Christianity's role in the history of abnormal psychology

The history of abnormal psychology has been influenced significantly by Christianity. Abnormal psychology and Christianity have been closely connected through various relationships. The most prominent relationship was between the religious institutions and the mentally ill. In the early history of abnormal psychology, these religious institutions were mainly responsible for taking care of the mentally ill (Dein, 2010, p.1). This was an opportunity for these individuals to be taken care of and shown love. While some were, many people and even churches believed that mental illness was a consequence of sin or demons. At some points, Christianity most definitely damaged the positive progression of addressing abnormal psychology. But at other times, Christianity provided just the grace and care that was needed. In the beginning, Christianity was heavily involved with abnormal psychology and almost exclusively took responsibility for the hurt that it was causing some individuals. However, as time went on, Western religion was soon seen by mental health professionals as an outdated response to abnormal psychiatric struggles(Dein, 2010, p.2). The church was often dismissive of the realities behind mental illness and Christian doctrine often discouraged the development of adult coping behaviors and support systems. (Dein, 2010, p.2). In relation to abnormal psychology, Christianity made an impact more religiously than spiritually. The Bible tells Christians to love each other and care for the least of these, but that command is often forgotten or ignored. Abnormal psychology has come a long way, but not with a few obstacles along the way. Thankfully, as society has learned more about abnormal psychology, there have been healthier perspectives and developments formed in the world of Christianity.

How this role has shaped modern Christian understandings of abnormal psychology

Modern Christian understandings have been shaped by Christianity's previous role in abnormal psychology. A major change occurred when religion started being associated with some of the hysteria that was expressed in members who suffered from abnormal psychology (Dein, 2010, p.2). This association created a divide between religion and mental health care. This belief is often pushed by the perspective that churches are supposed to be perfect. However, churches were created so that the broken could gather and help make one another better. Christiany has undoubtedly burned abnormal psychology and those in its field, but there are also many ways that it has benefited them. You have to look at the bigger picture and recognize the good that can come from a relationship between Christianity and abnormal psychology. Until fairly recently, the divide between religion and abnormal psychology continued. However, spirituality now plays an important role in many areas of recovery such as Alcoholics Anonymous. Although it may not always be strictly Christian, spirituality has made a comeback and taken the place of religious power that used to be involved with abnormal psychology. Modern Christians can now see the mistakes that were made in the past and understand

that love needs to be at the root of their approach. Abnormal psychology is abnormal, but that does not mean that Christians should act in any way that could mentally harm someone. Being able to look back at what has and has not worked in the past is one of the greatest tools to help people change the future. Chrisitians now can take on a new perspective and be a source of grace and peace to those who are struggling. Fortunately, there is also a greater amount of understanding and research in the world of abnormal psychology as a whole. Christianity is a wide religion and therefore there are always people part of it who will benefit or hinder abnormal psychology. Do you think that Christianity's role in the history of abnormal psychology has been mainly positive or negative?