

Week 1 Introduction

- Human needs
 - Need to belong
 - Friendship and intimacy
 - Caring for others and being cared for
 - Health and happiness → relationships are fundamental to human health and happiness- loneliness can kill
 - Types of relationships → kin, friends, mates, colleagues, enemies, animals

The scientific study of relationships

- Enormous growth since 1980s
- Two, specialist journals: *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, and *Personal Relationships*
- Many other journals devoted to, or including, relationship research
- Interdisciplinary enterprise
- A science of relationships
 - Different approaches depending on discipline, e.g., anthropology, sociology, communication studies, developmental psychology
 - Social psychologists take a broad view
 - Look at levels of explanation – take an integrative, not exclusive, approach

Charles Darwin theory of evolution

- Evolution deep level theory
 - Evolutionary approaches provide a backdrop to relationship issues – they constitute a deep-level explanation for why humans *in general* are motivated to do what they do
 - They help us to understand deep-seated and universal motives and emotions
- Evolution and relationships
 - Humans are social animals – they have to successfully manage relationships with others to survive
 - Need to find and keep mates, produce and parent offspring, compete for resources, maintain friendships, manage conflicts, and negotiate shifting power and status dynamics
 - Evolved *psychological mechanisms* help us achieve these tasks – powerful needs and desires (e.g., need to belong)

Emotions as motivators

- Romantic love- signals reward- motivates mating and pair bonding
- Jealousy- signals threat- motivates mate guarding
- Guilt – signals that we have damaged an important relationship - motivates efforts to repair it
- Shame – signals that we are a “bad” person - motivates efforts to fit in and be “good”

Theory	Description
Social cognitive theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Mid-level theory – inside the human mind➤ People learn about relationships as they grow up from their families and culture.. they develop theories (schemas) about relationship-related phenomena (e.g., love, marriage, friendship, parenthood)<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Schemas create implicit (unspoken) beliefs and expectations about relationships.. strong beliefs may become “rules”

John Bowlby: Attachment theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attachment – an evolved drive (instinct) with biological foundations (Bowlby, 1979) ➤ Manifests in infant-caregiver and adult romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) ➤ Attachment bonds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secure attachments are the source of our first powerful experiences of love, trust, and joy. - Disrupted or unpredictable bonds trigger intense negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and sorrow. - As we grow, we learn (construct schemas) about trust, love, and relationships from these early experiences ➤ Adult attachment styles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children who experience trust and security learn (acquire schemas) that others can be relied upon and that they are valuable = secure attachment ➤ Avoidant attachment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children who experience cold, neglectful parenting learn (acquire schemas) that relationships are painful and non-rewarding. Love hurts – who needs it? ➤ Anxious attachment style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children who experience inconsistent parenting learn (acquire schemas) that relationships are precarious, leading to extremes of hurt, hope, jealousy, and anxiety in adult relationships
Role theory (mid-level theory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ People acquire schemas about relationship roles (e.g, being a wife, mother, Managing Director) from their society/culture ➤ What does it mean to be a “good” mother, father, wife, husband? ➤ Multiple roles can mean conflicting expectations
Social exchange theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Economic models of relationships emphasize their rewards, costs, comparison levels, short-term versus long-term profits and losses ➤ Assume a “rational” (purely cognitive) approach to relationships ➤ When exchange is unfair <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The “cheater detection mechanism” – registers unfairness of exchange, elicits anger, hurt, revenge...
Stage theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A developmental (life cycle) approach to relationships ➤ Stage theory describes “typical” patterns of relationship initiation, development, maintenance and dissolution ➤ Moving through stages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partners may not be in step with one another.. e.g., not ready for commitment, parenthood, retirement etc. at the same stage..
*Dialectical theory *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sociological approach describing the process of managing tensions in relationships; e.g., connectedness (wanting togetherness) versus autonomy (wanting independence) - the most central tension in most relationships

Integrating approaches

- Dialectical tensions (pushes and pulls) may derive from schemas (including attachment), from conflicting roles, from ambivalence about relationship stage, from perceptions of inequity (unfairness), from biological drives and instincts, and conflicting emotions...
- **Important points**
 - You can look at relationships from these and many other different perspectives and obtain an enriched understanding
 - But always take the scientific, evidence-based approach, as opposed to relying on folk tales, agony aunts, dreams, psychics, movies, novels, and family/friend opinions..
 - There is an interdisciplinary science of relationships to be explored!

Classifying relationships

- Clark and Mills (1970s) – two category model
- *Communal* (e.g. family) based on shared needs and commitment
- *Exchange* (e.g., business partnership) relationships
- Four category model → Fiske and Haslam's research: Communal sharing (based on need)
 - Equality matching (based on give and take) = exchange
 - Authority ranking → based on power
 - Market pricing → based on value

Relationship types may be mixed

- A relationship may at different times follow communal, exchange, authority-ranking and/or market pricing norms
- But each type has its own rules and expectations
- Can lead to conflict when expectations do not match - e.g., when parents expect financial payment (exchange) for a child's upbringing (communal) – 'taboo trade-off'

Hal Kelley: research pioneer: Father of interdependence theory

- Dyadic (two-person) relationships are more or less interdependent
 - "P" (person) and "O" (other) bring personal attributes to relationship
 - Personality, beliefs, values, history
 - Social, cultural, and environmental factors also affect P and O's relationship
 - Interdependence
 - Interdependence is the key to all relationships
 - Living on "parallel tracks"? No relationship
 - Relationship closeness → Relationship closeness is a function of the degree of interdependence, not feelings of 'love'

Explaining relationships

- Need to distinguish between proximal (current) and distal (distant) causes of relationship events
 - Similar to the contemporary/historical explanation dimension
- Proximal feelings (e.g., love, hate) may have a variety of distal causes (e.g., a prior betrayal; schemas; personality variables)
- Need to consider both factors
 - *Distal*, or background, variables may have an important impact on the *proximal*, or current conditions of a relationship..
 - Our understanding of causal dynamics becomes complete only when the particular distal and proximal condition(s) are identified and understood
 - Then you can decide how best to help – tackle the immediate problem, treat the distal causes, or do both? (e.g., wine, relaxation exercises, sex therapy, psychotherapy, marital therapy....)
- Societal/ cultural influences

- Relationships don't exist in a vacuum
- Relationship behaviour is shaped by cultural norms and values (which create schemas)
- "I/me" versus "you/we"
 - Individualism – "me" orientation – I put my needs and desires first
 - Collectivism – "we" orientation – I put my kin's needs and desires first
 - Implications for romantic love and intimacy?