

Cambridge Elements

Elements in the Philosophy of Mind
edited by
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MENTAL ILLNESS

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CAMBRIDGE
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Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-108-92502-0 — Mental Illness
Tim Thornton
Frontmatter
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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108925020
DOI: 10.1017/9781108939836

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First published 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-92502-0 Paperback
ISSN 2633-9080 (online)
ISSN 2633-9072 (print)

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Mental Illness

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DOI: 10.1017/9781108939836
First published online: May 2022

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Abstract: The very idea of mental illness is contested. Given its differences with physical illnesses, is it right to count it, and particular mental illnesses, as genuinely medical as opposed to moral matters? One debate concerns its value-ladenness, which has been used by anti-psychiatrists to argue that it does not exist. Recent attempts to define mental illness divide both on the presence of values and on their consequences. Philosophers and psychiatrists have explored the nature of the general kinds that mental illnesses might comprise, influenced by psychiatric taxonomies such as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* and the *International Classification of Diseases*, and the rise of a rival biological 'meta-taxonomy': the Research Domain Criteria (RDoC). The assumption that the concept of mental illness has a culturally invariant core has also been questioned. This Element serves as a guide to these contested debates.

Keywords: mental illness, classification, transcultural psychiatry, concept of disorder, looping kinds

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ISBNs: 9781108925020 (PB), 9781108939836 (OC)
ISSNs: 2633-9080 (online), 2633-9072 (print)

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