

Communication of emotional meaning, alexithymia, and somatoform disorders: A proposal for a diagnostic axis1

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In this paper, a plea is made for establishing the dimension communication of emotional meaning as a descriptive axis in biopsychosocial diagnosis. Studies on alexithymia and somatic illness suggest that this dimension possesses not only diagnostic implications but also prognostic and therapeutic ones. A transactional viewpoint considering the definitions and expectations of patients, professionals and society would convert multiaxial into multidimensional diagnosis adapted to a given culture. Somatoform disorders are taken as illustration of the usefulness of the proposed dimension for further research and theorizing. © 1989 S. Karger AG, Basel.