Chapter 16
Psychological Disorders

Review 16.1: Anxiety Disorders
Carol almost constantly feels extremely tense and uneasy for no apparent reason. She cannot concentrate on her studies, and she’s on the verge of failing all her courses. This suggests that she may suffer from a (1) generalized anxiety disorder, which may lead to (2) physical problems, such as ulcers and high blood pressure. Because Carol cannot identify the cause of her tension, it would be described by Sigmund (3) Freud as (4) free-floating, while learning theorists would link her anxiety with (5) classical conditioning of fear, and biological psychologists might link it to an over arousal of (6) brain areas involved in (7) impulse control. Carol’s roommate Shayna complains of similar feelings, but also experiences unexpected episodes of intense dread, known as (8) panic attacks, which are accompanied by physical symptoms such as heart (9) palpitations, shortness of breath, and choking sensations. Shayna has experienced several of these frightening episodes and has begun to avoid situations in which she fears (10) escape may be difficult. Thus, Shayna is developing a fear of leaving her home, which may become (11) agoraphobia if the feelings intensify. Carol and Shayna’s friend Randal doesn’t understand their inability to identify the source of their anxiety. He says, “I know exactly what I fear: heights. I have a (12) phobia, which I know is (13) irrational but at least I can deal with it by avoiding tall buildings, for example. I believe I (14) learned my fear from my dad, after watching him fall off our roof and never climbing a ladder again.” While Randal is talking with Carol and Shayna, another friend Moira is making her third trip to the restroom to wash her hands. Moira has become (15) obsessed with the idea that doorknobs or any objects handled by others are full of germs. By giving in to her (16) compulsion to wash her hands, she eliminates the germs. But this constant hand-washing is interfering with her everyday life. One use flu explanation for Moira’s behavior is biological: Brain scans have shown that an area that monitors our actions and checks for errors, the (17) anterior cingulate cortex, is especially likely to be hyperactive in people with Moira’s disorder. Alternatively, learning theorists would say that actions such as frequent hand-washing reduce a sufferer’s (18) anxiety, thus reinforcing the hand-washing. As they talk, the four friends remember Shayna’s brother Shawn, who is an Army lieutenant serving in Afghanistan. In his many e-mails, he has described to Shayna some horrific situations. Shayna fears that when Shawn returns, he will have nightmares and suffer other constant reminders of the horrors he has seen, which would be symptoms of (19) post-traumatic stress disorder. As explained by (20) learning theorists, any reminders of his war-time experiences will bring out feelings of (21) anxiety.