

Individual Determinants of Health-Notes

WEEK 1-INTRODUCTION TO LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Learning-the relatively permanent change in behaviour or knowledge which results from practice or experience.

Why is learning important?

- To understand human beings, we need to understand learning.
- We are born with very few instincts. Everything we can do is learnt through acquired learning.
- Behaviour in health and service settings can be understood by understanding learning.

Health related behaviours that can be learnt through learning

- Healthy eating
- Exercise
- Social
- Sun protective
- Substance abuse-drugs, amphetamines, heroin, ecstasy
- Physiological changes that can lead to illness-tension headaches
- Avoidance behaviours-swallowing pills, needles

Classical conditioning

'a learning process in which an originally neutral stimulus, by repeated pairing with a stimulus that normally produces some response, comes to produce a similar or even identical response

Classic example. Ivan Pavlov, study of digestion in dogs (1890s)

Dogs when presented with meat start to salivate so when you ring a bell just before giving them meat they start to relate the two and after repeating the process many times just the bell will give the salvation response.

WEEK 4-PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

Mental Health

Mental health is a state of emotional and social wellbeing. It influences how an individual copes with the normal stresses of life and whether he or she can achieve his or her potential.

What is not mental illness?

- Religious opinion or preference
- Illegal conduct
- Sexual preference
- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Immoral conduct
- Antisocial behaviour

Mental health in Australia

1 in 5 Australians in previous 12 months have been diagnosed with a mental illness. Conditions included...

- Anxiety disorders (14%)
- Affective (mood) disorders (6%)
- Substance use disorders(5%)

45% had experienced a mental disorder in their lifetime.

The age group that is most effected by mental illness is 34-44 years

25% of young people experience mental illness

Anxiety Disorders

Excessive worry and anxiety (apprehensive expectation), occurring more days then not for at least 6 months, about a number of events or activities

Can also include

- Avoidance of social situations and environments which cause fear
- Ritual acts such as handwashing or cleaning
- Repetitive thoughts such as obsessive compulsion.

Symptoms include

- Excessive anxiety or worry
- Restlessness
- Easily fatigued
- Irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sleep disturbance
- Significant distress or impairment.

WEEK 11-EMOTIONS

Emotion-is a complex psychological state that involves three distinct components; a subjective experience, a psychological response and a behaviour or expressive response (short lived, relatively intense).

Moods-milder than emotion and last for longer, harder to determine specific cause.

Are emotions innate

As a product of evolution, all humans are thought to share a basic set of emotional responses

Without prior learning infants respond to certain stimuli with a prewired emotional response to a wide range of circumstances.

Silvan Tomkins (1962) believed that there were 9 affects to be innate and the source of all emotions (affect theory).

Positive-interest/excitement, enjoyment, surprise/startle

Negative-fear/terror, anger, distress, shame/humiliation, disgust, dismal

Universal expressions (Ekman and Friesen, 1986)

All people share an overlap in 'facial language', there are seven universal recognised expressions of emotion.

Happiness, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, fear and contempt

Basic emotions and culture

Cross culturally some emotional responses are quite similar, infants also have an innate ability to interpret facial expressions and mimic them vagariously and cross-modally.

How does culture influence emotional expression?

Culture acts very early in life to have an impact on innate emotional responses.

Cultures establish social rules for when people may show certain emotions and for the social appropriateness of certain types of emotional displays by given types of people in particular settings.

Functions of emotions

Emotions serve a motivational function by arousing an individual to take action with regards to some experienced or imagined event.

Emotions then drive attention by directing and sustaining behaviours towards specific goals.

On a social level emotions serve the broad function of regulating social interactions (drawing you closer to some and distracting you from others).

Emotions also serve a cognitive function by influencing what an individual attends to, the way they perceive themselves and others, and the way they interpret and remember various features of life situations.