



Abnormal Psychology

Abnormal psychology is the branch of psychology that studies unusual patterns of behaviour, emotion, and thought that may or may not be understood as precipitating a mental disorder. It seeks to understand the nature, causes, and treatments of psychological conditions. Central themes in abnormal psychology include trauma, stress, and resilience—all of which are critical in understanding the experiences of trafficking victims and survivors. Abnormal psychology provides a framework for understanding how trauma and prolonged abuse can result in mental health disorders and how these conditions affect recovery and resilience.

Condition: Post-traumatic stress Disorder

- Many trafficking survivors experience PTSD due to prolonged exposure to traumatic events, such as violence, captivity, and exploitation.
- Symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, hypervigilance, and emotional numbing, all of which can significantly impact survivors' ability to reintegrate into society.
- Trauma-informed care is essential for effective recovery and support.

Condition: Complex Trauma & Dissociation

- Trafficking victims often endure complex trauma, which results from repeated and prolonged abuse. This can lead to dissociation, a coping mechanism where individuals detach from reality to escape overwhelming stress.
- Understanding these responses helps professionals provide sensitive and effective interventions.

Condition: Anxiety & Depression

- Chronic anxiety and depression are common among trafficking survivors. These conditions often stem from feelings of hopelessness, fear, and isolation experienced during and after exploitation.
- Providing mental health resources and fostering supportive communities are critical for alleviating these conditions.

Condition: Substance Use Disorder

- Traffickers may force victims into substance use to exert control, or victims may turn to substances as a coping mechanism for their trauma.
- Rehabilitation programs must address the underlying trauma to support sustainable recovery.

Condition: Learned Helplessness

- Victims of trafficking may develop a sense of learned helplessness, where repeated abuse leads them to believe they cannot escape their circumstances.
- Empowerment-based interventions help survivors regain control and confidence in their ability to make decisions.

Issue: Stigma and Barriers to Treatment

- Survivors often face stigma and shame that prevent them from seeking help. Cultural and systemic barriers may further limit access to mental health services.
- Advocacy for accessible, nonjudgmental care is essential.

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