



An Integrative Worldview on Mental Health

Lecture 2
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Learning Objectives – Lecture 2

By the end of the lesson the learner should be able to:

- distinguish the worldviews of traditional societies and religion & the modern science;
- describe the characteristics of mental health;
- specify the scope of the present course.

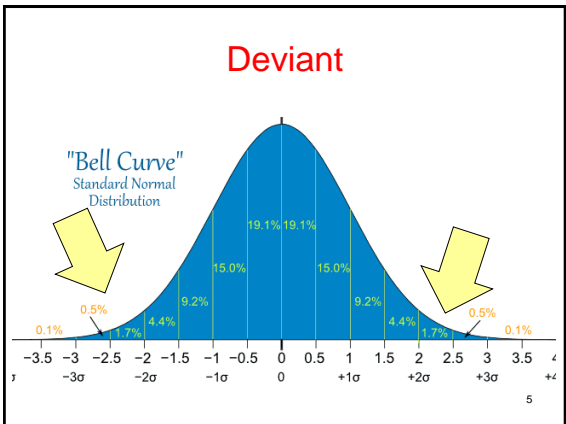
www.sahayaselvam.org

DSM's Definition of Mental Disorder

- "A mental disorder is a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. Mental disorders are usually associated with significant distress in social, occupational, or other important activities."
- **Excludes:** culturally approved response to a common stressor or loss; and socially deviant behaviour (e.g., political, religious, or sexual).

3 D's of Mental Disorder

- **Deviant:** it has a social dimension;
- **Distressful:** it has a subjective dimension;
- **Dysfunctional:** combination of both social and subjective; individual dysfunction often recognised by others; other times, directly harmful to others;



Distress

- Subjective experience: how the person feels, acts, thinks or perceives;
- Accompanied by a painful symptom or disability;
- Increases the risk of death, pain, or disability;

Dysfunctional

- Subjectively the individually is not able to think, feel and behave as they prefer;
- Social and external criteria: Disability to perform their expected functions;
- Sometimes possibility of causing harm to other people.

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For the purposes of this course:

- We have an integrative meaning of 'mental health';
- More to be understood as psychological health (cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions);
- Marked by subjective wellbeing, psychological wellbeing and social wellbeing.

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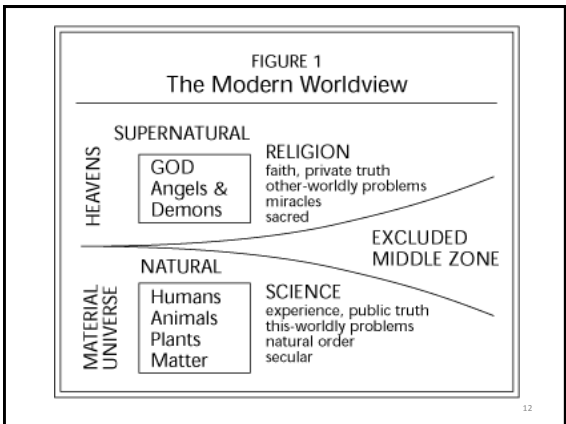
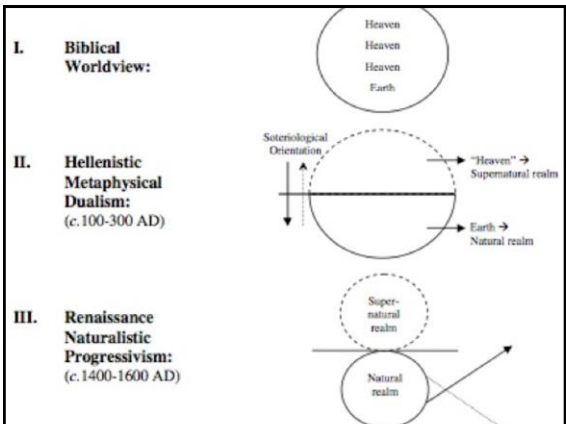
Characteristics of Mental Health

- **Subjective wellbeing and happiness:** the individual acknowledges a cognitive and affective gratification;
- **Functionality:** individual functions well enough (behavioural) and this is recognised by others.
- **Social Wellbeing:** the individual recognises their role in the society and contributes to the social wellbeing.

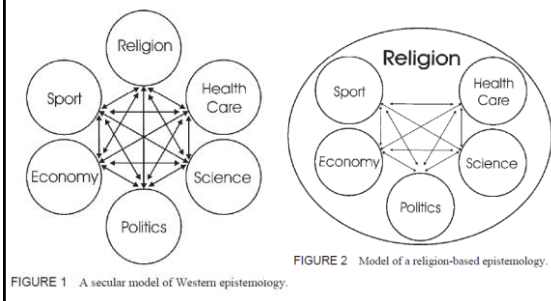
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Integrative Worldview

- Most indigenous religious and cultural traditions tend to express a holistic worldview of human being and wellbeing.



Two World Views



Islamic worldview

- “The Islamic view of human nature rests on the original purity and goodness of human beings, which is Fitrah. Fitrah is common to two basic constituents of human beings; *ruh* (soul, a transcendental self) and the *nafs* (physical or phenomenal self). Other views of Fitrah include ... holistic conceptualization and integrated view of Fitrah related to the internal and external world of human beings.”

Implications of worldview in understanding mental illness

- **Non-dualistic:** Physical illness could have a spiritual cause! The spirit world is intermingled with the physical.
- **Reductionalist worldview** (only matter exists): mental illness are brain-based!
- **Dualistic worldview:** let the psychiatrist deal with the physical dimension of mental disorder, and let the priest (medicine-man) deal with the spiritual dimension!
- **Integrative worldview:** human beings are embodied spirits, hence the ‘psychiatrist’, psychologist, and ‘priest’ need to work together.

Scope & Approach of the present Course

- Our focus: mental disorder and health, and not mental or physical disability (impairment);
- Our methodology: scientific not parapsychology or spirit world!
- Our worldview: an integrative worldview – while there is a distinction between the spiritual and the physiological, they exist in the same person, hence no separation.

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Scientific approach: From Miasma theory to germ theory

19/7 to 26/7



John Snow, 1854

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Characteristics of Science

- **Reliable:** Several scientists can repeat an experiment and the results are the same.
- **Empirical (Observability):** The evidence can be observed by using the five senses or extensions of them.
- **Predictability:** Predictions can be made about the subject and can be tested.
- **Verifiability (testability/falsifiability):** Subject can be tested using a controlled experiment; they are beyond opinions.

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Exercise: Worksheet

- Identify terms that refer to mental disorders in your local language;
- Group work;
- More videos from Lecture 3 – time permitting!