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Trouble in Mind: An Unorthodox Introduction to Psychiatry

Dean F. MacKinnon

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Orthodox psychiatric texts are often rich in facts, but thin in concept. Depression may be defined as a dysfunction of mood, but of what use is a mood? How can anxiety be both symptom and adaptation to stress? What links the disparate disabilities of perception and reasoning in schizophrenia? Why does the same situation push one person into drink, drugs, danger, or despair and bounce harmlessly off another?

Trouble in Mind is unorthodox because it models adaptive mental function along with mental illness to answer questions like these. From experience as a Johns Hopkins clinician, educator, and researcher, Dean F. MacKinnon offers a unique perspective on the nature of human anguish, unreason, disability, and self-destruction. He shows what mental illness can teach about the mind, from molecules to memory to motivation to meaning.

MacKinnon’s fascinating model of the mind as a vital function will enlighten anyone intrigued by the mysteries of thought, feeling, and behavior. Clinicians in training will especially appreciate the way mental illness can illuminate normal mental processes, as medical illness in general teaches about normal body functions. For students, the book also includes useful guides to psychiatric assessment and diagnosis.

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