



Understanding Mental Disorders

Your Guide to DSM-5®



Preface to *Understanding Mental Disorders*

More than 450 million people worldwide, and over 61 million adults and over 7 million children in the United States, live with a mental disorder at some point in their lives. Although some people are at higher risk, anyone can develop a mental illness. Most everyone has had a friend, a coworker, or a loved one with a mental illness. It is for all of us that *Understanding Mental Disorders: Your Guide to DSM-5* has been written.

Key to overcoming a mental illness is to recognize its symptoms, to know when to seek help, and to get the right treatment. This may be hard for someone who is struggling with mental illness. *Understanding Mental Disorders* is designed to help these people, as well as their loved ones. It lets them know what to expect from the illness—and informs them about the major forms of treatment.

Good treatment is tailored by a health care provider for each person and his or her unique needs and symptoms. This book cannot replace such care and does not provide in-depth details on treatment of specific disorders. Rather, it gives an overview of the treatments for these conditions—both talking therapies and psychiatric medications.

Understanding Mental Disorders is based on the latest edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, known as DSM-5. The purpose of DSM-5 is to create a common language for health care providers who diagnose mental illnesses. First published in 1952, DSM has since become the primary tool used by mental health care providers and other health care providers to define and diagnose mental disorders.

Understanding Mental Disorders is a version of DSM-5 for the general public—although it is not meant for use in self-diagnosis. Rather, it describes most of the disorders contained in DSM-5. This book can be a helpful resource when talking with a health care provider before or after a diagnosis is received. The content of this book mirrors that of DSM-5—it describes symptoms, risk factors, and related disorders. It defines mental disorders based on their symptoms and explores special needs or concerns.

This book also includes ways to cope, personal vignettes, and additional resources—such as a glossary, table of medications, and list of organizations that can help. (The stories in the book are from real people whose names, ages, and other information have been changed to protect them so that others do not know who they are. If a real person matches any of these stories, it is by chance and is not the intent of the authors.)

As with any medical illness, early recognition and treatment improve the chances of a better outcome. *Understanding Mental Disorders* will help patients and caregivers to receive the care they need.

Understanding Mental Disorders: Your Guide to DSM-5 was developed by a team of world-renowned psychiatrists and psychologists who were involved in writing DSM-5. To all of those involved in this book, as well as DSM-5, we extend our thanks for your commitment to improving the mental health of individuals around the world.

Learn more and purchase *Understanding Mental Disorders* at www.psychiatry.org/UnderstandingMentalDisorders.

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