

Abnormal Psychology

When Coping Doesn't Work

What is Abnormal Behaviour

- First, what is normal?
- What is abnormal?

What is Abnormal Behaviour?

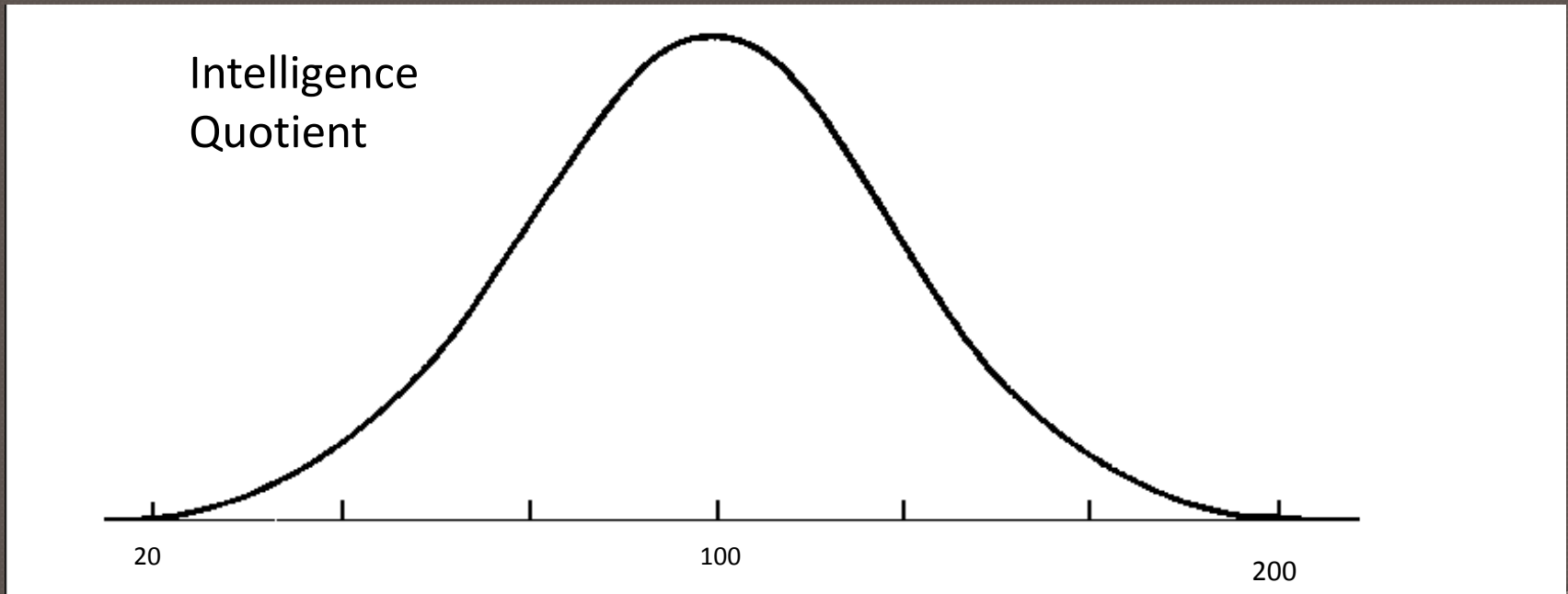
- Steven Hawking is abnormally intelligent.
- Nelson Mandela is abnormally humane.
- Should psychologists be treating these two?
- 1960s men with earrings were deemed abnormal.
- Should we commit men with pierced ears to treatment?
- The use of a burka in Canada is abnormal, but is it abnormal in Afghanistan?

What is Abnormal Behaviour?

- ◉ Statistically infrequent
- ◉ Violates of social norms
- ◉ Personally distressful
- ◉ Disability or dysfunction
- ◉ Unexpected

Statistical Infrequency

- Norm curve = most people in middle for most traits
- Norm curve used to diagnose intellectual disabilities (mental retardation in DSM-IV)
- Not sufficient alone to diagnose mental illness



Violation of Norms

- ◉ Behaviour that violates social norms
- ◉ Makes observers uncomfortable
- ◉ OCD rituals, antisocial behaviours
- ◉ Insufficient alone
 - Criminals not usually studied as abnormal
 - Anxious person studied, doesn't stand out

Personal Distress

- ◉ Behaviour is abnormal if it creates great distress for the individual experiencing it
- ◉ Again, insufficient alone to diagnose mental illness:
 - Psychopath
 - Extreme hunger can create distress

Disability or Dysfunction

- Disability = impairment in some area of life
- Agoraphobia = fear of public places
- Little people have a disability, but do not need psychological help

Unexpectedness

- Anxiety over a life changing event is expected.
- Anxiety over climbing a ladder to change a light bulb is unexpected.
- Extreme sadness after the death of a loved one is expected.
- Extreme sadness with no trigger is unexpected.

DSM-IV

- ◉ Diagnostician's Statistical Manual, 4
- ◉ Psychologist/psychiatrist's diagnostic tool
- ◉ 5 Axes to assess individual's condition

DSM-IV, Axis I

- ◉ Clinical syndromes
- ◉ Schizophrenia
- ◉ Generalized anxiety disorder
- ◉ Major depression
- ◉ Substance abuse
- ◉ Similar to illnesses and diseases recognized in medicine

DSM-IV, Axis II

- Personality disorders
- Deep seated, long standing, persistent pattern of disregard for accepted standards of conduct
- Intellectual disabilities

DSM-IV, Axis III

- General medical conditions linked to mental illness
- Is the depression caused by chronic pain due to terminal illness?

DSM-IV, Axis IV

- Psychosocial and environmental problems
- Family situation
- Economic situation
- Occupational situation

DSM-IV, Axis V

- Global assessment of functioning
- How well is the individual coping at the present time?
- 100-superior functioning in a wide range of activities, life's problems are never out of hand
- 70-Mild symptoms or difficulty socially or occupationally, generally functions well
- 40-Some impairment in reality testing or major impairment in several areas
- 10-Persistent danger of harming self or others