What is abnormal?
Mental Illness Paradigms

What is a paradigm?

A *pattern, model, or example.* (Roget)

1) Spiritual Model
2) Social Standards Model
3) Statistical Model
4) Medical Model
Spiritual Model

The earliest model that is based on the existence of evil spirits.

The treatment for individuals, according to this model, was to relieve them of these evil forces or demons.
Social Standards Model

This model suggests that it is society that determines what is *deviant* and what is not.

Treatments for individuals using this model suggest a re-examination of the existing standards in society and perhaps adjusting those.
Statistical Model

This model suggests that abnormal or deviant behavior is determined by the relative *infrequency of a behavior*.

The goals of treatment are to lessen the occurrence of the deviant behavior.
Medical Model

This is the current and most pervasive model today and it suggests that abnormality is caused by some sort of *pathogen* or *pathological state*.

Treatment of the problem therefore involves remediation of that pathological state or pathogen.
In short, it depends

- Orientation of the one making the determination
- Changes with time
- If the person making the determination is psychologically minded the definition will be very specific.
  - Psychoanalytic, Behavioral, Humanistic, Cognitive, Biological/Neuroscience