

INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY

DEFINE PSYCHOLOGY & UNDERSTAND WHY IT IS RELEVANT TO HEALTH

Psychology: *“the scientific study of mental processes and behaviour of individuals”*

- Psychology looks at how the mind and individual behaviour interact with health.
- It looks at why people aren't engaging with you or motivated to make a change.
- A pure science, where they work to understand human behaviour (mental and functional)
- **Behaviour** is the means by which organisms adjust to their environment.
- **Mental processes** are the working of the human mind; as psychologists recognize that you cant understand human action without understanding their mental processes.

Describing what happens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first task in psychology is to make observations about behaviour • Behavioural data is reports of observations about the behaviour of organisms and the conditions under which it occurs (social and cultural contexts). • Psychologists investigate for example the speed of reaction, eye movements during reading.
Explaining what happens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explanations go beyond what can be observed, with the central goal being to find patterns in behavioural and mental processes. ○ Psychologists want to discover how behaviour works (e.g. why you laugh) ○ Most behaviour is influenced by a number of factors including genetic makeup, motivation, intelligence or self-esteem.
Predicting what happens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Predictions are statements about the likelihood that certain behaviour will occur or that a given relationship will be found. ▪ An accurate explanation will allow for accurate predictions to be made. ▪ Predictions must be worded precisely enough to enable them to be tested and then rejected if the evidence does not support them.
Controlling what happens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ability to control behaviour is important because it gives psychologists ways of helping people improve the quality of their lives. - Psychologists have interventions that help people to gain control of problems in their lives.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

- Each individual brings in their own perspectives to a situation which affects the way people perceive a situation.
- Psychologist perspectives determine the way that they examine behaviour and mental processes.

Introspection: an individual's examination of his or her own thoughts and feelings

Structuralism: the study of structure of the mind and behaviour and the view that all human mental experience can be understood as a combination of simple elements or events.

Psychodynamic perspective (Freud): where powerful inner forces drive behaviour (motivation or attempt to resolve conflict)

- Human actions stem from instincts and attempt to resolve conflict between personal needs and society's demands.

- The organism stops reacting when its needs are satisfied → main purpose here is to reduce tension.

Behaviorist perspective (Watson): how environmental stimuli control behaviour (also relationships)

- They observe the consequences from a response **eg. how speeding tickets change the likelihood that motorists will drive with caution.**
- This approach has yielded a more humane approach to educating children.

Humanist (Rogers & Maslow): people are active creatures who are good and make choices for themselves.

- Looks more specifically at peoples life histories where their main emphasis was to strive for positive development.
- **Self actualization:** Refers to each individual's drive towards fullest development of their potential.
- It strives to deal with the whole person (holistic approach to human psychology) → Integrate knowledge of individual mind, body and behaviour with an awareness of social and cultural forces.

Cognitive (Chomsky & Piaget): stresses human thought and the process of knowing, attending, remembering, problem solving.

- Recognises that some behaviours occur because of ways of thinking, and that thoughts are both causes and results of actions.
- Piaget used a series of tasks to demonstrate changes in cognitive development.
- Because of its focus on mental processes, this has a dominant role in psychology today.

Biological: identifying the causes of behaviour by looking at the function of genes, the brain, nervous system, etc.

- An organisms functioning is explained in terms of underlying physical and electrical activities taking place.
- They look at neuroscience and an attempt to study the brain function in terms of sensation, learning and emotion.

Evolutionary: mental abilities evolved to serve particular adaptive purposes, so what made aggression an adaptive behaviour?

- Those better suited to their environment produce offspring
- Suggests mental abilities evolved over millions of years.
- Focuses on environmental conditions that affect the human brains evolution to see what central adaptive problems were faced by species.
- After identifying adaptive problems, early humans had mental mechanisms that allowed them so solve these problems.

Sociocultural: focuses on cross cultural differences in the causes and consequences of behaviour.

- Comparison of groups in the same boundaries
- Looks at are peoples perception of the world affected by their culture = do their languages affect the way they perceive the world, do their cultural values shape the way they experience the world?

