



PSY 215 Module Eight Activity Template

For this journal activity, you will focus on reconstructing your view of what it means to be abnormal. Specifically, consider the notion of the humanity in abnormality. Then respond to the following prompts with a minimum of 3 to 5 sentences. Address the rubric criteria listed below and support your answers with a credible source when necessary. Complete this template by replacing the bracketed text with the relevant information.

- Discuss what it means to view our individual differences through a **non-pathologizing** lens.

The definition of non-pathologizing lens is not viewing clients difficulties “... as intrinsic, inescapable diseases, nor should treatment focus on “healing” an issue in such a way” (Good Therapy, 2009, para. 1). Viewing others through a non-pathologizing lens allows us to see others for who they are and not as abnormal. Through this lens, we do not label people with the disorder they have, nor do we try to convince the patient that they need fixing, or that they will have their psychological condition for life. We do not label people and we understand that their differences are not permanent, can be mitigated, and they have the freedom to choose to receive treatment. Any individual differences are not wrong nor must be “fixed” according to an arbitrary standard, like texture of hair or color of skin. Any disease characteristic does not define the person, it is just a person who happens to have these attributes. They are not broken and are still as valuable to society as everyone else.

- In recent times, people have begun to adopt a non-clinical view of psychological conditions—as differences, not disorders. Discuss the **costs and benefits** of viewing psychological traits, symptoms, and conditions in this manner.

One of the benefits of adopting a non-clinical view of psychological conditions is stigma may be removed from individuals. Despite recent efforts, a great deal of stigma is still attached to psychological conditions and disorders. This stigma indirectly affects people as society and others may view certain traits and differences as being related to disorders or diseases. Removing the clinical association from traits and conditions would relieve stigma attached to people who have the certain traits and conditions. Viewing traits and conditions as differences and not disorders would also lead to greater acceptance and inclusion of individuals with these things into society. The downsides, however, include possibly reducing the severity of psychological disorders, possibly leading to people not seeking help for their conditions and disorders. It might also lead to acceptance of traits, behaviors, or conditions that, from a clinical view, should not be accepted or considered normal at all.

- Think of an abnormal behavior that may be viewed as a deficit or a weakness. Discuss how aspects of this behavior may be reframed and reapplied as a **strength**.

We can reframe an abnormal behavior to be a strength instead of viewing it as a weakness: “For example, a person who has the obsessive-compulsive disorder of hand-washing



may find that the behavior makes him cheerful, happy and better able to cope with his day” (Mcleod, 2018, para. 23). While some may view excessive handwashing as a deficit or weakness, if it helps the individual enjoy their day and have a more positive outlook on life, the behavior can be seen as a strength. Considering the behavior is not maladaptive or harmful to the individual and also has positive effects (hygiene, prevent spread of illness) on the individual, the behavior should not be seen as abnormal and could actually be seen as a strength. In today’s environment, for example, excessive handwashing has gone from something abnormal to something everyone **should** be doing.

References:

Good Therapy. (2009, July 15). *A word of caution against pathologizing*. Good Therapy.

<https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/word-of-caution-against-pathologizing>.

Mcleod, S. (2018, August 5). *Abnormal psychology*. Simply Psychology.

<https://www.simplypsychology.org/abnormal-psychology.html>.