

Glossary and Guide to Acronyms and Clinical Terms

ADD/ ADHD	Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Affect	<p>How the individual's mood appears to others. Disturbances in affect include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blunted: notable reduction in the intensity of emotional expression. • flat: absence or near-absence of any signs of affective expression. • inappropriate: mismatch between affective expression and the content of speech or ideation. • labile: abnormal variability in affect with rapid and/or abrupt shifts in affective expression. • restricted or constricted: mild reduction in the range and intensity of emotional expression.
Affective disorder	Characterized by a disturbance of mood; mood disorder.
Affective spectrum	A grouping of other possible conditions (e.g., Attention Deficit Disorder, migraines, panic and anxiety disorders, alcoholism, etc.) which seem to occur more than to be expected by chance in people with affective disorders.
Akathisia	Inability to be still; a feeling of inner restlessness. A possible side effect of neuroleptic medications; may be confused with hyperactivity.
Anergic	Without energy.
Anhedonia	Inability to feel pleasure or happiness
Anticonvulsant	A medication used to control or prevent seizures; a number of these medications are also used to alleviate the mania of Bipolar Disorder.
Antidepressant	A medication used to alleviate depression. Note that antidepressants are classified by their effects, not by their chemical properties; some antidepressants work on the brain's serotonin system, while other antidepressants alter the norepinephrine system. Antidepressants also have other uses apart from the treatment of depression.
Arithmomania	Compulsive mental counting or morbid preoccupation with numbers.

Associated behaviors	The spectrum of behaviors sometimes seen in association with whatever condition is being discussed. As examples: if one is discussing Tourette's, the "associated behaviors" referred to are usually obsessive-compulsive behaviors or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder-related behaviors.
Athetosis	Recurrent and involuntary movements of the extremities or other parts of the body. The movements tend to be slow and worm-like, producing continuous changes in the positions of the fingers, hands, etc.
Attention Deficit Disorder/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	A condition characterized by: (1) marked inattention or difficulty in sustaining attention and/or (2) impulsivity-hyperactivity.
Behavior Therapy	A treatment plan that targets a specific problem or behavior for modification; an approach to therapy that focuses on altering specific overt behaviors.
Biofeedback	A therapy modality whereby the individual gets external (usually machine-augmented) feedback about some physiological process; neurofeedback is a form of biofeedback.
Bipolar Disorder	A condition characterized by mood episodes where the person's mood "swings" from the highs of hypomania or mania to the "lows" of depression; formerly known as Manic Depression.
CAPD	Central Auditory Processing Disorder
Catatonic	Apparently awake, but unresponsive.
CBT	Cognitive Behavior Therapy: a class of psychological therapies where the emphasis is on altering thoughts (cognitions) and behavior.
CD	Conduct Disorder.
Central nervous system	One of the two main divisions of the nervous system (the other being the peripheral nervous system). The central nervous system (CNS) is comprised of the brain and spinal cord.
Chorea	An involuntary movement disorder characterized by sudden, graceful movements of arms or legs; distinguishable from tics by pattern, in that they are not as stereotyped or repetitive as tics. Choreaform movements may appear as twisting or writhing movements.
Chronic	A disease or condition which is long-lasting.
CNS	Central nervous system

Cognitive Therapy	A form of therapy where the emphasis is on altering thought patterns to produce improvement in behavior or emotional well-being.
Cognitive Behavior Therapy	A form of therapy that incorporates changing ideas or thoughts ("cognitions") as well as overt behaviors.
Cognitive dulling	An adverse effect of some medications; involves short-term memory loss (inability to recall recently learned material) and slowed thinking.
Comorbid condition	A medical condition that occurs along with another medical condition, although one condition does not directly cause the other and they may be occurring together by chance.
Complex tic	Involuntary movement or utterance involving more than one muscle group (complex motor tic) or linguistically meaningful phrase (complex phonic tic).
Compulsion	A ritualized pattern of behavior, often (although not necessarily) associated with an irrational, repetitive intrusive thought (obsession). The "hallmark" of a compulsion is that the person has to do it over and over again. Adj.: compulsive: characterized by ritualized nature and the feeling of having to do it over and over again.
Conduct Disorder	A disorder characterized by disregard for the person or safety of others or disregard for property.
Coprolalia	Involuntary utterances of obscene or socially taboo (inappropriate) statements or words. Coprolalia may be a symptom of Tourette's Syndrome, although the majority of people with Tourette's Syndrome do not have this symptom.
Copropaxia	Involuntary motoric expression of obscene or taboo gestures; may include inappropriate sexual touching. Copropaxia may be a symptom of Tourette's Syndrome, although the majority of people with Tourette's Syndrome do not have this symptom.
Cyclothymia	A mood disorder which is characterized by mood episodes that "swing" between hypomania and depressive symptoms (but not major depression).
DA	Dopamine.
Delusion	A belief held despite evidence that it is not true.
Depression	A sustained and somewhat extreme mood of sadness with physical symptoms such as loss of appetite and sleep. Depression can also present as sustained bad ("irritable") mood.
Developmental Disability	A handicap or impairment originating before the age of 18 which is expected to continue indefinitely and which constitutes a substantial disability.

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders	A manual published by the American Psychiatric Association in Washington D.C. that describes the diagnostic criteria for disorders subsumed as "mental illness." The "IV" indicates that this is the fourth edition. Usually abbreviated as DSM-IV. The DSM-IV-TR was released in July 2000 and contains some Text Revisions (TR).
Dopamine	One of the neurotransmitters (brain chemicals). Intimately involved in Tourette's Syndrome.
DSM-IV or DSM-IV-TR	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual -- 4th Edition
Dyskinesia	A general term for involuntary movements.
Dysphoria	A state of feeling unwell or unhappy.
Dysthymia	A condition in which the person has been in a sustained state of being somewhat depressed, but the symptoms aren't severe enough to meet the criteria for Major Depressive Disorder. Think of it this way: the "persistent blahs" that have present more often than not for more than a year. Dysthymia may be followed by major depression.
Dystonia	Sustained spasm of muscle contractions. Between spasms, the muscle tone is normal. Spasmodic torticollis, a specific focal (i.e., anatomically localized) dystonia, may look similar to neck tics, but is distinguishable by EMG and duration.
Echolalia	Involuntary repetition of others' words or phrases. Echolalia may be a complex tic of Tourette's Syndrome, but it may also be a symptom of other developmental disabilities or schizophrenia.
Echopraxia	Involuntary copying or repetition of others' gestures or movements.
ECT	Electroconvulsive Therapy
Electroconvulsive Therapy	A treatment, primarily for severe depression, in which a convulsion is intentionally produced by passing an electric current through the brain.
Episode	A specific period of time during which the individual is in a particular state, e.g., a manic episode, a depressive episode.
Etiology	The study of the cause of a disease or condition.
Euphoria	Feeling of well-being or mild elation.
Euthymia	A normal mood state.
Executive Function/Dysfunction	The higher-order cognitive "control" processes that enable us to sustain our focus, switch flexibly between tasks, inhibit responses, etc.

Extrapyramidal effects	Side effects of some medications, usually involving tremor or "Parkinsonian" symptoms.
Flight of ideas	A symptom of mania; used to describe the rapid changing, <u>grandiose</u> plans often experienced by those in a manic episode.
Frontal Lobe	The most anterior (front) lobe of the brain (forehead region). Thought to play a role in initiative and planning and other cognitive or "executive" functions.
Grandiosity	A symptom of mania; used to describe the larger-than-life feelings of superiority often experienced by those in a manic episode, e.g., the individual who thinks that he will be able to knock Bill Gates out of competition, even though he is first figuring out how to turn on a Mac.
Hallucination	A visual, auditory or olfactory perception which is not based in reality.
Hyperactive	Excessively active.
Hypersomnia	Excessive sleeping.
Hypomania	A mood episode generally lasting a few days which is characterized by a mild degree of mania. In some cases, hypomanic mood episodes are precursors to manic episodes.
IED	Intermittent Explosive Disorder
IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation
IEP	Individualized Education Program
Intermittent Explosive Disorder	A condition characterized by explosive outbursts.
Insomnia	Difficulty falling asleep or inability to sleep.
Involuntary movements	Movements that are not under one's intentional control.
Light therapy	A treatment for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) in which the patient is exposed to periods of bright light to alleviate depression.
Logorrhea	Tendency to speak too much. Excessive (and often incoherent) wordiness or talkativeness.
Mania	A mood state characterized by initial feelings of euphoria and well-being, followed by mental and physical hyperactivity, disorganization of thoughts and behavior. Mania may also present as marked irritability.
Manic Depression	An earlier name for Bipolar Disorder.

Mixed Episode	An episode in which symptoms of both mania and depression are present.
Mood	A combination of the individual's emotional state and overall sense of physical well-being, comfort.
Mood Congruent	Feelings which are in keeping with circumstances, e.g., feeling sad when someone close dies. We say that something is mood incongruent when feelings are not in keeping with circumstances. e.g., feeling happy or giggly when receiving word of a loved one's death.
Motor Tic	A brief, purposeless, involuntary movement. May involve one ("simple") or more ("complex") muscle groups.
Myoclonus	Sudden, fast movements or sudden, fast involuntary activity involving groups of muscles, e.g., the leg jerks that many people experience as they fall asleep.
NE	Norepinephrine (also called Noradrenalin)
Negative symptoms	Symptoms of schizophrenia are often described as positive symptoms or negative symptoms. Negative symptoms include withdrawal, social problems, lack of energy, lack of concern about personal appearance, and reduced ability to express emotion.
Neurofeedback	A type of biofeedback that attempts to alter electrical activity in the brain by providing external feedback.
Neuroleptic	A class of medications that generally target the dopamine neurotransmitter system. Often referred to as "antipsychotics," in small doses, these medications are also often used to treat the tics of Tourette's Syndrome (which is not a psychotic disorder) and to treat behavioral symptoms of some conditions (such as "rage attacks").
Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome	A potentially lethal (but usually non-fatal) and rare side effect of the neuroleptic medications.
Neurotransmitter	Any of the chemicals carrying nerve impulses across the synapse (gap) between adjacent neurons (nerve cells).
NMS	Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome
Norepinephrine	Another neurotransmitter (neurochemical) in the brain. Norepinephrine (also called Noradrenaline) is involved in the regulation of impulsivity and attention, among other its functions.
Obsession	An unwanted, repetitive, intrusive thought or impulse that is usually experienced as irrational, although children may lack such insight.
Obsessive-Compulsive	Having both obsessive and compulsive features.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder	A condition characterized by obsessions and/or compulsions that cause significant distress or impairment in the individual's life.
Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder	A personality disorder that is present in some, but not even the majority of, individuals who have Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.
OCB	Obsessive-compulsive behavior.
OCD	Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
OCs	Obsessive-compulsive symptom(s)
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder. A condition characterized by negative, oppositional behavior.
PANDAS	P ediatric A utoimmune N europsychiatric D isorders A ssociated with S treptococcal infections.
Paranoia	A psychosis characterized by delusions; the delusions are often of persecution or grandeur. Paranoia is usually not accompanied by hallucinations. The adjective "paranoid" may be used to describe an individual who tends to be very suspicious of others, very sensitive to rejection, hostile, and with an inflated sense of self-importance.
Paresthesia	An abnormal sense of tingling or creeping on the skin that has no identifiable physical basis.
Parkinsonian	Symptoms similar to Parkinson's disease such as tremors, rigid muscles, difficulty moving and unresponsive (flat facial) expression.
PDD	Pervasive Developmental Disorder
Phonic Tic	A generally brief, repetitive involuntary vocalization that may occur in bursts or bouts. Can be simple sounds such as throat-clearing, coughing, grunting sounds (simple phonic tics) or linguistically meaningful phrases or utterances such as echolalia, coprolalia, palilalia (complex phonic tics). Phonic tics are also referred to as vocal tics.
PITANDS	P ediatric, I nfection- T rigged A utoimmune N europsychiatric D isorders. Often used interchangeably with PANDAS , although PANDAS is about strep infections whereas PITANDS could include viral infections.
Positive symptoms	Symptoms of schizophrenia are often described as positive symptoms or negative symptoms. Positive symptoms include hallucinations and delusions.
Prefrontal Cortex	The portion of the cortex located in the anterior ("to the front") frontal lobe. The most developed part of the brain in humans compared to other animals.

Premonitory urges	Sensations immediately preceding an involuntary movement or vocalization; people may report an awareness of an "itch" or sensation building up in part of their body that will need to be released.
Pressured speech	Rapid, sometimes incoherent speech; a symptom of mania.
Prognosis	The expected course of an illness or condition or any prediction of recovery from a condition or illness.
Psychomotor Agitation	Restlessness.
Psychomotor Retardation	Slowing down of movement or actions. Psychomotor retardation may be a symptom for some children or teens with depression.
Psychotropic	Literally means "mind-changing." Psychotropic medications are medications that have the effect of altering mood and/or behavior.
Racing Thoughts	A symptom of mania in which the individual's thoughts seem to be speeded-up and may come tumbling out of them. The thoughts may all be logical but speeded-up, or they may jump from one topic to another without any apparent connection to the listener.
"Rage Attack"	A colloquial term used to describe explosive outbursts that are time-limited and out of proportion to the triggering situation. Some people refer to "storms" or "meltdowns." Because all of these are colloquial terms and not formal diagnoses, there are no unified set of diagnostic criteria.
Rapid Cycling	Refers to how quickly the individual switches between a depressive state and a manic or hypomanic state in Bipolar Disorder. Some rapid-cycling individuals may switch over days, others within the day.
Recurrent	Occurring again.
Remission	A complete absence of symptoms for a period of months to years.
SAD	Seasonal Affective Disorder
Schizoaffective	A mental disorder having features that overlap some of the symptoms of both Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorder, but not being either one or both of these disorders in full form.
Schizophrenia	A severe and chronic mental disorder characterized by delusions, hallucinations, incoherence and physical agitation. Schizophrenia is classified as a "thought disorder," in contrast to Bipolar Disorder, which is classified as a "mood disorder."
Seasonal Affective Disorder	A depressive disorder characterized by seasonal influences, with individuals experiencing depression during the lower-light (e.g., winter) months.

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor	A class of medications which are thought to work by blocking the re-uptake of serotonin at the pre-synaptic point, the result of which is to have more serotonin still available in the synapse for post-synaptic reception (uptake). This class of medications includes Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, Luvox, and Celexa.
Serotonin	One of the brain's neurotransmitters, believed to be involved in depression and anxiety disorders like Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.
SIB	Self-Injurious Behavior. Includes self-inflicted injuries such as skin cutting, skin/scab/nose picking; damage to eye from poking tics or compulsions, etc. When written in lowercase, "sib" refers to a sibling (brother or sister).
Side effect	Any condition caused by a medication other than the effect for which it was prescribed; secondary, (usually unwanted) effects of using a medication.
"Significant"	When used in discussing or reporting research results and their data analyses, all this really means is that the results are unlikely to be due to chance. It <i>does not</i> mean "important" or "very big effect."
Simple tic	An involuntary movement or sound that usually occurs in bursts and that involves only one muscle group or sound.
Spectrum disorder	In a spectrum disorder, the symptoms and additional features can present themselves in a wide variety of combinations. As one example, Tourette's Syndrome is said to be a spectrum disorder because some children have "just tics," but the tics range from mild and infrequent to severe and frequent in different children, and some children will also have features of other conditions such as Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or a mood disorder.
SSRI	Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor
Stereotyped	Always occurring in the same ritualized or mannered way.
Stimulants	A class of psychotropic medications often used to increase attention/focus and/or decrease hyperactivity; also prescribed for narcolepsy.
Suicidal ideation	Thinking about suicide, suicidal thoughts (but not at the level of making suicide plans).
Suicide	Taking one's own life; killing oneself.

Symptom	A perceptible change in the body or its functions that indicates disease or dysfunction. Some people use this term only to refer to subjective reports or experiences, and use the term "signs" to refer to objective changes that the observer measures or notes; other people use the term "symptom" to refer to any kind of perceptible change, regardless of whether it's subjective or objective.
Syndrome	A set or collection of signs and symptoms that usually occur together and that characterize a particular condition or abnormal state.
Tardive Dyskinesia	A movement disorder characterized by involuntary movement and twitching of the face muscles; a potentially irreversible side effect of certain neuroleptic medications.
TD	Tardive Dyskinesia
Tic	An involuntary movement (motor tic) or involuntary vocalization (vocal tic), sometimes confused with "nervous habits" or allergy symptoms.
Tourette's Syndrome	A condition characterized by multiple motor tics and vocal tics.. Also known as Gilles de la Tourette's, Tourette's Disorder, and Gilles de la Tourette's Syndrome.
Transient Tic Disorder	Transient means "passing through" as in "temporary." A transient tic disorder is a short-lived condition in which the child has one or even a few involuntary movements or sounds that last more than four weeks but less than a year; benign condition.
Tremor	Rapid rhythmic vacillating movements of limbs.
Trichotillomania	A condition in which one compulsively pulls out their own hair.
TS	Tourette's Syndrome
TS+	Pronounced "TS Plus," this is a non-official shorthand expression coined by Leslie E. Packer, PhD to denote someone who has Tourette's Syndrome plus features of other disorders such as ADHD, OCD, etc. The other disorders may be present in full-blown form or as just as features that do not meet full diagnostic criteria.
Tx	Treatment
Vocal Tic	Another name for a phonic tic.
Waxing and waning	A naturally occurring increase (waxing) and decrease (waning) in severity and frequency of symptoms. Usually associated with the tics of Tourette's Syndrome, but symptoms of other conditions may also wax and wane.