

Hello, class. So in today's lesson, we're going to be examining one specific category of mental disorders within psychology, and that's called psychotic disorders. Now psychosis is a sort of extreme psychological concept. It's something that shows the more drastic effects of mental disorders. And so it's been popularized as a result of this, especially within a lot of TV shows and media, but it's also something that's very widely misunderstood.

So the purpose of this lesson is to provide a very clear definition of what psychosis and psychotic disorders actually are, as well as what are a lot of the common symptoms that we can identify with those things. Now psychosis, as a word, is related to the Greek word psyche, which means the mind, and -osis, which refers to some kind of abnormal or non-normal state. And psychosis literally means some kind of split, or loss of contact, from reality, or from normal mental functioning. So psychotic disorders are different ways that this kind of thing may occur. So in other words, a person with psychosis has a completely different experience of reality from what everybody else around them might have as well.

OK, now the most recognized form of a psychotic disorder is schizophrenia, and that's something to examine on its own. But it can also be caused in different other ways as well. It can be caused by specific damage to the brain, which is what we call organic psychosis. And it can actually occur normally, through normal aging and the deterioration of the brain as well, which is what we call dementia. An example of dementia is Alzheimer's, where a person has a completely different kind of mental feeling about what's going on in the world. In fact, they often relate it to past events, and they don't relate it to what the actual reality of the things around them are.

And it can also be caused by people intentionally as well, through the use of drugs. This is usually a temporary state, say, for example, if somebody uses a drug like LSD, or acid, they can have a temporary sort of psychosis as well, and they might return later on. So this isn't what we would call a psychotic disorder, but rather an intentional psychotic state. Excuse me. But drug use can also lead to long-lasting effects, and they can also worsen existing conditions of psychosis, and lead to the development, or the worsening, of a psychotic disorder.

Now psychosis and psychotic disorders are characterized by two major features, or symptoms. And these are, again, ones that you're probably familiar with, but let's make sure that we have a common definition to understand these, and these are hallucinations and delusions. Now hallucinations, in a very broad way, are any kind of imagined sensations, or in other words, a feeling that a person has with any kind of stimulus, or anything that actually causes that feeling to occur, in the external world. So something is not actually there, but it might seem absolutely real to a person. They might say without a doubt that that is actually there.

So it's important to remember that your brain interprets any kind of sensory information that's coming in, and then gives it to you, and that creates your perception of what's occurring around you. So if a person's brain says that

something is real, that person will believe it's real without a shadow of a doubt, because they don't have anything else to interpret it. And this is why hallucinations can be very strong for a person that's having them.

Now hallucinations can take the form of any kind of sensory input that a person might have. For example, they might have some kind of visual hallucination, which is to say, they have flashes of color, or light. Oftentimes, visual also take the form of some kind of human figure. They can also have smells, which is generally something unpleasant, like a person might have a sensation of rotting flesh, or something like that.

They can have tactile, or touch hallucinations, which often take the form of a feeling of bugs crawling all over a person's skin, or the most common of which is auditory hallucinations, and these generally take the form of voices inside a person's head. So a person has the perception that people are talking, either to them or around them. Oftentimes they're making some kind of positive or negative comments about that person and their actions.

Now the other symptom of a psychotic disorder is a delusion. And a delusion is something that a person strongly believes in, even if there's evidence that it isn't necessarily true. So a person insists that something is absolutely true, and they can't be persuaded that it's not actually true. And this can range from very close to real life beliefs, to the very bizarre or far-fetched. For example, a person with very extreme delusions might have a feeling that aliens are controlling their brain, or they might have the belief that an extra limb is growing out of their back, even though there's no evidence to prove that that's actually true.

Now there are several different forms of delusions as well. The most important to remember is a paranoid delusion, which is to say, when a person believes that they're being persecuted by others. In other words, a person with paranoid delusions might think that the police are constantly monitoring them, and this can lead to a paranoid delusion disorder. Another form of delusion would be erotomanic, which is to say they believe that another person loves them, even though they might have never have met them. And this is the case in, for example, celebrity stalkers, oftentimes.

They might also have grandiose delusions, which is to say they have feelings of being some kind of great person. For example, they might think they're the second coming of Jesus, or something like that. They might have jealous delusions, which is to say they have strong feelings that their spouse or significant other is cheating on them, without any kind of evidence to back it up, as well as somatic delusions, which is to say they have this belief that their body is diseased, or rotting, or it's falling apart in some kind of way. OK, so this is a quick overview of what psychosis entails, as well as the two most important symptoms of what a psychotic disorder is.