



# Not So Abnormal Psychology : A Pragmatic View of Mental Illness

Ronald B. Miller



Each year, tens of thousands of students across the country enroll in abnormal psychology courses. The majority of these students are taught that mental illnesses are genetically-determined malfunctions in the brain, that the American Psychiatric Association's DSM-5 is the primary means of diagnosis and assessment, and that psychotropic medications and cognitive-behavioral interventions are the only scientifically appropriate tools for symptom management. In this warm and deeply personal text, author Ronald B. Miller offers students a different approach. Starting with his own professional and personal search for meaning as a young scholar, Miller guides readers through a historical tour of alternative conceptualizations and treatments for psychological problems. Across a comprehensive range of mental illnesses, including developmental disorders, anxiety, depression, personality disorders and schizophrenia, he reviews theoretical bases, methods of diagnosis and assessment, and treatments that have long produced successful outcomes, yet have too often been denigrated or ignored by proponents of the dominant approaches to mental health care. A much-needed critical examination of reigning orthodoxies, such as our tendency to pathologize psychological difficulties and to downplay or ignore subjective experiences of human suffering, this text offers a pragmatic and compassionate approach that can revolutionize readers' understanding of abnormal psychology.

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