disorder rather than ordinary nerves.
- (b) State one reason a diagnosis should not be made from this description alone.

Solution 3.3

Method: Category against reaction

Worked steps

(a) disproportion to the actual threat **B1**; impairment, since it changes course choices **B1**. (b) a diagnosis requires a full clinical assessment, including duration and other explanations **B1**.