



In the upcoming text revision of the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR), the category “unspecified mood disorder” is being restored. It will be applied to presentations that do not meet criteria for any specific mood disorder and in which it is difficult to choose between an unspecified depressive disorder and an unspecified bipolar disorder.

Rationale for Change

The removal of unspecified mood disorder from DSM-5 was an unintentional byproduct of the decision to eliminate the mood disorders diagnostic class from DSM-5 in favor of making bipolar disorders and depressive disorders top-level diagnostic classes (i.e., at the same level as neurodevelopmental disorders, anxiety disorders, etc.). Because of the absence of a mood disorders grouping in DSM-5 and DSM-5-TR, unspecified mood disorder is located within both the depressive disorders and the bipolar disorders chapters. That makes DSM-5-TR more compatible with both ICD-10-CM as well as ICD-11, which also includes this category. It also provides clinicians with a more accurate and less stigma-prone diagnosis for these kinds of mixed presentations.

The unspecified mood disorder applies to presentations in which symptoms predominate that are characteristic of a depressive disorder and cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. However, these symptoms do not meet the full criteria for any of the disorders in the depressive disorders diagnostic class, adjustment disorder with depressed mood, or adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood. The category is used in situations in which the clinician chooses not to specify the reason that the criteria are not met for a specific depressive disorder and includes presentations for which there is insufficient information to make a more specific diagnosis (e.g., in emergency room settings).

DSM is the manual used by clinicians and researchers to diagnose and classify mental disorders. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) will publish DSM-5-TR in 2022.

APA is a national medical specialty society whose more than 37,400 physician members specialize in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and research of mental illnesses, including substance use disorders. Visit the APA at www.psychiatry.org. For more information, please contact APA Communications at 202-459-9732 or press@psych.org.

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