**Basics of Psychology**

Throughout the course, various schools of psychology will be referenced within units. These include psychoanalytic theory, behaviourism, humanistic theory, and cognitive approaches. It is important to have a basic understanding of each of these schools of thought to aid your learning. Each of these theories are introduced below before recommendations for further readings are provided. Please use this as a guide to prepare for the course and/or to use as a reminder during your studies.

**Psychoanalytic Theory**

Psychoanalytic theory was founded by Sigmund Freud (Prochaska & Norcross, 2018). Freud developed a theory of personality which viewed the process between the unconscious and the conscious mind. Within this theory, Freud examines the unconscious conflicts happening within an individual (ID). There is a constant struggle between these unconscious impulses with social rules (ego) and morality (superego). Defence mechanisms are utilised to control impulses to keep guilt and anxiety to a minimum (Maddi, 1996). When unconscious conflicts are too intense and painful, and the defence mechanisms too restrictive, neurotic symptoms begin to emerge. Bringing these unconscious processes to the conscious mind is a large part of the psychoanalytic approach to develop more constructive defence mechanisms.

**Recommended Reading**

American Psychoanalytic Association. (n.d.). *Psychoanalytic terms & concepts defined.* <https://apsa.org/about-psychoanalysis/psychoanalytic-terms-concepts-defined/>

Tarzian, M., Ndrio, M., and Fakoya, A.O. (2023). An introduction and brief overview of psychoanalysis. *Cureus, 15*(9), doi: 10.7759/cureus.45171

Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10575551/>

Online resources: Yale open lectures https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7emS3ye3cVU

**Behaviourism**

Behaviourism is not dominated by a single figure like some of the other theories presented here. Behaviourism is developed from traditional learning theories such as Pavlov’s classical conditioning and Skinners operant conditioning (Pavlov, 1928; Skinner, 1963). The purpose of behaviourism is to develop techniques that are derived from validated, reliable and valid measures (Prochaska & Norcross, 2018). This approach looks to measure and identify maladaptive behaviours present within individuals. Behaviours are a result of stimuli within the individual’s environment that elicit specific responses. These responses are selected by the individual based on past experiences (conditioning). These behaviours are targeted because they are measurable, unlike thoughts and emotions. By identifying these maladaptive behaviours, individuals can be conditioned to change these behaviour patterns to be self-enhancing behaviours.

**Recommended Reading**

Brau, B., Fox, N., and Robinson, E. (2022). Behaviorism. In R. Kimmons (Ed.). *Education research.* BYU Open Learning Network.

Available from: <https://open.byu.edu/education_research/behaviorismt>

Online resource: Yale online lectures https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCKK6r15fro

**Humanistic Theory**

Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow are some of the key figures in humanistic theory. The humanistic approach views individuals as being in control of their own behaviour (Prochaska & Norcross, 2018). This approach views humans as being naturally good and when psychological needs are met, can work towards actualization. Self-actualization is realized through a desire to become the person you are capable of being and the closer an individual is to this, the happier and more fulfilled they are (Rogers, 1961). Maslow (1943) identified a hierarchy of needs required to reach self-actualization. These are: physiological needs, safety and security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The humanistic approach, therefore, places emphasis on aiding the individual to work on self-discovery and raise conscious experiences of their life to aid them in reaching their potential.

**Recommended Reading**

Angyal, A., Maslow, A., Murray, H.A., Bugental, J.F.T., Murphy, G., and Rogers, C. (1981). Humanistic psychology. In B.B. Wolman (Ed.), *Contemporary theories and systems in psychology* (pp. 507-515). Plenum Press.

Available from: <https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-4684-3800-0_14> (Read preview)

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (n.d.). *What is humanistic therapy? Types of therapy.* https://www.bacp.co.uk/about-therapy/types-of-therapy/humanistic-therapy/

**Cognitive Approaches**

Cognitive psychology approaches view how the mind processes information (Prochaska and Norcross, 2018). Figures such as Ulric Neisser, Jean Piaget, and Aaron Beck were interested in examining the internal processes of humans. Information is processed through the steps of input, processing, output, and storage (Neisser, 1967). This approach suggests that humans process from the environment through the senses (input). The mind then perceives this information and uses previously stored knowledge, problem-solving, decision-making etc. (processing). Once this process has been completed, potential courses of action can be generated (outputs). The outcomes are then evaluated and “stored” for future reference (storage). When working with individuals, cognitive approaches will look at faulty cognitions and increase coping skills to overcome difficulties being faced.

**Recommended Reading**

Michela, E. (2022). Cognitivism. In R. Kimmons (Ed.). *Education research.* BYU Open Learning Network.

Available from: https://open.byu.edu/education\_research/cognitivismj

**References**

Maddi, S.R. (1996). *Personality theories: A comparative analysis (6thed.).* Cole Publishing Company.

Maslow, A.H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*(4), 370-396.

Neisser, U. (1967). *Cognitive psychology.* Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Pavlov, I. P. (1928). *Lectures on conditional reflexes: Twenty-five years of objective study of the higher nervous activity (behaviour) of animals.* (W.H. Gantt, Trans.). Liverwright Publishing Corporation.

Prochaska, J.O. and Norcross, J.C. (2018). *Systems of psychotherapy: A transtheoretical analysis,* Oxford University Press. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/11081-000

Rogers, C. (1961). *On becoming a person: A therapist’s view of psychotherapy,* HarperOne.

Skinner, B.F. (1963). Operant behavior. *American Psychologist, 18*(8), 503-515. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/h0045185