



The Organization of DSM-5



The fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) represents the latest scientific thinking in both criteria content and organizational structure of mental disorders. Just as the diagnostic criteria for many individual disorders were refined based on scientific advances, the manual itself was reorganized. The changes are immediately evident in its table of contents, which signals how various conditions relate to each other and the occurrence of mental disorders across the lifespan—both of which may potentially influence care. The primary goals for the manual’s new framework are to help clinicians make more accurate and consistent diagnoses, and to help researchers better study how disorders relate to one another, which can lead to better treatment for patients.

Chapter Sequence

The sequence of chapters in DSM-5 is based on advancements in our understanding of the underlying vulnerabilities as well as symptom characteristics of disorders. This sequence reflects what has been learned during the past two decades about how the brain functions and how genes and environment influence a person’s health and behavior.

The chapters are also positioned by broad categories that—in some cases—indicate the common features within larger disorder groups. The new framework is intended to encourage research both within and across diagnostic groupings with the hope of advancing our understanding of the relationships between disorders. The more researchers and clinicians know about these connections, the more they will be able to identify patterns or even causes of mental health disorders, which in turn may inform the development of better treatments.

Developmental Lifespan

DSM-5 is organized in sequence with the developmental lifespan. This organization is evident in every chapter and within individual diagnostic categories, with disorders typically diagnosed in childhood detailed first, followed by those in adolescence, adulthood and later life. Disorders previously addressed in a single “infancy, childhood and adolescence” chapter are now integrated throughout the manual.

20 Disorder Chapters

While the actual number of disorders will remain approximately the same, three additional disorder chapters were added to DSM-5 to better classify the disorders based on known similarities to one another. Certain disorders come under more representative or comprehensive chapter headings. For example, Neurodevelopmental Disorders is a new heading that includes autism spectrum disorders, intellectual developmental disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and tic disorders, such as Tourette’s Disorder. The chapter on substance-related disorders now is titled Substance Use and Addictive Disorders and includes gambling disorder as the only behavioral addiction.

Other disorders are broken out from their previous groupings based on new scientific understanding of their principal features. For example, because recent studies have shown that obsessive-compulsive disorder involves distinct neurocircuits, it and several related disorders constitute their own chapter instead of being addressed in the chapter on anxiety disorders. Similarly, mood disorders are divided into two chapters for bipolar and related disorders and for depressive disorders.

The complete listing of DSM-5 chapters is:

- Neurodevelopmental Disorders
- Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders
- Bipolar and Related Disorders
- Depressive Disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Obsessive-Compulsive and Related Disorders
- Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders
- Dissociative Disorders
- Somatic Symptom Disorders
- Feeding and Eating Disorders
- Elimination Disorders
- Sleep-Wake Disorders
- Sexual Dysfunctions
- Gender Dysphoria
- Disruptive, Impulse Control and Conduct Disorders
- Substance Use and Addictive Disorders
- Neurocognitive Disorders
- Personality Disorders
- Paraphilic Disorders
- Other Disorders

DSM is the manual used by clinicians and researchers to diagnose and classify mental disorders. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) will publish DSM-5 in 2013, culminating a 14-year revision process.

APA is a national medical specialty society whose more than 36,000 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 Eve Herold at 703-907-8640 or press@psych.org.

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