

Glossary

Term	Definition
Acute	A term which means that a condition or presentation (usually a disorder or a symptom) has come about quickly with a high degree of impact on a person.
Addiction	The continual use of a substance (for example: alcohol, cocaine or prescription medication) for non-medical or non-prescribed purposes despite wanting or trying to stop using it. An individual's substance use may negatively impact their relationships with friends or family and functioning and success at school or work, and may interfere with other aspects of their life. An addiction is characterised by abuse of a chemical, behaviour of drug seeking, daily focus on the drug and craving for the substance. People who are addicted will often experience withdrawal when they stop using a substance.
Affect	An emotional experience that an individual feels inside of themselves that can be recognised by others. For example, if an individual is looking/acting sad, others can actively recognise that they are feeling sad.
Agoraphobia	A fear and avoidance of situations where someone might feel unsafe, trapped or unable to escape (such feelings may result in the individual experiencing a panic attack).
Anhedonia	A term used to describe a lack of pleasure. Individuals with depression may experience anhedonia, such as not experiencing happiness when engaging in an activity which normally makes them feel good.
Anorexia nervosa (anorexia)	A type of eating disorder. An individual with anorexia will experience not maintaining a minimal body weight which is considered medically reasonable or healthy, significant fear of gaining weight and an unrealistic perception of their body image.
Antidepressant medication (antidepressants)	Medication typically used to treat the symptoms of depression or anxiety disorders.
Antipsychotics	Medication often used to treat psychosis. Antipsychotics may also be used to treat conditions such as severe depression or extreme behaviours.

Glossary

Antisocial personality disorder	A personality disorder characterised by persistent disregard of the rights of other people, failure to comply with laws and social customs and reckless behaviour.
Anxiety	A type of body signal, or group of sensations that are generally unpleasant. A person with anxiety experiences a variety of physical sensations that are linked with thoughts that make them feel apprehensive or fearful, or they may feel that bad things will happen even when they are not likely to happen. When an individual has so much anxiety that it interferes with their normal routine or many parts of your life such as, school, work, recreation, friends or family, it may become problematic or even a disorder.
Anxiety disorders	A group of mental disorders. People with an anxiety disorder will experience things like mental and physical tension about their surroundings, apprehension (negative expectations) about the future, and will have unrealistic fears. It is the amount and intensity of the anxiety sensations and how they interfere with life that makes them disorders.
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	A mental disorder that is usually lifelong and associated with a delay in how the brain matures and how it processes information. People with ADHD usually have varying degrees of difficulty paying attention, being impulsive, and being overactive which may cause problems at home, in school, and in social situations. There are three kinds of ADHD: Inattentive Type, Hyperactive Impulsive Type and Combined Type.
Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)	A life-long disorder in which the person experiences significant abnormal development of social interaction, verbal and non-verbal communication. A person with autism may have trouble understanding the feelings of others (empathy) and may not understand many social norms (rules that tell us what is socially acceptable). Language difficulties range from the inability to speak to automatic sounding repetitive phrases to normal language that sounds formal and emotionless. Autism symptoms can vary from extremely severe to mild and people with autism may also display repetitive behaviours (for example, continuous flapping of hands) and a strong need to follow precise routines.
Avolition	Having little or no motivation or drive to do things. For example, not getting dressed or not wanting to go out with family or friends. This is not the same thing as 'lazy'.

Glossary

Benzodiazepines	Medications that are used to treat various mental disorders, most commonly anxiety, and can also be used to treat severe restlessness and agitation.
Bipolar disorder	A mood disorder where individuals experience extreme mood swings which interfere with their daily life. Individuals with bipolar disorder experience extreme highs (known as mania or hypomania) and lows (known as depression).
Bipolar disorder (Type 1)	A type of bipolar disorder when an individual has experienced at least one manic episode, and may not experience depressive episodes.
Bipolar disorder (Type 2)	A type of bipolar disorder when an individual has experienced at least one hypomanic episode and at least one depressive episode, and may never have experienced a manic episode.
Borderline personality disorder (BPD)	A personality disorder where individuals have difficulty in regulating their emotions and can experience intense bouts of anger, depression, and anxiety that may last from hours to days, or longer. These bouts occur repeatedly, often in response to minor life stressors or just on their own. People with BPD can experience unstable moods, poor self-image, and self-harming behaviours which can lead to impulsive aggression, self-injury and risk taking.
Bulimia nervosa (bulimia)	An eating disorder characterised by excessive uncontrollable eating (binges of large amounts of food) over a short period of time, which is then followed by actions that try to get rid of the calories consumed (for example, vomiting, laxative abuse or excessive exercise). This behaviour is repetitive and often followed by feelings of depression, self-disgust, and guilt.
Chronic	Something that is there most of the time for a long time. Often used to describe a disorder, illness or pain that lasts for an extended period (for example, years or more).
Clinical	An activity that takes place between a health provider and a patient (such as observation, treatment and providing diagnoses), as opposed to theoretical or laboratory studies.
Cognition	The mental processes associated with thinking, learning, planning and memory.

Glossary

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy	A form of psychotherapy (talk therapy), designed to help treat various mental disorders. It focuses on changing a person's thoughts and behaviours to help reverse the person's symptoms and help increase their functioning.
Cognitive symptoms	Disruptions in normal thoughts. Some medical disorders can interfere with cognition, such as delusions or difficulties in problem solving.
Comorbidity	The presence of two or more disorders in a person, for example, someone who has been diagnosed with a substance abuse disorder and major depressive disorder.
Compulsions	Repetitive behaviours used to manage or suppress obsessive thoughts or to follow strong urges. Some types of compulsions include counting, checking and tapping.
Conduct disorder (CD)	A behaviour disorder where an individual shows a persistent pattern of aggressive behaviours lasting over 6 months that are unacceptable to society, such as stealing and physical violence towards others.
Cyclothymic disorder	An affective disorder characterised by emotional reactivity and affective dysregulation where the criteria for a major depressive, manic, or hypomanic episode have not been met.
Delusion	A disturbance of cognition where a person has false beliefs that something has occurred or will occur that is not real. Delusions are often associated with psychosis.
Depressant	A medication or drug that slows down a person's thinking and/or physical functioning. Examples include some painkillers and alcohol.
Depression	A term used to describe a state of low mood or a mental disorder, for example, major depressive disorder. Depression can also form part of a mental disorder, for example, a bipolar disorder.
Depressive episode	One of the two phases of bipolar disorder (the other is mania). It is a period during which the person experiences a depressed mood (feeling sad, irritable, empty and a loss of pleasure or interest in activities) for most of the day, nearly every day and for at least two weeks.

Glossary

Development	Physical and psychological (including cognitive and emotional) growth throughout life.
Diagnosis	A description that identifies a medical or mental disorder or illness. Diagnoses related to mental disorders may be determined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and/or the International Classification of Diseases (ICD).
Disorder	An abnormality in mental or physical health. This term is often used as another name for illness.
Distress	Refers to mental or physical suffering. Distress is a part of normal life and is not, in and of itself, a mental disorder.
Double depression	A mental disorder which is characterised by the presence of major depressive disorder <u>and</u> persistent depressive disorder in one individual.
Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5-TR)	A diagnostic manual published by the American Psychiatry Association. The DSM names and describes mental disorders and divides these mental disorders into categories (diagnoses) based on signs and symptoms (criteria).
Eating disorders	A group of mental disorders related to eating. People with an eating disorder/s excessively control their eating, exercise and weight. These disorders include bulimia nervosa, anorexia nervosa and binge eating disorder.
Euphoria	A much-exaggerated sense of happiness or joy.
Extraversion	This is a personality type where someone is very outgoing and sociable. People with this personality feature are often called 'extroverts'.
Functional impairment	A state in which a person is not functioning as they usually would or not functioning well in one or more life domains (for example, family, friends, intimate relationships, work or study).
Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD)	A mental disorder which is characterised by excessive anxiety and worry about numerous possible events (not any single, specific event) that leads to problems with daily functioning.

Glossary

Genetic predisposition	This term describes the probability that a disorder may be due to genetic factors passed on from parents to their children.
Grandiosity	Having a highly exaggerated and unsubstantiated belief in your importance, ideas or abilities.
Grief	A normal emotional suffering experienced by a person from a loss of a loved one (for example, when a family member dies) or loss of situation or circumstance (for example, loss of employment). It is different from a depressive disorder and is not in and of itself a mental disorder.
Hallucination	A disturbance in how an individual's brain perceives the world. A person with a hallucination experiences senses that aren't real, including sound, sight, smell, taste, or touch. For example, a person with psychosis is hallucinating if they hear voices that aren't occurring in reality.
Health	A state of physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing and not just the absence of disease or infirmity. It includes mental health.
Hypomanic phase (hypomania)	A milder form of a manic phase. It is usually a part of bipolar disorder.
Illness	Has the same meaning as disease. However, having an illness can mean you have one disease or multiple diseases.
International Classification of Diseases of the World Health Organisation (ICD)	A book that classifies medical conditions (disorders and diseases) and groups of conditions. These conditions are determined by an international expert committee. This system is used for all medical diagnoses including mental disorders.
Introversion	When an individual mostly focuses on their inner selves and less on their social surroundings. People that have this personality characteristic are often called 'introverts'.
Learning disorder	Difficulties learning and using academic skills, as indicated by the presence of at least one of the following difficulties that have persisted for at least 6 months, despite the provision of interventions that target the difficulties – inaccurate or slow and effortful word reading or difficulty with spelling, written expression, mastering number sense, number facts, or calculation or mathematical reasoning.

Glossary

Manic phase	One of the two phases of bipolar disorder (the other is depression). It is a period during which the person with mania experiences very high energy and excessive activity which is elevated to the point where they may have difficulty controlling themselves or acting in an expected manner. Three or four of the following symptoms must be present for an episode to be considered to be a manic phase: inflated (very high) self-esteem or grandiosity, decreased need for sleep, more talkative than usual or pressure to keep talking, racing thoughts, distractibility, increase in goal-directed activity, excessive involvement in pleasurable activities that have a potential for painful or negative consequences, such as gambling.
Medication	Another word for medicine and is in most cases prescribed by a medical doctor. Medications are regulated by government authorities. There are many different classes of medications that are used to treat mental disorders, such as antidepressants and antipsychotics. Medications can also be used to treat specific symptoms that are part of a disorder, such as aggression.
Mental disorder	A disturbance of brain function that meets internationally accepted criteria (DSM or ICD) for a diagnosis. Mental disorders occur because of complex interactions between a person's genetic makeup, their environment and other factors.
Mental health	A state of emotional, psychological, behavioural, and social wellbeing.
Mental health issue	A broad term used to describe mental distress, mental suffering or mental disorder.
Mental health professional/s	A broad category of health care workers who work to help other people improve their mental health or treat mental disorders. Examples are psychiatrists, clinical social workers, psychiatric nurses, psychologists, mental health counsellors, and child and youth workers.
Mental ill-health	One way to describe conditions or states which can affect an individual's thoughts, behaviour, mood, functioning and how they perceive and navigate the world around them. The impacts of mental ill-health may be short or long term and range with respect to severity of impact.

Glossary

Mental illness	Refers to a range of brain disorders that affect mood, behaviour, and thought process. Mental illnesses are listed and defined in the DSM and the ICD. The terms mental illness and mental disorder are often used interchangeably.
Mood	The ongoing inner emotions and feelings experienced by an individual.
Mood disorders	A group of mental disorders (including major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder) which relate to problems in how the brain controls emotions. A person with a mood disorder experiences abnormal changes in mood.
Mood stabilisers	Medication which is used to help normalise or stabilise mood (such as those used to treat bipolar disorder).
Narcissistic	A quality or trait of a person who interprets and regards everything in relation to their own self and not to other people. It is associated with an unrealistic and highly inflated self-worth.
Negative symptoms	Symptoms of schizophrenia that follow a lessening of executive functioning (conscious choice, intention, decision making, problem solving) in the brain. The person either has less of something (for example energy) or is unable to do something (for example, unable to get out of bed).
Neurodevelopment	How the brain grows and changes over time.
Obsessions	Repetitive, persistent, unwanted thoughts or actions that an individual cannot stop, and which cause significant distress and impair the person's ability to function.
Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)	A type of mental disorder where individuals experience persistent unwanted and recurring thoughts (obsessions) and/or persistent and unwanted repetitive behaviours (compulsions). Repetitive behaviours are carried out with the goal of preventing or getting rid of the obsessions or of releasing a strong feeling of inner tension. These behaviours may provide temporary relief for the person, while not performing them can cause extreme anxiety.

Glossary

Panic attack	A sudden experience of overwhelming or intense fear or psychological and physical discomfort that develops for no apparent reason and that includes physical symptoms such as increased heart or respiratory issues (difficulties breathing).
Panic disorder	A mental disorder characterised by an individual experiencing panic attacks, expecting and fearing the attacks and avoiding places or situations where escape may be difficult if a panic attack occurs.
Perception	The mental process of becoming aware of or recognising information that comes from the five senses (sight, sound, smell, touch and taste).
Persistent depressive disorder	A mood disorder where individuals experience persistent low mood for two or more years (or one year for children) and other symptoms which may include fatigue or low energy, eating changes and feelings of hopelessness.
Personality disorders	A general term for a group of mental disorders characterised by lifelong behaviour patterns. Signs of these patterns may include poor judgement, emotional control or impulse control. People with personality disorders may experience challenges in adjusting or functioning in changing social environments.
Positive symptoms	Symptoms found in psychosis, often in schizophrenia. They include hallucinations, delusions, loose associations (unclear connections between ideas or disorganised flow of conversation topics), ambivalence (wanting to act one way but act in a way that is opposite to that), or unstable or quickly changing emotions.
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	A mental disorder which can develop when a person experiences a scary, painful, or horrific event or events in which they felt scared or helpless and during which they were in danger of death or severe injury. People who develop PTSD can experience flashback memories, or nightmares, of the event/s and may avoid things that remind them of the event/s.
Prognosis	An educated guess, based on previous evidence, scientific study and observations about an individual's unique circumstance or presentation, of how a disorder will affect a person over time. A prognosis can change over time.

Glossary

Protective factor	Anything that decreases a person's chances of getting a disorder or having a negative outcome. Protective factors can be aspects of a person's health, lifestyle, support network or environment.
Psychiatrist	A doctor who specialises in the practice of psychiatry (the treatment of people who have a mental disorder and the prevention of mental disorders). Psychiatrists are medical doctors who have had many years of additional training in psychiatric medicine.
Psychiatry	The medical specialty focused on understanding, diagnosing and treating mental disorders.
Psychologist	An individual who is a specialist in psychology and licensed to practice professional psychology clinically, and/or qualified to teach psychology as a discipline, and/or whose scientific specialty is a subfield of psychology (research psychology).
Psychosis	A mental state in which a person has lost the ability to recognise reality. Symptoms can vary from person to person but may include changes in thinking patterns, delusions, hallucinations, changes in mood, or difficulty completing tasks of daily living (such as bathing). Mental disorders such as schizophrenia can include psychosis as a symptom.
Psychotherapy	A type of treatment for emotional, behavioural, personality, and other psychiatric disorders based mainly on person-to-person communication.
Recovery	When a person with a mental disorder is doing as well as they can be and is feeling mentally healthy, even if they still have a mental disorder.
Relapse	When a person with a mental disorder who has been in remission or recovery gets sick again.
Remission	When a person's symptoms decrease and they return to their usual state after having an active phase of a disorder.
Risk factor	Anything that increases a person's chances of getting a disorder (can be aspects of a person's health, genetics, lifestyle or environment). Risk factors increase a person's chances of getting a disorder, but they do not cause the disorder.

Glossary

Schizoaffective disorder	A psychotic disorder that has symptoms of both schizophrenia and a major mood disorder.
Schizophrenia	A mental disorder where individuals experience delusions and hallucinations (psychotic symptoms) and other symptoms that can make daily living difficult.
Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)	A type of major depressive disorder that usually happens to people only or mostly at certain times of year (for example, during winter).
Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)	A group of medications used to treat depression. These medications work mainly in the serotonin system of the brain.
Self-harm	Any injury that a person inflicts on themselves without the intent to die. Examples of self-harming behaviours include an individual burning or cutting themselves following an emotionally upsetting event and burning or cutting themselves as a way of solving a problem.
Separation anxiety disorder	An anxiety disorder that can be diagnosed in children which makes it very hard for them to be away from their parent or primary caregiver.
Social phobia (also known as social anxiety disorder)	An anxiety disorder regarding the fear of having to be in social situations. An individual with social phobia may avoid situations that make them feel anxious (for example, public speaking or performing in front of other people).
Sociopathy	The behaviour patterns and personality traits a sociopath displays such as superficial charm and having a lack of remorse.
Somatic	Describes the physical body, for example, sore muscles, fatigue, and headache are all somatic (also known as physical) sensations.
Specific phobia	An anxiety disorder where individuals experience fear in the presence of an object or situation (for example, snakes, fear of heights, fear of the dark). Individuals may have phobias of more than one specific thing.

Glossary

Stigma (as related to mental illness or mental disorders)	The attaching of negative qualities to mental disorders (for example, thinking people with a mental disorder are dangerous). Stigma is a strong force that may keep people from speaking about their disorder, getting help, or receiving treatment. Stigma can also create a false image of what mental disorders are.
Stress	The body's reaction when forces such as infections or toxins disrupt the body's normal physiological balance. Psychological stress develops in response to when a person perceives a threat, real or imagined.
Stimulants	A group of medications that improve various aspects of brain function, such as alertness and concentration.
Substance abuse	A pattern of drug, alcohol, medication or other chemical use that may lead to relationship, education, work, mental and/or physical problems.
Substance dependence (addiction)	A pattern of actions, physical, and mental symptoms that develop from abuse of a substance (drug). A person who has a substance dependency may develop tolerance to the substance's effects and may experience withdraw symptoms when they stop using the substance.
Supported decision making	The process in which a vulnerable person is provided advice, support, and assistance by their support network so they can make and communicate their own decisions.
Symptom	An occurrence of any type experienced by a person that differs from their normal in structure, behaviour, sensation, emotion or cognition that indicates illness or disease.
Syndrome	A collection of signs (what a person observes about another person) and symptoms (what a person experiences) that describes a disease or condition.
Therapist	A person who is professionally trained and/or skilled in the practice of a particular type of therapy.
Therapy	The treatment of disease or disorder by any method.

Glossary

Trauma	Any painful or damaging injury/ies or event/s that harms a person's physical or mental health.
Treatment	Medical, psychological, social or surgical management and care of an individual.
Trichotillomania	A mental disorder where people pull out their hair repeatedly, resulting in noticeable hair loss. The person usually experiences tension before pulling the hair or if they try to stop themselves from pulling the hair and feel either pleasure or relief when pulling the hair out. The location of the hair can be anywhere on the body but is commonly from the scalp, eyebrows and eyelashes.
Voluntary admission	Where an individual's admission as a patient to a mental health facility for treatment is consented to or agreed upon by the individual themselves.
Voluntary patient	A person who stays in a mental health facility (usually a hospital) by their own consent.