

Is R. Kelly Mentally Ill?: A Comparative Behavioral Analysis to the DSM-V

by Greshun De Bouse™: Researcher Analyst

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Author's Note:

All of this paper offers comprehensive explication of specific mental illnesses as indicated by the DSM-V, and highlights the parallelism of each with exhibited behavior of R&B singer R.Kelly based on his self-reported behavior, accuser-and-close-acquaintance-reported behavior, and public-observed behavior.

About The Author:

Greshun De Bouse™ is a researcher and analyst who objectively examines and analyzes existent research, conducts independent research, and presents demonstrative evidentiary applicability of findings to relative subject matter.

Disclaimer:

Though formally educated and trained in behavioral sciences, counseling, criminology, neuropsychology, and other relative fields, Greshun De Bouse™ has neither performed a psychological evaluation on, nor is providing behavioral health services to R. Kelly at this time. This paper is a mere presentation of information and is not intended to diagnose or treat any disorder. Always consult your PCP or PSP (psychological services provider) before stopping or starting any form of treatment. Direct all emergencies and/or life-threatening situations to 911. Reader discretion is advised. Greshun De Bouse™ neither condones nor supports any inappropriate or unlawful behavior of any kind.

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Mental Illness

Defined. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), the diagnostic tool published by the American Psychological Association (APA) and used by mental health professionals (MHP's) which contains descriptions, symptoms, and other criteria for diagnosing mental disorders, mental illness is characterized by “A behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual.” The American Psychological Association (APA) describes mental illnesses as common, diagnosable, and treatable “health conditions involving changes in emotions, thinking or behavior (or a combination of these).” Because mental illnesses may vary in type and severity depending on whether or not the affected individual is biologically or environmentally predisposed (nature or nurture relativity) to a particular mental illness, it is imperative for one to thoroughly examine all potential contributing factors to a mental illness on an individual-specific basis. For example, a treatment differential may be required in a situational-induced mental illness diagnosis versus a clinical mental illness. A situational mental illness such as depression or anxiety may be spurred by various life transitions and adjustments such as relocating to a new city, changing jobs or schools, general stressful situations, and the like. Such depression usually is considered temporary and expected to resolve once one has adjusted to a particular life transition. Clinical depression is not necessarily situation-based and may be genetically inherited. Such depression severely disrupts functionality normalcy in daily life. Considering this paper is relative to R & B singer R. Kelly, the mental illnesses discussed herein are they which seem to most closely parallel consistent

persistent behavioral patterns of the singer based on his self-reported behavioral account, public-observed behavior, and on the behavioral account of others. Continue reading for greater insight.

Parallelism With R. Kelly

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is marked by “feeling on edge, and having negative thoughts. Nightmares, flashbacks, bursts of anger,” among other symptoms.

Stevens (2018) asserts “According to a Center for Disease Control (CDC) National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, one in six U.S. men have experienced sexual violence, and 17% of those men develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).” According to De Bouse (2019), “In his 2013 book, *Soulacoaster: The Diary of Me*, Robert Sylvester Kelly aka R.Kelly aka R., details being sexually abused by a female family member for approximately eight years-age seven to nearly fifteen” (p. 5). This is a very intense trauma- “the result of exposure to an inescapably stressful event that overwhelms a person's coping mechanisms”(Babbel, 2011) for any child. In a study by the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, male victims of childhood sexual abuse were found to be at greater risk for suicide attempts (Stevens, 2018). Further, De Bouse (2019) explicates the correlation between such childhood sexual abuse and subcortical, cerebral, and amygdalal cranial impairment (see [*Does Childhood Abuse Foster Cranial Impairment \(Brain Damage\) Disability?*](#)). Childhood trauma such as that experienced by R. Kelly and countless other children can cause significant psychological and physiological arrested development, and PTSD.

Intermittent explosive disorder. The DSM-V defines intermittent explosive disorder as “characterized by brief outbursts of anger and violence that are out of proportion for the situation. People with this disorder may erupt into angry outbursts or violent actions in response

to everyday annoyances or disappointments”(Cherry, 2018). In addition, “Less severe verbal outbursts may occur in between episodes of physical aggression” (Mayo Clinic, 2019)

If one assigns truth to the nearly identical accounts by numerous females who allege “Robert” R. Kelly abused them, and other individuals concerning the tendency of “Robert” R. Kelly to become easily angered if others fail to speak or behave as he desires, one may logically conclude such is indicative of an established behavioral pattern (*a mental illness diagnostic requirement as aforementioned*) for intermittent explosive disorder.

Anti-social personality disorder. The common understanding of the word anti-social is one who is isolated from others or a loner. Conversely, in the realm of mental health professionals, “To be anti-social is to be against society: against rules, norms, laws and acceptable behavior” (Porter & Hunter, 2019). According to the DSM-V, a diagnosable anti-social personality disorder is contingent on one meeting the following criteria: “Ego-centrism; self-esteem derived from personal gain, power, or pleasure. Lack of concern for feelings, needs, or suffering of others; lack of remorse after hurting or mistreating another” (American Psychological Association, 2018). As stated previously, if what his numerous accusers and others privy to his customary behaviors allege is true concerning his personality, “Robert” R. Kelly easily fits into this DSM-V category. Porter and Hunter (2019) contend “Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder tend to be charismatic, attractive, and very good at obtaining sympathy from others; for example, describing themselves as the victim of injustice. Some studies suggest that the average intelligence of antisocials is higher than the norm.” In a recent televised interview, R. Kelly stated “I have been assassinated, but I'm alive” (G. King Interview, 2019). Some may perceive such a statement as one assuming a victim role. Kelly also states within the same interview “I need help. This is the kinda help I need. I need somebody to help me not have

a big heart because my heart is so big, people betray me and I keep forgivin' 'em" (G. King Interview, 2019). Interviewer Gayle King immediately responded to Kelly by stating "You sound like you're playing the victim here" (CBS This Morning, 2019). Whether or not Kelly was or is assuming a victim role is in the perception of viewers. Moreover, "Antisocials possess a superficial charm, they can be thoughtful and cunning, and have an intuitive ability to rapidly observe and analyze others, determine their needs and preferences, and present it in a manner to facilitate manipulation and exploitation" (Porter & Hunter, 2019). Interestingly, though known for his innumerable sexual escapades, many allegedly with minors, based on statements from multiple individuals who have such intimate knowledge of him, Robert R. Kelly seems to have "Incapacity for mutually intimate relationships, as exploitation is a primary means of relating to others, including by deceit and coercion; use of dominance or intimidation to control others" (American Psychological Association, 2018). The aforementioned statement is a direct quote from the DSM-V, and all who have heard statements from his partners, accusers, and others privy to his behavioral functionality may deductively reason "Robert" R. Kelly seemingly fits this category.

Narcissistic personality disorder. Perhaps no other disorder is as easily observable in "Robert" R. Kelly based on publicly-provided information by those closest to him, as narcissistic personality disorder. This disorder "is associated with a lasting pattern of exaggerated self-image, self-centeredness, and low empathy. People with this condition tend to be more interested in themselves than with others" (Cherry, 2018).

Obsessive compulsive personality disorder (OCPD). Not to be confused with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), OCPD is marked by a "pervasive pattern of preoccupation with orderliness, perfectionism, inflexibility, and mental and interpersonal control" (Cherry, 2018).

All of R. Kelly's accusers have alleged he is mentally and interpersonally controlling-having dictated their eating, excretory, visitor, and phone schedules, as well as style of dress; and all of his accusers allege “Robert” R. Kelly is rigid and inflexible. On this basis, Kelly is exhibiting behavioral parallels with this disorder.

Situational depression. As mentioned previously, stress facilitates an environment for situational depression at least. Though typically considered temporary, such depression can be exacerbated by prolonged stress. Such prolonged-stress-induced situational depression can prompt suicidal ideation or suicide just like clinic depression. One would imagine the current situation in which he finds himself is quite stressful for R. Kelly, and to lend credence to this, millions of viewers witnessed the adverse behavioral manifestation of stress that R. Kelly displayed during his television interview with Gayle King.

Paraphillic Disorder. The DSM-V describes paraphillic disorders as “sexual disorders in which persons have frequent and recurring instances of intense sexually arousing thoughts, ideas, urges, fantasies, or behaviors involving non-human objects, humiliation of self and partner, children or other non-consenting people, over a long period - at least 6 months.” After reading this definition, and based on the nearly identical allegations of his accusers, one might reason the behavior exhibited by R. Kelly seemingly parallels this disorder precisely.

Coping mechanisms. In her article, *Does Childhood Abuse Foster Cranial Functionality (Brain Damage) Disability?* De Bouse (2019) asserts “Kelly admittedly recalls after a couple of years, looking forward to it sometimes”(p.5)-referring to being sexually abused by a female family member. This may be unfathomable to some, but “Some survivors surrender to protect themselves or their loved ones” (Morber, 2019). Stevens (2018) contends “Men who have experienced sexual assault are more likely to engage in risky behaviors to cope with complex

feelings.” Perhaps his learning to look forward to the sexual abuse was a protective pain-numbing coping mechanism because “If the young Kelly convinced himself he liked the abuse, he could feel as though he exerted some sense of situational control-rather than feeling like a helpless, control-stripped victim” (De Bouse, 2019, p. 5). Conversely, it is possible R. Kelly could have learned to look forward to being molested due to physiologically-derived enjoyment. In fact, “because fear activates the sympathetic nervous system, increasing blood flow throughout the body—it’s possible that it could even facilitate genital arousal, according to the Journal of Clinical Forensic Medicine paper” (Weiss, 2018).

Summation

The aforementioned list of mental illnesses may be analyzed in comparison to R. Kelly based on his behavioral self-reporting, reporting of those privy to his consistent behavioral patterns, and behavioral patterns observed by the general public. Based on the previously stated reporting and observation, R. Kelly may exhibit behaviors that qualify for one or more of the mental illnesses described in this paper. Stress can serve as a gateway to clinical depression, suicide ideation, and ultimate death by suicide. Unfortunately, According to The American Institute on Stress (2018), stress-related suicide will occur if “The person sees no way out and fears things may get worse.” Stress reduction is key for Kelly at this juncture because of the ensuing plethora of psychological, physiological, neurological and other problems lingering stress can incite. In addition, based on his recent behavior in the media observed by millions of viewers, and information presented in this paper, R. Kelly should have a psychological evaluation conducted by a qualified professional to receive an accurate analysis of his current mental health. Considering his adverse childhood sexual abuse experiences, and based on existent research

indicating childhood abuse victims suffer cranial impairment due to such experiences, a neuropsychologist and neurologist should be consulted to perform necessary cranial functionality diagnostics.

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