

## Problems Defining Abnormality

Below are four observations that illustrate problems for some of the definitions of abnormality we have been looking at. Read each example and assess which definition or definitions are affected. Write a short explanation of why the example poses a problem for the definitions you have identified.

Example	Comments
<p>Social behaviour varies markedly when different cultures are compared. For example, it is common in Southern Europe to stand much closer to strangers than in the UK. Voice pitch and volume, touching, direction of gaze and acceptable subjects for discussion have all been found to vary between cultures.</p>	
<p>There is evidence that some psychological disorders are more common than was previously thought. Depending on how data are gathered and how diagnoses are made, as many as 27% of some population groups may be suffering from depression at any one time (NIMH, 2001; data for older adults).</p>	
<p>Taylor (1989) reports that depressed patients perceive the world more accurately than clinically normal people. It appears that 'normal' people need to create 'positive illusions' in order to protect themselves from reality. Depressed patients make much more accurate assessments of their place in the world.</p>	
<p>At some time, we all find it difficult or impossible to cope with everyday life, for example after a bereavement or the break-up of a longstanding relationship. On the other hand, it is possible for a person with schizophrenia to show no apparent signs of emotional distress at their own predicament.</p>	