

Defining Abnormality

Psychology

Four definitions, and what each one gets wrong.

Educational reference on the standard approaches.

Definition	Problem
Statistical infrequency	Rare is not always abnormal — high IQ
Deviation from social norms	Norms vary by culture and era
Failure to function adequately	Some distress is appropriate; some dysfunction is chosen
Deviation from ideal mental health	Almost nobody meets the criteria

Educational reference. Clinical diagnosis uses operationalised criteria plus distress and impairment, not any single definition.