

## Is Neurosis a Mental Illness?

Neurosis is a disorder involving obsessive thoughts or anxiety. Have you ever heard someone say he's neurotic? Oh my God, you mean he is crazy? Talk about stigma, this is a prime example of people not understanding what the disorder is. Many people who are told that their friend, loved one or just an acquaintance has a mental illness (it's not), automatically envision that person deemed unable to function and be part of society. For this reason alone, I chose to devote my time and energy helping people understand what a disorder is, whether it be bipolar illness or any other disability. There is a misconception among many that anyone with a mental illness has a disease that will last forever and that there is no helping these misfortunate people. It is true that most mental illnesses are truly a lifetime burden, but most are manageable with proper treatment. The term "neurosis" is rarely used by modern psychologists, as they consider it to be outdated and vague. It is one of very few conditions that CAN NOT be treated.

Many mental health professionals do not agree on what constitutes neurosis, although there are common traits that have been associated with other mental illnesses, and ongoing studies are presently being explored in the mental health profession. Most recently, neurosis refers to a mental disorder that does not interfere with rational thoughts or the individual's ability to function, even though that they cause distress. Sigmund Freud, a famous neurologist, said for many years that neurosis was a coping strategy caused by unsuccessfully repressed emotions from past experiences. He further said these emotions overwhelm or interfere with current experiences. He gave the example of an overwhelming fear of dogs that may have resulted from a dog attack earlier in life. Carl Gustav Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist who believed that neurosis was a clash of conscious and unconscious events in the mind.

How can you tell if you're a little more neurotic than the rest of the world? One main difference between someone who is simply neurotic and someone who has developed psychosis is that even the most highly neurotic person is clearly and painfully aware of the following tendency in their personality. 1. Consciousness of one's mistakes and imperfections, 2. Dwelling on negative thoughts, 3. Expectations that the worst outcome in any situation will most likely occur. 4. Highly reactive to stress and emotional upset. 5. Being Compulsive and 6. Drug abuse. Please remember, being neurotic is not a medical condition or even a diagnosable mood disorder, for a lot of us may have a touch of it ourselves.

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