

# What Would Women Say?

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*Today is International Women's Day. We have much to celebrate around the world. Rates of education for girls are up. Maternal mortality is down. And women are speaking out. Just a few weeks ago at the Academy Awards, as the young female filmmakers of the documentary, [Period. End of Sentence](#), said in their acceptance speech, "A period should end a sentence, not an education." Women filmmakers talking about menstruation and winning an Oscar?! Wow.*



## Photo Credit

*Yes, women are being heard in places where we once had no voice, and this is true for mental health as well. Let's face it, women were not at the table when the original diagnoses of mental disorders were first articulated. So just for fun, and in the spirit of International Women's Day, with this Five on Friday, let's imagine what diagnoses women might wish to add to our current list of disorders:*

**1. Mansplaining Not Otherwise Specified (NOS):** Included among the "[2010 Words of the Year](#)" by the *New York Times*, *mansplaining* comes from a blend of the noun *man* and the informal form of the gerund *explaining*. The essential feature of *mansplaining* is the behavioral disturbance of a man commenting on or explaining something to a woman or for a woman in a condescending, overconfident, and often inaccurate or oversimplified manner. Additional features include "[explaining without regard to the fact that the explainee knows more than the explainer](#)." Although rigorous epidemiological studies do not yet exist, an informal Twitter survey conducted by "Another Round" co-host [Tracy Clayton](#), suggests the disorder is quite common. Case examples include a male classmate explaining to a woman how to pronounce her last name because he thought she was doing it wrong, a male friend instructing his female friend on how to correctly insert a tampon, and a senior male colleague taking the mic to "explain" what his female colleague and world expert on the topic had just presented.

**2. Lack of Emotional Availability (LEA) Syndrome (A.K.A. "Not Right Now, Honey"):** Some would say that in America today (and elsewhere too) the pressures around masculinity have resulted in one of the [ten commandments of masculinity](#) being *Thou shalt not feel*. Of course this disorder does not apply to all men. Diagnoses never apply to all members of a group at risk. The essential features of *LEA Syndrome* include never expressing feelings, acting too cool or distant about problems, and blaming others for emotional issues. *LEA Syndrome* is commonly referred to as being [allergic to human emotions](#). In fact, "how to crack men's feelings" and "why won't my man cry" are two common responses when googling the term [men](#). Lack of emotional availability is also one of the top issues brought to [couple's therapy](#). Let's just imagine, Adam and Eve are

banished from The Garden of Eden. Eve says, "Geez, this is pretty serious. How are you feeling about this, Adam?" Adam replies, "I am hungry, and wonder if we are going to be able to find any apples out here."

**3. Spheraholia:** Many forms of addiction end with the suffix *oholic*, (think alcoholic, chocoholic, etc). So how about taking the Greek *sphera* (round) to establish the new disorder, *Spheraholia*? The essential features of this behavioral disturbance are being compulsively and incessantly focused on getting a spherical object to achieve a particular destination - specifically getting a ball across a finish line, through a hoop, out of the park, inside a cup, or over a net - to score points that translate into winning a game. The person with *spheraholia* may engage in these activities directly or may engage in such behavior vicariously as a spectator. Although the typical pursuit of such sporting activity is widespread, *Spheraholia* may be diagnosed when such behaviors are taken to the extreme such that the individual spends an excessive amount of time, energy, and resources engaged in these behaviors at the neglect of family and other social relations.

**4. Orchisteria:** The term *Hysteria* comes from the Greek root word *hyster* meaning uterus. Throughout ancient times, medical practitioners believed that when women suffered from what were at the time mysterious emotional disturbances, the root cause was somehow related to problems of female sexual organs, and in particular the wandering of the uterus. And thus, *Hysteria* became the term used to describe neurotic conditions, particularly for women. These ideas were elaborated in the twentieth century by none other than Herr Doktor Sigmund Freud with his landmark work, [\*Studies on Hysteria\*](#), published with his physician colleague Joseph Breuer. According to Freud and Breuer, the idea was that somehow this internal female organ would break loose and wreak havoc in ways that led to irrationality and mood disorder. If we suspend our understanding of science today and consider that a wandering uterus can cause such psychological disturbance, by analogy, it takes only a little imagination to consider that wandering testicles might wreak havoc as well. Thus, is born the diagnosis of *Orchisteria* from the Greek word *orchis* meaning testicle. You can take it from here.

**5. Selectivamaudiodamnum:** From the Latin *selectivam* (selective), *audio* (hearing), and *damnum* (loss), this last diagnosis describes a syndrome of selective hearing loss. *Selectivamaudiodamnum* is distinct from the typical diagnosis of hearing loss, which is typically conferred by an otolaryngologist (ENT doctor). Prior to making the diagnosis of *Selectivamaudiodamnum*, it is essential to first rule out that the hearing loss is not due to some other medical condition better treated by an ENT (and in case you need a great ENT, I can refer you to my sister). As opposed to typical hearing loss, the essential feature of *Selectivamaudiodamnum* is the specific failure to hear requests or questions or conversation that are typically initiated by "the wife." Frequent indication of *Selectivamaudiodamnum* is the tendency to respond with incongruent responses to questions and conversation. For example, when asked by his wife if he has taken care of the phone bill, the husband with *Selectivamaudiodamnum* responds that his friend Bill is away this week.

*Of course none of these disorders has been proposed in the forthcoming International Classification of Diseases (nor should they be). But just for today, International Women's Day, it's kind of fun to imagine!*