

## 2.2 What is mental illness?

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Narration by Prof. C. Williams

# Lay perspectives

- Recognition of "madness" in ourselves and others
- Sadness, fear, confusion, disorganization recognized and identified
- Link to ability to fulfill social role
- Continuum of mental health includes well-being and disorder

# Medical (professional) perspectives

- Diagnosis, prognosis, treatment
- Link between disordered biology and disordered mind
- Continua vs. thresholds
- Lack of evidence for biological correlates in many illnesses and diseases

# Psychoanalytic

- Unconscious processes from previous relationships dominating conscious processes = illness or disorder
- Continuum of abnormality and normality

# Psychology

- Maladaptive behaviours
- Distorted cognitions
- Personality psychopathology →
- Humanists: similar to “wellness” concepts
- Positive psychology

Five Factor Model:  
Conscientiousness  
Agreeableness  
Neuroticism  
Openness to experience  
Extraversion

# Sociology eg., Goffmann

- Regulating and controlling deviance
- Social construction of mental health problems and mental health expertise
- Social negotiation of what is acceptable and unacceptable

# Social Workers?

- Probably, all of the above  
(biopsychosocial perspective + person-in-environment perspective)
- Systemic reinforcement of power and privilege, opportunities for empowerment and resistance
  - Professionals
  - Communities
  - Diagnosed individuals

# Recovery perspective

- Mental health in the presence of mental illness
- Mental health following mental illness