

## CHAPTER TWO: DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES

### Psychodynamic Developmental Theories Freud & Erickson

#### Freudian Theory

- Sigmund Freud: developed *psychoanalysis* approach to understanding and treating psychological problems on which psychodynamic theory is based.
- The psychoanalytical theory proposes that unconscious forces act to determine personality and behaviour as individuals resolve conflicts between biological drives and social expectations.

#### The 3-Part Structure of Personality

Freud described each individual's personality as consisting of 3 hypothetical mental structures: the id, the ego, and the superego.

##### The Id:

- Present at birth, unconscious.
- It impulsively tries to satisfy a person's inborn biological needs/desires by motivating behaviours that maximise pleasure/avoid discomfort with no regard for the realities involved.
- The newborn infant is 'all id', crying for food/comfort but having no idea of how to get them because they cannot distinguish between wishful fantasy and reality.

##### The Ego:

- Largely rational, conscious, problem-solving part of the personality.
  - It is closely related to a person's sense of self.
  - The ego functions according to the *reality principle*, a process by which the infant learns to delay their desire for instant satisfaction and redirect it into more realistic and appropriate ways to meet their needs. E.g. *A hungry infant shifts from imagining that the wish for food will satisfy their hunger to a more realistic focus on anticipating the appearance of their parent or other caregiver, who will feed them.*
  - The ego protects itself by means of unconscious **defence mechanisms**, which keeps conflicts from awareness by distorting reality
- Defence Mechanisms:** are unconscious distortions of reality that keep conflicts from the ego's conscious awareness (These conflicts can threaten the person's ego, or sense of self).
- Repression:* is a defence mechanism, where unacceptable feelings and impulses are forced from memory and forgotten.
- Projection:* is a defence mechanism, where a person's conflict-producing feelings, such as feelings of aggression, are mistakenly attributed to another person.
- Fixation:** refers to a blockage in development due to unresolved id-ego and super-ego conflicts, or from parenting that is not appropriately responsive to a child's need E.g. *overindulgence during the oral stage can lead to excessive dependence on others later in life. However, infants who experience severe deprivation/frustration of their needs may feel the need to manipulate others later in life.*

##### The Super Ego:

- The moral and ethical component of the personality. Develops at the end of early childhood.
- The superego includes the child's emerging sense of conscience, or right/wrong, as well as the ego-ideal, an idealised sense of how they should behave.
- The superego acts as an internalised, all-knowing parent. It punishes the person for unacceptable sexual or aggressive thoughts, feelings and actions with guilt, and rewards them for fulfillment of parental standards with heightened self-esteem.
- The superego can sometimes be overly moralistic and unreasonable, but it provides the individual with standards by which to regulate their moral conduct and take pride in their accomplishments.