



In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition, text revision (DSM-5-TR), the diagnostic criterion A for delirium was modified to enhance its clarity. These changes were approved by the DSM Steering Committee and the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees.

Rationale for Change

In DSM-5, criterion A for delirium: “A disturbance in attention (i.e., reduced ability to direct, focus, sustain, and shift attention) and awareness (reduced orientation to the environment)” could be unclear. The criterion equated “awareness” to “reduced orientation to the environment”; in addition, it uses the term “disorientation” which already appears as one of the “additional disturbances in cognition” in criterion C. To clarify the meaning, the parenthesized phrase “reduced orientation to the environment” was removed, and the second half of criterion A was changed to “accompanied by reduced awareness of the environment.”

DSM is the manual used by clinicians and researchers to diagnose and classify mental disorders. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) will publish DSM-5-TR in 2022.

APA is a national medical specialty society whose more than 37,400 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 APA Communications at 202-459-9732 or press@psych.org.

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