

Outline and evaluate the psychodynamic model of abnormality

Science



Outline and evaluate the psychodynamic model of abnormality. (12 Marks)

The psychodynamic model (which is based on Freud's theories) states that abnormalities are results of a conflict which has gone wrong in the "psyche" (in the mind). Freud's idea states that the psyche - which is made up of the (id, ego and superego), should all work in perfect harmony with each other to avoid being an abnormal person.

It is the idea that conscious thoughts and feelings are determined by the unconscious mind, and essentially being mentally healthy requires a good balance between: the id (which controls the desires for which we live for in order to satisfy ourselves), the superego (which takes into consideration morals and the difference between right and wrong) and the ego (which balances the superego and id to keep our behaviour in check).

From these 3 components in the psyche, you can quickly see that the id and superego are constantly in conflict. This ultimately means that for a person to not develop a psychological disorder - a strong ego is necessary as it will "get the best of both worlds" and create a balance, while allowing the superego and id to express themselves (when suitable), without dominating the personality and hence, causing a psychological disorder.

An example of an abnormality which could occur from the id being too strong in kids (is developing conduct disorders). In adults (they become psychopaths), all because of the personality being taken over by the id. If the superego is too strong socially acceptable pleasures will be hard to come by as neurotic behaviours such as phobias and obsessions will be apparent, as they will be constantly fixated with things that they want to do but "cant" because their too scared.

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Freud thought that the childhood of an individual was essential in the development of personality and that all abnormal behaviours are linked to childhood. There are different ages associated with different stages. An example of this is the oral stage which usually happens between (0-18 months) - the focus of pleasure is the mouth (feeding or dummy) and if this is fixated upon, this could lead to overeating or smoking in order to comfort themselves and their mouth. Another example is the anal stage (2-4 years).

A conflict may arise when potty training as if the child receives either excessive punishment or the parents are too lenient during this stage it can lead to a fixation which will be taken to adult life. The end result could either be a person who has an anal retentive personality (stubborn perfectionist obsessed with tidiness) or an anal repulsive personality (messy person with no self-control), according to Freud. The evaluation of Freud's model is that many detailed pieces of data were obtained as it was a case study.

The findings did support Freud's hypotheses and theories. However Freud's ideas were very subjective as not much - if any scientific data was produced to back his work up. This therefore raises question marks over the reliability of his findings and theories. Also the evidence from the case study came from his own patients who could compel us to think that his results are unreliable, as his patients may have been biased and essentially gave the answers Freud wanted, because they were his patients.