

Psychodynamic theories

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As a group over the last few weeks we have been discussing as a group the 3 main theories of counselling and after careful deliberation I've chosen to do my presentation on the psychodynamic theory. Psychodynamics is the theory and systematic study of the psychological forces that underlie human behaviour. It is especially interested in the dynamic relations between conscious and unconscious motivation. Psychodynamic therapies depend upon a theory of inner conflict, wherein repressed behaviours and emotions surface into the patient's consciousness; generally, one conflict is subconscious .

Psychodynamics was initially developed by Sigmund Freud , Carl Jung and Alfred Adler. By the mid 1940s and into the 1950s, the general application of the " psychodynamic theory" had been well established. When talking about Psychodynamic theory the first name that pops into most people's heads is Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud was Born in Austria on May 6, 1856, Sigmund Freud theorized and practiced neuropsychology, studying first hysteria and then sexuality. A highly controversial intellectual figure of the 20th century, he studied dreams, defined what he called the Oedipus complex and laid out three stages of infantile sexual development .

He remains one of the most influential figures in today's world. His name alone symbolizes the importance of his theories, and the name that comes to most people's heads when saying the word psychology is Sigmund Freud. Freud was a psychodynamic psychologist and that came from Freud's view on the mind is in the shape of an iceberg. He believes that mankind's mind works in the unconscious. Every choice that mankind makes he is aware of, but maybe the consequences of our action might be unknown.

The Structure of Personality which is another interesting part of Freud's theory basically states that we have an ID, a Superego and an Ego. The ID is a biological reservoir of urges and impulses that need to be gratified. He says the ID does not have a conscious, it acts on instinct and it seeks out gratification and pleasure. It is the pleasure principle. The Superego is the Morality Principle, and the Superego knows the difference between right and wrong. The Superego is a bunch of learned internalized morals and values of society. This is basically the thing that keeps the ID in check. Freud said that Superego is our conscience, and that the Superego is the most powerful tool (guilt and pride). Last but not least is the Ego, which is the reality principle. The Ego finds socially acceptable ways to satisfy the ID. It finds the balance between the ID and reality. The function of the Ego is to find a compromise between the ID and the Superego. The Ego must also learn to deal with anxiety, and it also helps to boost the self-esteem. Without the Ego there would be no mental health.

After researching Freud's theory of the Structure of Personality I feel we have different parts of our behavior that we can control and that we are conscious about and there are other behaviors that come directly from our unconscious. Our ego lies to us, denies, falsifies, and distorts reality which in turn causes us to create what Freud likes to call the seven defense mechanisms. The first of the seven defense mechanisms is Repression. Repression pushes the problem to the subconscious. It is the exclusion of impulses and thoughts from the conscious mind.

Next comes Denial, and denial is the cutting of the conscious mind from external threats. An example of this would be when you are walking in the

mall with your girlfriend and a beautiful woman walks by and you look but when your girlfriend asks you say, " I wasn't looking at her. " Next there is a defense mechanism called Sublimation which is the changing of bad behavior and impulses into socially acceptable behavior and impulses. One example of this could be playing football for ascholarshipin order to go to college.

Another defense mechanism is Reaction Formation which is a development of behavior opposite of that which brings you anxiety . The next mechanism is called Projection whichis when the unconscious attribution of your thoughts and feelings is brought onto others. Finding flaws in others is a good example of Projection. Displacement is the next defense mechanism, and this is when an urge is placed onto another object. Taking out anger onto others when you really should be mad at yourself. Last but not least is the defense mechanism of Rationalization which is giving a good reason in place of the true reason.

Another well known psychologist which is actually a student of Freuds' is Carl Jung who is also a psychodynamic psychologist, Carl Jung was born July 26, 1875 in Kesswil, Switzerland and he went a little deeper than Freud did in his theories and he challenges some of his ideas. One is that Jung's iceberg is right side up and at the top of the iceberg is the ego, and the level underneath that is the personal unconscious, and the final level of the iceberg is finally the collective unconscious which is almost the exact opposites of Freud's.

What I mean by deeper is that he feels that man is not just sexual but spiritual as well. He says that the major difference in man is based on the

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Libido which is your sex drive. As you can see Jung has a much broader level of human interest. Jung theories are strongly based on Darwin's theory of Evolution. Jung thinks we evolved behaviorally which has allowed us to prosper and move forward in order to keep up with society. The next part of Carl Jung's theory is the Archetypal Complex, which are common ways of dealing with the world.

In other words it's a genetically transmitted response strategy. It ensures survival. There are two examples of Archetypal Complexes and they are the enemy archetype and the social archetype. . There are examples in everyday life when a person does not know what something is they immediately show some sort of aggression or frustration which proves they are afraid of what is different or what they do not really know or understand. The social archetype basically means strength in numbers. Also the social archetype is what we look to for support and look to interact and socialize with.

The response strategy is to develop a need to conform. With the whole idea of Archetypal Complexes different people use different ways to deal with the world's problems, and enemy archetype could not be more precise about mankind being threatened by something that is different. The next part of Jung's theory is the idea of Individuation which is the integration of our conscious perceptions of the outside world with our unconscious archetypal experiences. Polarities, which are opposite extremes, which ties in the Principle of entropy which, is a state of disorder and a randomness of energy.

The last thing Jung states in his theory is the idea of wholeness which is having both polarities of our life met. Carl Jung's theory challenges much of

Freud's, but in some ways is similar. Jung gets more into man being more spiritual than sexual which is almost the opposite of Freud. The next psychologist that I will mention will be a social psychodynamic psychologist by the name of Alfred Adler. Adler was born on February 7, 1870 and Adler's theory states that all of us are born with a sense of inferiority as evidenced by how weak and helpless a newborn is.

By this, Adler was able to explain that this inferiority is a crucial part of our personality, in the sense that it is the driving force that pushes us to strive in order to become superior. In addition to the Inferiority Theory of Personality, Adler also considers birth order as a major factor in the development of our personality. He believed that first born children may feel inferior and may even develop inferiority complex once their younger sibling arrives.

The middle born children, on the other hand, are not as pampered as their older or younger sibling, but they have a sense of superiority to dethrone their older sibling in a healthy competition. Thus they have the greatest potential to be successful in life. The youngest children may feel like they have the least power to influence other members of the family. Because they are often the most pampered, they may develop personality problems of inferiority just like the first born. He was much less of a pessimist than Freud was; Almost a complete opposite from Freud.

Adler believed that society impedes humans. His view of the mind is much like Carl Jung's, but instead of having the ego at the top he has the conscious at the top with the unconscious on the bottom. He felt that social interests drive motivation, which is an innate drive to be social and to belong. He also stated in his theory that mankind is dependent on others and their reactions

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and their acceptance which in turn leaves mankind very vulnerable. The main idea of this theory is that he feels that mankind is more social than biological.

A great example of this would definitely be that in today's schools there are cliques and clans of different people that feel that they are cooler or better and than the people who are not as popular do whatever they can to fit in with a certain group. Teenagers nowadays are probably the best example there is of Adler's theory of social interest. Another part of Adler's theory that he brings up is the idea of the creative self which he says drives us toward human nature. There are two parts to this theory and they are the superiority complex and the inferiority complex.

First of all the superiority complex states mankind tries to better itself in order to overcome our weaknesses. The second part of this theory is the inferiority complex which is when society measures us up to their standards. This is when we begin to avoid our weaknesses instead of trying to overcome them. The next theorist is Erich Fromm who was born in Frankfurt on March 23, 1900 and he was a liberal social psychodynamic psychologist who was also a student of Freud's. He believes that man is innately good and society is the thing that corrupts him.

He also feels that the conscious mind dominates over the unconscious. Fromm says man is a social creature and he believes that mankind has social needs. He says life is a struggle and society makes our lives difficult. Fromm feels that the four needs of man's social life are relatedness, frame of reference, identity, and transcendence. Relatedness is a basic need and it states that man needs to feel connected to humanity whether it be friends,

family, or activities. It also states that man has to be interacted with other in order to belong.

The problems start when a person feels that they are not a part of something. Relatedness is probably the most powerful need. Frame of Reference are common ideas and beliefs of looking at the world. This is when we seek out a belief system or a value system. We receive our frame of reference from where we find our relatedness. Without frame of reference there is no meaning to life. Identity is the next out of the four needs of mans social life which is when you know who you are and what you stand for.

With identity you have to establish your own uniqueness or identity. Recognizing differences in others help you to find your own identity. Next comes transcendence which is rarely achieved and this means to rise above societies conformities in order to be an individual. With transcendence there is a risk of losing your relatedness, and for this not to happen relatedness must allow you rise above society. A conflict of freedom and loneliness means that the more that we become transcendent the more we lose the relatedness.

My last theorist to talk about is Erik Erikson, he was born in Frankfurt, Germany in 1902 . Erikson impacted psychological theories by expanding upon Freud's original five stages of development. He believed that each person progressed through eight, and ultimately nine (added by his widow), stages of development throughout their lives. Erikson's theories were founded on the premise that environment played a major role in self-awareness, adjustment, human development, and identity . His belief in the Life Cycle later won him a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award.

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He was selected for the Jefferson Lecture and recognized for his achievement in the area of humanities. Erikson was best known for his impact on psychology through his theory on social development and his lengthy teaching career at prestigious institutions. Now after all my researching which has taken me quite a while to get through because there are so many sources to choose from I have realised that as psychodynamic theories have developed over the years our understanding of the human psyche has evolved and so as the effectiveness of the methods used by counsellors today.

There is a negative side to this theory though because some critics argue that psychodynamic theories are not falsifiable and therefore unscientific. In response to this criticism, proponents of psychodynamic theories point out that evidence does support some psychodynamic concepts. For example, research shows that there are unconscious mental processes, that people have mental representations of other people, and that people use unconscious defense mechanisms to protect themselves from unpleasant emotions such as anxiety.

Other critics argue that psychodynamic theories are made by generalizing from a small number of patients to the whole human population. Relying only on case studies can lead to faulty conclusions. Still others argue that most psychodynamic theories are not based on studies that follow people from childhood to adulthood. Instead, psychodynamic theorists listen to descriptions of an adult patient's past and draw conclusions about the relevance of childhood experiences however memories are not always reliable.