Chapter 10:
Personality

Personality

An individual's unique and relatively consistent pattern of thinking, feeling, and behaving.

Personality Theory

Personality theory attempts to describe and explain how people are similar, how they are different, and why every individual is unique.
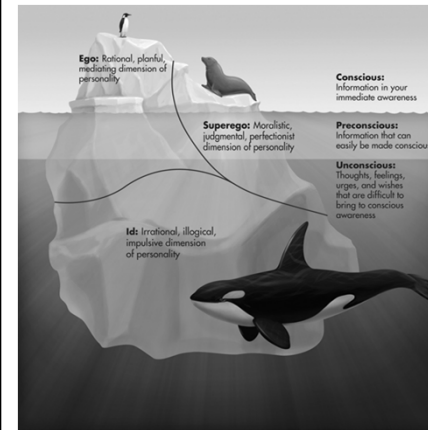

Personality Perspectives

•Psychoanalytic — importance of unconscious processes and childhood experiences

•Humanistic — importance of self and fulfillment of potential

•Social cognitive — importance of beliefs about self

•Trait — description and measurement of personality differences
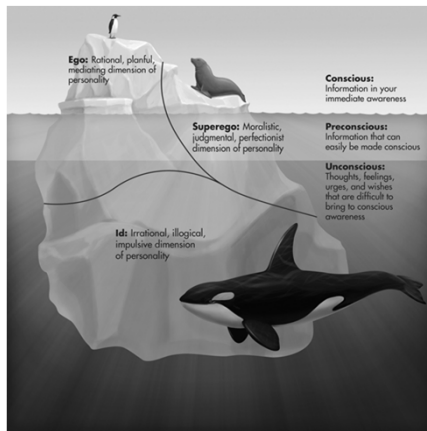
Psychoanalytic Approach

•Developed by Sigmund Freud

•Psychoanalysis is both an approach to therapy and a theory of personality

  » Emphasizes unconscious motivation – the main causes of behavior lie buried in the unconscious mind
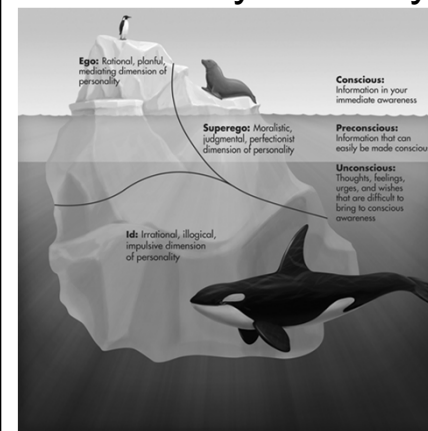
Psychoanalytic Approach

Conscious – all things we are aware of at any given moment

Psychoanalytic Approach

Preconscious – everything that can, with a little effort, be brought into consciousness

Psychoanalytic Approach

Unconscious – inaccessible warehouse of anxiety-producing thoughts and drives

Psychoanalytic Divisions of the Mind

Id — instinctual drives present at birth
  – does not distinguish between reality and fantasy
  – operates according to the pleasure principle
Ego — develops out of the id in infancy
  – understands reality and logic
  – mediator between id and superego
Superego
  – internalization of society's moral standards
  – responsible for guilt

Id: The Pleasure Principle

• Pleasure principle — drive toward immediate gratification, most fundamental human motive
• Sources of energy
  – Eros — life instinct, perpetuates life
  – Thanatos — death instinct, aggression, self-destructive actions
Libido — sexual energy or motivation

Ego: The Reality Principle

• Reality principle — the ability to postpone gratification in accordance with demands of reality
• Ego — rational, organized, logical, mediator to demands of reality
• Can repress desires that cannot be met in an acceptable manner

Superego: Conscience

• Internalization of societal and parental values
• Partially unconscious
• Can be harshly punitive, using feelings of guilt

Defense Mechanisms

Unconscious mental processes employed by the ego to reduce anxiety

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The Major Ego Defense Mechanisms

Defense	Description	Example
Repression	The complete exclusion from consciousness of anxiety-producing thoughts, feelings, or impulses; most basic defense mechanism.	Three years after being hospitalized for back surgery, a man can remember only vague details about the event.
Displacement	The redirection of emotional impulses toward a substitute person or object, usually one less threatening or dangerous than the original source of conflict.	Angered by a neighbor's hateful comment, a mother spanks her daughter for accidentally spilling her milk.
Sublimation	A form of displacement in which sexual urges are rechanneled into productive, nonsexual activities.	A graduate student works on her thesis 14 hours a day while her husband is on an extended business trip.
Rationalization	Justifying one's actions or feelings with socially acceptable explanations rather than consciously acknowledging one's true motives or desires.	After being rejected by a prestigious university, a student explains that he is glad because he would be happier at a smaller, less competitive college.
Projection	The attribution of one's own unacceptable urges or qualities to others.	A married woman who is sexually attracted to a co-worker accuses him of flirting with her.
Reaction formation	Thinking or behaving in a way that is the extreme opposite of unacceptable urges or impulses.	Threatened by his awakening sexual attraction to girls, an adolescent boy goes out of his way to tease and torment adolescent girls.
Denial	The failure to recognize or acknowledge the existence of anxiety-provoking information.	Despite having multiple drinks every night, a man says he is not an alcoholic because he never drinks before 5 P.M.
Undoing	A form of unconscious repentance that involves neutralizing or atoning for an unacceptable action or thought with a second action or thought.	A woman who gets a tax refund by cheating on her taxes makes a larger-than-usual donation to the church collection on the following Sunday.
Regression	Retreating to a behavior pattern characteristic of an earlier stage of development.	After her parents' bitter divorce, a 10-year-old girl refuses to sleep alone in her room, crawling into bed with her mother.

Defense Mechanisms

- Repression — keeping anxiety-producing thoughts out of the conscious mind
- Reaction formation — replacing an unacceptable wish with its opposite

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Defense Mechanisms

- Displacement — when a drive directed to one activity by the id is redirected to a more acceptable activity by the ego
- Sublimation — displacement to activities that are valued by society

Defense Mechanisms

•Projection — reducing anxiety by attributing unacceptable impulses to someone else

•Rationalization — reasoning away anxiety-producing thoughts

•Regression — retreating to a mode of behavior characteristic of an earlier stage of development

Psychosexual Stages

•Freud's five stages of personality development, each associated with a particular erogenous zone.

•Fixation — an attempt to achieve pleasure as an adult in ways that are equivalent to how pleasure was achieved in these stages.

Oral Stage (birth – 1 year)

•Mouth is associated with sexual pleasure.

•Weaning a child can lead to fixation if not handled correctly.

•Fixation can lead to oral activities in adulthood.

Anal Stage (1 – 3 years)

•Anus is associated with pleasure.

•Toilet training can lead to fixation if not handled correctly.

•Fixation can lead to anal retentive or expulsive behaviors in adulthood.

Phallic Stage (3 – 5 years)

•Focus of pleasure shifts to the genitals.
•Oedipus or Electra complex can occur
•Fixation can lead to excessive masculinity in males and the need for attention or domination in females.

Latency Stage
(5 years – puberty)

•Sexuality is repressed
•Children participate in hobbies, school, and same-sex friendships

Genital Stage
(puberty and older)

•Sexual feelings re-emerge and are oriented toward others.

•Healthy adults find pleasure in love and work, fixated adults have their energy tied up in earlier stages.

Post-Freudian
Psychodynamic Theories

•Carl Jung's collective unconscious
•Karen Horney's focus on security
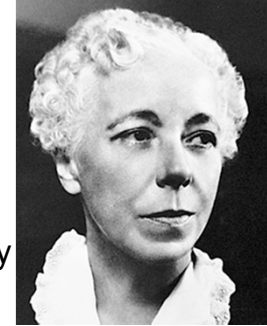•Alfred Adler's individual psychology

Carl Jung

- More general psychic energy
- Universality of themes —
- archetypes
- Collective unconscious — human collective evolutionary history (archetypes)
- First to describe introverts and extraverts

Karen Horney

- Looked at anxiety related to security and social relationships.
- Basic anxiety — the feeling of being isolated and helpless in a hostile world
- Moving toward, against, or away from other people

Alfred Adler

- Most fundamental human motive is striving for superiority
- Arises from universal feelings of inferiority that are experienced during childhood
- Overcompensation may cause superiority complex, in which a person exaggerates their own achievements and importance

Evaluation of Psychoanalysis

- Evidence is inadequate — data are not available or able to be reviewed
- Theory is not testable — lack of operational definitions; good at explaining past, but not at prediction
- Sexism — believed that women were weak and inferior; used male psychology as basis for all people

Humanistic Perspective

- Free will
- Self-awareness
- Psychological growth
- Abraham Maslow
- Carl Rogers

Carl Rogers

- Actualizing tendency — innate drive to maintain and enhance the human organism
- Self-concept — set of perceptions you hold about yourself
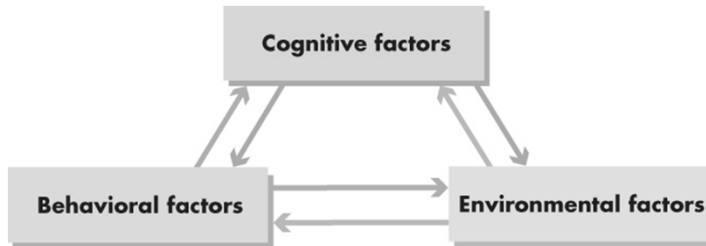- Positive regard — conditional and unconditional

Evaluating Humanism

- Difficult to test or validate scientifically

- Tends to be too optimistic, minimizing some of the more destructive aspects of human nature

Social Cognitive Perspective

- Social cognitive theory — the importance of observational learning, conscious cognitive processes, social experience, self-efficacy and reciprocal determinism in personality
- Reciprocal determinism — model that explains personality as the result of behavioral, cognitive, and environmental interactions
- Self-efficacy — belief that people have about their ability to meet the demands of a specific situation

Reciprocal Determinism - Albert Bandura

Evaluation of Social Cognitive Perspective

•Well grounded in empirical, laboratory research

•However, laboratory experiences are rather simple and may not reflect the complexity of human interactions.

•Ignores the influences of the unconscious, emotions, and conflicts

Trait and Type Theories

•Trait — relatively stable predisposition to behave in a certain way

•Surface trait — characteristic that can be inferred from observable behavior

•Source trait — most fundamental dimensions of personality; relatively few

Theorists

•Raymond Cattell — 16PF

•Hans Eysenck — Three-factor model

•McCrae and Costa — Five-factor model

Raymond Cattell

• Used factor analysis to come up with 16 basic personality traits, also called source traits

• 16PF test that was developed to measure these traits

• Generally considered too many traits

Cattell's 16 Personality Factors

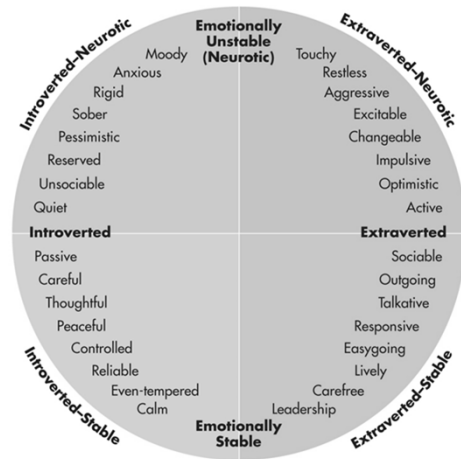|			
1	Reserved, unsociable	←→	Outgoing, sociable
2	Less intelligent, concrete	←→	More intelligent, abstract
3	Affected by feelings	←→	Emotionally stable
4	Submissive, humble	←→	Dominant, assertive
5	Serious	←→	Happy-go-lucky
6	Expedient	←→	Conscientious
7	Timid	←→	Venturesome
8	Tough-minded	←→	Sensitive
9	Trusting	←→	Suspicious
10	Practical	←→	Imaginative
11	Forthright	←→	Shrewd, calculating
12	Self-assured	←→	Apprehensive
13	Conservative	←→	Experimenting
14	Group-dependent	←→	Self-sufficient
15	Undisciplined	←→	Controlled
16	Relaxed	←→	Tense

Source: Adapted from Cattell (1973).

Hans Eysenck

• Similar method to Cattell

• Had 3 different source traits
  – Introversion-extraversion
  – Neuroticism-stability
  – Psychoticism

• Generally considered too few traits

Five-Factor Model

• Described somewhat differently among researchers

• Factors — usually rated from low to high
  – Extraversion
  – Neuroticism
  – Openness to Experience
  – Agreeableness
  – Conscientiousness

Emotionally Unstable (Neurotic)

Introverted-Neurotic
Moody
Anxious
Rigid
Sober
Pessimistic
Reserved
Unsociable
Quiet

Introverted
Passive
Careful
Thoughtful
Peaceful
Controlled
Reliable
Even-tempered
Calm

Introverted-Stable

Extraverted-Neurotic
Touchy
Restless
Aggressive
Excitable
Changeable
Impulsive
Optimistic
Active

Extraverted
Sociable
Outgoing
Talkative
Responsive
Easygoing
Lively
Carefree
Leadership

Extraverted-Stable

Emotionally Stable

Behavioral Genetics

•Interdisciplinary field that studies the effects of genes and heredity on behavior

•Heredity seems to play a role in four of the "big five" personality traits — extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, and conscientiousness

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Evaluation of Trait Perspective

•Doesn't really explain personality, simply describe the behaviors
•Doesn't describe the development of the behaviors
•Trait approaches generally fail to address how issues such as motives, the unconscious, or beliefs about self affect personality development.

Personality Assessment

Projective Techniques

•Interpretation of an ambiguous image
•Used to determine unconscious motives, conflicts, and psychological traits

Rorschach Inkblot Test

•Presentation and interpretation of a series of black-and-white and colored inkblots

•Numerous scoring systems exist

Thematic Apperception Test

•Series of pictures depicting ambiguous scenes

•Person is asked to create a story about the scene

•Answers are scored according to themes, motives, and anxieties of main character.

Drawbacks to Projective Tests

•Examiner or test situation may influence individual's response

•Scoring is highly subjective

•Tests fail to produce consistent results (reliability problem)

•Tests are poor predictors of future behavior (validity problem)

Self-Report Inventory

•Psychological test in which an individual answers standardized questions about their behavior and feelings.

•The answers are then compared with established norms.

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)

•Originally influenced by Carl Jung's personality theory and his proposal that people could be categorized into discrete personality "types."

•Designed to assess personality *types* rather than measure personality *traits.*

•Traits involve varying degrees of a trait, types involve being in one of two distinct categories that don't overlap.

•Measures a person's *preferred* way of dealing with information, making decisions, and interacting with others.

      Four basic categories *(all* opposite pairs):

•*Extraversion/Introversion; Sensing/Intuition; Thinking/Feeling;* and *Perceiving/Judging.*

•Criticisms with reliability and validity

MMPI

•Most widely used self-report inventory

•Originally designed to assess mental health and detect psychological symptoms

•Includes more than 500 questions to which person must reply "True" or "False"

•Includes "lying scales"

Table 10.6

Simulated MMPI-2 Items

Most people will use somewhat unfair means to gain profit or an advantage rather than lose it.

I am often very tense on the job.

The things that run through my head sometimes are horrible.

Sometimes there is a feeling like something is pressing in on my head.

Sometimes I think so fast I can't keep up.

I am worried about sex.

I believe I am being plotted against.

I wish I could do over some of the things I have done.

Source: MMPI-2®.

Strengths of Self-Reports

•Standardized — each person receives same instructions and responds to the same questions

•Use of established norms: results are compared with previously established norms and are not subjectively evaluated

Weaknesses of Self-Reports

•Evidence that people can "fake" responses to look better (or worse)

•Tests contain hundreds of items and become tedious

•People may not be good judges of their own behavior

Possible Selves

The aspect of the self-concept that includes images of the selves that you hope, fear, or expect to become in the future.