

# Psychoanalytic theory



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Psychoanalytic Theory by: Sigmund Freud Sigmund Freud Sigmund Freud was born as Sigismund Schlomo Freud (May 6, 1856 – September 23, 1939). He is psychology's most famous figure, one of the most influential and controversial thinkers. He is a Viennese Physician who wanted to devote himself to medical research, but limited funds and barriers to academic advancement for Jews in Austria forced him into the private practice of medicine. One of his main interests was neurology, the study of the brain and treatment of disorders of the nervous system, a branch of medicine then in its infancy.

He attended a fellowship study with Europe's most renowned neurologist, Jean Martin Charcot in October 1885, Freud acknowledged that the experience of the stay is one of the turning point in turning him toward the practice of medical psychopathology and away from a less financially promising career in research neurology. Charcot's approach on curing hysteria was through hypnosis. Freud tried to follow Charcot's lead but he turned away from this approach and favoured the approach of free association and dream analysis.

In free association, in order to relieve patients of symptoms with no apparent physical cause, Freud asked questions designed to summon up long buried memories. This approach came to be known as the "talking cure". The ultimate goal of this talking was to locate and release powerful emotional energy that had initially been rejected, and imprisoned in the unconscious mind. Freud called this denial of emotions "repression", and he believed that it was often damaging to the normal functioning of the psyche and could

also retard physical functioning as well, which he described as “ psychosomatic” symptoms.

With this approach, he was able to conclude that the source of emotional disturbances lay in repressed traumatic experience in early childhood. The “ talking cure” is widely seen as the basis of psychoanalysis. The Psychoanalytic Theory Developmentalists have come up with many explanations or theories about why people behave as they do. No one theory of human development is universally accepted, and no one theory explains all facets of development.

Some theorists give more weight to innate factors (heredity/nature), others to environment or experience (nurture) --- though most contemporary theories acknowledge the interaction of the 2. The Psychoanalytic Perspective or Theory, which focuses on human emotions, is concerned with unconscious forces that motivate human behaviour. It focuses on the unconscious motivations and conflicts. Psychoanalysis is a therapeutic approach aimed at giving people weight into unconscious emotional conflicts. The psychoanalytic perspective has been expanded and modified by other theorists, including Erik H.

Erikson and Jean Baker Miller. Freud theorized that personality is developed by the person’s childhood experiences or is formed in the first few years of life, as children deal with conflicts between their inborn biological, sexually related urges and the requirements of society. He proposed that these conflicts occur in an unvarying, maturation-based sequence of stages of

psychosexual development, in which pleasure shifts from one body zone to another --- from the mouth to the anus and then to the genitals.

At each stage, the behaviour that is the chief source of gratification changes --- from feeding to elimination and eventually to sexual activity.

Psychosexual Stages of Development. The psychosexual development theory has 5 psychosexual stages. Of the five stages of personality development, he considered the first three ---- those of the few years of life --- crucial.

According to Freud, in the psychosexual stages of development, there is a psychosexual energy or what he calls as the libido. The libido is described as the driving force behind human behaviour.

In his theory, there is often conflict between the child and parent. The conflict arises because the child wants immediate satisfaction or gratification of its needs, while the parents often place restrictions on when, where and how the child's needs should be satisfied. For example, a child may wish to be fed immediately, while the parent may want to delay the feeding to a more convenient time. Freud believed that interactions between parent and child in satisfying these psychosexual needs greatly influence the child's social development and future social interactions.

He suggested that if a child receives too little or too much gratification in any of these stages, they are at risk of fixation --- an arrest in development --- and may need help to move beyond that stage. He believed that evidence of childhood fixations shows up in adult personality. In addition, Freud emphasized the importance of a child's first five years in influencing future social development or future personality problems. The five different

development periods in the psychosexual theory are oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital stages.

- Oral Stage Period - Early infancy (first 18 months of life) oBaby's chief source of pleasure involves mouth-oriented activities, so the rooting and sucking reflex is especially important. The mouth is vital for eating, and the infant derives pleasure from oral stimulation through gratifying activities such as tasting and sucking. Because the infant is entirely dependent upon the caretaker, the infant also develops a sense of trust and comfort through this oral stimulation. Other forms of mouth-oriented activities would include chewing, swallowing, biting and eating. The primary emotional issues at this stage of life are nurturance and dependency. The conflict at this stage is the weaning process --- the child must become less dependent upon caretakers.
- Fixation oBabies whose oral wishes were gratified too little or too much or was weaned too early or too late would continue to seek oral gratification in oral activities such as nail biting, overeating, chain smoking, gum chewing, drinking. A baby who receives too little would develop personality traits such as excessive dependency and desire for approval of others, pessimistic, envious, sarcastic and suspicious.

A baby who receives too much is too optimistic, gullible, is full of admiration for others around him/her, is overly demanding or aggressive.

- Anal Stage oPeriod --- Late infancy (1 ? to 3 years). oChild derives sensual gratification from controlling bladder and bowel movements. Zone of gratification is anal region. oThe major conflict at this stage is toilet training --- the child has to learn to control his or her bodily needs. Developing this control leads to a

sense of accomplishment and independence. oThis is a child's first major experience with discipline.

Experiences at this stage play a role in determining a person's degree of initiative and attitude towards authority. oAccording to Freud, success at this stage is dependent upon the way in which parents approach toilet training. Parents who utilize praise and rewards for using the toilet at the appropriate time encourage positive comments and help children feel capable and productive. An individual is more likely to develop a willingness to "let go" that is associated with generosity and creativity. Freud believed that positive experiences during this stage served as the basis for people to become competent and productive adults.

However, not all parents provide the support and encouragement that children need during this stage. Some parents' instead punish, ridicule or shame a child for accidents. According to Freud, inappropriate responses can result in negative outcomes. •Fixation oA person who, as a toddler, had too-strict toilet training or parents begin toilet training too early, may be fixated at this stage. Freud believed that such a person may have a "constipated" personality or may develop anal-retentive personality in which the individual is stringent, obsessively clean and neat or rigidly tied to schedules and routines.

A child who is harshly disciplined in the course of toilet training may later rebel against authority or become overly fastidious. If the parent is too lenient, Freud suggested that an anal-expulsive personality could occur in which the person may be defiantly messy, reckless, may behave very

loosely, is carefree, wasteful or have a destructive personality. •Phallic Stage

- oPeriod --- Early childhood (3 to 6 years)
- oZone of gratification shifts to genital region.
- oChildren discover the difference between male and female.
- oChild becomes attached to parent of the other sex. Eventually, the child begins to identify with same-sex parent.
- oFreud theorized that the phallic stage is particularly important for personality development because of the occurrence of the Oedipus complex (named for Oedipus Rex, the character in Greek mythology who unknowingly killed his father and married his mother).

Oedipus complex is a process in which a child compares with the parent of the same sex for the affections and pleasures of the parent of the opposite sex. According to Freud, the Oedipus complex presents different problems for boys and girls.

Fixation

- oBoy. When a boy discovers that his penis is a source of pleasure, he develops sexual attraction to his mother. As a result, the boy feels hatred, jealousy and competition toward his father and because of these feelings, the child fears that he will be punished by his father, a fear Freud termed as castration anxiety. Because of this fear, the boy resolves his Oedipus complex by identifying with his father, imitating him and adopting his values
- oGirl. When a girl discovers that she does not have a penis, she feels a loss that Freud called penis envy.

Her loss makes her turn against her mother, blames the mother for her perceived castration and develops sexual desires for her father. A girl resolves her Oedipus complex, sometimes called the Electra complex (for Electra, a woman in Greek mythology who killed her mother) by identifying with her mother.

oIf the boy does not resolve the complex, fixation occurs and he may go through life trying to prove his toughness.

oIf the girl does

not resolve this complex, fixation occurs and the woman may go through life feeling inferior to men.

The failure to resolve a conflict can also cause a person to be afraid or incapable of close love, Freud also postulated that fixation could be a root of homosexuality. Over the years, the idea of the Oedipus complex has waned in popularity and credibility because there's almost no way to scientifically test this idea and is not supported by data from other cultures. Freud believed that penis envy is never fully resolved and that all women remain somewhat fixated on this stage. Karen Horney, a psychologist, disputed his theory, calling it both inaccurate and demeaning to women.

Instead, Horney proposed that men experience feelings of inferiority because they cannot give birth to children, she referred to this as “womb envy.”

Other feminist thinkers described his ideas as distorted and condescending. Freud responded indirectly to Karen Horney stating that Horney's concept of womb envy emerged as a result of her own supposed penis envy.

- Latency Stage
- o Period --- Middle and late childhood (6 years to puberty)
- o Dormant stage.
- o Conflicts in the phallic stage are either resolved or repressed. The stage begins around the time that children enter into school and become more concerned with peer relationships, hobbies and other activities.
- o Children repress sexual thoughts and engage in nonsexual activities, such as developing social and intellectual skills.
- o The latent period is a time for exploration. Though the sexual energy is still present, it is directed into other areas.
- o This stage is important in the development of social and communication skills and self-confidence. At puberty, sexuality reappears because of the physical changes that develop during puberty.



These physical changes reawaken the libido, the energy that fuels the sexy drive. This marks the beginning of a new stage. •Genital Stage oPeriod --- Puberty through adulthood. oTime of mature adult sexuality. An individual has renewed sexual desires that he or she seeks to fulfill through relationships with members of the opposite sex. oIn the earlier stages, the focus was solely on individuals needs; in this stage, interest in the welfare of others grows. If an individual is fixated at an earlier stage, less energy will be available to resolve conflicts at the genital stage.

If an individual resolved conflicts in the first three stages or if the other stages have been completed successfully, the individual should now be well-balanced, warm and caring. He or she will have the energy to develop loving relationships and a healthy and mature personality and develop relations with persons outside the family. The goal of this stage is to establish a balance between the various life areas. Purpose of Psychoanalytic Theory Why do we need to study or be familiar with the psychoanalytic theory? •To attempt to realize how the unconscious is affecting our lives.

Criticisms on Freud's Psychosexual Stage Theory Though Freud's theories were enormously influential, it is still subject to considerable criticism both now and during his life. •The theory is focused almost entirely on male development with little mention of female psychosexual development. •His theories are difficult to test scientifically. Concepts such as the libido are impossible to measure, and therefore cannot be tested. •Future predictions are too vague. How can we know that a current behaviour was caused specifically by a childhood experience?

The length of time between the cause and the effect is too long to assume there is a relationship between the two variables. •Freud's theory is based upon case studies and not empirical research. Also, Freud based his theory on the recollections of his adult patients, not on actual observation and study of children. He also relied almost exclusively on Austrian middle-aged women for his data. Final Thoughts Even Freud himself admitted that his understanding of women was limited. " That is all I have to say to you about femininity.

It is certainly incomplete and fragmentary and does not always sound friendly. If you want to know more about femininity, enquire of your own experiences in life, or turn to poets, or wait until science can give you deeper and more coherent information. Regardless of the perception of Sigmund Freud's theories, there is no question that he had an enormous impact on the field of psychology. His work supported the belief that not all mental illnesses have physiological causes. His work and writings contributed to our understanding of personality, clinical psychology, human development and abnormal psychology.

His work and theories helped shape our views of childhood, personality, memory, sexuality and therapy. Today, many analysts suggest that rather than reject Freud's theories outright, we should instead focus on developing new views on his original ideas. As one writer said, " Freud revised his theories many times as he accumulated new data and reached fresh insights. Contemporary analysts should do no less. " Sources: About. com – Kendra Van Wagner Wikipedia. org Introduction to Psychology (5th Edition)

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