



ESL Podcast 651 – Psychological Disorders

GLOSSARY

psychology – the study of how the human brain affects thoughts and behavior

* Janet is studying psychology because she's interested in why people behave in the way they do.

nervous – uncomfortable, worried, and anxious, not wanting to do something

* Do you get nervous when you have to speak in public?

anxiety disorder – a mental health condition where one often feels uncontrollably nervous, anxious, and worried, sometimes for no reason

* Hal has an anxiety disorder that makes him sweat and want to leave whenever he's in a noisy environment.

phobia – a strong fear of something

* Doctors have given special names to many phobias. For example, if you have a fear of spiders, you have arachnophobia.

mood swing – a rapid, unexpected change in one's emotions and feelings

* Karl has mood swings and he sometimes goes from laughter to tears within a few seconds.

to make a diagnosis – for a doctor to determine what is medically or psychologically wrong with someone

* The doctor said she couldn't make a diagnosis over the phone, so I'll have to schedule an appointment with her.

bipolar disorder – a mental health condition where one moves between extreme depression and extreme happiness

* It's very hard to speak to people with bipolar disorder because you never know how they're going to react to things.

obsessive-compulsive disorder – a mental health condition where one always worries about something or always needs to complete a particular task many times

* Mona is obsessive-compulsive and washes her hands at least five times before touching food.

eating disorder – a mental health condition that affects the types and quantity of food eaten, often not eating enough or eating far too much

* Anorexia nervosa is an eating disorder where people stop eating because they think they are overweight.



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pyromania – a mental health condition where one is fascinated by fires and often starts fires because they make one feel good and in control

* The police suspect that whoever started those fires suffers from pyromania.

to feel compelled to – with a strong sensation that one must or should do something

* Willamina spends too much money, because she feels compelled to buy things even when she doesn't need them.

kleptomania – a mental health condition where one always wants to steal things

* I can't believe you stole that candy from the store! Do you have kleptomania?

therapist – a person who provides treatment and care for someone with a mental health or medical condition, often a psychologist or psychiatrist

* When the Bains began having problems in their marriage, they started seeing a therapist twice a week.

a real fear of – a strong fear of something; strong feelings of anxiety or worry related to something

* Ulysses has a real fear of heights, so his office and apartment are on the ground floor.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these people would be expected to have mood swings?
 - a) Someone with a bipolar disorder.
 - b) Someone who has pyromania.
 - c) Someone who has kleptomania.
2. Which of these people has a phobia?
 - a) Someone who often cries for no reason.
 - b) Someone who eats too much food.
 - c) Someone who is very scared of something.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

disorder

The word “disorder,” in this podcast, means a medical condition or a mental health condition: “Mingsang has a vision disorder that makes it very difficult to focus on distant objects.” Or, “His stomach disorder becomes much worse whenever he eats spicy food.” “Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder” or “ADHD” is a medical condition where children are unable to pay attention and hold still for very long: “How many of the students in your classroom are taking medicine for ADHD?” “Post-traumatic stress disorder,” or “PTSD,” is a mental health condition that affects people who have had a very difficult and/or dangerous experience: “What percentage of soldiers returning from the war are complaining about symptoms of PTSD?” Or, “Is it possible to have PTSD after being in a car accident?”

swing

In this podcast, a “mood swing” is a rapid, unexpected change in one’s emotions and feelings: “Many kids start to have a lot of mood swings when they enter puberty.” At a park, a “swing” is a small seat that hangs from a metal or wooden structure by chains or ropes, so that children can sit on it and move back and forth: “Could you please push me on the swing?” The phrase “to get into the swing of things” means to become very involved in some activity or project: “The project started slowly, but once we got into the swing of things, it became much easier.” Finally, the phrase “to be in full swing” means to be fully operational, or to be at the maximum level of activity: “The hospital renovations are almost finished, so we should be in full swing by the middle of next month.”



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CULTURE NOTE

Many therapy “sessions” (meetings) are “one-on-one” (between only two people) sessions with a psychologist or a “psychiatrist” (a medical doctor trained in medical illness, who can prescribe medicine). These types of sessions are also known as “psychoanalytic therapy,” where the “patient” (the person receiving treatment) talks about his or her life and the therapist looks for “patterns” (things that happen in the same way over and over again) and then provides advice.

However, there are also many other popular types of therapy that change this “dynamic” (way of doing or structuring something). For example, in “group therapy” there is usually one psychologist or psychiatrist working with several people who are “struggling” (having problems) with the same type of problem. Group therapy is common among people who are “grieving” (feeling sad about the death of a relative or close friend) or people who have eating disorders. In group therapy, people “benefit” (receive advantages) from hearing about each other’s experience.

“Hypnotherapy” is another popular type of therapy. It relies on “hypnosis,” which is a mental state where one almost appears to be asleep, but one’s thoughts and actions can be influenced by what another person says. Hypnotherapy works best for “behavioral therapy,” which focuses on changing people’s actions. For example, someone who wants to quit smoking might “undergo” (experience) hypnosis where the “hypnotist” (the person who performs the hypnosis) helps him or her change or “cease” (end) the smoking behaviors.

Therapists specialize in different types of therapy, so it is important to speak with more than one therapist before choosing a doctor.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – c



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 651: Psychological Disorders.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 651. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Go there today and do what you need to do.

This episode is called "Psychological Disorders." It's something I'm very familiar with! It's a dialogue between Brett and Dr. Mollie using a lot of vocabulary that you would find in a psychology class – or right here at the Center for Educational Development! Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Brett: Hi, Dr. Mollie. Could I speak to you for a few minutes?

Dr. Mollie: Certainly. Have a seat.

Brett: I'm really enjoying your psychology class and I was wondering if I could ask you a few questions.

Dr. Mollie: Sure, go ahead.

Brett: Well, I have a friend who is nervous all the time, especially around other people. Could he have a serious problem?

Dr. Mollie: It's hard to say without knowing your friend, but he may have an anxiety disorder or some type of phobia.

Brett: I was afraid of that. Well, I have another friend who has mood swings all the time and washes his hands 50 times a day.

Dr. Mollie: Again, I don't know your friend so it's hard to make a diagnosis, but he may have a bipolar disorder and may also be obsessive-compulsive.

Brett: That sounds really serious. Well, I have another friend who doesn't eat and sits around all day playing with fire. That's bad, isn't it?



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Dr. Mollie: It could be. Your friend may have an eating disorder and his interest in fire may indicate that he has pyromania, but it's very hard to say.

Brett: Did I mention that he likes to steal things, too?

Dr. Mollie: People who feel compelled to steal may have kleptomania. Who are all of these friends you're talking about? Do I know them?

Brett: No, definitely not.

Dr. Mollie: Hmm, would your "friends" like to make an appointment with a therapist? It sounds like it may be a good idea.

Brett: No, no. My "friends" wouldn't like that. He has a real fear of doctors.

[end of dialogue]

The title of this episode is "Psychological Disorders." These are basically illnesses or diseases of the mind. Brett begins by saying, "Hi, Dr. Mollie. Could I speak to you for a few minutes?" Dr. Mollie says, "Certainly. Have a seat (please sit down)." Dr. Mollie is a professor of psychology. Brett says, "I'm really enjoying your psychology class." "Psychology" studies the way the human brain affects our thoughts, our behaviors; it's a study of emotions and so forth.

Brett says he's really enjoying Dr. Mollie's psychology class and he was wondering if he could ask her a few questions; he wants to ask her a few questions. Dr. Mollie says, "Sure, go ahead," meaning begin. Brett says, "Well, I have a friend who is nervous all the time, especially around other people. Could he have a serious problem?" "To be nervous" means to be worried, overly concerned about something, anxious. Dr. Mollie says, "It's hard to say without knowing your friend (meaning it's difficult for me to determine that), but he may have an anxiety disorder or some kind of phobia." "Anxiety" is the noun for anxious; it's similar to nervous, worried. A "disorder" is a general term referring to some illness or sickness. Here, we're talking about a mental, not physical, health condition: an anxiety disorder. A "phobia" (phobia) is a very strong fear of something. If you have "arachnophobia" you are afraid of spiders. If you have "agoraphobia" you are afraid of open spaces, big public spaces. "Agora" is the old Greek word for the marketplace, where people would come and buy and sell things in the middle of town.

Anyway, Dr. Mollie thinks perhaps that Brett's friend has an anxiety disorder or some kind of phobia. Brett says, "I was afraid of that (that's what I feared). Well,



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I have another friend who has mood swings all the time and washes his hands 50 times a day.” A “mood” is the way you are feeling; you can have a good mood, you can be in a bad mood. “Swing” (swing) here means something that changes quickly, that goes up or down very quickly. So, “mood swings” are rapid, unexpected changes in someone’s emotions and feelings; one minute they’re laughing, the next minute they’re crying; one minute you are very happy, and then the next minute you are very sad. It sounds like what you would go through if you were watching the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team last year! Anyway, mood swings, then, are something that seemed to be affecting another one of Brett’s friends. By the way, the word “swing” has a couple of different meanings in English, as does the word “disorder.” Take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations of both of those terms.

Brett’s friend also washes his hands 50 times a day. So, he has mood swings and is always washing his hands. Dr. Mollie says, “Again, I don’t know your friend so it’s hard to make a diagnosis.” “To make a diagnosis” (diagnosis) is when a doctor determines what is wrong with the patient – with the person who he or she is examining. “To diagnose” as a verb means to determine what medical problem you have, although we use the word more generally to mean to figure out what’s wrong, what isn’t working. Your mechanic, the person who fixes your car, may diagnose a problem in your motor – in your engine. Doctors diagnose illnesses. Dr. Mollie says that it’s hard to make a diagnosis, “but your friend may have a bipolar disorder and may also be obsessive-compulsive.” “Bi” (bi) usually means two when it’s at the front of a word in English. “Bipolar” is someone who is extremely happy and suddenly extremely depressed. A “disorder,” remember, is an illness or disease. So, this friend of Brett’s may have bipolar disorder. He also may be a graduate student; those two things often mean the same thing! Dr. Mollie says his friend also may have obsessive-compulsive tendencies. He may be someone who is “obsessive,” that’s someone who is always worrying about one particular thing, who can’t stop worrying about it. Someone who’s “compulsive” is always repeating the same activity, someone who has to do something 20 times or 30 times. If you saw the movie with Jack Nicholson and...what was her name? The actress...um...you know...Helen Hunt, that’s it! The movie was called As Good as It Gets, from 1997. Wonderful movie; it is about someone who is obsessive-compulsive, has an obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Brett says, “That sounds really serious. Well, I have another friend who doesn’t eat and sits around all day playing with fire. That’s bad, isn’t it?” Dr. Mollie says, “It could be. Your friend may have an eating disorder.” An “eating disorder” is when people either eat too much or they don’t eat enough. She continues, “his interest in fire may indicate that he has pyromania.” “Pyromania” (pyromania)



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comes from “pyro” meaning fire and “mania” meaning madness or craziness about something. In this case, it is someone who is fascinated by fires and often starts fires, things that can be very dangerous. Dr. Mollie says, “it’s hard to say,” it’s difficult to know what this person’s problem is. Brett said, “Did I mention that he likes to steal things, too (that he likes to rob or steal things from other people)?” Dr. Mollie says, “People who feel compelled to steal may have kleptomania.” “To feel compelled to” means that you have a strong urge or strong desire to do something, that you have to do something or that you should do something. “Kleptomania” is a condition where someone likes to steal things all time, but it’s a mental health condition, it isn’t just a normal criminal.

Mollie finally says, “Who are all of these friends you’re talking about? Do I know them?” Brett says, “No, definitely not.” Mollie says, “Hmm, would your ‘friends’ like to make an appointment with a therapist? It sounds like it may be a good idea.” A “therapist” is a person who provides treatment and care for someone who has a mental illness or a mental disorder, or simply someone who is having psychological difficulties. Actually, the term “therapist” is also used more generally to mean someone who helps someone recover from an illness. We have physical therapists, who help people who have had injuries to their arms or legs for example, to learn how to use them properly again.

Of course, we think that Brett’s “friends” are really descriptions of Brett himself. People often say, “I have a friend,” when they really mean themselves. Brett says, “No, no. My ‘friends’ wouldn’t like that (they would not like to see a therapist). They have a real fear of doctors.” “A real fear of” is a strong fear of, similar to a phobia.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

I feel compelled to thank our scriptwriter, who does such a wonderful job each week, Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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