Personality
A person’s characteristic pattern of thinking, feeling, and acting.

Personality Theories
- Psychodynamic
- Humanistic
- Trait
- Social-Cognitive

Personality Assessments
- Projective Techniques
- Self-Report Inventories
- Clinical Interviews
- Behavioral Assessment
PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORIES OF PERSONALITY

Psychodynamic theories of personality view human behavior as a dynamic interaction between the conscious and unconscious mind, including associated motives and conflicts.

Freud: Personality is Driven by Instincts

Life Instincts
Libido or sex

Death Instincts
Aggressive drive

Freud’s Psychodynamic Personality Theory

Id
Unconscious psychic energy that operates on the pleasure principle and strives to satisfy basic sexual and aggressive needs.

Ego
Conscious “executive” mediator between the id and superego; operates on the reality principle by satisfying the id’s desires in ways that will realistically bring pleasure rather than

Superego
Represents internalized ideals and provides standards for judgment and future aspirations; demands often oppose the id’s demands.

Ego is Threatened by Anxiety
Reality Anxiety, Neurotic Anxiety, and Moral Anxiety

Ego Uses Defense Mechanisms for Protection
Freudian Defense Mechanisms

- **Repression**
  - Unconscious denial of the existence of something that causes anxiety

- **Denial**
  - Denying the existence of an external threat or traumatic event

- **Reaction Formation**
  - Expressing an id impulse that is the opposite of the one truly driving the person

- **Projection**
  - Attributing a disturbing impulse to someone else

- **Regression**
  - Returning to an earlier, less frustrating period of life and displaying childish and dependent behaviors

- **Rationalization**
  - Reinterpreting behavior to make it more acceptable and less threatening

- **Displacement**
  - Shifting id impulses from a threatening or unavailable object to a substitute object that is available

- **Sublimation**
  - Altering or displacing id impulses by diverting instinctual energy into socially acceptable behaviors
Freud’s Psychosexual Stages of Personality Development

**Oral (0-1)**
Mouth is the primary erogenous zone; pleasure derived from sucking; id is dominant

**Anal (1-3)**
Toilet training interferes w/ gratification received from defecation

**Phallic (4-5)**
Incestuous fantasies; Oedipus complex and castration anxiety, and Electra complex and penis envy

**Latency (5-Puberty)**
Gender identity fully developed by age 5; kids sublimate their sex instinct

**Genitalia (Puberty +)**
Development of sex-role identity and adult social relationships.

Freudian Personality Assessments

**Free Association**
A technique in which the patient says whatever comes to mind. In other words, it is a kind of daydreaming out loud.

**Dream Analysis**
A technique involving the interpretation of dreams to uncover unconscious conflicts; manifest and latent content
# Neo-Freudian Personality Theorists

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<tr>
<th>Alfred Adler</th>
<th>Karen Horney</th>
<th>Carl Jung</th>
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<tr>
<td>Believed that social tensions in childhood are crucial for personality formation</td>
<td>Believed that childhood anxiety triggers our desire for love and security</td>
<td>Placed less emphasis on social factors and believed that the unconscious contains more than repressed thought and feelings.</td>
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| **Inferiority Complex**
Believed that behavior is driven by efforts to overcome childhood feelings of inferiority that trigger our strivings for superiority and power | Did not believe that women have weak superegos and rejected Freud’s theory of penis envy. | **Collective Unconscious**
Believed that we have a reservoir of images and archetypes derived from our species’ history |

These theorists **accepted** Freud’s ideas of the id, ego, and superego, personality development in childhood, the unconscious mind, and anxiety and defense mechanisms. **However...**

They placed more emphasis on the conscious mind’s role in interpreting experiences and coping with the environment, they **doubted** Freud’s theory that sex and aggression were all-consuming motivations, and they **emphasized** social interactions.

### Neo-Freudian Personality Assessments

Projective tests that aim to provide a psychological x-ray by asking test-takers to describe an ambiguous stimulus to tell a story about it (e.g. Rorschach [ROAR-shock] Inkblot Test)

### Evaluating Freudian and Neo-Freudian Theories

- All theorists were correct about the unconscious mind as we have limited access to all that goes on in our mind
- Personality development is a lifelong process and does not only occur in childhood
- Freud overestimated parental influence and underestimated peer influence
- Freud’s theory is subjective and fails to predict behaviors and traits
- Modern research challenges the idea of repression
- Children gain gender identity earlier than age 5 or 6
HUMANISTIC THEORIES OF PERSONALITY

Humanistic theorists focused on the ways “healthy” people strive for self-determination and self-realization. They assessed people’s self-concept through their self-reported feelings and experiences shared on questionnaires and during interviews and intimate conversation.

**Abraham Maslow**

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<th>Studied healthy, creative people</th>
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Developed a **hierarchy of needs** that activate and direct human behavior. The lower a need is in the hierarchy, the greater are its strength, potency, and priority. The higher needs are weaker needs that appear later in life.

**Self-Actualization**

The highest need in the hierarchy that depends on the maximum realization and fulfillment of our potentials, talents, and abilities.

**Conditions Necessary for Self-Actualization**

1. We must be free of constraints imposed by society and by ourselves.
2. We must not be distracted by the lower-order needs.
3. We must be secure in our self-image and in our relationships with other people; we must be able to love and be loved in return.
4. We must have a realistic knowledge of our strengths and weaknesses, virtues and vices.

**Characteristics of Self-Actualizers**

1. Clear perception of reality
2. Acceptance of self, others, and nature
3. Spontaneity, simplicity, and naturalness
4. Dedication to a cause
5. Independence and need for privacy
6. Freshness of appreciation
7. Mystical or peak experiences
8. Social interest
9. Deep interpersonal relations
10. Tolerance and acceptance of others
11. Creativeness and originality
12. Resistance to social pressures
Humanistic Theories of Personality

Carl Rogers
Agreed with Maslow’s thinking and believed that people are basically good and endowed with self-actualizing tendencies

Person-Centered Perspective
Believed that a growth-promoting climate required three conditions:

1. Genuineness: When people are genuine, they are open with their own feelings, drop their facades, and are transparent and self-disclosing
2. Acceptance: When people are accepting, they offer unconditional positive regard, an attitude of grace that values us even knowing our failings.
3. Empathy: When people are empathic, they share and mirror other’s feelings and reflect their meanings.

“People are just as wonderful as sunsets if you let them be. When I look at a sunset, I don’t find myself saying, ‘Soften the orange a bit on the right hand corner.’ I don’t try to control a sunset. I watch it as it unfolds.” - Carl Rogers

Evaluating Humanistic Theories

- Maslow’s and Rogers’ ideas have influenced counseling, education, child rearing, management, and much of today’s popular psychology
- Some believe that humanistic concepts are vague and subjective
- Some object the emphasis placed on individualism
- Some believe that humanistic theories fail to appreciate the reality of our human capacity for evil.
Trait theories attempt to define personality in terms of people’s characteristic behaviors and conscious motives, also known as traits. Trait theorists assess personality through personality inventories, long questionnaires that cover a wide range of feelings and behaviors and assess several traits at once. The classic personality inventory is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI or MMPI-2), an empirically derived test that assesses “abnormal” personality traits and psychopathology. It is primarily intended to test people who are suspected of having mental health or other clinical issues.

Gordon Allport

After an interesting meeting with Freud, Allport decided that psychology should pay more attention to conscious or visible motivations rather than unconscious, invisible motivations.

Allport described personality in terms of fundamental traits, or characteristic behaviors and conscious motives. He was not interested in explaining traits, but in describing them.

Allport and his colleague H.S. Odbert counted words in an unabridged dictionary that could be used to describe people, and they came up with 18,000 words!

Factor analysis was used to identify clusters of behavior that reflect a basic personality factor or trait.

Hans and Sybil Eysenck [EYE-sink] believed that we can reduce many of our normal individual variations to two or three dimensions, including extraversion-introversion and emotional stability-instability, and that most of these factors are genetically influenced (research supports this belief).

The Big Five

Today’s trait researchers believe that simple trait factors are important, but do not tell the whole story. A slightly expanded set of factors, The Big Five, does a better job.

McCrae and Costa identified five so-called Big Five factors of personality that were confirmed through a variety of assessment techniques including self-ratings, objective tests, and observers’ reports.

The Big Five

Neuroticism: worried, insecure, nervous, highly strung

Extraversion: sociable, talkative, fun-loving, affectionate

Openness: original, independent, creative, daring

Agreeableness: good-natured, soft-hearted, trusting, courteous

Conscientiousness: careful, reliable, hardworking, organized

Evaluating Trait Theories

- Our personality traits are stable and potent, but the consistency of our specific behaviors vary from one situation to the next, which makes personality test scores weak predictors of behavior.
- Our average outgoingness, happiness, or carelessness over many situations is predictable.
SOCIAL-COGNITIVE THEORIES OF PERSONALITY

The social-cognitive perspective emphasizes the interaction of our traits (including their thinking) with our situations. Social cognitive theorists believe we learn many of our behaviors either through conditioning or by observing and imitating others. Assessment techniques include direct observation, self-reported inventories, and physiological measurements.

Albert Bandura

Reciprocal Determinism
The idea that behavior is controlled or determined by the individual through cognitive processes, and by the environment through external social stimulus events.

Triadic Responsibility
The idea that behavior is determined through the interaction of behavioral, cognitive, and environmental or social variables.

Individual and Environmental Interactions
1. Different people choose different environments
2. Our personalities shape how we interpret and react to events.
3. Our personalities help create situations to which we react.

Our reactions to stimuli are self-activated in accordance with our learned expectations. Here’s how it works:

1. We observe and interpret the potential effects of our actions and determine which behaviors are appropriate for a given situation.
2. We encode and represent these external events symbolically and anticipate that a certain behavior will bring a certain response, thus choosing and shaping our behavior to gain reinforcement and avoid punishment.

Evaluating Social-Cognitive Theories

- Critics charge that social-cognitive theories focus so much on the situation that they fail to appreciate the person’s inner traits, like motivation and emotion.
- An advantage of this approach is that it is objective and amenable to laboratory methods of investigation, making it congruent with experimental psychology.
- Another advantage is that observational learning and behavior modification are compatible with the functional, pragmatic spirit of American psychology.
EXPLORING THE SELF

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<td>The organizer of our thoughts, feelings, and actions; is the center of personality</td>
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<th>Spotlight Effect</th>
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<td>We often overestimate others’ noticing and evaluating our appearance, performance, and blunders.</td>
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<td>Sense of competence and effectiveness.</td>
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<th>Self-Serving Bias</th>
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<td>We tend to perceive ourselves favorably. We are more likely to accept responsibility for good deeds than for bad, and for successes rather than failures, and most people see themselves as better than average.</td>
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<td>Excessive self-love and self-absorption; has drastically increased over the last few decades.</td>
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<td>Giving priority to one’s own goals over group goals and defining one’s identity in terms of personal attributes rather than group identification.</td>
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<th>Collectivism</th>
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<td>Giving priority to the goals of one’s group (often one’s extended family or work group) and defining one’s identity accordingly.</td>
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