



Psychological Models of Abnormality

Psychology 311
Abnormal Psychology

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Several Different Models

- Psychoanalytic Models
- Learning Models
- Cognitive Models

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Psychoanalytic Models

- Freud
- All problems are related to systems in the unconscious.
 - ID
 - Ego
 - Superego

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Unconscious vs. Conscious

- Conscious
 - Is all things you are aware of.
- Unconscious
 - Are things that influence or control your behavior but you are not aware of them.
- Had three conflicting mechanisms
 - Were not really separate entities but were names for three different reaction patterns.

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ID

- Is the most basic
- Most Primitive
- Consists of basic biological urges
 - Eating
 - Drinking
 - Elimination of wastes
 - Be comfortable and warm
 - Gain sexual pleasure

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Id's Purpose

- Sole purpose is to seek:
 - Immediate gratification of impulses.
 - Reduce tension
- Operates on the pleasure principle.
 - Seek pleasure and avoid pain.
 - Hedonism
- Other divisions develop from the ID

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Ego

- Is derived from the ID
- Is concerned with objective reality.
- Id has the impulsive drives,
- Ego is the system that pursues the drives.
- Problem – Has to deal with the reality of the world.
- Solution – Postpone gratification
- Operates on the reality principle.

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At birth

- Infant is all ID
- Over time ID must deal with facts.
- Some gratification only comes after a delay
 - Bottle isn't always available
 - So infant cries.

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Superego

- Is the internalized representation of the values and morals of parents and society
- Is your conscience.
- Judges if acts are right or wrong.
- Is concerned with moral issues.
- When ideas are broken, anxiety can develop

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All Systems are Interrelated

- Id has the monopoly on psychic energy
 - Uses it for pleasure
- Ego and Superego
 - Postpone the energy and block it

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Result

- Id, Ego and Superego are in conflict
- Id wants something
- Ego is trying to delay or figure out how to get it.
- Superego is making sure how you get it is morally correct

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Causes Problems and Anxiety

- Forbidden acts by a child are associated with anxiety as the child is scolded or disciplined
- Child feels threatened with the loss of love by the parent and becomes anxious.
- Next time it is about to do something bad, it becomes anxious

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Anxiety

- Is unpleasant
 - So the child tries to remove it
- If the cause is external – the child runs away.
- If the cause is internal – the child must suppress the cause of the anxiety.

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Repression

- Is the primary defense mechanism
- However, is often incomplete
 - Often thoughts or urges refuse to stay repressed
- Other defense mechanisms develop
 - Projection
 - Displacement
 - Reaction Formation
 - Regression
 - Rationalization
 - Identification

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Ultimately

- Abnormal behavior is caused by anxiety do to conflicts between Id, Ego, Superego.
- Defense mechanisms appear at abnormal behavior
- Causes problems

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Remember

- All of these conflicts are in the unconscious.
- So the cause of the abnormal behavior lies in the unconscious.
- To resolve the problem, must bring the problem causing the anxiety to the conscious level.
- When the problem becomes conscious and is dealt with, the abnormal behavior goes away.

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Conclusion and Problems

- Is difficult to test
- Even testing of things that should occur does not provide good results
 - E.g. symptom substitution
- Generally, has poor reliability and validity.

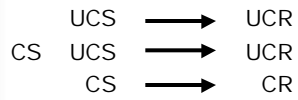
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Learning Models

- Abnormal behavior is caused by learning
- Two major methods
- Classical Conditioning Models (Pavlov)
- Operant Conditioning Models (Skinner)

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Classical Conditioning Models



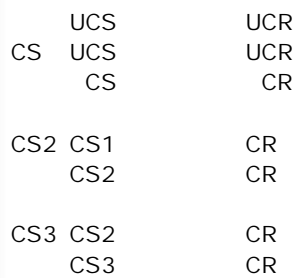
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Abnormal Behavior

- Occurs through two methods
- Generalization
 - New things similar to the original CS cause the same CR
- Higher Order (Secondary) Conditioning

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Higher Order Conditioning



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Example

- | | | |
|-------------|---------|--------------------|
| • Criticism | | Embarrassment/Pain |
| • Teacher | Crit. | Embarr. / Pain |
| • Teacher | | Embarr. / Pain |
| • School | Teacher | Embarr. Pain |
| • School | | Embarr. Pain |
| • Bus | School | Embarr. Pain |
| • Bus | | Embarr. Pain |

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Note

- Symptoms are not as strong at level 3 as the first association
- Cause anxiety, apprehension, etc.
- Classic way phobias can develop

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Operant Conditioning

- Different from Classical Conditioning.
- Look at consequent stimuli following a response



Consequent stimuli can be reinforcing or punishing

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Reinforcement and Punishment

- If abnormal behavior is followed by a reinforcing stimulus, you will repeat the behavior.
- Thus, abnormal behavior increases
- Also get generalization,
 - If similar responses are reinforced, you will do those as well.

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Example

- Child throws CD's across the room
- Parent punishes the child
- Child throws even more CD's across the room.
- Child is behaving abnormally?

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Head banging behavior

- Child acts out
- Gets parents attention
- Extinction occurs
- Child does something more traumatic to get attention. - Hits themselves
- Gets parents attention
- Extinction occurs
- Child hits head on the wall
- Gets lots of parent attention.

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Conclusion

- Abnormal behavior is learned.
- Does not rely on a genetic component
- Can be accurately measured
- Treatment for some problems is very effective.
- Has significantly more validity than psychoanalytic models

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Cognitive Models

- Stimulus causes organism to think.
- The organism makes a response
- The organism is rewarded or punished
- Influences the thinking
- Next time, the organism makes a different behavioral response.
- What influences the thinking – Personality variables

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Personality variables

- Locus of control
- Borderline personality
- Gender specific variables
- Many others

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Conclusions

- Abnormality is linked to some thinking problem.
- Change the thinking, you change the behavior that is abnormal.
- Doesn't always work

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Final conclusions

- Many types of psychological models for abnormality.
- Some have more reliability and validity than others.
- Thus, treatments differ in respect to changing the behavior.

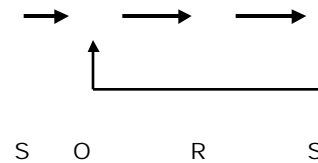
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Conclusions of all models

- All models have some aspects that may influence abnormal behavior.
- Does not mean _____ caused the abnormal behavior.
- May be a combination of things or it may be one thing alone
- Remember the science behind the model you are using.
 - Correlations
 - Case studies
 - Experiments
 - Other

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Cognitive M



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