

Personality

PSY 1000:
Introduction to Psychology

Defining Personality: Consistency and Distinctiveness

- **Personality** refers to an individual's unique constellation of behavioral traits
 - Used to describe **consistency** (i.e., stability across time and situations) and **distinctiveness** (i.e., behavioral differences to the same situation between individuals)
- Perspectives on personality
 - Trait
 - Psychodynamic
 - Behaviorist and Social Cognitive
 - Humanistic
 - Biological



Trait Perspective

- **Personality traits** are durable dispositions to behave in a particular way in a variety of situations
- The dominant trait model of personality is the Five Factor Model (use the acronym OCEAN to help you remember the five factors)

Openness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imaginative or practical• Interested in variety or routine• Independent or conforming	Conscientiousness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organized or disorganized• Careful or careless• Disciplined or impulsive	Extraversion <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sociable or retiring• Fun-loving or somber• Affectionate or reserved	Agreeableness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Softhearted or ruthless• Trusting or suspicious• Helpful or uncooperative	Neuroticism <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calm or anxious• Secure or insecure• Self-satisfied or self-pitying
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- Criticized for being descriptive and not dealing with personality development

Eysenck's Trait Model (P-E-N)

- This model began with two factors
 - **Extraversion:** the tendency to seek excitement and social contact in order to heighten their level of arousal
 - **Neuroticism:** the tendency to become upset or emotional
- The third factor was included in the 1970s
 - **Psychoticism:** a personality feature characterized by aggressiveness and interpersonal hostility
- A major strength of this model is that it considered the development of personality from a biological perspective
 - e.g., Extraversion was due to variations in cortical arousal such that extraverts experienced less internal arousal so they would seek out stimulation from the environment

Psychodynamic Perspectives



- **Psychodynamic theories** include all the diverse theories descended from the work of Sigmund Freud which focus on unconscious mental forces
- Freud's **psychoanalytic theory** developed as a means for treating mental disorders
 - Explains personality, motivation, and mental disorders by focusing on the influence of early childhood experiences, unconscious motives and conflicts, and methods used to cope with sexual and aggressive urges

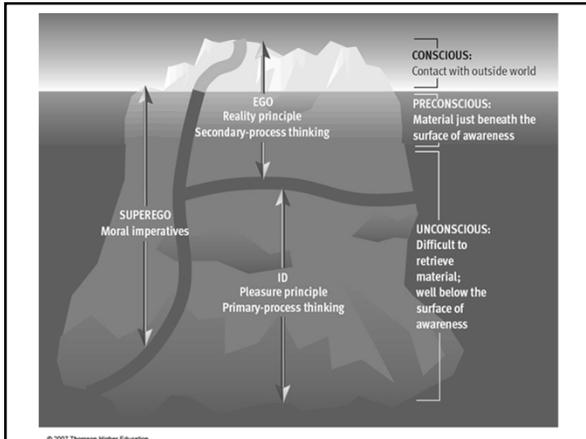
Psychodynamic Perspectives



- Structural model of personality
 - **Id:** primitive, instinctive component of personality that operates according to the pleasure principle
 - Raw biological urges (e.g., eat, sleep)
 - **Ego:** decision-making component of personality that operates according to the reality principle (i.e., mediates between the id and external reality)
 - Delays gratification until appropriate methods can be employed and allows attainment of long-term goals
 - **Superego:** moral component of personality that incorporates social standards about what represents right and wrong
 - Many social norms are internalized over time
- These components are distributed differently across three levels of awareness

Psychodynamic Perspectives

- Freud recognized the influence of unconscious forces on behavior (e.g., Freudian slips, dreams, humor)
- Levels of awareness (topographical model)
 - **Conscious:** consists of whatever one is aware of at a particular time
 - Example: Dr. Zeigler-Hill keeps rambling on about Freud
 - **Preconscious:** contains material just beneath the surface of awareness that can easily be retrieved
 - Example: Your phone number
 - **Unconscious:** contains thoughts, memories, and desires that are well below the surface of conscious awareness but that nonetheless exert great influence on behavior
 - Examples: Forgotten trauma from childhood, hidden feelings of hostility toward a parent, and repressed sexual desires

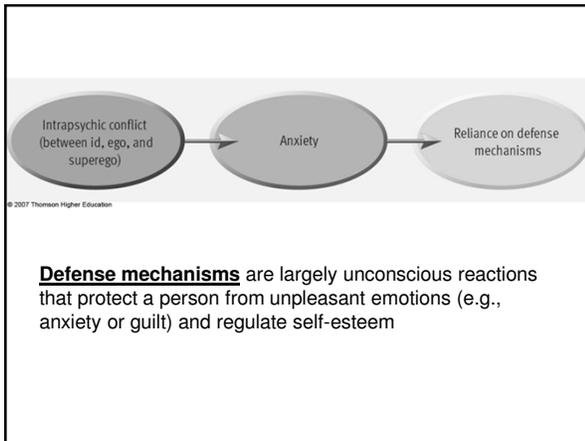


Psychodynamic Perspectives

- Freud assumed that behavior is the result of a series of ongoing internal conflicts between the id, ego, and superego
 - These conflicts arise frequently
 - Ex. Your alarm clock rings at 7am...your id urges you to go back to sleep but your ego tells you to go to your 8am class because you have a test next week
 - Sexual and aggressive drives are important
 - We often receive conflicting messages about appropriate behavior
 - These drives are thwarted more regularly than other drives (e.g., if the car in front of you is driving too slowly, you aren't allowed to ram your car into them)

Psychodynamic Perspectives

- Some internal conflicts produce considerable **anxiety** (i.e., intense nervousness)
 - Anxiety is produced by the ego and the type of anxiety depends upon the source of the threat
 - **Realistic (or objective) anxiety** is caused by danger in the environment (e.g., threatening person approaching you at night)
 - **Neurotic anxiety** is the result of fears that you will yield to powerful and dangerous id impulses (e.g., giving in to one's sexual desires)
 - Fear of external punishment (e.g., rejection)
 - **Moral anxiety** is caused by acts or wishes that violate one's standards of right and wrong (superego)
 - Fear of internal punishment (e.g., guilt)



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Identification	Bolstering self-esteem by forming an imaginary or real alliance with some person or group	An insecure young man joins a fraternity to boost his self-esteem.

Freud on Development: Psychosexual Stages

- “The child is father to the man”
 - The foundation of personality is established early in life (by around age 5)
- Based his theory on how children deal with their immature but powerful “sexual” urges
 - Sexual = physical pleasure

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Genital	Puberty onward	Genitals (being sexually intimate)	Establishing intimate relationships; contributing to society through working

Other Psychodynamic Theorists



- Carl Jung: Analytical Psychology
 - **Personal unconscious**: similar to Freud's construct
 - **Collective unconscious**: inherited latent memories
 - **Archetypes**: emotionally charged images/thoughts with universal meaning (e.g., mandala or “magic circle”)
 - **Introversion** (focused on internal world) and **Extraversion** (focused on external world)
- Alfred Adler: Individual Psychology
 - **Striving for superiority**: universal drive to adapt and improve oneself (primary goal of life!)
 - **Compensation**: effort to overcome real or imagined inferiorities by developing one's abilities
 - **Inferiority complex**: excessive feelings of inferiority
 - **Overcompensation**: focus on achieving status, power, and trappings of success
 - **Birth order**

Evaluating Psychodynamic Perspectives

- Positives
 - Unconscious forces can influence behavior
 - Psychological conflict often plays a key role in generating psychological distress
 - Early childhood experiences can have powerful influences on adult personality
 - People do use defense mechanisms to reduce negative emotions and regulate self-esteem
- Negatives
 - Poor testability
 - Inadequate empirical base
 - Sexist views

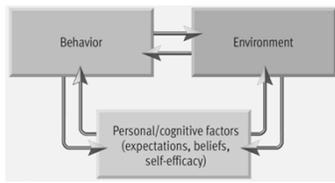
Behaviorist and Social Cognitive Perspectives

- B. F. Skinner
 - Viewed personality as a collection of **response tendencies** that are tied to various stimulus situations
 - The importance of reinforcement, punishment, and extinction



Behaviorist and Social Cognitive Perspectives

- Albert Bandura
 - Social learning theory
 - Emphasized cognitive processes
 - **Reciprocal determinism**: internal mental events, external environmental events, and overt behavior all influence each other



Behaviorist and Social Cognitive Perspectives

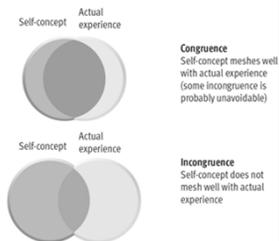
- Walter Mischel
 - He found that there is less consistency in behavior than is commonly believed
 - The person-situation controversy has led to a recognition that both the individual and the situation are important for determining behavior
 - The particular circumstances of any given situation will influence the way in which traits are expressed
 - Personality signatures (e.g., a man does X if one thing happens but does Y if something else happens)

Evaluating the Behaviorist and Social Cognitive Perspectives

- Positives
 - Based on rigorous research
 - Insights into effects of learning and environmental factors
- Negatives
 - Overdependence on animal research
 - Dehumanizing nature of radical behaviorism
 - Fragmented view of personality

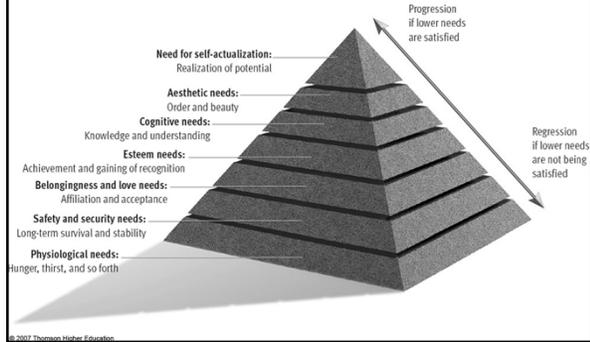
Humanistic Perspectives

- Carl Rogers
 - **Self-concept**: collection of beliefs about one's own nature, unique qualities, and typical behavior
 - **Incongruence**: disparity between one's self-concept and one's actual experience; may lead to psychological problems (e.g., anxiety)
 - Conditional & unconditional positive regard



Humanistic Perspectives

● Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Evaluating Humanistic Perspectives

● Positives

- Highlight the importance of a person's subjective view of reality
- Focused attention on what constitutes a healthy personality.

● Negatives

- Lacked a strong research base
- Poor testability
- Overly optimistic view of human nature

Biological Perspectives

● Physiological predisposition to respond to the environment in certain ways

- Ancient Greeks proposed temperaments (i.e., sanguine, melancholy, choleric, and phlegmatic)

● Twin studies



● The evolutionary approach

- Traits conducive to reproductive fitness have emerged

Evaluating Biological Perspectives

- Positives
 - Convincing evidence for genetic influence
- Negatives
 - Conceptual problems with heritability estimates
 - Artificial carving apart of nature and nurture
 - No comprehensive biological theory

The Assessment of Personality



- Interviews
 - Ex. Structured and semi-structured
- Projective Tests
 - Ex. Rorschach and Thematic Apperception Test
- Behavioral Assessments
 - Ex. Direct observation, rating scales, and frequency counts
- Personality Inventories
 - Ex. Neuroticism/Extraversion/Openness Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)
