

Classic Perspectives on Personality

Module 34

What is personality?

- A person's characteristic way of thinking, feeling, and acting

Sigmund Freud - Psychoanalysis & Psychodynamic Theories

- 1856-1939
- Motivations are attributable to the unconscious
- Your unconscious is full of thoughts - most unacceptable
- We are unaware of those thoughts & their impact on our daily behaviors
- We can discover these unconscious conflicts via psychoanalysis

Freud & Psychoanalysis

- Free association
- Most of our mind is hidden from our conscious thoughts
- Your personality is shaped by conflict between your impulses and the restraints required by your societal expectations

Freud 3-Part Personality Structure

- The mind is like an iceberg - See figure 34.1
 - Unconscious mind
 - Always striving to meet basic urges - pleasure principle
- Response to the real world - reality principle
 - Tries to gratify the Id in ways that are workable in society
- A recognition of how we should behave
 - Provides a conscience - standards for judgment

Freud's Psychsexual Stages

- Freud believed personality formed during first few years of life
- Id drives pleasure-seeking opportunities assoc. w/"erogenous zones" of the body
- See Table 34.1 pg 456
- Freud believed if you have disruption during any of these stages you can become "fixated"

Freud's Psychosexual Stages

- Oedipus Complex (also Electra Complex)
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Freud's Defense Mechanisms

- The ego protects itself by distorting reality
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 - Repression
 - Regression
 - Projection
 - Rationalization
 - Displacement
 - Denial
 - Reaction formation
 - "Freudian slips"
 - When repressed thoughts seep out into reality

Quiz Yourself:

- Unresolved conflicts during the first three psychosexual stages may lead to: _____
- According to Freud, our defense mechanisms work consciously or unconsciously?
- Defense mechanisms defend us against what?
- Explain the functions of the three part personality structure according to Freud.

Not all of Freud's ideas stuck...

- Neo-Freudians
- Adopted Freud's basic ideas, but typically placed more emphasis on the conscious mind and also doubted the intense significance of sex and aggression in motivation
- Examples: Alfred Adler, Karen Horney, Carl Jung

Not all of Freud's ideas stuck...

- Modern research contradicts much of Freud's theories
- Criticism: not research based/few testable hypotheses
- Biggest criticism: it doesn't do anything to predict behavior, only makes observations after the fact
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Not all of Freud's ideas stuck...

- Repression is much more rare than Freud believed
- Remember that the more traumatic or emotional an incident is, the more it is locked into our conscious memories

But Freud's influence is significant...

- Drew attention to the unconscious mind
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- To our irrational defense mechanisms
- To the significance of sexuality
- To the contradictions in our minds

How can we measure unconscious processes?

- Projective tests
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What do you see in this inkblot?



Humanistic Theories

- Humanist Psychologists focus on how “average” people strive for self-determination & self-realization
- Based on self-reported info from the subject



Carl Rogers: Growth Promoting Climate

- Each of us is born primed for fulfillment unless thwarted by a growth-inhibiting climate
- Three conditions of a growth promoting climate
 - Open w/feelings, self-disclosing
 - Unconditional positive regard (accepted even when ppl know our flaws)
 - Share and mirror others' feelings

Carl Rogers

- A growth-promoting climate is like water, sun, and nutrients to a tree

Humanists & personality

- Your self-concept is a key feature to your personality
 - positive place
