Psychological Models and Treatments for Depression

Psychology 311
Abnormal Psychology

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Psychoanalytic Models
- Not used much today
- Has influenced other models
  - Cognitive behavioral
  - Interpersonal

Freud
- Called depression – Melancholy
  - Grief gone haywire
  - Excessive, drawn out, unsatisfied
  - Person suffered impoverishment of the ego on a grand scale.

Bibring
- Changed internal conflict of Freud to helplessness associated with particular situations

Overall
- Contends depression occurs due to triggers of problems that occurred in childhood.
- Research
  - Supports contention of a combination of traumatic childhood experiences and acute external stressful events in adulthood.

Psychoanalytic therapy
- Helps sort out the childhood issues and apply them to the issues going on in adulthood well.
Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT)

- Is short-term therapy
- Originally designed to prevent relapse of acute depression treated with antidepressants.
- Contends early childhood issues often relate to depression – attachment bonds

Treatment

- Focuses on teaching people to be more socially effective
  - Helps to improve relationships
- Has been shown to be very effective when combined with Cognitive Therapies.

Humanistic/Existentialist Models

- Existential
  - Focusses on low self esteem
- Humanistic
  - Focusses on the discrepancy between a person's view of the ideal self and their view of their actual self
  - Loss can be anything (not just death)
    - Money, Job, etc

Depression and Anxiety

- Thought to happen when the discrepancy between the ideal self and reality is too large.
- Often occurs in young people with high aspirations

Example

- Females
  - Have to juggle many roles
    - Work, motherhood, PTA, church, spouse, others
  - Are trying to fill many roles
  - Problem – Not possible to fulfill the highest potential
  - Result - Depression

Behavioral

- Contends depression occurs from a lack of reinforcement
- Are concerned with peoples skills in getting social reinforcement and typical ways individuals deal with stress.
- Contends depressed people in stressful situations cope with delay and attempting to get emotional support from others.
Experiences a Circular Pattern

Person Seeks Attention
Annoys Others
Gets Agitated or Depressed

Result

- Negative Social Spiral
- Depression worsens

Treatment

- Social Skills Training
  - Teach basic verbal and non-verbal skills
  - Then give homework assignments
  - Trained to be perceptive of social cues
  - Time to leave
  - Teach a realistic criteria for self-evaluation.
  - Put it all together in role plays
  - Clients are usually surprised how well it works

Cognitive Model

- Is the most influential model today
- Contends depressed people consistently perceive causes of events in a way that is unfavorable to their self.
- Is thought that current day events are processed through a childhood schemata.
- Result - Cognitive Distortion

Beck

- Most influential today.
- Contends depression is best described in a negative triad
Overview

- Depressed person misinterprets facts in a negative way
- Focuses on negative aspects
- Pessimistic expectations of the future
- Attribute misfortunes to personal defects

Attribution

- Blame themselves first when something bad happens
- Blames luck when something good happens
- Feel helpless to control their environment
  - Called learned helplessness
- All cognitive theorists stress the inaccuracy of self-perception

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

- Main focus is to help clients think more adaptively.
- Is based on the length and severity of depression
  - More severe form begins with behavioral techniques.
  - Clients are taught to self-monitor
    - Self mastery increases mood
    - Increases motivation to engage in more activities that could be rewarding

Automatic thoughts

- Are very powerful
- Links an outside event to a reaction

Conclusions

- Psychological models do not primarily focus on biological aspects of depression
  - Acknowledge they may be needed.
- Many models of psychological treatment
  - Many work well alone
  - Also work well in combination with medications

Role of Medications and Psychotherapy

- Both can be beneficial alone
- Better when used in combination
  - Depends on the patients/clients condition
- A thorough assessment is mandatory