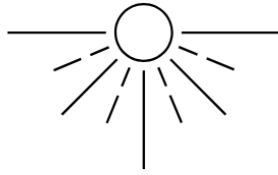


THE HOLISTIC COUNSELOR PODCAST



A LEARNING & REFLECTION GUIDE

Understanding the DSM

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental
Disorders

READ / LISTEN / REFLECT

Diana S. Rice

LMHC, CIMHP, QS

FROM THE MIC TO THE COMMUNITY

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Begin where you are.

A diagnosis may help explain something you have been living with. It can also bring questions about what the label means. Understanding the DSM can help you take part in that conversation with your clinician.

Listen alongside this guide

Conversations from The Holistic Counselor Podcast to explore with these pages.

EPISODE 85

Understanding OCPD with Darryl Rossignol

Explore one diagnosis, obsessive-compulsive personality disorder, through a focused podcast conversation.

[Listen or read the transcript](#)

IN THESE PAGES

Understanding the topic / Make room for your questions / Keep learning. Find support.

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Understanding the topic

A shared clinical language

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders helps clinicians diagnose mental health conditions. The American Psychiatric Association publishes it. DSM-5-TR means Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision. That edition name tells you which version a provider is using.

A diagnosis needs context

An assessment looks at symptoms, their effect on your life, and your history. A clinician also checks for other causes. Reading a list online is not the same as having an assessment. A diagnosis cannot tell your whole story.

A manual is not a treatment plan

Ask why a diagnosis fits, whether it is provisional, and how it affects care. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases are related systems, but their categories are not identical.

Research and perspective

The American Psychiatric Association explains the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders's purpose and relationship to the International Classification of Diseases. A conversation with your clinician can clarify how the manual is being used in your own care.

Can I ask questions about a diagnosis in my records?

Yes. You can ask what led to the diagnosis, what other explanations were considered, whether it is provisional, and how it affects the care plan. Your culture, history, physical health, and current circumstances are important context for that discussion.

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Make room for your questions

Choose a question that feels useful today. A few notes in your own words can be enough. Your reflections stay with you; this website does not collect them.

Type in the spaces below, or print and write by hand.

What do I hope a diagnosis would help me understand?

What concerns do I have about a label?

What part of my experience might a short label leave out?

Questions for a conversation

Why does this diagnosis fit, and what alternatives did you consider?

Is it provisional or established?

How will it affect treatment, records, or insurance?

Ask your clinician to explain any diagnosis in plain language. You can request time to discuss what it means to you.

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Keep learning. Find support.

Sources and further reading

Editorial revision: October 13, 2026. The linked authorities provide current rules, services, and evidence.

[1. American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders questions](#)

[2. National Institute of Mental Health: Understanding psychotherapy](#)

Wherever you are reading from, your culture, language, beliefs, access needs, and daily circumstances belong in the conversation. Professional titles and services vary between countries. Sources and directories identify their own regions; a local health service or professional regulator can explain the options where you live.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

These guides offer general education for adults. They do not provide personal therapy, diagnosis, medical advice, or a professional relationship with Diana. A qualified professional who can practice where you live can help you apply information to your circumstances. Changes to prescribed care belong in a conversation with your treating professional.

[Read the full educational disclaimer](#)

FROM THE MIC TO THE COMMUNITY

Keep exploring.



Read, listen, and return
at your own pace.

Scan for this guide and its episode links.

theholisticcounselor.com/resources

Diana S. Rice, LMHC, CIMHP, QS

Podcast host, educator, and psychoeducational trainer

IF YOU NEED URGENT SUPPORT

If you need urgent emotional support in the U.S. or its territories, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers phone, text, and chat support. For immediate danger or a medical emergency, use your local emergency number (911 in the U.S.). Elsewhere, contact a crisis service in your country. The podcast and its messages are not monitored for urgent care.

988lifeline.org/chat/

PRINTING YOUR COPY

Print the pages you want to keep. This edition uses US Letter pages; on A4 paper, choose Fit to page. For two-sided printing, choose Flip on long edge.

For the most comfortable reading on a phone, use the website version.

© 2026 Diana S. Rice. For personal educational use. Please share the guide's website page and keep the author credit and sources with printed copies.