Personality

Unit 3: Developmental Psychology

Personality

Personality: The consistent, enduring, and unique characteristics of a person.

There are many personality theories that provide a way of ***organizing*** the many characteristics you know about yourself and other people into a system.

Psychologists studying personality might seek to determine:
- whether certain traits go together
- what causes the differences between individual personalities
- how and why people conduct their lives the way they do
- how life can be improved

Major Schools of Thought

1. Psychoanalytic (Freud)
2. Behaviourist (Skinner)
3. Social Learning Theory
4. Cognitive
5. Humanistic
6. Trait Theory

Psychoanalytic Theory

RECALL:

Freud believed that personality was a system of energy consisting of the pleasure-seeking instincts which come into conflict with with the conscious, rational parts of our brain.

- **Id -** primitive, instinctual motive to satisfy basic desires

- **Ego** - conscious, realistic part that mediates the needs of the Id in socially acceptable ways

- **Superego** - source of conscience in personality, counteracts the Id.

Defense Mechanisms

When the demands of the id and the ego cannot be resolved, it may be necessary to resort to psychological defenses rather than face frustration, conflict, anxiety or confusion.

Defense Mechanisms: Are the specific methods the ego uses to protect itself from unpleasant circumstances or anxiety that results when its job becomes too difficult.

Rationalization	Making up acceptable excuses for behaviours that cause us to feel anxious.
Repression	Pushing anxiety-causing feelings out of conscious thought.
Denial	Refuse to accept the reality of something that makes you anxious.
Projection	Believing that impulses coming from within are really coming from other people.
Reaction Formation	Replacing the unacceptable feeling or urge with an opposite one.
Regression	Going back to an earlier, less mature, pattern of behaviour.
Displacement	Taking out frustrations on a less powerful person.
Sublimation	Redirecting forbidden desire into a socially acceptable desire.

DEFENSE MECHANISMS

Freud's Contributions to Personality

- Recognition of the forces that exists in human personality and the difficulty in controlling them.

- First to claim that infancy and childhood are critical times for forming a person's basic character structure.

- First to propose a unified theory to understand and explain human behaviour.

Behaviourist Theory

- **B.F. Skinner's** work saw no need for a general concept of personality. Instead he focused on the specific causes of behaviour and how to predict/control it.

- Skinner tried to uncover the ***contingencies of reinforcement*** - the occurrence of rewards or punishments following particular behaviours.

  - What conditions in a person's life are reinforcing their behaviour?

Social Learning Theory

- **Albert Bandura** argued that personality is acquired not only by direct reinforcement of behaviour but also by observational learning or imitation.

- People direct their own behaviour by their choice of models

- Support and Criticism
    - Learning theories (both social and behaviourist) focus on concrete actions that can be tested and measured.

    - Critics argue that they do not give enough attention to the influence of genetics, emotions, or childhood experiences.

Cognitive Theory

- Based on an analysis of our own perceptions, thoughts, and feelings.

- Personality consists of our thoughts about ourselves including our biases, errors, and mistakes.

- Our individuality comes from the unique way in which we organize our personal schemas of other people, events, and concepts.

Humanistic Theory

Psychoanalysis - instinctual behaviour, role of childhood experiences
Learning Theory - actions shaped by reward/punishment or social learning

- **Humanistic** psychologists emphasize our ability to create and live by personal standards and perceptions.

- **Carl Rogers** was a humanist who developed **"Self Theory"** to explain personality and behaviour.

Carl Rogers - Self Theory

Rogers believed that personality develops over time based on both our interactions with others and our childhood experiences.

- **Self** - A person's image of who they are and what they value

- **Positive Regard** - Viewing yourself in a favorable light due to supportive feedback received from interaction with others.

Individuals seek positive regard, and will learn to behave in ways that their close friends and family react positively to. To be **fully functioning** according to Rogers a person needs to feel completely accepted.

Trait Theories

Trait Theory

Trait - a tendency to react to a situation in a way that remains stable over time.

Traits are predispositions, rooted in our genes. Trait theorists generally make two basic assumptions about these underlying sources of consistency:

1. Every trait applies to all people
2. These descriptions can be quantified

16 Trait Theory - Raymond Cattell

Cattell believed that by identifying and measuring certain traits you could predict people's behaviour in certain situations.

- 46 *surface traits* that represent the stable characteristics that can be observed through behaviour in certain situations.

- 16 *source traits* that represent the stable characteristics that are considered to be at the core of personality.

Cattell used his 16 source traits to develop a personality questionnaire to measure an individual's traits.

Each trait is listed as a pair of opposites on a continuum.

	Factor	Descriptors		
A	Warmth	Reserved	vs.	Outgoing
B	Reasoning	Less Intelligent	vs.	More Intelligent
C	Emotional Stability	Affected by feelings	vs.	Emotionally stable
E	Dominance	Humble	vs.	Assertive
F	Liveliness	Sober	vs.	Happy-go-lucky
G	Rule Consciousness	Expedient	vs.	Conscientious
H	Social Boldness	Shy	vs.	Venturesome
I	Sensitivity	Tough-minded	vs.	Tender-minded
L	Vigilance	Trusting	vs.	Suspicious
M	Abstractedness	Practical	vs.	Imaginative
N	Privateness	Straightforward	vs.	Shrewd
O	Apprehension	Self-Assured	vs.	Apprehensive
Q1	Openness to Change	Conservative	vs.	Experimenting
Q2	Self-Reliance	Group-dependent	vs.	Self-sufficient
Q3	Perfectionism	Self-conflict	vs.	Self-control
Q4	Tension	Relaxed	vs.	Tense

Dimensions of Personality - Hans Eysenck

Concluded that there are two basic dimensions of personality.

1. Stability vs. Instability
   a. Stable - easy going, relaxed, well-adjusted and even tempered
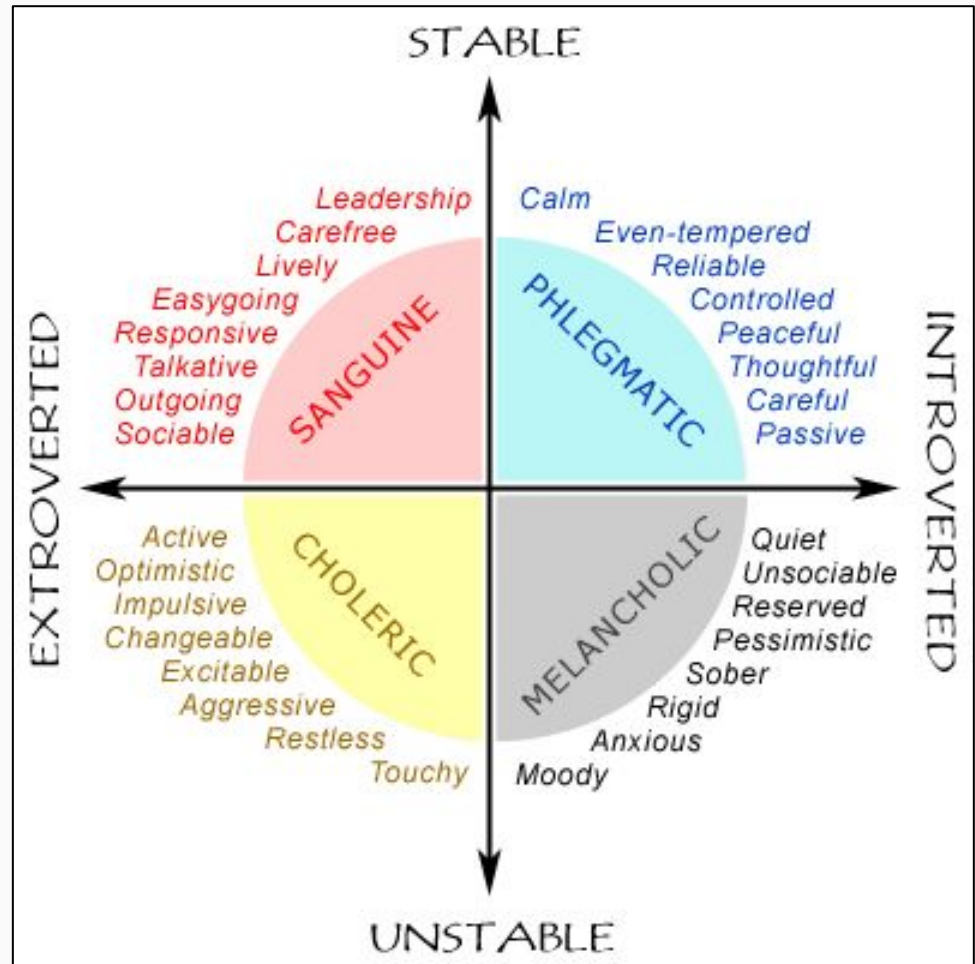   b. Unstable - moody, anxious, and restless
2. Extraversion vs. Introversion
   a. Extraversion - outgoing, active, sociable, lively
   b. Introversion - thoughtful, reserved, passive, quiet
3. Psychoticism (Added years later)
   a. Psychotic - self-centered, hostile, aggressive, act without thinking
   b. Non-Psychotic - socially sensitive, high caring and empathy, easy to work with

Eysenck hypothesized that people who share dimensions of personality will share similar traits.

STABLE

Leadership
Carefree
Lively
Easygoing
Responsive
Talkative
Outgoing
Sociable

SANGUINE

Calm
Even-tempered
Reliable
Controlled
Peaceful
Thoughtful
Careful
Passive

PHLEGMATIC

EXTROVERTED

INTROVERTED

Active
Optimistic
Impulsive
Changeable
Excitable
Aggressive
Restless
Touchy

CHOLERIC

MELANCHOLIC

Quiet
Unsociable
Reserved
Pessimistic
Sober
Rigid
Anxious
Moody

UNSTABLE

4 Temperaments

Ancient Greek physician Hippocrates identified 4 primary temperaments as part of the medical theory *humorism* - that 4 bodily fluids affect personlaity and behaviour. The 4 temperaments were:

1. **Sanguine** - extroverted, fun-loving, impulsive, optimistic

2. **Choleric** - extroverted, hot-tempered, quick thinking, practical

3. **Melancholic** - introverted, logical, analytic, private, factual

4. **Phlegmatic** - introverted, calm, unemotional, easygoing

The Robust 5

Trait psychologists have found that five traits appear repeatedly in different research studies, often called "The Big 5"

1. **Extraversion** - associated with warmth, talkativeness and energy

2. **Agreeableness** - Involves being sympathetic to others, kind, trusting

3. **Conscientiousness** - dutiful, dedicated, organized, responsible

4. **Openness to Experience** - open-minded, try new things

5. **Emotional Stability** - not easily upset, the opposite is **Neuroticism**, the tendency to experience unpleasant emotions

Each "Big 5" trait is part of a continuum and has many related traits.

Low Score	Trait	High Score
Practical, conventional, prefers routine	**O**penness (imagination, feelings, actions, ideas)	Curious, wide range of interests, independent
Impulsive, careless, disorganized	**C**onscientiousness (competence, self-discipline, thoughtfulness, goal-driven)	Hardworking, dependable, organized
Quiet, reserved, withdrawn	**E**xtroversion (sociability, assertiveness, emotional expression)	Outgoing, warm, seeks adventure
Critical, uncooperative, suspicious	**A**greeableness (cooperative, trustworthy, good-natured)	Helpful, trusting, empathetic
Calm, even-tempered, secure	**N**euroticism (tendency toward unstable emotions)	Anxious, unhappy, prone to negative emotions