Introduction to Psychology - 1st Canadian Edition

Introduction to Psychology - 1st Canadian Edition

Charles Stangor and Jennifer Walinga

BCCAMPUS
VICTORIA, B.C.

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The following changes were made to this book as a whole:

- Canadian spellings were used
- Imperial measurements were changed to metric
- Added or changed content and references to reflect a Canadian perspective
- Where appropriate, changed images to reflect Canadian specific content and references
- Replaced copyrighted images with openly licensed images; if no replacement found, copyrighted images were removed.
- For most existing videos, videos were embedded and QR codes added

Chapter 2: NEW

- Introduction to Major Perspectives

Chapter 3:

- Replaced “Consent Form: Interactions” with “Sample Research Consent Form”
- Replaced “APA Guidelines on Human Care and Use of Animals in Research” with the Canadian Psychological Association guidelines

Chapter 6:

- Replaced National Sleep Foundation guidelines with those from the Canadian Sleep Society

Chapter 9:

- Added Thomas Sophonow and Michael Kliman examples to opening case study about Jennifer Thompson
- Replaced *States and Capital Cities* table with *Provinces and Capital Cities*
- Added Kent Cochrane example to section on severe amnesia
- Added *Gold Mountain Blues* copyright case

Chapter 10:

- Added Vingilis-Jeremko & Vingilis 2006 researcher on gender differences in STEM performance to opening case study
- Expanded section on bilingualism to include Canadian relevance

Chapter 11:

- Added Gavin England story to opening case study

Chapter 12:

- Changed text and images to Canadian content in *Psychology in Everyday Life: Leaders and Leadership* text box

Chapter 13:

- Added information on Romeo Dallaire to PSTD section

Chapter 14:

- Replaced ethical principles by the American Psychological Association with those from the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association in the *Psychology in Everyday Life* text box

Chapter 15:

- Sam Spady opening case study replaced with Jonathan Andrews story
- *Research Focus: The Culture of Honour* was rewritten with an international perspective

Chapter 16 – NEW

- Stress, Health, and Coping

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Stangor, C. and Walinga, J. (2014). *Introduction to Psychology – 1st Canadian Edition.* Victoria, B.C.: BCcampus. Retrieved from https://opentextbc.ca/introductiontopsychology/

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Ebook ISBN: 978-1-77420-005-6

Print ISBN: 978-1-77420-004-9

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This book was produced with Pressbooks (https://pressbooks.com) and rendered with Prince.

Dedication

From Original Author: Charles Stangor

To Leslie

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Approach and Pedagogy

Charles Stangor

From Original Author: Charles Stangor

Preface

When I first started teaching Introduction to Psychology, I found it difficult — much harder than teaching classes in statistics or research methods. I was able to give a lecture on the sympathetic nervous system, a lecture on Piaget, and a lecture on social cognition, but how could I link these topics together for the student? I felt a bit like I was presenting a laundry list of research findings rather than an integrated set of principles and knowledge. Of course, what was difficult for me was harder still for my students. How could they be expected to remember and understand all the many phenomena of psychology? How could they tell what was most important? And why, given the abundance of information that was freely available to them on the web, should they care about my approach? My pedagogy needed something to structure, integrate, and motivate their learning.

Eventually, I found some techniques to help my students understand and appreciate what I found to be important. First, I realized that psychology actually did matter to my students, but that I needed to make it clear to them why it did. I therefore created a more consistent focus on the theme of *behaviour*. One of the most fundamental integrating principles of the discipline of psychology is its focus on behaviour, and yet that is often not made clear to students. Affect, cognition, and motivation are critical and essential, and yet are frequently best understood and made relevant through their links with behaviour. Once I figured this out, I began tying all the material to this concept: The sympathetic nervous system matters *because it has specific and predictable influences on our behaviour*. Piaget's findings matter *because they help us understand the child's behaviour* (not just his or her thinking). And social cognition matters *because our social thinking helps us better relate to the other people in our everyday social lives*. This integrating theme allows me to organize my lectures, my writing assignments, and my testing.

Second was the issue of empiricism: I emphasized that what seems true might not be true, and we need to try to determine whether it is. The idea of empirical research testing falsifiable hypotheses and explaining much (but never all) behaviour — the idea of *psychology as a science* — was critical, and it helped me differentiate psychology from other disciplines. Another reason for emphasizing empiricism is that the Introduction to Psychology course represents many students' best opportunity to learn about the fundamentals of scientific research.

The length of existing textbooks was creating a real and unnecessary impediment to student learning. I was condensing and abridging my coverage, but often without a clear rationale for choosing to cover one topic and omit another. My focus on behaviour, coupled with a consistent focus on empiricism, helped in this regard — focusing on these themes helped me identify the underlying principles of psychology and separate more essential topics from less essential ones.

Approach and Pedagogy

I wrote this book to help students organize their thinking about psychology at a conceptual level. Five or ten years from now, I do not expect my students to remember the details of most of what I teach them. However, I do hope that they will remember that psychology matters because it helps us understand behaviour and that our knowledge of psychology is based on empirical study.

This book is designed to facilitate these learning outcomes. I have used three techniques to help focus students on behaviour:

1. **Chapter openers.** I begin my focus on behaviour by opening each chapter with a chapter opener showcasing an interesting real-world example of people who are dealing with behavioural questions and who can use psychology to help them answer those questions. The opener is designed to draw the student into the chapter and create an interest in learning about the topic.
2. **Psychology in everyday life.** Each chapter contains one or two features designed to link the principles from the chapter to real-world applications in business, environment, health, law, learning, and other relevant domains. For instance, the application in Chapter 7 “Growing and Developing” — “What Makes a Good Parent?” — applies the concepts of parenting styles in a mini handbook about parenting, and the application in Chapter 4, “Brains, Bodies, and Behaviour,” is about the difficulties that left-handed people face performing everyday tasks in a right-handed world.
3. **Research focus.** I have also emphasized empiricism throughout, but without making it a distraction from the main story line. Each chapter presents two close-ups on research — well-articulated and specific examples of research within the content area, each including a summary of the hypotheses, methods, results, and interpretations. This feature provides a continuous thread that reminds students of the importance of empirical research. The research foci also emphasize the fact that findings are not always predictable ahead of time (dispelling the myth of hindsight bias) and help students understand how research really works.

My focus on behaviour and empiricism has produced a text that is better organized, has fewer chapters, and is somewhat shorter than many of the leading books.

Finally, this textbook also includes learning objectives, key takeaways, and exercises and critical thinking activities.

In short, I think that this book will provide a useful and productive synthesis between your goals and the goals of your students. I have tried to focus on the forest rather than the trees and to bring psychology to life in ways that really matter for the students. At the same time, the book maintains content and conceptual rigor, with a strong focus on the fundamental principles of empiricism and the scientific method.

Acknowledgments

The following statement of acknowledgement is from the original author.

The development of *Introduction to Psychology* was made possible through the combined efforts of many people, each of whom brought special skills to the project.

One important resource was an advisory board of instructors from across the country. Their thoughtful and insightful feedback throughout development was invaluable in creating this first edition. I am deeply grateful to the following people for their time and effort:

- M. Janelle Cambron-Mellott, University of Alabama; Birmingham Southern College
- Celeste Doerr, Florida State University
- Jerry Green, Tarrant County College–NW Campus
- Richard Hass, University of Delaware
- Adam Hutcheson, University of South Carolina
- Matthew I. Isaak, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
- Kerry Jordan, Utah State University
- Jerwen Jou, University of Texas–Pan American
- Peggy Norwood, Community College of Aurora
- Karen Rhines, Northampton Community College
- Eva Szeli, Arizona State University
- Anton Villado, Rice University

Introduction to Psychology also benefited from reviews at various stages of the book's development. Many thanks to the following reviewers for their contributions:

- Eileen J. Achorn, The University of Texas at San Antonio
- Mara Aruguete, Lincoln University
- David Carlston, Midwestern State University
- Jenel T. Cavazos, Cameron University
- Stephanie B. Ding, Del Mar College
- Gaithri A. Fernando, California State University, Los Angeles
- William Goggin, University of Southern Mississippi
- Karla A. Lassonde, Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Greg Loviscky, Pennsylvania State University

- Michael A. Mangan, University of New Hampshire, Durham
- Anne Moyer, SUNY at Stony Brook
- Todd Nelson, California State University, Stanislaus
- Bridgette J. Peteet, University of Cincinnati
- Brad Pinter, Pennsylvania State University, Altoona
- Steven V. Rouse, Pepperdine University
- Glenda S. Williams, Lone Star College, North Harris

Thanks also to Maren Voss, Hagerstown (MD) Community College, for her research and writing assistance; to Matthew I. Isaak, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, for his work on the accompanying Test Item File and PowerPoint slides; and to Chrissy Chimi and Stacy Claxton of Scribe, Inc., who expertly handled the many details of the production process.

And special thanks to the team at Flat World Knowledge. Completion of the book and supplements required the attention of many people, including Michael Boezi, who signed the book and supported my efforts from beginning to end; Pam Hersperger, who managed the book through development; and Gina Huck Siegert, who worked closely with me on all aspects of the project.

Chapter 1. Introducing Psychology

1. Introducing Psychology

Psychology is the *scientific study of mind and behaviour*. The word "psychology" comes from the Greek words "psyche," meaning *life,* and "logos," meaning *explanation*. Psychology is a popular major for students, a popular topic in the public media, and a part of our everyday lives. Television shows such as *Dr. Phil* feature psychologists who provide personal advice to those with personal or family difficulties. Psychological television crime dramas such as *Cracked, Criminal Minds, Psyche, CSI,* and others feature the work of forensic psychologists who use psychological principles to help solve crimes. And many people have direct knowledge of psychology because they have visited psychologists, such as school counsellors, family therapists, and religious, marriage, or bereavement counsellors.

Because we are frequently exposed to the work of psychologists in our everyday lives, we all have an idea about what psychology is and what psychologists do. In many ways I am sure that your conceptions are correct. Psychologists do work in forensic fields, and they do provide counselling and therapy for people in distress. But there are hundreds of thousands of psychologists in the world, and most of them work in other places, doing work that you are probably not aware of.

Most psychologists work in research laboratories, hospitals, and other field settings where they study the behaviour of humans and animals. For instance, my colleagues in the Psychology Department at the University of Maryland study such diverse topics as anxiety in children, the interpretation of dreams, the effects of caffeine on thinking, how birds recognize each other, how praying mantises hear, how people from different cultures react differently in negotiation, and the factors that lead people to engage in terrorism. Other psychologists study topics such as alcohol and drug addiction, memory, emotion, hypnosis, love, what makes people aggressive or helpful, and the psychologies of politics, prejudice, culture, and religion. Psychologists also work in schools and businesses, and they use a variety of methods, including observation, questionnaires, interviews, and laboratory studies, to help them understand behaviour.

This chapter provides an introduction to the broad field of psychology and the many approaches that psychologists take to understanding human behaviour. We will consider how psychologists conduct scientific research, with an overview of some of the most important approaches used and topics studied by psychologists, and also consider the variety of fields in which psychologists work and the careers that are available to people with psychology degrees. I expect that you may find that at least some of your preconceptions about psychology will be challenged and changed, and you will learn that psychology is a field that will provide you with new ways of thinking about your own thoughts, feelings, and actions.



Figure 1.1 Psychology is in part the study of behaviour. Why do you think these people are behaving the way they are? [Long Description]

Attributions

Figure 1.1:

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- "couple yelling at each other" by Vic (http://www.flickr.com/photos/59632563@N04/6238711264/in/photostream/) is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Long Descriptions

Figure 1.1 long description: Five photos:

1. Man in hospital bed with broken leg; a soldier is lifting his leg as is if to give physical therapy.
2. Young girl smoking a cigarette.
3. A man doing a hand stand on a beach with sun setting in background.
4. A man and woman yelling at each other with their heads touching.
5. One man and four women dressed up like Star Trek characters and aliens. [Return to Figure 1.1]

1.1 Psychology as a Science

Learning Objectives

1. Explain why using our intuition about everyday behaviour is insufficient for a complete understanding of the causes of behaviour.
2. Describe the difference between values and facts and explain how the scientific method is used to differentiate between the two.

Despite the differences in their interests, areas of study, and approaches, all psychologists have one thing in common: they rely on scientific methods. **Research psychologists** *use scientific methods to create new knowledge about the causes of behaviour*, whereas **psychologist-practitioners**, such as clinical, counselling, industrial-organizational, and school psychologists, *use existing research to enhance the everyday life of others*. The science of psychology is important for both researchers and practitioners.

In a sense all humans are scientists. We all have an interest in asking and answering questions about our world. We want to know why things happen, when and if they are likely to happen again, and how to reproduce or change them. Such knowledge enables us to predict our own behaviour and that of others. We may even collect **data** (i.e., *any information collected through formal observation or measurement*) to aid us in this undertaking. It has been argued that people are "everyday scientists" who conduct research projects to answer questions about behaviour (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). When we perform poorly on an important test, we try to understand what caused our failure to remember or understand the material and what might help us do better the next time. When our good friends Monisha and Charlie break up, despite the fact that they appeared to have a relationship made in heaven, we try to determine what happened. When we contemplate the rise of terrorist acts around the world, we try to investigate the causes of this problem by looking at the terrorists themselves, the situation around them, and others' responses to them.

The Problem of Intuition

The results of these "everyday" research projects can teach us many principles of human behaviour. We learn through experience that if we give someone bad news, he or she may blame us even though the news was not our fault. We learn that people may become depressed after they fail at an important task. We see that aggressive behaviour occurs frequently in our society, and we develop theories to explain why this is so. These insights are part of everyday social life. In fact, much research in psychology involves the scientific study of everyday behaviour (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967).

The problem, however, with the way people collect and interpret data in their everyday lives is that they are not always particularly thorough. Often, when one explanation for an event seems right, we adopt that explanation as the truth even when other explanations are possible and potentially more accurate. For example, eyewitnesses to violent crimes are often extremely confident in their identifications of

the perpetrators of these crimes. But research finds that eyewitnesses are no less confident in their identifications when they are incorrect than when they are correct (Cutler & Wells, 2009; Wells & Hasel, 2008). People may also become convinced of the existence of extrasensory perception (ESP), or the predictive value of astrology, when there is no evidence for either (Gilovich, 1993). Furthermore, psychologists have also found that there are a variety of cognitive and motivational biases that frequently influence our perceptions and lead us to draw erroneous conclusions (Fiske & Taylor, 2007; Hsee & Hastie, 2006). In summary, accepting explanations for events without testing them thoroughly may lead us to think that we know the causes of things when we really do not.

Research Focus: Unconscious Preferences for the Letters of Our Own Name

A study reported in the *Journal of Consumer Research* (Brendl, Chattopadhyay, Pelham, & Carvallo, 2005) demonstrates the extent to which people can be unaware of the causes of their own behaviour. The research demonstrated that, at least under certain conditions (and although they do not know it), people frequently prefer brand names that contain the letters of their own name to brand names that do not contain the letters of their own name.

The research participants were recruited in pairs and were told that the research was a taste test of different types of tea. For each pair of participants, the experimenter created two teas and named them by adding the word stem "oki" to the first three letters of each participant's first name. For example, for Jonathan and Elisabeth, the names of the teas would have been Jonoki and Elioki.

The participants were then shown 20 packets of tea that were supposedly being tested. Eighteen packets were labelled with made-up Japanese names (e.g., Mataku; Somuta), and two were labelled with the brand names constructed from the participants' names. The experimenter explained that each participant would taste only two teas and would be allowed to choose one packet of these two to take home.

One of the two participants was asked to draw slips of paper to select the two brands that would be tasted at this session. However, the drawing was rigged so that the two brands containing the participants' name stems were always chosen for tasting. Then, while the teas were being brewed, the participants completed a task designed to heighten their need for self-esteem, and that was expected to increase their desire to choose a brand that had the letters of their own name. Specifically, the participants all wrote about an aspect of themselves that they would like to change.

After the teas were ready, the participants tasted them and then chose to take a packet of one of the teas home with them. After they made their choice, the participants were asked why they chose the tea they had chosen, and then the true purpose of the study was explained to them.

The results of this study found that participants chose the tea that included the first three letters of their own name significantly more frequently (64% of the time) than they chose the tea that included the first three letters of their partner's name (only 36% of the time). Furthermore, the decisions were made unconsciously; the participants did not know why they chose the tea they chose. When they were asked, more than 90% of the participants thought that they had chosen on the basis of taste, whereas only 5% of them mentioned the real cause — that the brand name contained the letters of their name.

Once we learn about the outcome of a given event (e.g., when we read about the results of a research project), we frequently believe that we would have been able to predict the outcome ahead of time. For instance, if half of a class of students is told that research concerning attraction between people has demonstrated that "opposites attract" and the other half is told that research has demonstrated that "birds of a feather flock together," most of the students will report believing that the outcome that they just read about is true, and that they would have predicted the outcome before they had read about it. Of

course, both of these contradictory outcomes cannot be true. (In fact, psychological research finds that "birds of a feather flock together" is generally the case.) The problem is that just reading a description of research findings leads us to think of the many cases we know that support the findings, and thus makes them seem believable. *The tendency to think that we could have predicted something that has already occurred that we probably would not have been able to predict* is called the **hindsight bias**.

Why Psychologists Rely on Empirical Methods

All scientists, whether they are physicists, chemists, biologists, sociologists, or psychologists, use *empirical methods* to study the topics that interest them. **Empirical methods** *include the processes of collecting and organizing data and drawing conclusions about those data*. The empirical methods used by scientists have developed over many years and provide a basis for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data within a common framework in which information can be shared. We can label the **scientific method** as *the set of assumptions, rules, and procedures that scientists use to conduct empirical research*.

Although scientific research is an important method of studying human behaviour, not all questions can be answered using scientific approaches. Statements that cannot be objectively measured or objectively determined to be true or false are not within the domain of scientific inquiry. Scientists therefore draw a distinction between values and facts. *Values* are personal statements such as "Abortion should not be permitted in this country," "I will go to heaven when I die," or "It is important to study psychology." **Facts** are *objective statements determined to be accurate through empirical study*. Examples are "There were more than 21,000 homicides in Canada in 2009" or "Research demonstrates that individuals who are exposed to highly stressful situations over long periods of time develop more health problems than those who are not."

Because values cannot be considered to be either true or false, science cannot prove or disprove them. Nevertheless, as shown in Table 1.1, research can sometimes provide facts that can help people develop their values. For instance, science may be able to objectively measure the impact of unwanted children on a society or the psychological trauma suffered by women who have abortions. The effect of imprisonment on the crime rate in Canada may also be determinable. This factual information can and should be made available to help people formulate their values about abortion and incarceration, as well as to enable governments to articulate appropriate policies. Values also frequently come into play in determining what research is appropriate or important to conduct. For instance, the Canadian government has recently increased funding for university research, designating $37 million annually to the three major research councils dealing with health, social science, and the sciences (Research Canada, 2014).

Table 1.1 Examples of Values and Facts in Scientific Research.[1]

[Skip Table]	
Personal value	**Scientific fact**
The environment should be protected.	The Canadian government has reduced environmental funding by $200 million but annually pays more than $1.4 billion in subsidies to the oil and gas industry.
Practical work experience helps to develop skilled workers.	More than $100 million for interest-free loans will be available in 2014 through the Canada Apprentice Loan program, an expansion of the Canada Student Loans Program.
Technology is increasingly necessary.	The federal government in Canada will invest $305 million over five years to extend high-speed broadband to some 280,000 homes in 2014.
It is important to quit smoking.	The Canadian government will raise the cost of cigarettes by more than $4 on a carton in 2014.

Although scientists use research to help establish facts, the distinction between values and facts is not always clear-cut. Sometimes statements that scientists consider to be factual turn out later, on the basis of further research, to be partially or even entirely incorrect. Although scientific procedures do not necessarily guarantee that the answers to questions will be objective and unbiased, science is still the best method for drawing objective conclusions about the world around us. When old facts are discarded, they are replaced with new facts based on newer and more correct data. Although science is not perfect, the requirements of empiricism and objectivity result in a much greater chance of producing an accurate understanding of human behaviour than is available through other approaches.

Levels of Explanation in Psychology

The study of psychology spans many different topics at many different **levels of explanation**, which are *the perspectives that are used to understand behaviour*. Lower levels of explanation are more closely tied to biological influences, such as genes, neurons, neurotransmitters, and hormones, whereas the middle levels of explanation refer to the abilities and characteristics of individual people, and the highest levels of explanation relate to social groups, organizations, and cultures (Cacioppo, Berntson, Sheridan, & McClintock, 2000).

The same topic can be studied within psychology at different levels of explanation, as shown in Table 1.2, “Levels of Explanation.” For instance, the psychological disorder known as **depression** affects millions of people worldwide and is known *to be caused by biological, social, and cultural factors*. Studying and helping alleviate depression can be accomplished at low levels of explanation by investigating how chemicals in the brain influence the experience of depression. This approach has allowed psychologists to develop and prescribe drugs, such as Prozac, which may decrease depression in many individuals (Williams, Simpson, Simpson, & Nahas, 2009). At the middle levels of explanation, psychological therapy is directed at helping individuals cope with negative life experiences that may cause depression. And at the highest level, psychologists study differences in the prevalence of depression between men and women and across cultures. The occurrence of psychological disorders, including depression, is substantially higher for women than for men, and it is also higher in Western cultures, such as in Canada, the United States, and Europe, than in Eastern cultures, such as in India,

China, and Japan (Chen, Wang, Poland, & Lin, 2009; Seedat et al., 2009). These sex and cultural differences provide insight into the factors that cause depression. The study of depression in psychology helps remind us that no one level of explanation can explain everything. All levels of explanation, from biological to personal to cultural, are essential for a better understanding of human behaviour.

Table 1.2 Levels of Explanation

[Skip Table]		
Level of Explanation	**Underlying Process**	**Examples**
Lower	Biological	• Depression is in part genetically influenced. • Depression is influenced by the action of neurotransmitters in the brain.
Middle	Interpersonal	• People who are depressed may interpret the events that occur to them too negatively. • Psychotherapy can be used to help people talk about and combat depression
Higher	Cultural and social	• Women experience more depression than do men. • The prevalence of depression varies across cultures and historical time periods.

The Challenges of Studying Psychology

Understanding and attempting to alleviate the costs of psychological disorders such as depression is not easy because psychological experiences are extremely complex. The questions psychologists pose are as difficult as those posed by doctors, biologists, chemists, physicists, and other scientists, if not more so (Wilson, 1998).

A major goal of psychology is to predict behaviour by understanding its causes. Making predictions is difficult, in part because people vary and respond differently in different situations. **Individual differences** are *the variations among people on physical or psychological dimensions.* For instance, although many people experience at least some symptoms of depression at some times in their lives, the experience varies dramatically among people. Some people experience major negative events, such as severe physical injuries or the loss of significant others, without experiencing much depression, whereas other people experience severe depression for no apparent reason. Other important individual differences that we will discuss in the chapters to come include differences in extraversion, intelligence, self-esteem, anxiety, aggression, and conformity.

Because of the many individual difference variables that influence behaviour, we cannot always predict who will become aggressive or who will perform best in graduate school or on the job. The predictions

made by psychologists (and most other scientists) are only probabilistic. We can say, for instance, that people who score higher on an intelligence test will, on average, do better than people who score lower on the same test, but we cannot make very accurate predictions about exactly how any one person will perform.

Another reason that it is difficult to predict behaviour is that almost all behaviour is **multiply determined**, or *produced by many factors*. And these factors occur at different levels of explanation. We have seen, for instance, that depression is caused by lower-level genetic factors, by medium-level personal factors, and by higher-level social and cultural factors. You should always be skeptical about people who attempt to explain important human behaviours, such as violence, child abuse, poverty, anxiety, or depression, in terms of a single cause.

Furthermore, these multiple causes are not independent of one another; they are associated such that when one cause is present, other causes tend to be present as well. This overlap makes it difficult to pinpoint which cause or causes are operating. For instance, some people may be depressed because of biological imbalances in neurotransmitters in their brain. The resulting depression may lead them to act more negatively toward other people around them, which then leads those other people to respond more negatively to them, which then increases their depression. As a result, the biological determinants of depression become intertwined with the social responses of other people, making it difficult to disentangle the effects of each cause.

Another difficulty in studying psychology is that much human behaviour is caused by factors that are outside our conscious awareness, making it impossible for us, as individuals, to really understand them. The role of unconscious processes was emphasized in the theorizing of the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), who argued that many psychological disorders were caused by memories that we have **repressed** and thus *remain outside our consciousness*. Unconscious processes will be an important part of our study of psychology, and we will see that current research has supported many of Freud's ideas about the importance of the unconscious in guiding behaviour.

Key Takeaways

- Psychology is the scientific study of mind and behaviour.
- Though it is easy to think that everyday situations have commonsense answers, scientific studies have found that people are not always as good at predicting outcomes as they think they are.
- The hindsight bias leads us to think that we could have predicted events that we actually could not have predicted.
- People are frequently unaware of the causes of their own behaviours.
- Psychologists use the scientific method to collect, analyze, and interpret evidence.
- Employing the scientific method allows the scientist to collect empirical data objectively, which adds to the accumulation of scientific knowledge.
- Psychological phenomena are complex, and making predictions about them is difficult because of individual differences and because they are multiply determined at different levels of explanation.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Can you think of a time when you used your intuition to analyze an outcome, only to be surprised later to find that your explanation was completely incorrect? Did this surprise help you understand how intuition may sometimes lead us astray?
2. Describe the scientific method in a way that someone who knows nothing about science could understand it.
3. Consider a behaviour that you find to be important and think about its potential causes at different levels of explanation. How do you think psychologists would study this behaviour?

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Notes

1. Source: Huffington Post, 2014.

1.2 The Evolution of Psychology: History, Approaches, and Questions

Learning Objectives

1. Explain how psychology changed from a philosophical to a scientific discipline.
2. List some of the most important questions that concern psychologists.
3. Outline the basic schools of psychology and how each school has contributed to psychology.

In this section we will review the history of psychology with a focus on the important questions that psychologists ask and the major approaches (or schools) of psychological inquiry. The schools of psychology that we will review are summarized in Table 1.3, “The Most Important Approaches (Schools) of Psychology,” while Table 1.4, “History of Psychology,” presents a timeline of some of the most important psychologists, beginning with the early Greek philosophers and extending to the present day. Table 1.3 and Table 1.4 both represent a selection of the most important schools and people; to mention all the approaches and all the psychologists who have contributed to the field is not possible in one chapter. The approaches that psychologists have used to assess the issues that interest them have changed dramatically over the history of psychology. Perhaps most importantly, the field has moved steadily from speculation about behaviour toward a more objective and scientific approach as the technology available to study human behaviour has improved (Benjamin & Baker, 2004). There has also been an influx of women into the field. Although most early psychologists were men, now most psychologists, including the presidents of the most important psychological organizations, are women.

Table 1.3 The Most Important Approaches (Schools) of Psychology.

[Skip Table]		
School of Psychology	**Description**	**Important Contributors**
Structuralism	Uses the method of introspection to identify the basic elements or "structures" of psychological experience	Wilhelm Wundt, Edward B. Titchener
Functionalism	Attempts to understand why animals and humans have developed the particular psychological aspects that they currently possess	William James
Psychodynamic	Focuses on the role of our unconscious thoughts, feelings, and memories and our early childhood experiences in determining behaviour	Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler, Erik Erickson
Behaviourism	Based on the premise that it is not possible to objectively study the mind, and therefore that psychologists should limit their attention to the study of behaviour itself	John B. Watson, B. F. Skinner
Cognitive	The study of mental processes, including perception, thinking, memory, and judgments	Hermann Ebbinghaus, Sir Frederic Bartlett, Jean Piaget
Social-cultural	The study of how the social situations and the cultures in which people find themselves influence thinking and behaviour	Fritz Heider, Leon Festinger, Stanley Schachter

Although most of the earliest psychologists were men, women are increasingly contributing to psychology. Here are some examples:

- 1968: Mary Jean Wright became the first woman president of the Canadian Psychological Association.
- 1970: Virginia Douglas became the second woman president of the Canadian Psychological Association.
- 1972: The Underground Symposium was held at the Canadian Psychological Association Convention. After having their individual papers and then a symposium rejected by the Program Committee, a group of six graduate students and non-tenured faculty, including Sandra Pyke and Esther Greenglass, held an independent research symposium that showcased work being done in the field of the psychology of women.
- 1976: The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women was founded.
- 1987: Janet Stoppard led the Women and Mental Health Committee of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Although it cannot capture every important psychologist, the following timeline shows some of the most important contributors to the history of psychology. (Adapted by J. Walinga.)

Table 1.4 History of Psychology.

[Skip Table]		
Date	**Psychologist(s)**	**Description**
428 to 347 BCE	Plato	Greek philosopher who argued for the role of nature in psychological development.
384 to 432 BCE	Aristotle	Greek philosopher who argued for the role of nurture in psychological development.
1588 to 1679 CE	Thomas Hobbes	English philosopher.
1596 to 1650	René Descartes	French philosopher.
1632 to 1704	John Locke	English philosopher.
1712 to 1778	Jean-Jacques Rousseau	French philosopher.
1801 to 1887	Gustav Fechner	German experimental psychologist who developed the idea of the "just noticeable difference" (JND), which is considered to be the first empirical psychological measurement.
1809 to 1882	Charles Darwin	British naturalist whose theory of natural selection influenced the functionalist school and the field of evolutionary psychology.
1832 to 1920	Wilhelm Wundt	German psychologist who opened one of the first psychology laboratories and helped develop the field of structuralism.
1842 to 1910	William James	American psychologist who opened one of the first psychology laboratories and helped develop the field of functionalism.
1849 to 1936	Ivan Pavlov	Russian psychologist whose experiments on learning led to the principles of classical conditioning.
1850 to 1909	Hermann Ebbinghaus	German psychologist who studied the ability of people to remember lists of nonsense syllables under different conditions.
1856 to 1939	Sigmund Freud	Austrian psychologist who founded the field of psychodynamic psychology.
1867 to 1927	Edward Bradford Titchener	American psychologist who contributed to the field of structuralism.
1878 to 1958	John B. Watson	American psychologist who contributed to the field of behavioralism.
1886 to 1969	Sir Frederic Bartlett	British psychologist who studied the cognitive and social processes of remembering.

[Skip Table]		
Date	**Psychologist(s)**	**Description**
1896 to 1980	Jean Piaget	Swiss psychologist who developed an important theory of cognitive development in children.
1904 to 1990	B. F. Skinner	American psychologist who contributed to the school of behaviourism.
1926 to 1993	Donald Broadbent	British cognitive psychologist who was pioneer in the study of attention.
20th and 21st centuries	Linda Bartoshuk; Daniel Kahneman; Elizabeth Loftus; Geroge Miller.	American psychologists who contributed to the cognitive school of psychology by studying learning, memory, and judgment. An important contribution is the advancement of the field of neuroscience. Daniel Kahneman won the Nobel Prize in Economics for his work on psychological decision making.
1850	Dorothea Dix	Canadian psychologist known for her contributions to mental health and opened one of the first mental hospitals in Halifax, Nova Scotia.
1880	William Lyall; James Baldwin	Canadian psychologists who wrote early psychology texts and created first Canadian psychology lab at the University of Toronto.
1950	James Olds; Brenda Milner; Wilder Penfield; Donald Hebb; Endel Telving	Canadian psychologists who contributed to neurological psychology and opened the Montreal Neurological Institute.
1960	Albert Bandura	Canadian psychologist who developed 'social learning theory' with his Bobo doll studies illustrating the impact that observation and interaction has on learning.
1970	Hans Selye	Canadian psychologist who contributed significantly in the area of psychology of stress.

Although psychology has changed dramatically over its history, the most important questions that psychologists address have remained constant. Some of these questions follow, and we will discuss them both in this chapter and in the chapters to come:

- *Nature versus nurture.* Are genes or environment most influential in determining the behaviour of individuals and in accounting for differences among people? Most scientists now agree that both genes and environment play crucial roles in most human behaviours, and yet we still have much to learn about how nature (our biological makeup) and nurture (the experiences that we have during our lives) work together (Harris, 1998; Pinker, 2002). *The proportion of the observed differences of characteristics among people (e.g., in terms of their height, intelligence, or optimism) that is due to genetics* is known as the **heritability of the characteristic**, and we will make much use of this term in the chapters to come. We will see, for example, that the heritability of intelligence is very high (about .85 out of 1.0) and that the heritability of extraversion is about .50. But we will also see that nature and nurture interact in complex ways, making the question "Is it nature or is it nurture?" very difficult to answer.

- *Free will versus determinism.* This question concerns the extent to which people have control over their own actions. Are we the products of our environment, guided by forces out of our control, or are we able to choose the behaviours we engage in? Most of us like to believe in free will, that we are able to do what we want—for instance, that we could get up right now and go fishing. And our legal system is premised on the concept of free will; we punish criminals because we believe that they have choice over their behaviours and freely choose to disobey the law. But as we will discuss later in the research focus in this section, recent research has suggested that we may have less control over our own behaviour than we think we do (Wegner, 2002).
- *Accuracy versus inaccuracy.* To what extent are humans good information processors? Although it appears that people are good enough to make sense of the world around them and to make decent decisions (Fiske, 2003), they are far from perfect. Human judgment is sometimes compromised by inaccuracies in our thinking styles and by our motivations and emotions. For instance, our judgment may be affected by our desires to gain material wealth and to see ourselves positively and by emotional responses to the events that happen to us. Many studies have explored decision making in crisis situations such as natural disasters, or human error or criminal action, such as in the cases of the Tylenol poisoning, the Maple Leaf meats listeriosis outbreak, the SARS epidemic or the Lac-Mégantic train derailment (Figure 1.2).



Figure 1.2 Lac-Mégantic Derailment. Psychologists study the causes of poor judgments such as those made by executives like the three criminally charged in relation to the Lac-Mégantic train derailment in 2013. This picture was taken from a Sûreté du Québec helicopter on the day of the derailment.

- *Conscious versus unconscious processing.* To what extent are we conscious of our own actions and the causes of them, and to what extent are our behaviours caused by influences that we are not aware of? Many of the major theories of psychology, ranging from the Freudian psychodynamic theories to contemporary work in cognitive psychology, argue that much of our behaviour is determined by variables that we are not aware of.
- *Differences versus similarities.* To what extent are we all similar, and to what extent are we

different? For instance, are there basic psychological and personality differences between men and women, or are men and women by and large similar? And what about people from different ethnicities and cultures? Are people around the world generally the same, or are they influenced by their backgrounds and environments in different ways? Personality, social, and cross-cultural psychologists attempt to answer these classic questions.

Early Psychologists

The earliest psychologists that we know about are the Greek philosophers Plato (428-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC). These philosophers (see Figure 1.3) asked many of the same questions that today's psychologists ask; for instance, they questioned the distinction between nature and nurture and the existence of free will. In terms of the former, Plato argued on the nature side, believing that certain kinds of knowledge are innate or inborn, whereas Aristotle was more on the nurture side, believing that each child is born as an "empty slate" (in Latin, a *tabula rasa*) and that knowledge is primarily acquired through learning and experience.



Figure 1.3 Early Psychologists. The earliest psychologists were the Greek Philosophers Plato (left) and Aristotle (right). Plato believed that much knowledge was innate, whereas Aristotle thought that each child was born as an "empty slate" and that knowledge was primarily acquired through learning and experience.

European philosophers continued to ask these fundamental questions during the Renaissance. For instance, the French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) also considered the issue of free will, arguing in its favour and believing that the mind controls the body through the pineal gland in the brain (an idea that made some sense at the time but was later proved incorrect). Descartes also believed in the existence of innate natural abilities. A scientist as well as a philosopher, Descartes dissected animals and was among the first to understand that the nerves controlled the muscles. He also addressed the relationship between mind (the mental aspects of life) and body (the physical aspects of life). Descartes believed in the principle of **dualism**: *that the mind is fundamentally different from the mechanical body*. Other European philosophers, including Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), John Locke (1632-1704), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), also weighed in on these issues. The fundamental problem that these philosophers faced was that they had few methods for settling their claims. Most philosophers didn't conduct any research on these questions, in part because they didn't yet know how to do it, and in part because they weren't sure it was even possible to objectively study human experience. But dramatic changes came during the 1800s with the help of the first two research psychologists: the German psychologist Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), who developed a psychology laboratory in Leipzig,

Germany, and the American psychologist William James (1842-1910), who founded a psychology laboratory at Harvard University.

Structuralism: Introspection and the Awareness of Subjective Experience

Wundt's research in his laboratory in Leipzig focused on the nature of consciousness itself. Wundt and his students believed that it was possible to analyze the basic elements of the mind and to classify our conscious experiences scientifically. Wundt began the field known as **structuralism**, *a school of psychology whose goal was to identify the basic elements or structures of psychological experience*. Its goal was to create a periodic table of the elements of sensations, similar to the periodic table of elements that had recently been created in chemistry. Structuralists used the method of *introspection* to attempt to create a map of the elements of consciousness. **Introspection** involves *asking research participants to describe exactly what they experience as they work on mental tasks*, such as viewing colours, reading a page in a book, or performing a math problem. A participant who is reading a book might report, for instance, that he saw some black and coloured straight and curved marks on a white background. In other studies the structuralists used newly invented reaction time instruments to systematically assess not only what the participants were thinking but how long it took them to do so. Wundt discovered that it took people longer to report what sound they had just heard than to simply respond that they had heard the sound. These studies marked the first time researchers realized that there is a difference between the *sensation* of a stimulus and the *perception* of that stimulus, and the idea of using reaction times to study mental events has now become a mainstay of cognitive psychology.

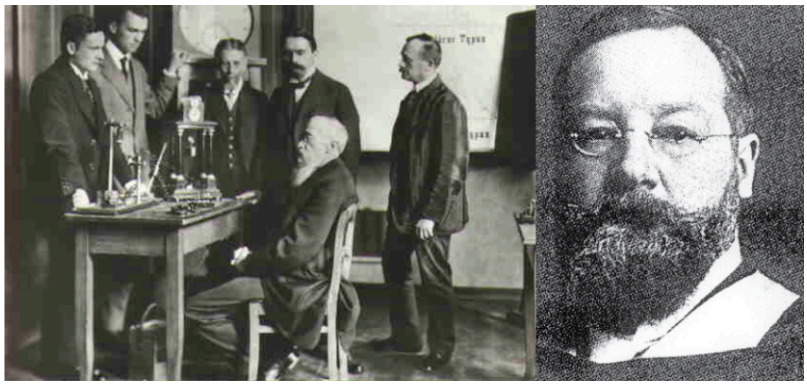


Figure 1.4 Wundt and Titchener. Wilhelm Wundt (seated at left) and Edward Titchener (right) helped create the structuralist school of psychology. Their goal was to classify the elements of sensation through introspection.

Perhaps the best known of the structuralists was Edward Bradford Titchener (1867-1927). Titchener was a student of Wundt's who came to the United States in the late 1800s and founded a laboratory at Cornell University (Figure 1.4). (Titchener was later rejected by McGill University (1903). Perhaps he was ahead of his time; Brenda Milner did not open the Montreal Neurological Institute until 1950.) In his research using introspection, Titchener and his students claimed to have identified more than 40,000 sensations, including those relating to vision, hearing, and taste. An important aspect of the structuralist approach was that it was rigorous and scientific. The research marked the beginning of psychology as a science, because it demonstrated that mental events could be quantified. But the structuralists also discovered the limitations of introspection. Even highly trained research participants were often unable to report on their subjective experiences. When the participants were asked to do simple math

problems, they could easily do them, but they could not easily answer how they did them. Thus the structuralists were the first to realize the importance of unconscious processes—that many important aspects of human psychology occur outside our conscious awareness, and that psychologists cannot expect research participants to be able to accurately report on all of their experiences.

Functionalism and Evolutionary Psychology

In contrast to Wundt, who attempted to understand the nature of consciousness, William James and the other members of the **school of functionalism** aimed *to understand why animals and humans have developed the particular psychological aspects that they currently possess* (Hunt, 1993). For James, one's thinking was relevant only to one's behaviour. As he put it in his psychology textbook, "My thinking is first and last and always for the sake of my doing" (James, 1890). James and the other members of the functionalist school (Figure 1.5) were influenced by Charles Darwin's (1809-1882) **theory of natural selection**, which *proposed that the physical characteristics of animals and humans evolved because they were useful, or functional*. The functionalists believed that Darwin's theory applied to psychological characteristics too. Just as some animals have developed strong muscles to allow them to run fast, the human brain, so functionalists thought, must have adapted to serve a particular function in human experience.



Figure 1.5 Functionalist School. The functionalist school of psychology, founded by the American psychologist William James (left), was influenced by the work of Charles Darwin (right).

Although functionalism no longer exists as a school of psychology, its basic principles have been absorbed into psychology and continue to influence it in many ways. The work of the functionalists has developed into the field of **evolutionary psychology**, *a branch of psychology that applies the Darwinian theory of natural selection to human and animal behaviour* (Dennett, 1995; Tooby & Cosmides, 1992). Evolutionary psychology accepts the functionalists' basic assumption, namely that many human psychological systems, including memory, emotion, and personality, serve key adaptive functions. As we will see in the chapters to come, evolutionary psychologists use evolutionary theory to understand many different behaviours, including romantic attraction, stereotypes and prejudice, and even the causes

of many psychological disorders. A key component of the ideas of evolutionary psychology is *fitness*. **Fitness** refers to *the extent to which having a given characteristic helps the individual organism survive and reproduce at a higher rate than do other members of the species who do not have the characteristic*. Fitter organisms pass on their genes more successfully to later generations, making the characteristics that produce fitness more likely to become part of the organism's nature than characteristics that do not produce fitness. For example, it has been argued that the emotion of jealousy has survived over time in men because men who experience jealousy are more fit than men who do not. According to this idea, the experience of jealousy leads men to be more likely to protect their mates and guard against rivals, which increases their reproductive success (Buss, 2000). Despite its importance in psychological theorizing, evolutionary psychology also has some limitations. One problem is that many of its predictions are extremely difficult to test. Unlike the fossils that are used to learn about the physical evolution of species, we cannot know which psychological characteristics our ancestors possessed or did not possess; we can only make guesses about this. Because it is difficult to directly test evolutionary theories, it is always possible that the explanations we apply are made up after the fact to account for observed data (Gould & Lewontin, 1979). Nevertheless, the evolutionary approach is important to psychology because it provides logical explanations for why we have many psychological characteristics.

Psychodynamic Psychology

Perhaps the school of psychology that is most familiar to the general public is the *psychodynamic approach* to understanding behaviour, which was championed by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and his followers. **Psychodynamic psychology** is an *approach to understanding human behaviour that focuses on the role of unconscious thoughts, feelings, and memories*. Freud (Figure 1.6) developed his theories about behaviour through extensive analysis of the patients that he treated in his private clinical practice. Freud believed that many of the problems that his patients experienced, including anxiety, depression, and sexual dysfunction, were the result of the effects of painful childhood experiences that they could no longer remember.

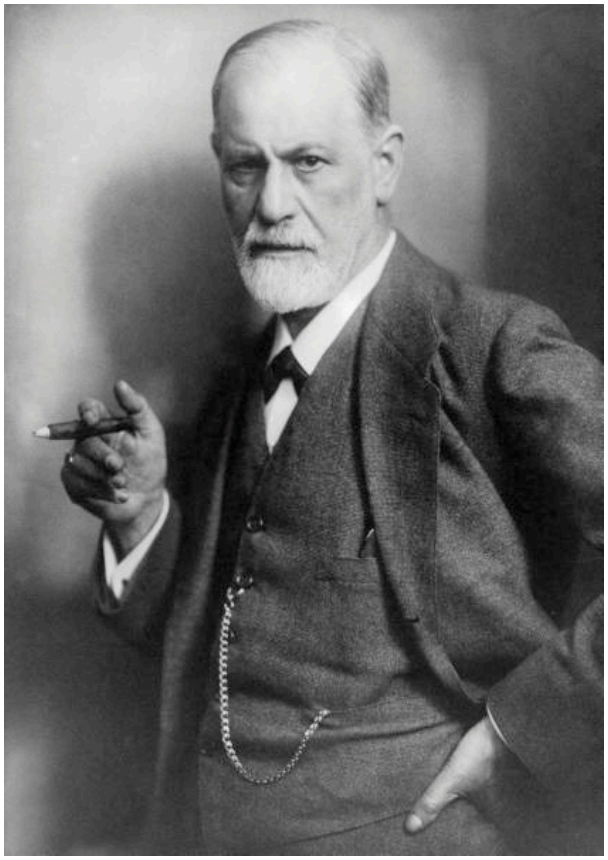


Figure 1.6 Sigmund Freud. Sigmund Freud and the other psychodynamic psychologists believed that many of our thoughts and emotions are unconscious. Psychotherapy was designed to help patients recover and confront their "lost" memories.

Freud's ideas were extended by other psychologists whom he influenced, including Carl Jung (1875-1961), Alfred Adler (1870-1937), Karen Horney (1855-1952), and Erik Erikson (1902-1994). These and others who follow the psychodynamic approach believe that it is possible to help the patient if the unconscious drives can be remembered, particularly through a deep and thorough exploration of the person's early sexual experiences and current sexual desires. These explorations are *revealed through talk therapy and dream analysis in a process called* **psychoanalysis**. The founders of the school of psychodynamics were primarily practitioners who worked with individuals to help them understand and confront their psychological symptoms. Although they did not conduct much research on their ideas, and although later, more sophisticated tests of their theories have not always supported their proposals, psychodynamics has nevertheless had substantial impact on the field of psychology, and indeed on thinking about human behaviour more generally (Moore & Fine, 1995). The importance of the unconscious in human behaviour, the idea that early childhood experiences are critical, and the concept of therapy as a way of improving human lives are all ideas that are derived from the psychodynamic approach and that remain central to psychology.

Behaviourism and the Question of Free Will

Although they differed in approach, both structuralism and functionalism were essentially studies of the

mind. The psychologists associated with the school of *behaviourism*, on the other hand, were reacting in part to the difficulties psychologists encountered when they tried to use introspection to understand behaviour. **Behaviourism** is *a school of psychology that is based on the premise that it is not possible to objectively study the mind, and therefore that psychologists should limit their attention to the study of behaviour itself*. Behaviourists believe that the human mind is a black box into which stimuli are sent and from which responses are received. They argue that there is no point in trying to determine what happens in the box because we can successfully predict behaviour without knowing what happens inside the mind. Furthermore, behaviourists believe that it is possible to develop laws of learning that can explain all behaviours. The first behaviourist was the American psychologist John B. Watson (1878-1958). Watson was influenced in large part by the work of the Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936), who had discovered that dogs would salivate at the sound of a tone that had previously been associated with the presentation of food. Watson and the other behaviourists began to use these ideas to explain how events that people and other organisms experienced in their environment (*stimuli*) could produce specific behaviours (*responses*). For instance, in Pavlov's research the *stimulus* (either the food or, after learning, the tone) would produce the *response* of salivation in the dogs. In his research Watson found that systematically exposing a child to fearful stimuli in the presence of objects that did not themselves elicit fear could lead the child to respond with a fearful behaviour to the presence of the objects (Watson & Rayner, 1920; Beck, Levinson, & Irons, 2009). In the best known of his studies, an eight-month-old boy named Little Albert was used as the subject. Here is a summary of the findings: The boy was placed in the middle of a room; a white laboratory rat was placed near him and he was allowed to play with it. The child showed no fear of the rat. In later trials, the researchers made a loud sound behind Albert's back by striking a steel bar with a hammer whenever the baby touched the rat. The child cried when he heard the noise. After several such pairings of the two stimuli, the child was again shown the rat. Now, however, he cried and tried to move away from the rat. In line with the behaviourist approach, the boy had learned to associate the white rat with the loud noise, resulting in crying.

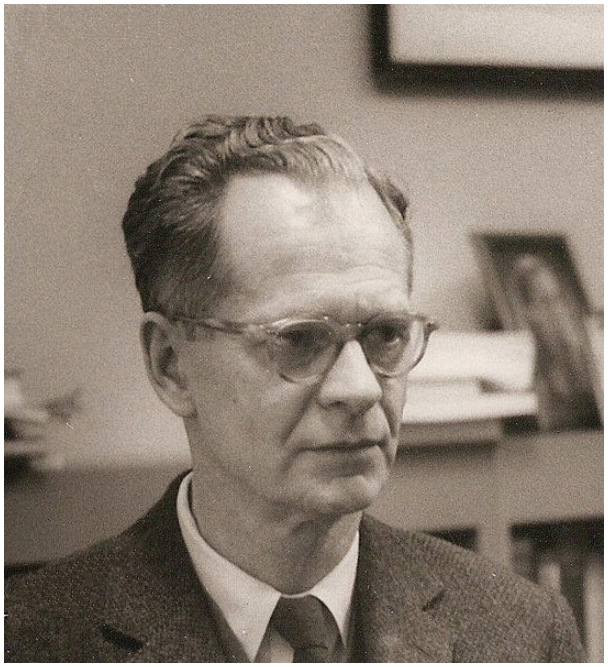


Figure 1.7 Skinner. B. F. Skinner was a member of the behaviourist school of psychology. He argued that free will is an illusion and that all behaviour is determined by environmental factors.

The most famous behaviourist was Burrhus Frederick (B. F.) Skinner (1904 to 1990), who expanded the principles of behaviourism and also brought them to the attention of the public at large. Skinner (Figure 1.7) used the ideas of stimulus and response, along with the application of rewards or *reinforcements*, to train pigeons and other animals. And he used the general principles of behaviourism to develop theories about how best to teach children and how to create societies that were peaceful and productive. Skinner even developed a method for studying thoughts and feelings using the behaviourist approach (Skinner, 1957, 1972).

Research Focus: Do We Have Free Will?

The behaviourist research program had important implications for the fundamental questions about nature and nurture and about free will. In terms of the nature-nurture debate, the behaviourists agreed with the nurture approach, believing that we are shaped exclusively by our environments. They also argued that there is no free will, but rather that our behaviours are determined by the events that we have experienced in our past. In short, this approach argues that organisms, including humans, are a lot like puppets in a show who don't realize that other people are controlling them. Furthermore, although we do not cause our own actions, we nevertheless believe that we do because we don't realize all the influences acting on our behaviour.

Recent research in psychology has suggested that Skinner and the behaviourists might well have been right, at least in the sense that we overestimate our own free will in responding to the events around us (Libet, 1985; Matsuhashi & Hallett, 2008; Wegner, 2002). In one demonstration of the misperception of our own free will, neuroscientists Soon, Brass, Heinze, and Haynes (2008) placed their research participants in a *functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI)* brain scanner while they presented them with a series of letters on a computer screen. The letter on the screen changed every half second. The participants were asked, whenever they decided to, to press either of two buttons. Then they were asked to indicate which letter was showing on the screen when they decided to press the button. The researchers analyzed the brain images to see if they could predict which of the two buttons the participant was going to press, even before the letter at which he or she had indicated the decision to press a button. Suggesting that the intention to act occurred in the brain before the research participants became aware of it, the researchers found that the prefrontal cortex region of the brain showed activation that could be used to predict the button pressed as long as 10 seconds before the participants said that they had decided which button to press.

Research has found that we are more likely to think that we control our behaviour when the desire to act occurs immediately prior to the outcome, when the thought is consistent with the outcome, and when there are no other apparent causes for the behaviour. Aarts, Custers, and Wegner (2005) asked their research participants to control a rapidly moving square along with a computer that was also controlling the square independently. The participants pressed a button to stop the movement. When participants were exposed to words related to the location of the square just before they stopped its movement, they became more likely to think that they controlled the motion, even when it was actually the computer that stopped it. And Dijksterhuis, Preston, Wegner, and Aarts (2008) found that participants who had just been exposed to first-person singular pronouns, such as "I" and "me," were more likely to believe that they controlled their actions than were people who had seen the words "computer" or "God." The idea that we are more likely to take ownership for our actions in some cases than in others is also seen in our attributions for success and failure. Because we normally expect that our behaviours will be met with success, when we are successful we easily believe that the success is the result of our own free will. When an action is met with failure, on the other hand, we are less likely to perceive this outcome as the result of our free will, and we are more likely to blame the outcome on luck or our teacher (Wegner, 2003).

The behaviourists made substantial contributions to psychology by identifying the principles of learning. Although the behaviourists were incorrect in their beliefs that it was not possible to measure thoughts

and feelings, their ideas provided new ideas that helped further our understanding regarding the nature-nurture debate and the question of free will. The ideas of behaviourism are fundamental to psychology and have been developed to help us better understand the role of prior experiences in a variety of areas of psychology.

The Cognitive Approach and Cognitive Neuroscience

Science is always influenced by the technology that surrounds it, and psychology is no exception. Thus it is no surprise that beginning in the 1960s, growing numbers of psychologists began to think about the brain and about human behaviour in terms of the computer, which was being developed and becoming publicly available at that time. The analogy between the brain and the computer, although by no means perfect, provided part of the impetus for a new school of psychology called *cognitive psychology*. **Cognitive psychology** is *a field of psychology that studies mental processes, including perception, thinking, memory, and judgment*. These actions correspond well to the processes that computers perform. Although cognitive psychology began in earnest in the 1960s, earlier psychologists had also taken a cognitive orientation. Some of the important contributors to cognitive psychology include the German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850-1909), who studied the ability of people to remember lists of words under different conditions, and the English psychologist Sir Frederic Bartlett (1886-1969), who studied the cognitive and social processes of remembering. Bartlett created short stories that were in some ways logical but also contained some very unusual and unexpected events. Bartlett discovered that people found it very difficult to recall the stories exactly, even after being allowed to study them repeatedly, and he hypothesized that the stories were difficult to remember because they did not fit the participants' expectations about how stories should go. The idea that our memory is influenced by what we already know was also a major idea behind the cognitive-developmental stage model of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980). Other important cognitive psychologists include Donald E. Broadbent (1926-1993), Daniel Kahneman (1934-), George Miller (1920-2012), Eleanor Rosch (1938-), and Amos Tversky (1937-1996).

The War of the Ghosts

The War of the Ghosts is a story that was used by Sir Frederic Bartlett to test the influence of prior expectations on memory. Bartlett found that even when his British research participants were allowed to read the story many times, they still could not remember it well, and he believed this was because it did not fit with their prior knowledge. One night two young men from Egulac went down to the river to hunt seals, and while they were there it became foggy and calm. Then they heard war-cries, and they thought: "Maybe this is a war-party." They escaped to the shore, and hid behind a log. Now canoes came up, and they heard the noise of paddles and saw one canoe coming up to them. There were five men in the canoe, and they said: "What do you think? We wish to take you along. We are going up the river to make war on the people." One of the young men said, "I have no arrows." "Arrows are in the canoe," they said. "I will not go along. I might be killed. My relatives do not know where I have gone. But you," he said, turning to the other, "may go with them." So one of the young men went, but the other returned home. And the warriors went on up the river to a town on the other side of Kalama. The people came down to the water and they began to fight, and many were killed. But presently the young man heard one of the warriors say, "Quick, let us go home: that Indian has been hit." Now he thought: "Oh, they are ghosts." He did not feel sick, but they said he had been shot. So the canoes went back to Egulac and the young man went ashore to his house and made a fire. And he told everybody and said: "Behold I accompanied the ghosts, and we went to fight. Many of our fellows were

> killed, and many of those who attacked us were killed. They said I was hit, and I did not feel sick." He told it all, and then he became quiet. When the sun rose he fell down. Something black came out of his mouth. His face became contorted. The people jumped up and cried. He was dead. (Bartlett, 1932)

In its argument that our thinking has a powerful influence on behaviour, the cognitive approach provided a distinct alternative to behaviourism. According to cognitive psychologists, ignoring the mind itself will never be sufficient because people interpret the stimuli that they experience. For instance, when a boy turns to a girl on a date and says, "You are so beautiful," a behaviourist would probably see that as a reinforcing (positive) stimulus. And yet the girl might not be so easily fooled. She might try to understand why the boy is making this particular statement at this particular time and wonder if he might be attempting to influence her through the comment. Cognitive psychologists maintain that when we take into consideration how stimuli are evaluated and interpreted, we understand behaviour more deeply. Cognitive psychology remains enormously influential today, and it has guided research in such varied fields as language, problem solving, memory, intelligence, education, human development, social psychology, and psychotherapy. The cognitive revolution has been given even more life over the past decade as the result of recent advances in our ability to see the brain in action using *neuroimaging* techniques. **Neuroimaging** is *the use of various techniques to provide pictures of the structure and function of the living brain* (Ilardi & Feldman, 2001). These images are used to diagnose brain disease and injury, but they also allow researchers to view information processing as it occurs in the brain, because the processing causes the involved area of the brain to increase metabolism and show up on the scan. We have already discussed the use of one neuroimaging technique, functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), in the research focus earlier in this section, and we will discuss the use of neuroimaging techniques in many areas of psychology in the chapters to follow.

Social-Cultural Psychology

A final school, which takes a higher level of analysis and which has had substantial impact on psychology, can be broadly referred to as the *social-cultural approach*. The field of **social-cultural psychology** is *the study of how the social situations and the cultures in which people find themselves influence thinking and behaviour*. Social-cultural psychologists are particularly concerned with how people perceive themselves and others, and how people influence each other's behaviour. For instance, social psychologists have found that we are attracted to others who are similar to us in terms of attitudes and interests (Byrne, 1969), that we develop our own beliefs and attitudes by comparing our opinions to those of others (Festinger, 1954), and that *we frequently change our beliefs and behaviours to be similar to those of the people we care about*—a process known as **conformity**. An important aspect of social-cultural psychology are **social norms**—*the ways of thinking, feeling, or behaving that are shared by group members and perceived by them as appropriate* (Asch, 1952; Cialdini, 1993). Norms include customs, traditions, standards, and rules, as well as the general values of the group. Many of the most important social norms are determined by the *culture* in which we live, and these cultures are studied by *cross-cultural psychologists*. A **culture** represents *the common set of social norms, including religious and family values and other moral beliefs, shared by the people who live in a geographical region* (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998; Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1996; Matsumoto, 2001). Cultures influence every aspect of our lives, and it is not inappropriate to say that our culture defines our lives just as much as does our evolutionary experience (Mesoudi, 2009). Psychologists have found that there is a fundamental difference in social norms between Western cultures (including those in Canada, the United

States, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand) and East Asian cultures (including those in China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, India, and Southeast Asia). Norms in Western cultures are primarily oriented toward **individualism**, which is about *valuing the self and one's independence from others*. Children in Western cultures are taught to develop and to value a sense of their personal self, and to see themselves in large part as separate from the other people around them. Children in Western cultures feel special about themselves; they enjoy getting gold stars on their projects and the best grade in the class. Adults in Western cultures are oriented toward promoting their own individual success, frequently in comparison to (or even at the expense of) others. Norms in the East Asian culture, on the other hand, are oriented toward interdependence or **collectivism**. In these cultures children are taught to *focus on developing harmonious social relationships with others.* The predominant norms relate to group togetherness and connectedness, and duty and responsibility to one's family and other groups. When asked to describe themselves, the members of East Asian cultures are more likely than those from Western cultures to indicate that they are particularly concerned about the interests of others, including their close friends and their colleagues (Figure 1.8, "East vs West").



Figure 1.8 East vs West. In Western cultures social norms promote a focus on the self (individualism), whereas in Eastern cultures the focus is more on families and social groups (collectivism).

Another important cultural difference is the extent to which people in different cultures are bound by social norms and customs, rather than being free to express their own individuality without considering social norms (Chan, Gelfand, Triandis, & Tzeng, 1996). Cultures also differ in terms of personal space, such as how closely individuals stand to each other when talking, as well as the communication styles they employ. It is important to be aware of cultures and cultural differences because people with different cultural backgrounds increasingly come into contact with each other as a result of increased travel and immigration and the development of the Internet and other forms of communication. In Canada, for instance, there are many different ethnic groups, and the proportion of the population that comes from minority (non-White) groups is increasing from year to year. The social-cultural approach to understanding behaviour reminds us again of the difficulty of making broad generalizations about human nature. Different people experience things differently, and they experience them differently in different cultures.

The Many Disciplines of Psychology

Psychology is not one discipline but rather a collection of many subdisciplines that all share at least some common approaches and that work together and exchange knowledge to form a coherent discipline (Yang & Chiu, 2009). Because the field of psychology is so broad, students may wonder which areas are most suitable for their interests and which types of careers might be available to them. Table

1.5, “Some Career Paths in Psychology,” will help you consider the answers to these questions. You can learn more about these different fields of psychology and the careers associated with them at http://www.psyccareers.com/.

Table 1.5 Some Career Paths in Psychology.

[Skip Table]		
Psychology field	**Description**	**Career opportunities**
Biopsychology and neuroscience	This field examines the physiological bases of behaviour in animals and humans by studying the functioning of different brain areas and the effects of hormones and neurotransmitters on behaviour.	Most biopsychologists work in research settings—for instance, at universities, for the federal government, and in private research labs.
Clinical and counselling psychology	These are the largest fields of psychology. The focus is on the assessment, diagnosis, causes, and treatment of mental disorders.	Clinical and counseling psychologists provide therapy to patients with the goal of improving their life experiences. They work in hospitals, schools, social agencies, and private practice. Because the demand for this career is high, entry to academic programs is highly competitive.
Cognitive psychology	This field uses sophisticated research methods, including reaction time and brain imaging, to study memory, language, and thinking of humans.	Cognitive psychologists work primarily in research settings, although some (such as those who specialize in human-computer interactions) consult for businesses.
Developmental psychology	These psychologists conduct research on the cognitive, emotional, and social changes that occur across the lifespan.	Many work in research settings, although others work in schools and community agencies to help improve and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention programs such as Head Start.
Forensic psychology	Forensic psychologists apply psychological principles to understand the behaviour of judges, lawyers, courtroom juries, and others in the criminal justice system.	Forensic psychologists work in the criminal justice system. They may testify in court and may provide information about the reliability of eyewitness testimony and jury selection.
Health psychology	Health psychologists are concerned with understanding how biology, behaviour, and the social situation influence health and illness.	Health psychologists work with medical professionals in clinical settings to promote better health, conduct research, and teach at universities.

[Skip Table]		
Psychology field	**Description**	**Career opportunities**
Industrial-organizational and environmental psychology	Industrial-organizational psychology applies psychology to the workplace with the goal of improving the performance and well-being of employees.	There are a wide variety of career opportunities in these fields, generally working in businesses. These psychologists help select employees, evaluate employee performance, and examine the effects of different working conditions on behaviour. They may also work to design equipment and environments that improve employee performance and reduce accidents.
Personality psychology	These psychologists study people and the differences among them. The goal is to develop theories that explain the psychological processes of individuals, and to focus on individual differences.	Most work in academic settings, but the skills of personality psychologists are also in demand in business—for instance, in advertising and marketing. PhD programs in personality psychology are often connected with programs in social psychology.
School and educational psychology	This field studies how people learn in school, the effectiveness of school programs, and the psychology of teaching.	School psychologists work in elementary and secondary schools or school district offices with students, teachers, parents, and administrators. They may assess children's psychological and learning problems and develop programs to minimize the impact of these problems.
Social and cross-cultural psychology	This field examines people's interactions with other people. Topics of study include conformity, group behaviour, leadership, attitudes, and personal perception.	Many social psychologists work in marketing, advertising, organizational, systems design, and other applied psychology fields.
Sports psychology	This field studies the psychological aspects of sports behaviour. The goal is to understand the psychological factors that influence performance in sports, including the role of exercise and team interactions.	Sports psychologists work in gyms, schools, professional sports teams, and other areas where sports are practiced.

Psychology in Everyday Life: How to Effectively Learn and Remember

One way that the findings of psychological research may be particularly helpful to you is in terms of improving your learning and study skills. Psychological research has provided a substantial amount of knowledge about the principles of learning and memory. This information can help you do better in this and other courses, and can also help you better learn new concepts and techniques in other areas of your life. The most important thing you can learn in college is how to better study, learn, and remember. These skills will help you throughout your life, as you learn new jobs and take on other responsibilities.

There are substantial individual differences in learning and memory, such that some people learn faster than others. But even if it takes you longer to learn than you think it should, the extra time you put into studying is well worth the effort. And you can learn to learn—learning to study effectively and to remember information is just like learning any other skill, such as playing a sport or a video game.

To learn well, you need to be ready to learn. You cannot learn well when you are tired, when you are under stress, or if you are abusing alcohol or drugs. Try to keep a consistent routine of sleeping and eating. Eat moderately and nutritiously, and avoid drugs that can impair memory, particularly alcohol. There is no evidence that stimulants such as caffeine, amphetamines, or any of the many "memory-enhancing drugs" on the market will help you learn (Gold, Cahill, & Wenk, 2002; McDaniel, Maier, & Einstein, 2002). Memory supplements are usually no more effective than drinking a can of sugared soda, which releases glucose and thus improves memory slightly.

Psychologists have studied the ways that best allow people to acquire new information, to retain it over time, and to retrieve information that has been stored in our memories. One important finding is that learning is an active process. To acquire information most effectively, we must actively manipulate it. One active approach is rehearsal—repeating the information that is to be learned over and over again. Although simple repetition does help us learn, psychological research has found that we acquire information most effectively when we actively think about or elaborate on its meaning and relate the material to something else. When you study, try to elaborate by connecting the information to other things that you already know. If you want to remember the different schools of psychology, for instance, try to think about how each of the approaches is different from the others. As you compare the approaches, determine what is most important about each one and then relate it to the features of the other approaches.

In an important study showing the effectiveness of elaborative encoding, Rogers, Kuiper, and Kirker (1977) found that students learned information best when they related it to aspects of themselves (a phenomenon known as the *self-reference effect*). This research suggests that imagining how the material relates to your own interests and goals will help you learn it. An approach known as the *method of loci* involves linking each of the pieces of information that you need to remember to places that you are familiar with. You might think about the house that you grew up in and the rooms in it. You could put the behaviourists in the bedroom, the structuralists in the living room, and the functionalists in the kitchen. Then when you need to remember the information, you retrieve the mental image of your house and should be able to "see" each of the people in each of the areas.

One of the most fundamental principles of learning is known as the *spacing effect*. Both humans and animals more easily remember or learn material when they study the material in several shorter study periods over a longer period of time, rather than studying it just once for a long period of time. Cramming for an exam is a particularly ineffective way to learn. Psychologists have also found that performance is improved when people set difficult yet realistic goals for themselves (Locke & Latham, 2006). You can use this knowledge to help you learn. Set realistic goals for the time you are going to spend studying and what you are going to learn, and try to stick to those goals. Do a small amount every day, and by the end of the week you will have accomplished a lot.

Our ability to adequately assess our own knowledge is known as *metacognition*. Research suggests that our metacognition may make us overconfident, leading us to believe that we have learned material even when we have not. To counteract this problem, don't just go over your notes again and again. Instead,

make a list of questions and then see if you can answer them. Study the information again and then test yourself again after a few minutes. If you made any mistakes, study again. Then wait for a half hour and test yourself again. Then test again after one day and after two days. Testing yourself by attempting to retrieve information in an active manner is better than simply studying the material because it will help you determine if you really know it. In summary, everyone can learn to learn better. Learning is an important skill, and following the previously mentioned guidelines will likely help you learn better.

Key Takeaways

- The first psychologists were philosophers, but the field became more empirical and objective as more sophisticated scientific approaches were developed and employed.
- Some basic questions asked by psychologists include those about nature versus nurture, free will versus determinism, accuracy versus inaccuracy, and conscious versus unconscious processing.
- The structuralists attempted to analyze the nature of consciousness using introspection.
- The functionalists based their ideas on the work of Darwin, and their approaches led to the field of evolutionary psychology.
- The behaviourists explained behaviour in terms of stimulus, response, and reinforcement, while denying the presence of free will.
- Cognitive psychologists study how people perceive, process, and remember information.
- Psychodynamic psychology focuses on unconscious drives and the potential to improve lives through psychoanalysis and psychotherapy.
- The social-cultural approach focuses on the social situation, including how cultures and social norms influence our behaviour.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. What type of questions can psychologists answer that philosophers might not be able to answer as completely or as accurately? Explain why you think psychologists can answer these questions better than philosophers can.
2. Choose one of the major questions of psychology and provide some evidence from your own experience that supports one side or the other.
3. Choose two of the fields of psychology discussed in this section and explain how they differ in their approaches to understanding behaviour and the level of explanation at which they are focused.

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Figure 1.5: William James (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:William_James,_philosopher.jpg). Charles Darwin by George Richmond (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Charles_Darwin_by_G._Richmond.jpg) is in public domain.

Figure 1.6: Sigmund Freud by Max Halberstadt (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sigmund_Freud_LIFE.jpg) is in public domain.

Figure 1.7: B.F. Skinner at Harvard circa 1950 (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:B.F._Skinner_at_Harvard_circa _1950.jpg) used under CC BY 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en).

Figure 1.8: "West Wittering Wonderful As Always" by Gareth Williams (http://www.flickr.com/photos/gareth1953/7976359044/) is licensed under CC BY 2.0. "Family playing a board game" by Bill Branson (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Family_playing_a_board_game_(3).jpg) is in public domain.

1.3 Chapter Summary

Psychology is the scientific study of mind and behaviour. Most psychologists work in research laboratories, hospitals, and other field settings where they study the behaviour of humans and animals. Some psychologists are researchers and others are practitioners, but all psychologists use scientific methods to inform their work.

Although it is easy to think that everyday situations have commonsense answers, scientific studies have found that people are not always as good at predicting outcomes as they often think they are. The hindsight bias leads us to think that we could have predicted events that we could not actually have predicted.

Employing the scientific method allows psychologists to objectively and systematically understand human behaviour.

Psychologists study behaviour at different levels of explanation, ranging from lower biological levels to higher social and cultural levels. The same behaviours can be studied and explained within psychology at different levels of explanation.

The first psychologists were philosophers, but the field became more objective as more sophisticated scientific approaches were developed and employed. Some of the most important historical schools of psychology include structuralism, functionalism, behaviourism, and psychodynamic psychology. Cognitive psychology, evolutionary psychology, and social-cultural psychology are some important contemporary approaches.

Some of the basic questions asked by psychologists, both historically and currently, include those about the relative roles of nature versus nurture in behaviour, free will versus determinism, accuracy versus inaccuracy, and conscious versus unconscious processing.

Psychological phenomena are complex, and making predictions about them is difficult because they are multiply determined at different levels of explanation. Research has found that people are frequently unaware of the causes of their own behaviours.

There are a variety of available career choices within psychology that provide employment in many different areas of interest.

Chapter 2. Introduction to Major Perspectives

2. Introduction to Major Perspectives

Jennifer Walinga

Scientific areas of study are often guided by a **paradigm** (*prevailing model*). In astronomy, Ptolemy placed Earth at the centre of the universe and thereby shaped the way people conceived of all things related to that science. Later, the Copernican paradigm placed the Sun at the centre of the universe, which shifted perspectives and understandings. A paradigm presents a generally accepted approach to the whole field during a particular era. A paradigm equips scientists and practitioners with a set of assumptions about what is to be studied as well as a set of research methods for how those phenomena should be examined. In physics, the Aristotelian view of the composition of matter prevailed until Newton's 17th-century mechanical model emerged and overtook it, which in turn was expanded by Einstein's 20th-century relativity paradigm (Watson, 1967). With each shift in knowledge and insight, a form of revolution occurs (Kuhn, 1970).

However, psychology lacks a guiding or prevailing paradigm due to its youth and scope. Instead, the field of psychology has travelled the course of several movements, schools of thought, or perspectives, which provide frameworks for organizing data and connecting theories but no overall guidance or stance. In psychology, each new line of thinking emerges in response to another. New ideas or ways of thinking challenge prior thinking and require further research in order to resolve, clarify, or expand tensions between concepts. Often, new **methodologies**[1] emerge as well, and new questions demand new tools or approaches in order to be answered.

Major psychological perspectives discussed by researchers and practitioners today include biological, psychodynamic, behaviouristic, humanistic, cognitive, and evolutionary perspectives (Figure 2.1, "Major Psychological Perspectives Timeline"). It appears that a new perspective emerges every 20 to 30 years.



Figure 2.1 Major Psychological Perspectives Timeline [Long Description] (by J. Walinga)

This list of perspectives changes, of course, as the field of psychology grows and evolves, and as our conceptualization of psychology expands and develops. The first structuralist psychologists, such as Wilhelm Wundt and Edward B. Titchener of the late 1800s, thought of psychology in biological or physiological terms and focused on the elements of human experience and sensation — the "what" of human experience. But the wave of functionalist, behavioural, and cognitive psychologists to follow began to include the "how" of human experience. Influenced by Charles Darwin's theories, William James and others later began to consider the "why" of human experience by focusing on interactions between mind and body, including perceptions and emotions, as well as the influence of environment on human experience (Figure 2.2, "The Elements of Psychology").

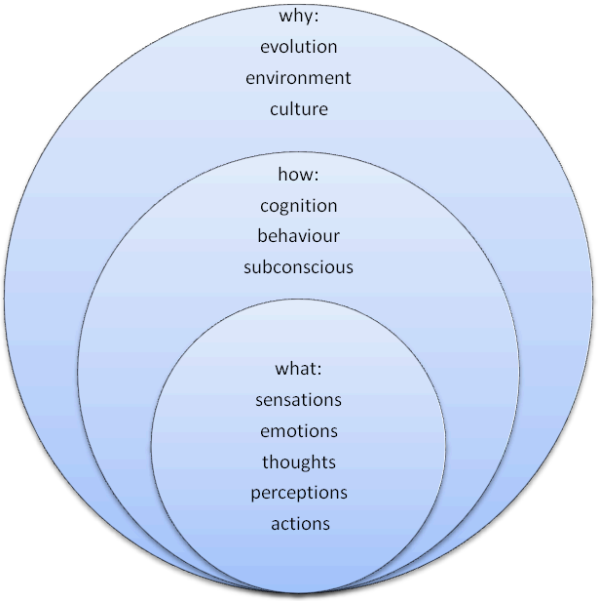


Figure 2.2 The Elements of Psychology [Long Description] (by J. Walinga)

Reflecting on psychological developments today (e.g., positive psychology, multiple intelligences, systems thinking), we can foresee psychology moving toward an integrative approach that incorporates much of the prior learning that has come before it. Dr. Evan Thompson, a professor of philosophy at the University of British Columbia, who works in the fields of cognitive science, philosophy of mind, phenomenology, and cross-cultural philosophy, especially Asian philosophy and contemporary Buddhist philosophy in dialogue with Western philosophy and science, speaks and writes about an **integrative psychology**, which is *psychology that combines the nature and actions of mind, body, and spirit* (Varela, Rosch, & Thompson, 1992). Perhaps an integrative perspective will be the next developmental stage for the field of psychology and will move the field that much closer to its own established paradigm.

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Long Descriptions

Figure 2.1 Long Description – Major Psychological Perspectives Timeline.

Physiological Perspective	Year	Person
Biological – Physiological Psychology	1874	Wundt
	1898	Titchener
Phsychodynamic – Interpretation of Dreams	1990	Freud
Behaviouristic – Stimulus and Response	1927	Pavlov
	1938	Skinner
Humanistic – Self Actualization	1942	Rogers
	1954	Maslow
Cognitive – Information Processing	1967	Neisser
Evolutionary – Adaptation	1999	Buss

[Return to Figure 2.1]

Figure 2.2 long description: There are three elements of psychology: Why? How? and What? “Why” deals with things like evolution, environment, and culture. “How” deals with things like cognition, behaviour, and subconscious. “What” deals with sensations, emotions, thoughts, perceptions, and actions. [Return to Figure 2.2]

Notes

1. Research study design principles.

2.1 Biological Psychology

Jennifer Walinga

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the core premises of biological psychology and the early thinkers.
2. Critically evaluate empirical support for various biological psychology theories.
3. Explore applications and implications of key concepts from this perspective.

Biological psychologists *are interested in measuring biological, physiological, or genetic variables in an attempt to relate them to psychological or behavioural variables.* Because all behaviour is controlled by the central nervous system, biological psychologists seek to understand how the brain functions in order to understand behaviour. Key areas of focus include sensation and perception; motivated behaviour (such as hunger, thirst, and sex); control of movement; learning and memory; sleep and biological rhythms; and emotion. As technical sophistication leads to advancements in research methods, more advanced topics such as language, reasoning, decision making, and consciousness are now being studied.

Biological psychology has its roots in early structuralist and functionalist psychological studies, and as with all of the major perspectives, it has relevance today. In section 1.2, we discuss the history and development of functionalism and structuralism. In this chapter, we extend this discussion to include the theoretical and methodological aspects of these two approaches within the biological perspective and provide examples of relevant studies.

The early structural and functional psychologists believed that the study of conscious thoughts would be the key to understanding the mind. Their approaches to the study of the mind were based on systematic and rigorous observation, laying the foundation for modern psychological experimentation. In terms of research focus, Wundt and Titchener explored topics such as attention span, reaction time, vision, emotion, and time perception, all of which are still studied today.

Wundt's primary method of research was **introspection**, which involves training people to *concentrate and report on their conscious experiences as they react to stimuli.* This approach is still used today in modern neuroscience research; however, many scientists criticize the use of introspection for its lack of empirical approach and objectivity. Structuralism was also criticized because its subject of interest – the conscious experience – was not easily studied with controlled experimentation. Structuralism's reliance on introspection, despite Titchener's rigid guidelines, was criticized for its lack of reliability. Critics argued that self-analysis is not feasible, and that introspection can yield different results depending on the subject. Critics were also concerned about the possibility of retrospection, or the memory of sensation rather than the sensation itself.

Today, researchers argue for introspective methods as crucial for understanding certain experiences and contexts.Two Minnesota researchers (Jones & Schmid, 2000) used **autoethnography,** *a narrative*

approach to introspective analysis (Ellis, 1999), to study the phenomenological experience of the prison world and the consequent adaptations and transformations that it evokes. Jones, serving a year-and-a-day sentence in a maximum security prison, relied on his personal documentation of his experience to later study the psychological impacts of his experience.

From Structuralism to Functionalism

As structuralism struggled to survive the scrutiny of the scientific method, new approaches to studying the mind were sought. One important alternative was functionalism, founded by William James in the late 19th century, described and discussed in his two-volume publication *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) (see Chapter 1.2 for details). Built on structuralism's concern for the anatomy of the mind, functionalism led to greater concern about the functions of the mind, and later on to behaviourism.

One of James's students, James Angell, captured the functionalist perspective in relation to a discussion of free will in his 1906 text *Psychology: An Introductory Study of the Structure and Function of Human Consciousness*:

> Inasmuch as consciousness is a systematising, unifying activity, we find that with increasing maturity our impulses are commonly coordinated with one another more and more perfectly. We thus come to acquire definite and reliable habits of action. Our wills become formed. Such fixation of modes of willing constitutes character. The really good man is not obliged to hesitate about stealing. His moral habits all impel him immediately and irrepressibly away from such actions. If he does hesitate, it is in order to be sure that the suggested act is stealing, not because his character is unstable. From one point of view the development of character is never complete, because experience is constantly presenting new aspects of life to us, and in consequence of this fact we are always engaged in slight reconstructions of our modes of conduct and our attitude toward life. But in a practical common-sense way most of our important habits of reaction become fixed at a fairly early and definite time in life.

Functionalism considers mental life and behaviour in terms of active adaptation to the person's environment. As such, it provides the general basis for developing psychological theories not readily testable by controlled experiments such as applied psychology. William James's functionalist approach to psychology was less concerned with the composition of the mind than with examining the ways in which the mind adapts to changing situations and environments. In functionalism, the brain is believed to have evolved for the purpose of bettering the survival of its carrier by acting as an **information processor**.[1] In processing information the brain is considered to execute functions similar to those executed by a computer and much like what is shown in Figure 2.3 below of a complex adaptive system.

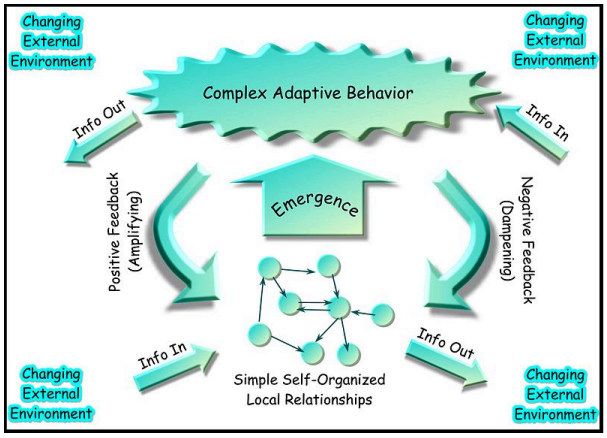


Figure 2.3 Complex Adaptive System. Behaviour is influenced by information gathered from a changing external environment.

The functionalists retained an emphasis on conscious experience. John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, Harvey A. Carr, and especially James Angell were the additional proponents of functionalism at the University of Chicago. Another group at Columbia University, including James McKeen Cattell, Edward L. Thorndike, and Robert S. Woodworth, shared a functionalist perspective.

Biological psychology is also considered *reductionist*. For the **reductionist**, *the simple is the source of the complex*. In other words, to explain a complex phenomenon (like human behaviour) a person needs to reduce it to its elements. In contrast, for the **holist**, *the whole is more than the sum of the parts*. Explanations of a behaviour at its simplest level can be deemed reductionist. The experimental and laboratory approach in various areas of psychology (e.g., behaviourist, biological, cognitive) reflects a reductionist position. This approach inevitably must reduce a complex behaviour to a simple set of variables that offer the possibility of identifying a cause and an effect (i.e., the biological approach suggests that psychological problems can be treated like a disease and are therefore often treatable with drugs).

The brain and its functions (Figure 2.4) garnered great interest from the biological psychologists and continue to be a focus for psychologists today. **Cognitive psychologists** *rely on the functionalist insights in discussing how* **affect,** or *emotion*, and *environment or events interact and result in specific perceptions*. Biological psychologists study the human brain in terms of specialized parts, or systems, and their exquisitely complex relationships. Studies have shown **neurogenesis**[2] in the hippocampus (Gage, 2003). In this respect, the human brain is not a static mass of nervous tissue. As well, it has been found that influential environmental factors operate throughout the life span. Among the most negative factors, traumatic injury and drugs can lead to serious destruction. In contrast, a healthy diet, regular programs of exercise, and challenging mental activities can offer long-term, positive impacts on the brain and psychological development (Kolb, Gibb, & Robinson, 2003).

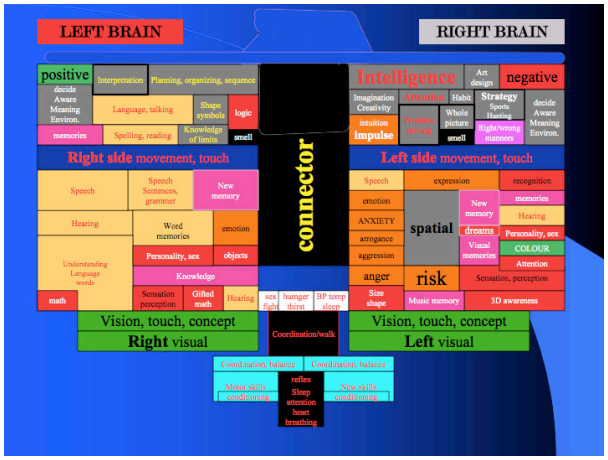


Figure 2.4 Functions of the Brain. Different parts of the brain are responsible for different things.

The brain comprises four lobes:

1. **Frontal lobe:** *also known as the motor cortex, this portion of the brain is involved in motor skills, higher level cognition, and expressive language*.
2. **Occipital lobe:** *also known as the visual cortex, this portion of the brain is involved in interpreting visual stimuli and information.*
3. **Parietal lobe:** *also known as the somatosensory cortex, this portion of the brain is involved in the processing of other tactile sensory information such as pressure, touch, and pain.*
4. **Temporal lobe:** *also known as the auditory cortex, this portion of the brain is involved in the interpretation of the sounds and language we hear*.

Another important part of the nervous system is the **peripheral nervous system**, which is divided into two parts:

1. The **somatic nervous system,** which *controls the actions of skeletal muscles*.
2. The **autonomic nervous system,** which *regulates automatic processes such as heart rate, breathing, and blood pressure*. The autonomic nervous system, in turn has two parts:
    1. The **sympathetic nervous system**, which controls the **fight-or-flight response**, a *reflex that prepares the body to respond to danger in the environment*.
    2. The **parasympathetic nervous system**, which works to bring the body back to its normal state after a fight-or-flight response.

Research Focus: Internal versus External Focus and Performance

Within the realm of sport psychology, Gabrielle Wulf and colleagues from the University of Las Vegas Nevada have studied the role of internal and external focus on physical performance outcomes such as balance, accuracy, speed, and endurance. In one experiment they used a ski-simulator and directed participants' attention to either the pressure they exerted on the wheels of the platform on which they were

standing (external focus), or to their feet that were exerting the force (internal focus). On a retention test, the external focus group demonstrated superior learning (i.e., larger movement amplitudes) compared with both the internal focus group and a control group without focus instructions. The researchers went on to replicate findings in a subsequent experiment that involved balancing on a stabilometer. Again, directing participants' attention externally, by keeping markers on the balance platform horizontal, led to more effective balance learning than inducing an internal focus, by asking them to try to keep their feet horizontal. The researchers showed that balance performance or learning, as measured by deviations from a balanced position, is enhanced when the performers' attention is directed to minimizing movements of the platform or disk as compared to those of their feet. Since the initial studies, numerous researchers have replicated the benefits of an external focus for other balance tasks (Wulf, Höß, & Prinz, 1998).

Another balance task, riding a paddle boat, was used by Totsika and Wulf (2003). With instructions to focus on pushing the pedals forward, participants showed more effective learning compared to participants with instructions to focus on pushing their feet forward. This subtle difference in instructions is important for researchers of attentional focus. The first instruction to push the pedal is external, with the participant focusing on the pedal and allowing the body to figure out how to push the pedal. The second instruction to push the feet forward is internal, with the participant concentrating on making his or her feet move.

In further biologically oriented psychological research at the University of Toronto, Schmitz, Cheng, and De Rosa (2010) showed that **visual attention** — *the brain's ability to selectively filter unattended or unwanted information from reaching awareness* — diminishes with age, leaving older adults less capable of filtering out distracting or irrelevant information. This age-related "leaky" attentional filter fundamentally impacts the way visual information is encoded into memory. Older adults with impaired visual attention have better memory for "irrelevant" information. In the study, the research team examined brain images using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) on a group of young (mean age = 22 years) and older adults (mean age = 77 years) while they looked at pictures of overlapping faces and places (houses and buildings). Participants were asked to pay attention only to the faces and to identify the gender of the person. Even though they could see the place in the image, it was not relevant to the task at hand (Read about the study's findings at http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/main/newsitems/brains-ability).

The authors noted:

> In young adults, the brain region for processing faces was active while the brain region for processing places was not. However, both the face and place regions were active in older people. This means that even at early stages of perception, older adults were less capable of filtering out the distracting information. Moreover, on a surprise memory test 10 minutes after the scan, older adults were more likely to recognize what face was originally paired with what house.

The findings suggest that under attentionally demanding conditions, such as a person looking for keys on a cluttered table, age-related problems with "tuning in" to the desired object may be linked to the way in which information is selected and processed in the sensory areas of the brain. Both the relevant sensory information — the keys — and the irrelevant information — the clutter — are perceived and encoded more or less equally. In older adults, these changes in visual attention may broadly influence many of the cognitive deficits typically observed in normal aging, particularly memory.

Key Takeaways

- Biological psychology – also known as biopsychology or psychobiology – is the application of the principles of biology to the study of mental processes and behaviour.
- Biological psychology as a scientific discipline emerged from a variety of scientific and philosophical traditions in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- In *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), William James argued that the scientific study of psychology should be grounded in an understanding of biology.
- The fields of behavioural neuroscience, cognitive neuroscience, and neuropsychology are all subfields of biological psychology.
- Biological psychologists are interested in measuring biological, physiological, or genetic variables in an attempt to relate them to psychological or behavioural variables.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Try this exercise with your group: Take a short walk together without talking to or looking at one another. When you return to the classroom, have each group member write down what they saw, felt, heard, tasted, and smelled. Compare and discuss reflecting on some of the assumptions and beliefs of the structuralists. Consider what might be the reasons for the differences and similarities.
2. Where can you see evidence of insights from biological psychology in some of the applications of psychology that you commonly experience today (e.g., sport, leadership, marketing, education)?
3. Study the functions of the brain and reflect on whether you tend toward left- or right-brain tendencies.

Image Attributions

Figure 2.3: Complex Adaptive System by Acadac (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Complex-adaptive-system.jpg) is in the public domain.

Figure 2.4: Left and Right Brain by Webber (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Left_and_Right_Brain.jpg) is in the public domain.

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Notes

1. A system for taking information in one form and transforming it into another.
2. The generation or growth of new brain cells, specifically when neurons are created from neural stem cells.

2.2 Psychodynamic Psychology

Jennifer Walinga

Learning Objectives

1. Understand some of the psychological forces underlying human behaviour.
2. Identify levels of consciousness.
3. Critically discuss various models and theories of psychodynamic and behavioural psychology.
4. Understand the concept of psychological types and identify applications and examples in daily life.

Sigmund Freud

The psychodynamic perspective in psychology proposes that there are psychological forces underlying human behaviour, feelings, and emotions. Psychodynamics originated with Sigmund Freud (Figure 2.5) in the late 19th century, who suggested that psychological processes are flows of psychological energy (libido) in a complex brain. In response to the more reductionist approach of biological, structural, and functional psychology movements, the psychodynamic perspective marks a pendulum swing back toward more holistic, systemic, and abstract concepts and their influence on the more concrete behaviours and actions. Freud's theory of psychoanalysis assumes that much of mental life is unconscious, and that past experiences, especially in early childhood, shape how a person feels and behaves throughout life.

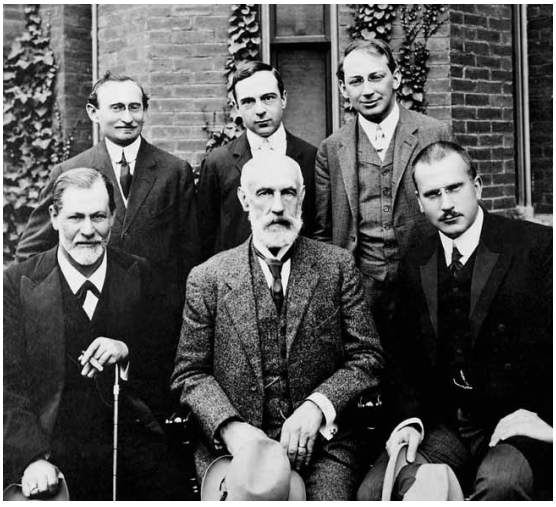


Figure 2.5 Group Photo. Front row (left to right): Sigmund Freud, G. Stanley Hall, Carl Jung; Back row (left to right): Abraham A. Brill, Ernest Jones, Sándor Ferenczi.

Consciousness is the *awareness of the self in space and time*. It can be defined as human awareness of both internal and external stimuli. Researchers study states of human consciousness and differences in perception in order to understand how the body works to produce conscious awareness. Consciousness varies in both arousal and content, and there are two types of conscious experience: **phenomenal**, or *in the moment*, and **access**, which *recalls experiences from memory*.

First appearing in the historical records of the ancient Mayan and Incan civilizations, various theories of multiple levels of consciousness have pervaded spiritual, psychological, medical, and moral speculations in both Eastern and Western cultures. The ancient Mayans were among the first to propose an organized sense of each level of consciousness, its purpose, and its temporal connection to humankind. Because consciousness incorporates stimuli from the environment as well as internal stimuli, the Mayans believed it to be the most basic form of existence, capable of evolution. The Incas, however, considered consciousness to be a progression, not only of awareness but of concern for others as well.

Sigmund Freud divided human consciousness into three levels of awareness: the *conscious*, *preconscious*, and *unconscious*. Each of these levels corresponds to and overlaps with Freud's ideas of the id, ego, and superego. The **conscious** level consists of *all those things we are aware of*, including things that we know about ourselves and our surroundings. The **preconscious** consists of *those things we could pay conscious attention to if we so desired, and where many memories are stored for easy retrieval*. Freud saw the **preconscious** as *those thoughts that are unconscious at the particular moment in question, but that are not repressed and are therefore available for recall and easily capable of becoming conscious* (e.g., the "tip of the tongue" effect). The **unconscious** consists of *those things that are outside of conscious awareness, including many memories, thoughts, and urges of which we are not aware.* Much of what is stored in the unconscious is thought to be unpleasant or conflicting; for example, sexual impulses that are deemed "unacceptable." While these elements are stored out of our awareness, they are nevertheless thought to influence our behaviour.

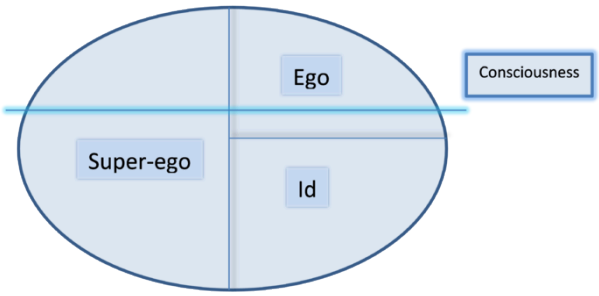


Figure 2.6 The Levels of Consciousness.

Figure 2.6 illustrates the respective levels of id, ego, and superego. In this diagram, the bright blue line represents the divide between consciousness (above) and unconsciousness (below). Below this line, but above the id, is the preconscious level. The lowest segment is the unconscious. Like the ego, the superego has conscious and unconscious elements, while the id is completely unconscious. When all three parts of the personality are in dynamic equilibrium, the individual is thought to be mentally healthy. However if the ego is unable to mediate between the id and the superego, an imbalance occurs in the form of psychological distress.

While Freud's theory remains one of the best known, various schools within the field of psychology have developed their own perspectives. For example:

- **Developmental psychologists** view consciousness not as a single entity, but as a developmental process with potential higher stages of cognitive, moral, and spiritual quality.
- **Social psychologists** view consciousness as a product of cultural influence having little to do with the individual.
- **Neuropsychologists** view consciousness as ingrained in neural systems and organic brain structures.
- **Cognitive psychologists** base their understanding of consciousness on computer science.

Most psychodynamic approaches use *talk therapy,* or *psychoanalysis,* to examine maladaptive functions that developed early in life and are, at least in part, unconscious. **Psychoanalysis** is *a type of analysis that involves attempting to affect behavioural change through having patients talk about their difficulties*. Practising psychoanalysts today collect their data in much the same way as Freud did, through case studies, but often without the couch. The analyst listens and observes, gathering information about the patient. Psychoanalytic scientists today also collect data in formal laboratory experiments, studying groups of people in more restricted, controlled ways (Cramer, 2000; Westen, 1998).

Carl Jung

Carl Jung (1875-1961) expanded on Freud's theories, introducing the concepts of the *archetype*, the *collective unconscious*, and *individuation* — or the psychological process of integrating the opposites, including the conscious with the unconscious, while still maintaining their relative autonomy (Figure 2.7). Jung focused less on infantile development and conflict between the id and superego, and more on integration between different parts of the person.

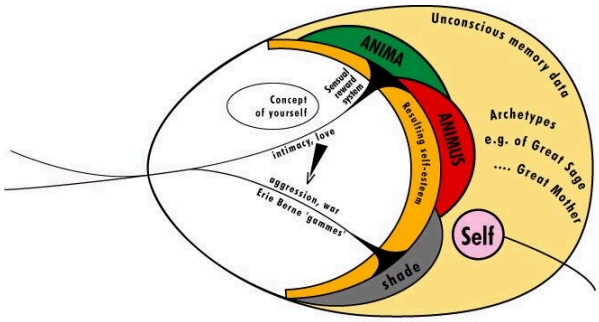


Figure 2.7 Jung's Theory.

The following are Jung's concepts that are still prevalent today:

Active imagination: This refers to activating our imaginal processes in waking life in order to tap into the unconscious meanings of our symbols.

Archetypes: These primordial images reflect basic patterns or universal themes common to us all and that are present in the unconscious. These symbolic images exist outside space and time. Examples are the shadow, animus, anima, the old wise person, and the innocent child. There are also nature archetypes, like fire, ocean, river, mountain.

1. **Anima** is the *archetype symbolizing the unconscious female component of the male psyche*. Tendencies or qualities often thought of as feminine.
2. **Animus** is the *archetype symbolizing the unconscious male component of the female psyche*. Tendencies or qualities often thought of as masculine.
3. **Self** is the *archetype symbolizing the totality of the personality*. It represents the striving for unity, wholeness, and integration.
4. **Persona** is the *mask or image a person presents to the world*. It is designed to make a particular impression on others, while concealing a person's true nature.
5. **Shadow** is the *side of a personality that a person does not consciously display in public*. It may have positive or negative qualities.
6. **Dreams** are *specific expressions of the unconscious that have a definite, purposeful structure indicating an underlying idea or intention*. The general function of dreams is to restore a person's total psychic equilibrium.
7. **Complexes** are usually *unconscious and repressed emotionally toned symbolic material that is incompatible with consciousness*. Complexes can cause constant psychological disturbances and symptoms of neurosis. With intervention, they can become conscious and greatly reduced in their impact.

Individuation: Jung believed that a human being is inwardly whole, but that most people have lost touch with important parts of themselves. Through listening to the messages of our dreams and waking imagination, we can contact and reintegrate our different parts. The goal of life is individuation, which is *the process of integrating the conscious with the unconscious, synergizing the many components of the psyche*. Jung asserted: "Trust that which gives you meaning and accept it as your guide" (Jung, 1951, p. 3). Each human being has a specific nature and calling uniquely his or her own, and unless these are fulfilled through a union of conscious and unconscious, the person can become sick. Today, the term "individuation" is used in the media industry to describe new printing and online technologies that permit "mass customization" of media (newspaper, online, television) so that its contents match each individual user's unique interests, shifting from the mass media practice of producing the same contents for all readers, viewers, listeners, or online users (Chen, Wang, & Tseng, 2009). Marshall McLuhan, the communications theorist, alluded to this trend in customization when discussing the future of printed books in an electronically interconnected world (McLuhan & Nevitt, 1972).

Mandala: For Jung, the mandala (which is the Sanskrit word for "circle") was a *symbol of wholeness, completeness, and perfection*, and symbolized the self.

Mystery: For Jung, life was a great mystery, and he believed that humans know and understand very little of it. He never hesitated to say, "I don't know," and he always admitted when he came to the end of his understanding.

Neurosis: Jung had a hunch that what passed for normality often was the very force that shattered the personality of the patient. He proposed that trying to be "normal" violates a person's inner nature and is itself a form of pathology. In the psychiatric hospital, he wondered why psychiatrists were not interested in what their patients had to say.

Story: Jung concluded that every person has a story, and when derangement occurs, it is because the

personal story has been denied or rejected. Healing and integration come when the person discovers or rediscovers his or her own personal story.

Symbol: A symbol is a name, term, or picture that is familiar in daily life, but for Jung it had other connotations besides its conventional and obvious meaning. To Jung, a symbol implied something vague and partially unknown or hidden, and was never precisely defined. Dream symbols carried messages from the unconscious to the rational mind.

Unconscious: This basic tenet, as expressed by Jung, states that all products of the unconscious are symbolic and can be taken as guiding messages. Within this concept, there are two types:

1. **Personal unconscious:** This aspect of the psyche does not usually enter an individual's awareness, but, instead, appears in overt behaviour or in dreams.
2. **Collective unconscious:** This aspect of the unconscious manifests in universal themes that run through all human life. The idea of the collective unconscious assumes that the history of the human race, back to the most primitive times, lives on in all people.

Word association test: This is a *research technique that Jung used to explore the complexes in the personal unconscious*. It consisted of reading 100 words to someone, one at a time, and having the person respond quickly with a word of his or her own.

Psychological Types

According to Jung, people differ in certain basic ways, even though the instincts that drive us are the same. Jung distinguished two general attitudes–introversion and extraversion–and four functions–thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting:

1. **Introvert:** *Inner-directed*; needs privacy and space; chooses solitude to recover energy; often reflective.
2. **Extravert:** *Outer-directed*; needs sociability; chooses people as a source of energy; often action-oriented.
3. **Thinking function:** *Logical*; sees cause and effect relations; cool, distant, frank, and questioning.
4. **Feeling function:** *Creative, warm, intimate*; has a sense of valuing positively or negatively. (Note that this is not the same as emotion.)
5. **Sensing function:** *Sensory*; oriented toward the body and senses; detailed, concrete, and present.
6. **Intuitive:** *Sees many possibilities in situations*; goes with hunches; impatient with earthy details; impractical; sometimes not present

The **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator** (MBTI) assessment is a *psychometric questionnaire designed to measure psychological preferences in how people perceive the world and make decisions*. The original developers of the Myers-Briggs personality inventory were Katharine Cook Briggs and her daughter, Isabel Briggs-Myers (1980, 1995). Having studied the work of Jung, the mother-daughter team turned their interest in human behaviour into a practical application of the theory of psychological types. They

began creating the indicator during World War II, believing that a knowledge of personality preferences would help women who were entering the industrial workforce for the first time to identify the sort of wartime jobs that would be "most comfortable and effective."

The initial questionnaire became the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), first published in 1962 and emphasizing the value of naturally occurring differences (CAPT, 2012). These preferences were extrapolated from the typological theories proposed by Jung and first published in his 1921 book *Psychological Types* (Adler & Hull, 2014). Jung theorized that there are four principal psychological functions by which we experience the world: sensation, intuition, feeling, and thinking, with one of these four functions being dominant most of the time. The MBTI provides individuals with a measure of their dominant preferences based on the Jungian functions.

Research Focus: The Theory of Buyer Behaviour

Jungian theory influenced a whole realm of social psychology called Consumer Behaviour (Howard & Sheth, 1968). Consumer behaviour is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs, and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society. Blending psychology, sociology, social anthropology, marketing, and economics, the study of consumer behaviour attempts to understand the decision-making processes of buyers, such as how emotions affect buying behaviour (Figure 2.8); it also studies characteristics of individual consumers, such as demographics, and behavioural variables and external influences, such as family, education, and culture, in an attempt to understand people's desires.

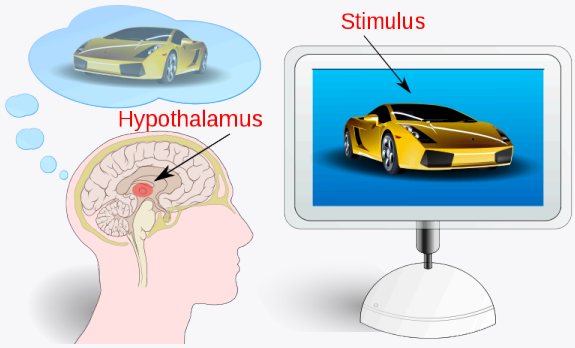


Figure 2.8 Neuromarketing.

The **black box model** (Sandhusen, 2000) captures this *interaction of stimuli, consumer characteristics, decision processes, and consumer responses*. Stimuli can be experienced as interpersonal stimuli (between people) or intrapersonal stimuli (within people). The black box model is related to the black box theory of behaviourism, where the focus is set not on the processes inside a consumer, but on the relation between the stimuli and the response of the consumer. The marketing stimuli are planned and processed by the companies, whereas the environmental stimuli are based on social, economic, political, and cultural circumstances of a society. The buyer's black box contains the buyer characteristics and the decision process, which determines the buyer's response (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Environmental Factors and Buyer's Black Box[1]

[Skip Table]				
Environmental Factors		**Buyer's Black Box**		**Buyer's Response**
Marketing Stimuli	**Environmental Stimuli**	**Buyer Characteristics**	**Design Process**	
• product, • price, • place, • promotion.	• economic, • technological, • political, • cultural, • demographic, • natural.	• attitudes, • motivation, • perceptions, • personality, • lifestyle, • knowledge.	• problem recognition, • information search • alternative evaluation, • purchase decision, • post-purchase behaviour.	• product choice, • brand choice, • dealer choice, • purchase timing, • purchase, • amount.

Dreaming and Psychodynamic Psychology

Freud showed a great interest in the interpretation of human dreams, and his theory centred on the notion of repressed longing — the idea that dreaming allows us to sort through unresolved, repressed wishes. Freud's theory described dreams as having both latent and manifest content. **Latent content** relates to *deep unconscious wishes or fantasies,* while **manifest content** is *superficial and meaningless*. Manifest content often masks or obscures latent content.

Theories emerging from the work of Freud include the following:

Threat-simulation theory s*uggests that dreaming should be seen as an ancient biological defence mechanism*. Dreams are thought to provide an evolutionary advantage because of their capacity to repeatedly simulate potential threatening events. This process enhances the neurocognitive mechanisms required for efficient threat perception and avoidance. During much of human evolution, physical and interpersonal threats were serious enough to reward reproductive advantage to those who survived them. Therefore, dreaming evolved to replicate these threats and continually practice dealing with them. This theory suggests that dreams serve the purpose of allowing for the rehearsal of threatening scenarios in order to better prepare an individual for real-life threats.

Expectation fulfillment theory *posits that dreaming serves to discharge emotional arousals (however minor) that haven't been expressed during the day*. This practice frees up space in the brain to deal with the emotional arousals of the next day and allows instinctive urges to stay intact. In effect, the expectation is fulfilled (i.e., the action is completed) in the dream, but only in a metaphorical form so that a false memory is not created. This theory explains why dreams are usually forgotten immediately afterwards.

Other neurobiological theories also exist:

Activation-synthesis theory: One prominent neurobiological theory of dreaming is the activation-synthesis theory, which states that *dreams don't actually mean anything*. They are merely electrical brain impulses that pull random thoughts and imagery from our memories. The theory posits that humans construct dream stories after they wake up, in a natural attempt to make sense of the nonsensical. However, given the vast documentation of realistic aspects to human dreaming as well as indirect experimental evidence that other mammals (e.g., cats) also dream, evolutionary psychologists have theorized that dreaming does indeed serve a purpose.

Continual-activation theory: The continual-activation theory of dreaming proposes that *dreaming is a result of brain activation and synthesis*. Dreaming and REM sleep are simultaneously controlled by different brain mechanisms. The hypothesis states that the function of sleep is to process, encode, and transfer data from short-term memory to long-term memory through a process called "consolidation." However, there is not much evidence to back up consolidation as a theory. **NREM (non-rapid eye movement or non-REM) sleep** *processes the conscious-related memory (declarative memory)*, and **REM (rapid eye movement) sleep** *processes the unconscious-related memory (procedural memory)*.

The underlying assumption of continual-activation theory is that during REM sleep, the unconscious part of a brain is busy processing procedural memory. Meanwhile, the level of activation in the conscious part of the brain descends to a very low level as the inputs from the senses are basically disconnected. This triggers the "continual-activation" mechanism to generate a data stream from the memory stores to flow through to the conscious part of the brain.

Nielsen and colleagues (2003) investigated the dimensional *structure of dreams* by administering the Typical Dreams Questionnaire (TDQ) to 1,181 first-year university students in three Canadian cities. A profile of themes was found that varied little by age, gender, or region; however, differences that were identified correlated with developmental milestones, personality attributes, or sociocultural factors. Factor analysis found that women's dreams related mostly to negative factors (failure, loss of control, snakes/insects), while men's dreams related primarily to positive factors (magic/myth, alien life).

Research Focus: Can Dreaming Enhance Problem Solving?

Stemming from Freudian and Jungian theories of dream states, researchers in Lancaster, UK (Sio & Ormerod, 2009; Sio Monaghan, & Ormerod, 2013) and in Alberta, Canada (Both, Needham, & Wood, 2004) explored the role of "incubation" in facilitating problem solving. Incubation is the concept of "sleeping on a problem," or disengaging from actively and consciously trying to solve a problem, in order to allow, as the theory goes, the unconscious processes to work on the problem. Incubation can take a variety of forms, such as taking a break, sleeping, or working on another kind of problem either more difficult or less challenging. Findings suggest that incubation can, indeed, have a positive impact on problem-solving outcomes. Interestingly, lower-level cognitive tasks (e.g., simple math or language tasks, vacuuming, putting items away) resulted in higher problem-solving outcomes than more challenging tasks (e.g., crossword puzzles, math problems). Educators have also found that taking active breaks increases children's creativity and problem-solving abilities in classroom settings.

There are several hypotheses that aim to explain the conscious-unconscious effects on problem solving:

1. **Spreading activation**: When problem solvers disengage from the problem-solving task, they naturally expose themselves to more information that can serve to inform the problem-solving process. Solvers are sensitized to certain information and can benefit from conceptual combination of disparate ideas related to the problem.
2. **Selective forgetting:** Once disengaged from the problem-solving process, solvers are freer to let go of certain ideas or concepts that may be inhibiting the problem-solving process, allowing a cleaner, fresher view of the problem and revealing clearer pathways to solution.
3. **Problem restructuring**: When problem solvers let go of the initial problem, they are then freed to restructure or reorganize their representation of the problem and thereby capitalize on relevant information not previously noticed, switch strategies, or rearrange problem information in a manner more conducive to solution pathways.

The study of **neural correlates of consciousness (NCC)** seeks to *link activity within the brain to subjective human experiences in the physical world*. Progress in **neurophilosophy** has come from *focusing on the body rather than the mind* (Squire, 2008). In this context, the neuronal correlates of consciousness may be viewed as its causes, and consciousness may be thought of as a state-dependent property of some undefined complex, adaptive, and highly interconnected biological system. The NCC constitute the smallest set of neural events and structures sufficient for a given conscious percept or explicit memory (Figure 2.9).

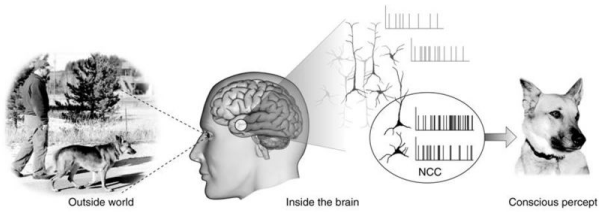


Figure 2.9 The Neuronal Correlates of Consciousness.

In the investigation into the NCC, our capacity to manipulate visual percepts in time and space has made vision a focus of study. Psychologists have perfected a number of techniques in which the seemingly simple relationship between a physical stimulus in the world and its associated principle in the subject's mind is disturbed and therefore open for understanding. In this manner the neural mechanisms can be isolated, permitting visual consciousness to be tracked in the brain. In a perceptual illusion, the physical stimulus remains fixed while the perception fluctuates. The best known example is the Necker Cube (Koch, 2004): the 12 lines in the cube can be perceived in one of two different ways in depth (Figure 2.10).

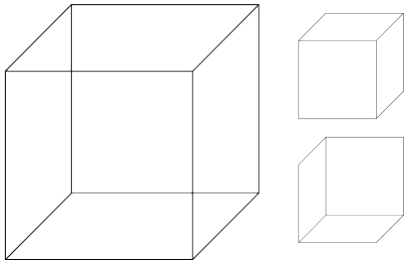


Figure 2.10 The Necker Cube.

A number of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) experiments have identified the activity underlying visual consciousness in humans and demonstrated quite conclusively that activity in various areas of the brain follows the mental perception and not the retinal stimulus (Rees & Frith, 2007), making it possible to link brain activity with perception (Figure 2.11).

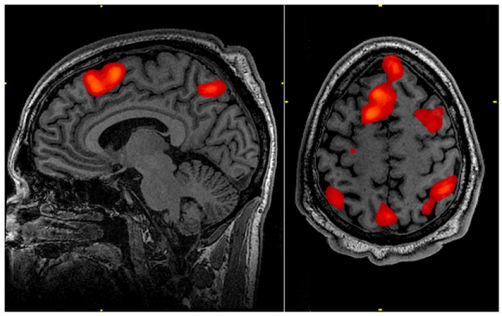


Figure 2.11 fMRI scan.

Key Takeaways

- Psychodynamic psychology emphasizes the systematic study of the psychological forces that underlie human behaviour, feelings, and emotions and how they might relate to early experience.
- Consciousness is the awareness of the self in space and time and is defined as human awareness to both internal and external stimuli.
- Sigmund Freud divided human consciousness into three levels of awareness: the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious. Each of these levels corresponds and overlaps with his ideas of the id, ego, and superego.
- Most psychodynamic approaches use talk therapy to examine maladaptive functions that developed early in life and are, at least in part, unconscious.
- Carl Jung expanded upon Freud's theories, introducing the concepts of the archetype, the collective unconscious, and individuation.
- Freud's theory describes dreams as having both latent and manifest content. Latent content relates to deep unconscious wishes or fantasies while manifest content is superficial and meaningless.
- Unconscious processing includes several theories: threat simulation theory, expectation fulfillment theory, activation synthesis theory, continual activation theory.
- One application of unconscious processing includes incubation as it relates to problem solving: the concept of "sleeping on a problem" or disengaging from actively and consciously trying to solve a problem in order to allow one's unconscious processes to work on the problem.
- The study of neural correlates of consciousness seeks to link activity within the brain to subjective human experiences in the physical world.
- In a perceptual illusion, like the Necker Cube, the physical stimulus remains fixed while the perception fluctuates, allowing the neural mechanisms to be isolated and permitting visual consciousness to be tracked in the brain.
- Activity in the brain can be studied and captured using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scans.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Utilize the principles of the psychodynamic school of thought to reflect on a recent dream you experienced. What might the dream imply or represent? Try to trace one of your qualities or characteristics to a prior experience or learning.
2. Jung has influenced a variety of practices in psychology today including therapeutic and organizational. Can you identify other areas of society where "archetypes" may play a role?
3. Debate with your group the value or danger of "mass customization." What issues or controversies does the concept of customized marketing and product development pose?

Image Attributions

Figure 2.5: Freud Jung in front of Clark Hall (http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b5/Hall_Freud_Jung_in_front_of_Clark.jpg) is in the public domain.

Figure 2.6: Visual representation of Freud's id, ego and superego and the level of consciousness (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Id_ego_superego.png) used under CC BY SA 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en).

Figure 2.7: Graphical model of Carl Jung's theory – English version by Andrzej Brodziak (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scheme-Jung.jpg) used under CC-BY-SA 2.5 Generic license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/deed.en).

Figure 2.8: Neuromarketing schema by Benoit Rochon (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Neuromarketing_fr.svg) used under CC BY 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en).

Figure 2.9: Neural Correlates Of Consciousness by Christof Koch (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Neural_Correlates_Of_Consciousness.jpg) used under CC BY SA 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en).

Figure 2.10: Necker's cube, a type of optical illusion by Stevo-88 (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Necker%27s_cube.svg) is in the public domain.

Figure 2.11: FMRI scan during working memory tasks by John Graner (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FMRI_scan_during_working_memory_tasks.jpg) is in the public domain.

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Notes

1. Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumer_behaviour by J. Walinga.

2.3 Behaviourist Psychology

Jennifer Walinga

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the principles of behaviourist psychology and how these differ from psychodynamic principles in terms of theory and application.
2. Distinguish between classical and operant conditioning.
3. Become familiar with key behaviourist theorists and approaches.
4. Identify applications of the behaviourist models in modern life.

Emerging in contrast to psychodynamic psychology, **behaviourism** *focuses on observable behaviour as a means to studying the human psyche.* The primary tenet of behaviourism is that psychology should concern itself with the observable behaviour of people and animals, not with unobservable events that take place in their minds. The behaviourists criticized the mentalists for their inability to demonstrate empirical evidence to support their claims. The behaviourist school of thought maintains that behaviours can be described scientifically without recourse either to internal physiological events or to hypothetical constructs such as thoughts and beliefs, making behaviour a more productive area of focus for understanding human or animal psychology.

The main influences of behaviourist psychology were Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936), who investigated classical conditioning though often disagreeing with behaviourism or behaviourists; Edward Lee Thorndike (1874-1949), who introduced the concept of reinforcement and was the first to apply psychological principles to learning; John B. Watson (1878-1958), who rejected introspective methods and sought to restrict psychology to experimental methods; and B.F. Skinner (1904-1990), who conducted research on operant conditioning.

The first of these, Ivan Pavlov, is known for his work on one important type of learning, **classical conditioning**. *As we learn, we alter the way we perceive our environment, the way we interpret the incoming stimuli, and therefore the way we interact, or behave*. Pavlov, a Russian physiologist, actually discovered classical conditioning accidentally while doing research on the digestive patterns in dogs. During his experiments, he would put meat powder in the mouth of a dog who had tubes inserted into various organs to measure bodily responses. Pavlov discovered that the dog began to salivate before the meat powder was presented to it. Soon the dog began to salivate as soon as the person feeding it entered the room. Pavlov quickly began to gain interest in this phenomenon and abandoned his digestion research in favour of his now famous classical conditioning study.

Basically, Pavlov's findings support the idea that we develop responses to certain stimuli that are not naturally occurring. When we touch a hot stove, our reflex pulls our hand back. We do this instinctively with no learning involved. The reflex is merely a survival instinct. Pavlov discovered that we make

associations that cause us to generalize our response to one stimuli onto a neutral stimuli it is paired with. In other words, hot burner = ouch; stove = burner; therefore, stove = ouch.

In his research with the dogs, Pavlov began pairing a bell sound with the meat powder and found that even when the meat powder was not presented, a dog would eventually begin to salivate after hearing the bell. In this case, since the meat powder naturally results in salivation, these two variables are called the *unconditioned stimulus* (UCS) and the *unconditioned response* (UCR), respectively. In the experiment, the bell and salivation are *not* naturally occurring; the dog is conditioned to respond to the bell. Therefore, the bell is considered the *conditioned stimulus* (CS), and the salivation to the bell, the *conditioned response* (CR).

Many of our behaviours today are shaped by the pairing of stimuli. The smell of a cologne, the sound of a certain song, or the occurrence of a specific day of the year can trigger distinct memories, emotions, and associations. *When we make these types of associations*, we are experiencing **classical conditioning**.

Operant conditioning is another type of learning that refers to *how an organism operates on the environment or how it responds to what is presented to it in the environment* (Figure 2.12).

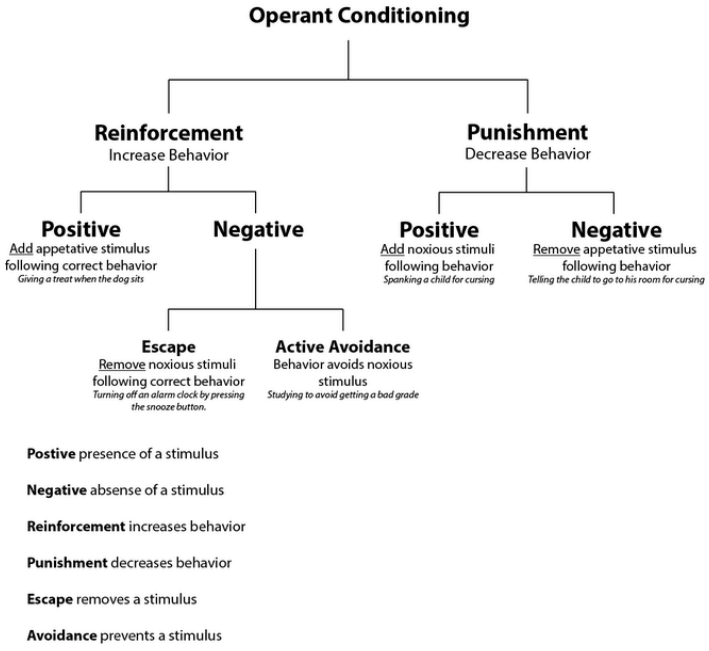


Figure 2.12 Operant Conditioning.

Examples of operant conditioning include the following:

Reinforcement means to strengthen, and is used in psychology to *refer to any stimulus which strengthens or increases the probability of a specific response*. For example, if you want your dog to sit on command, you may give him a treat every time he sits for you. The dog will eventually come to understand that sitting when told to will result in a treat. This treat is reinforcing the behaviour because the dog likes it and will result in him sitting when instructed to do so. There are four types of reinforcement: positive, negative, punishment, and extinction.

- **Positive reinforcement** involves *adding something in order to increase a response*. For example, adding a treat will increase the response of sitting; adding praise will increase the

chances of your child cleaning his or her room. The most common types of positive reinforcement are praise and reward, and most of us have experienced this as both the giver and receiver.

- **Negative reinforcement** involves *taking something negative away in order to increase a response*. Imagine a teenager who is nagged by his parents to take out the garbage week after week. After complaining to his friends about the nagging, he finally one day performs the task and, to his amazement, the nagging stops. The elimination of this negative stimulus is reinforcing and will likely increase the chances that he will take out the garbage next week.
- **Punishment** refers to *adding something aversive in order to decrease a behaviour*. The most common example of this is disciplining (e.g., spanking) a child for misbehaving. The child begins to associate being punished with the negative behaviour. The child does not like the punishment and, therefore, to avoid it, he or she will stop behaving in that manner.
- **Extinction** involves *removing something in order to decrease a behaviour.* By having something taken away, a response is decreased.

Research has found positive reinforcement is the most powerful of any of these types of operant conditioning responses. Adding a positive to increase a response not only works better, but allows both parties to focus on the positive aspects of the situation. Punishment, when applied immediately following the negative behaviour, can be effective, but results in extinction when it is not applied consistently. Punishment can also invoke other negative responses such as anger and resentment.

Thorndike's (1898) work with cats and puzzle boxes illustrates the concept of conditioning. The puzzle boxes were approximately 50 cm long, 38 cm wide, and 30 cm tall (Figure 2.13). Thorndike's puzzle boxes were built so that the cat, placed inside the box, could escape only if it pressed a bar or pulled a lever, which caused the string attached to the door to lift the weight and open the door. Thorndike measured the time it took the cat to perform the required response (e.g., pulling the lever). Once it had learned the response he gave the cat a reward, usually food.

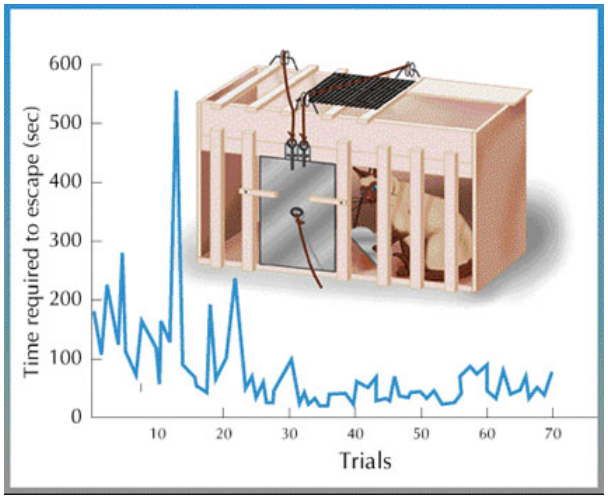


Figure 2.13 Thorndike's Puzzle Box.

Thorndike found that once a cat accidentally stepped on the switch, it would then press the switch faster in each succeeding trial inside the puzzle box. By observing and recording how long it took a variety of animals to escape through several trials, Thorndike was able to graph the learning curve (graphed as

an S-shape). He observed that most animals had difficulty escaping at first, then began to escape faster and faster with each successive puzzle box trial, and eventually levelled off in their escape times. The learning curve also suggested that different species learned in the same way but at different speeds. His finding was that cats, for instance, consistently showed gradual learning.

From his research with puzzle boxes, Thorndike was able to create his own theory of learning (1932):

1. Learning is incremental.
2. Learning occurs automatically.
3. All animals learn the same way.
4. **Law of effect.** *If an association is followed by satisfaction, it will be strengthened, and if it is followed by annoyance, it will be weakened*.
5. **Law of use.** *The more often an association is used, the stronger it becomes*.
6. **Law of disuse.** *The longer an association is unused, the weaker it becomes*.
7. **Law of recency.** *The most recent response is most likely to reoccur*.
8. **Multiple response.** *An animal will try multiple responses (trial and error) if the first response does not lead to a specific state of affairs.*
9. **Set or attitude**. *Animals are predisposed to act in a specific way.*
10. **Prepotency of elements.** *A subject can filter out irrelevant aspects of a problem and focus on and respond to significant elements of a problem*.
11. **Response by analogy**. *Responses from a related or similar context may be used in a new context*.
12. **Identical elements theory of transfer**. *The more similar the situations are, the greater the amount of information that will transfer*. Similarly, if the situations have nothing in common, information learned in one situation will not be of any value in the other situation.
13. **Associative shifting**. *It is possible to shift any response from occurring with one stimulus to occurring with another stimulus*. Associative shift maintains that a response is first made to situation A, then to AB, and then finally to B, thus shifting a response from one condition to another by associating it with that condition.
14. **Law of readiness**. *A quality in responses and connections that results in readiness to act*. Behaviour and learning are influenced by the readiness or unreadiness of responses, as well as by their strength.
15. **Identifiability.** *Identification or placement of a situation is a first response of the nervous system, which can recognize it*. Then connections may be made to one another or to another response, and these connections depend on the original identification. Therefore, a large amount of learning is made up of changes in the identifiability of situations.
16. **Availability**. *The ease of getting a specific response*. For example, it would be easier for a person to learn to touch his or her nose or mouth with closed eyes than it would be to draw a line five inches long with closed eyes.

John B. Watson promoted a change in psychology through his address, Psychology as the Behaviorist

Views It (1913), delivered at Columbia University. Through his behaviourist approach, Watson conducted research on animal behaviour, child rearing, and advertising while gaining notoriety for the controversial "Little Albert" experiment. Immortalized in introductory psychology textbooks, this experiment set out to show how the recently discovered principles of classical conditioning could be applied to condition fear of a white rat into Little Albert, an 11-month-old boy. Watson and Rayner (1920) first presented to the boy a white rat and observed that the boy was not afraid. Next they presented him with a white rat and then clanged an iron rod. Little Albert responded by crying. This second presentation was repeated several times. Finally, Watson and Rayner presented the white rat by itself and the boy showed fear. Later, in an attempt to see if the fear transferred to other objects, Watson presented Little Albert with a rabbit, a dog, and a fur coat. He cried at the sight of all of them. This study demonstrated how emotions could become conditioned responses.

Burrhus Frederic Skinner called his particular brand of behaviourism *radical behaviourism* (1974). **Radical behaviourism** is the *philosophy of the science of behaviour*. It seeks to understand behaviour as a function of environmental histories of reinforcing consequences. This applied behaviourism does not accept private events such as thinking, perceptions, and unobservable emotions in a causal account of an organism's behaviour.

While a researcher at Harvard, Skinner invented the *operant conditioning chamber*, popularly referred to as the **Skinner box** (Figure 2.14), *used to measure responses of organisms* (most often rats and pigeons) *and their orderly interactions with the environment*. The box had a lever and a food tray, and a hungry rat inside the box could get food delivered to the tray by pressing the lever. Skinner observed that when a rat was first put into the box, it would wander around, sniffing and exploring, and would usually press the bar by accident, at which point a food pellet would drop into the tray. After that happened, the rate of bar pressing would increase dramatically and remain high until the rat was no longer hungry.

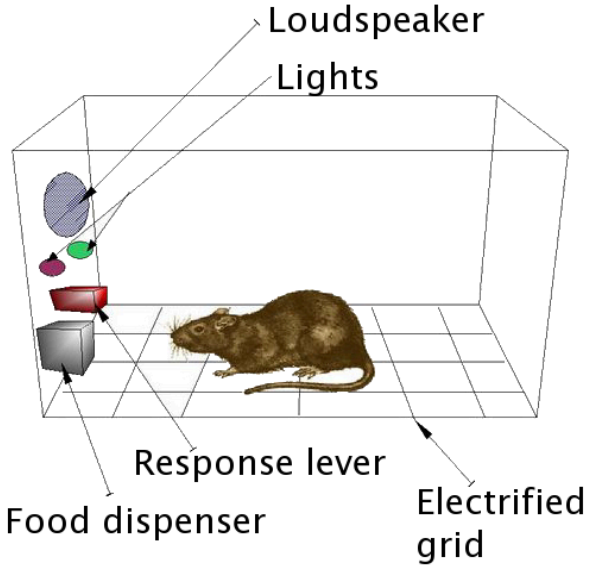


Figure 2.14 Skinner Box.

Negative reinforcement was also exemplified by Skinner placing rats into an electrified chamber that delivered unpleasant shocks. Levers to cut the power were placed inside these boxes. By running a current through the box, Skinner noticed that the rats, after accidentally pressing the lever in a frantic

bid to escape, quickly learned the effects of the lever and consequently used this knowledge to stop the currents both during and prior to electrical shock. These two learned responses are known as **escape learning** and **avoidance learning** (Skinner, 1938). The operant chamber for pigeons involved a plastic disk in which the pigeon pecked in order to open a drawer filled with grain. The Skinner box led to the principle of reinforcement, which is the probability of something occurring based on the consequences of a behaviour.

Research Focus

Applying game incentives such as prompts, competition, badges, and rewards to ordinary activities, or **gamification,** is a growing approach to behaviour modification today. Health care has also applied some early innovative uses of gamification — from a Sony PS3 Move motion controller used to help children diagnosed with cancer to the launch of *Games for Health*, the first peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the research and design of health games and behavioural health strategies. Gamification is the process of taking an ordinary activity (like jogging or car sharing) and adding game mechanisms to it, including prompts, rewards, leader-boards, and competition between different players.

When used in social marketing and online health-promotion campaigns, gamification can be used to encourage a new, healthy behaviour such as regular exercise, improved diet, or completing actions required for treatment. Typically, gamification is web-based, usually with a mobile app or as a micro-site. Behavioural change campaigns require an understanding of human psychology, specifically the benefits and barriers associated with a behaviour. There have been several campaigns using gamification techniques that have had remarkable results. For example, organizations that wanted employees to exercise regularly have installed gyms in their offices and created a custom application that rewards employees for "checking in" to the gyms. Employees can form regionally based teams, check in to workouts, and chart their team's progress on a leader-board. This has a powerful effect on creating and sustaining a positive behavioural change.

Similar game mechanics have been used in sustainability campaigns aimed at increasing household environmental compliance. Such sites use game mechanics such as points, challenges, and rewards to increase daily "green" habits like recycling and conserving water. Other behavioural change campaigns that have applied social gaming include using cameras to record speeding cars, which reduce the incidence of speeding, and offering products that allow users to track their healthy behaviours through the day, including miles travelled, calories burned, and stairs climbed.

Key Takeaways

- Behaviourist psychology should concern itself with the observable behaviour of people and animals, not with unobservable events that take place in their minds.
- The main influences of behaviourist psychology were Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936), Edward Lee Thorndike (1874-1949), John B. Watson (1878-1958), and B.F. Skinner (1904-1990).
- The idea that we develop responses to certain stimuli that are not naturally occurring is called "classical conditioning."
- Operant conditioning refers to how an organism operates on the environment or how it responds to what is presented to it in the environment.
- Reinforcement means to strengthen, and is used in psychology to refer to any stimulus

that strengthens or increases the probability of a specific response.

- There are four types of reinforcement: positive, negative, punishment, and extinction.
- Behaviourist researchers used experimental methods (puzzle box, operant conditioning or Skinner box, Little Albert experiment) to investigate learning processes.
- Today, behaviourism is still prominent in applications such as gamification.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Reflect on your educational experience and try to determine what aspects of behaviourism were employed.
2. Research Skinner's other inventions, such as the "teaching machine" or the "air crib," and discuss with a group the underlying principles, beliefs, and values governing such "machines." Do you disagree or agree with their use?
3. What might be some other applications for gamification behavioural change strategies? Design a campaign or strategy for changing a behaviour of your choice (e.g., health, work, addiction, or sustainable practice).

Image Attributions

Figure 2.12: Operant conditioning diagram by studentne (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Operant_conditioning_diagram.png) used under CC BY SA 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en).

Figure 2.13: Thorndike's Puzzle Box. by Jacob Sussman (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Puzzle_box.jpg) is in the public domain.

Figure 2.14: Skinner box scheme 01 by Andreas1 (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skinner_box_scheme_01.png) used under CC BY SA 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en).

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2.4 Humanist, Cognitive, and Evolutionary Psychology

Jennifer Walinga

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the key principles of humanistic psychology.
2. Differentiate humanistic psychology from biological, psychodynamic, and behaviourist psychology.
3. Critically discuss and differentiate between key humanistic concepts such as motivation, need, adaptation, and perception.
4. Identify how humanistic psychology, and its related streams of cognitive and evolutionary psychology, have influenced aspects of daily life and work.

Humanistic psychology emerged as the **third force** in psychology after psychodynamic and behaviourist psychology. **Humanistic psychology** holds *a hopeful, constructive view of human beings and of their substantial capacity to be self-determining*. This wave of psychology is guided by a conviction that intentionality and ethical values are the key psychological forces determining human behaviour. Humanistic psychologists strive to enhance the human qualities of choice, creativity, the interaction of the body, mind, and spirit, and the capacity to become more aware, free, responsible, life-affirming, and trustworthy.

Emerging in the late 1950s, humanistic psychology began as a reaction against the two schools of thought then dominating American psychology. Behaviourism's insistence on applying the methods of physical science to human behaviour caused adherents to neglect crucial subjective data, humanists believed. Similarly, psychoanalysis's emphasis on unconscious drives relegated the conscious mind to relative unimportance.

The early humanistic psychologists sought to restore the importance of consciousness and offer a more holistic view of human life. Humanistic psychology acknowledges that the mind is strongly influenced by determining forces in society and the unconscious, and emphasizes the conscious capacity of individuals to develop personal competence and self-respect. The humanistic orientation has led to the development of therapies to facilitate personal and interpersonal skills and to enhance the quality of life. During the 1950s and 1960s, Carl Rogers, for instance, introduced what he called **person** or **client-centred therapy**, which *relies on clients' capacity for self-direction, empathy, and acceptance to promote clients' development*. Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) developed a *hierarchy of motivation* or *hierarchy of needs* culminating in *self-actualization*. Rollo May (1909 – 1994) brought European *existential psychotherapy* and phenomenology into the field by acknowledging human choice and the tragic aspects of human existence, and Fritz Perls developed *gestalt therapy* in his workshops and training programs at the Esalan Institute and elsewhere.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the ideas and values of humanistic psychology spread into many areas of society. As a result, humanistic psychology has many branches and extensions, as outlined in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Humanistic Therapies and their Theorists.[1]

[Skip Table]	
Humanistic Therapies	**Theorists**
Analytical and Archetypal Psychology	C.G. Jung, James Hillman
Authentic Movement	Mary Whitehouse
Encounter	Carl Rogers, Will Schultz
Existential Analysis	Rollo May, James F.T Bugental
Focusing	Eugene Gendin
Gestalt Art Therapy	Janie Rhyne
Logotherapy	Viktor Frankl
Neuro-Linguistic Programming	Richard Bandler, John Grinder
Psychosynthesis	Roberto Assagioli
Rational-Emotive Therapy	Albert Ellis
Reality Therapy	William Glasser
Self-Disclosure	Sidney Jourard
Sensory Awareness though Movement	Moshe Feldenkreis

Client-centred therapy provides a *supportive environment in which clients can re-establish their true identity*. Central to this thinking is the idea that the world is judgmental, and many people fear that if they share with the world their true identity, it would judge them relentlessly. People tend to suppress their beliefs, values, or opinions because they are not supported, not socially acceptable, or negatively judged. To re-establish a client's true identity, the therapist relies on the techniques of unconditional positive regard and empathy. These two techniques are central to client-centred therapy because they build trust between the client and therapist by creating a nonjudgmental and supportive environment for the client.

Existential therapy contrasts the psychoanalysts' focus on the self and *focuses instead on "man in the world."* The counsellor and the client may reflect on how the client has answered life's questions in the past, but attention ultimately emphasizes the choices to be made in the present and future and enabling a new freedom and responsibility to act. By accepting limitations and mortality, a client can overcome anxieties and instead view life as moments in which he or she is fundamentally free.

Gestalt therapy focuses on *the skills and techniques that permit an individual to be more aware of their feelings*. According to this approach, it is much more important to understand what patients are feeling and how they are feeling rather than to identify what is causing their feelings. Supporters of gestalt

therapy argued that earlier theories spent an unnecessary amount of time making assumptions about what causes behaviour. Instead, gestalt therapy focuses on the here and now.

Research Focus

In his seminal work "Significant Aspects of Client-Centered Therapy," Rogers described the discovery of the "capacity of the client" (1946):

Naturally the question is raised, what is the reason for this predictability in a type of therapeutic procedure in which the therapist serves only a catalytic function? Basically the reason for the predictability [page 418] of the therapeutic process lies in the discovery — and I use that word intentionally — that within the client reside constructive forces whose strength and uniformity have been either entirely unrecognized or grossly underestimated. It is the clearcut and disciplined reliance by the therapist upon those forces within the client, which seems to account for the orderliness of the therapeutic process, and its consistency from one client to the next.

I mentioned that I regarded this as a discovery. I would like to amplify that statement. We have known for centuries that catharsis and emotional release were helpful. Many new methods have been and are being developed to bring about release, but the principle is not new. Likewise, we have known since Freud's time that insight, if it is accepted and assimilated by the client, is therapeutic. The principle is not new. Likewise we have realized that revised action patterns, new ways of behaving, may come about as a result of insight. The principle is not new.

But we have not known or recognized that in most if not all individuals there exist growth forces, tendencies toward self-actualization, which may act as the sole motivation for therapy. We have not realized that under suitable psychological conditions these forces bring about emotional release in those areas and at those rates which are most beneficial to the individual. These forces drive the individual to explore his own attitudes and his relationship to reality, and to explore these areas effectively.

We have not realized that the individual is capable of exploring his attitudes and feelings, including those which have been denied to consciousness, at a rate which does not cause panic, and to the depth required for comfortable adjustment. The individual is capable of discovering and perceiving, truly and spontaneously, the interrelationships between his own attitudes, and the relationship of himself to reality. The individual has the capacity and the strength to devise, quite unguided, the steps which will lead him to a more mature and more comfortable relationship to his reality. It is the gradual and increasing recognition of these capacities within the individual by the client-centered therapist that rates, I believe, the term discovery. All of these capacities I have described are released in the individual if a suitable psychological atmosphere is provided.

Rogers identified five characteristics of the fully functioning person:

1. Open to experience: Both positive and negative emotions are accepted. Negative feelings are not denied, but worked through (rather than resort to ego defence mechanisms).
2. Existential living: Being in touch with different experiences as they occur in life, avoiding prejudging and preconceptions. Being able to live in and fully appreciate the present, not always looking back to the past or forward to the future (i.e., living for the moment).
3. Trust feelings: Feelings, instincts, and gut-reactions are paid attention to and trusted. A person's own decisions are the right ones and we should trust ourselves to make the right choices.
4. Creativity: Creative thinking and risk taking are features of a person's life. A person does not play it safe all the time. This involves the ability to adjust and change and seek new experiences.
5. Fulfilled life: A person is happy and satisfied with life, and always looking for new challenges

and experiences.

Humanistic psychology recognizes that human existence consists of multiple layers of reality: the physical, the organic, and the symbolic. It contests the idea — traditionally held by the behavioural sciences — that the only legitimate research method is an experimental test using quantitative data. It argues for the use of additional methods specifically designed to study qualitative factors such as subjective experience, emotion, perception, memory, values, and beliefs. Whereas other approaches take an objective view of people — in essence asking, What is this person like? — humanistic psychologists give priority to understanding people's subjectivity, asking, What is it like to be this person? (Clay, 2002).

Humanistic psychology has, of course, quietly influenced North American psychology and culture over many decades by informing the civil rights debate and the women's rights movement, for example. In the academic world, however, humanistic psychology's rejection of quantitative research in favour of qualitative methods caused its reputation to suffer and its adherents to be marginalized. But in recent years, there's mounting evidence of renewal in the field itself.

Abraham Maslow's view of human needs was more complex than Rogers's. While Rogers believed that people needed unconditional positive regard, Maslow acknowledged that people have a variety of needs that differ in timing and priority (Figure 2.15).

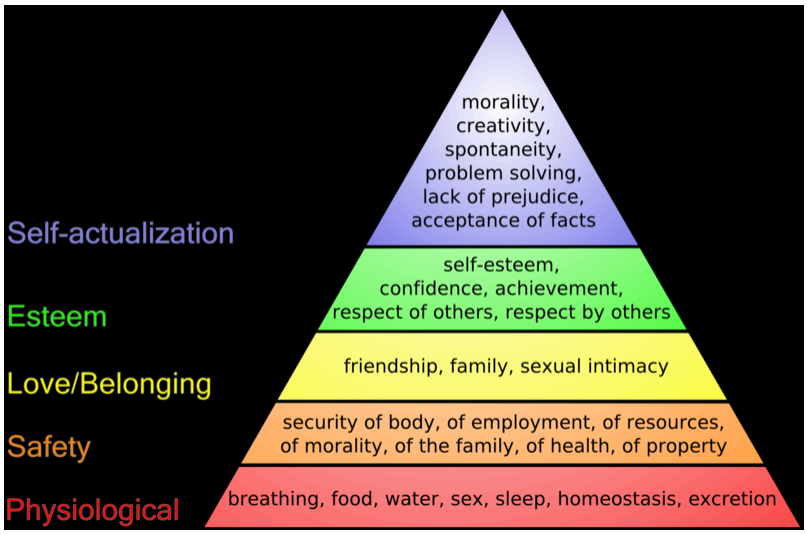


Figure 2.15 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. [Long Description]

Maslow called the bottom four levels of the pyramid **deficiency needs** because *a person does not feel anything if they are met, but becomes anxious if they are not*. Thus, physiological needs such as eating, drinking, and sleeping are deficiency needs, as are safety needs, social needs such as friendship and sexual intimacy, and ego needs such as self-esteem and recognition. In contrast, Maslow called the fifth level of the pyramid a **growth need**[2] because it enables a person to **self-actualize** or *reach his or her fullest potential as a human being*. Once a person has met the deficiency needs, he or she can attend to self-actualization; however, only a small minority of people are able to self-actualize because

self-actualization requires uncommon qualities such as honesty, independence, awareness, objectivity, creativity, and originality.

Frederick Taylor's **scientific management** principles of the early 1900s, born of the industrial revolution and focused on scientific study of productivity in the workplace, fostered the development of **motivation theory**, which held that *all work consisted largely of simple, uninteresting tasks, and that the only viable method to get people to undertake these tasks was to provide incentives and monitor them carefully*. In order to get as much productivity out of workers as possible, it was believed that a person must reward the desired behaviour and punish the rejected behaviour — otherwise known as the "carrot-and-stick" approach.

During this time, scientists believed in two main drives powering human behaviour: the **biological drive**, including hunger, thirst, and intimacy; and the **reward-punishment drive**. However, scientists began to encounter situations during their experiments where the reward-punishment drive wasn't producing the expected performance results. In 1949, Harry F. Harlow, professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin, began to argue for a third drive: **intrinsic motivation** — *the joy of the task itself*.

Harlow's theory (1950) was based on studies of primate behaviour when solving puzzles. He found that when presented with a puzzle, monkeys seemed to enjoy solving the puzzles without the presence or expectation of rewards. He found these monkeys, driven by intrinsic motivation, solved the puzzles quicker and more accurately than monkeys that received food rewards.

Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (1985) went on to explore and replicate these findings with humans many times over in their studies of families, classrooms, teams, organizations, clinics, and cultures. They concluded that conditions supporting the individual's experience of autonomy, competence, and relatedness foster the greatest motivation for and engagement in activities while enhancing performance, persistence, and creativity.

Dan Pink (2010) provides ample evidence to support the notion that a traditional carrot-and-stick approach can result in:

- Diminished intrinsic motivation (the third drive)
- Lower performance
- Less creativity
- Crowding out of good behaviour
- Unethical behaviour
- Addictions
- Short-term thinking

Research Focus: When the Lights Went on

The term "Hawthorne Effect" was coined in 1950 by Henry A. Landsberger when analyzing earlier

experiments from 1924 to 1932 at the Hawthorne Works (a Western Electric factory outside Chicago). The Hawthorne Works had commissioned a study to see if their workers would become more productive in higher or lower levels of light. (Most industrial/occupational psychology and organizational behaviour textbooks refer to these illumination studies.) In these lighting studies, light intensity was altered to examine its effect on worker productivity. The workers' productivity seemed to improve when changes were made, and slumped when the study ended. It was suggested that the productivity gain occurred as a result of the motivational effect on the workers of the interest being shown in them. George Elton Mayo (1945) described the Hawthorne Effect in terms of a positive emotional effect due to the perception of a sympathetic or interested observer. Although illumination research of workplace lighting formed the basis of the Hawthorne Effect, other changes such as maintaining clean work stations, clearing floors of obstacles, and even relocating work stations resulted in increased productivity for short periods. Today the term is used to identify any type of short-lived increase in productivity based on attention to human needs.

Humanistic psychology gave birth to the self-help movement, with concepts grounded in emotion and intuition. The recent **positive psychology** movement is one form of neo-humanistic psychology that *combines emotion and intuition with reason and research*. Similarly, modern crisis counselling's emphasis on empathetic listening finds its roots in Rogers's humanistic psychology work. In the wider culture, the growing popularity of personal and executive coaching also points to humanistic psychology's success. Humanistic psychology's principles may become increasingly relevant as the nation ages, creating a culture preoccupied with facing death and finding meaning in life.

In 1998, a paradigm shift in thinking occurred when University of Pennsylvania psychologist Martin Seligman, in his presidential address to the American Psychological Association (APA), urged psychology to "turn toward understanding and building the human strengths to complement our emphasis on healing damage" (1998b). Though not denying humanity's flaws, the new approach suggested by positive psychologists recommends focusing on people's strengths and virtues as a point of departure. Rather than analyze the psychopathology underlying alcoholism, for example, positive psychologists might study the resilience of those who have managed a successful recovery through Alcoholics Anonymous. Instead of viewing religion as a delusion and a crutch, as did Freud, they might identify the mechanisms through which a spiritual practice like meditation enhances mental and physical health. Their lab experiments might seek to define not the conditions that induce depraved behaviour, but those that foster generosity, courage, creativity, and laughter.

Seligman developed the concepts of learned optimism (1998a) and authentic happiness (2002). Learned optimism follows an ABCDE model:

- A=Adversity
- B=Belief
- C=Consequence
- D=Disputation
- E=Energization

In this model, when faced with adversity (A) such as a criticism or failure, a person might form the belief (B) that he or she is underperforming or incapable, and consider the consequence (C) of quitting. However, disputation (D) would challenge the underlying assumptions or beliefs that have formed. The

person would then form a new belief in his or her capacity to grow from the critique or learn from the failure. From there, the person would become energized (E) as he or she pursues a new performance path.

In collaboration with Seligman, and within the positive psychology framework, Dr. Mihalyi Csikszentmihályi from Claremont University developed the *theory of flow* (1988; 1990). **Flow** is a *state of optimal performance*. A flow state can be entered while performing any activity, although it is most likely to occur when a person is wholeheartedly performing a task or activity for intrinsic purposes. Csikszentmihályi identified the following six factors as encompassing an experience of flow:

1. Intense and focused concentration on the present moment
2. Merging of action and awareness
3. Loss of reflective self-consciousness
4. Sense of personal control or agency over the situation or activity
5. Distortion of temporal experience (i.e., a person's subjective experience of time being altered)
6. Experience of the activity being intrinsically rewarding (also referred to as an *autotelic experience*)

Flow theory suggests that three conditions have to be met to achieve a flow state. First, a person must be involved in an activity with a clear set of goals and progress. This adds direction and structure to the task. Second, the task at hand must have clear and immediate feedback. This helps the person negotiate any changing demands and allows him or her to adjust performance to maintain the flow state. And last, a person must have a good balance between the perceived challenges of the task at hand and his or her own perceived skills. The person must have confidence in his or her ability to complete the task at hand (Figure 2.16).

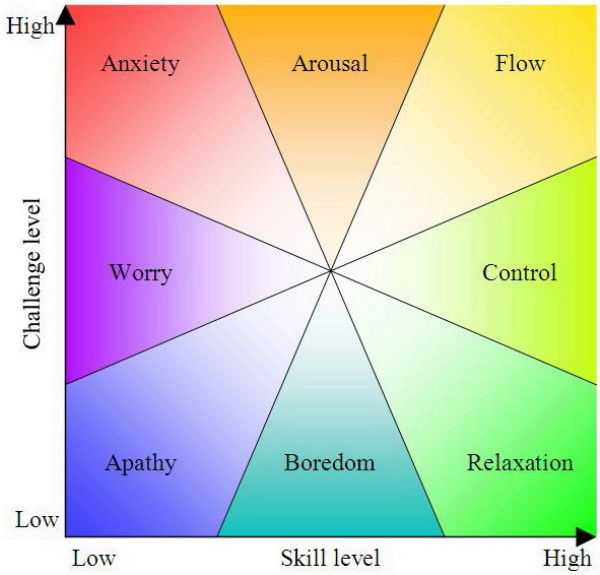


Figure 2.16 Factors of Flow State. [Long Description]

Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology is *the study of mental processes such as attention, memory, perception, language use, problem solving, creativity, and thinking*. Much of the work derived from cognitive psychology has been integrated into various other modern disciplines of psychological study including social psychology, personality psychology, abnormal psychology, developmental psychology, educational psychology, and economics.

Ulric Neisser (1928-2012) is credited with formally coining the term cognitive psychology and defining it as *"all processes by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered, and used"* (1967, page 4). Cognition came to be seen as involved in everything a human being might possibly do: every psychological phenomenon is a cognitive phenomenon. Theories of cognition include developmental, cultural, neural, computational, and moral perspectives.

While behaviourism and cognitive schools of psychological thought may not agree theoretically, they have complemented each other in practical therapeutic applications, such as in *cognitive-behavioural therapy* (CBT) that has demonstrable utility in treating certain pathologies, such as simple phobias, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and addiction. CBT replaces maladaptive strategies with more adaptive ones by challenging ways of thinking and reacting. **CBT** techniques focus on *helping individuals challenge their patterns and beliefs and replace erroneous thinking,* such as overgeneralizing, magnifying negatives, or catastrophizing, with more realistic and effective thoughts, thus decreasing self-defeating emotions and behaviour and breaking what can otherwise become a negative cycle. These errors in thinking are known as "cognitive distortions." CBT helps individuals take a more open, mindful, and aware posture toward their distorted thoughts and feelings so as to diminish their impact (Hayes, Villatte, Levin, & Hildebrandt, 2011).

Attention

The psychological definition of **attention** is a *state of focused awareness on a subset of the available perceptual information*. The key function of attention is to filter out irrelevant data, enabling the desired data to be distributed to the other mental processes. The human brain may, at times, simultaneously receive inputs in the form of auditory, visual, olfactory, taste, and tactile information. Without the ability to filter out some or most of that simultaneous information and focus on one or typically two inputs at most, the brain would become overloaded as a person attempted to process all the information.

Memory

Modern conceptions of memory typically break it down into three main subclasses:

1. **Procedural memory:** *memory for the performance of particular types of action*, is often activated on a subconscious level, or at most requires a minimal amount of conscious effort (e.g., driving to work along the same route).
2. **Semantic memory:** *the encyclopedic knowledge* that a person possesses, such as what the Eiffel Tower looks like, or the name of a friend from Grade 6.
3. **Episodic memory:** *memory of autobiographical events that can be explicitly stated,* contains all memories that are temporal in nature, such as when you last brushed your teeth, or where

you were when you heard about a major news event.

Perception

Perception involves both the physical senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch, and proprioception) as well as the cognitive processes involved in selecting and interpreting those senses. It is how people come to understand the world around them through interpretation of stimuli.

Language use

Cognitive psychologists began exploring the cognitive processes involved with language in the 1870s when Carl Wernicke (1848-1905) proposed a model for the mental processing of language (1875/1995). Significant work has been done recently on understanding the timing of language acquisition and how it can be used to determine if a child has, or is at risk of developing, a learning disability.

Problem solving

Metacognition involves *conscious thought about thought processes* and might include monitoring a person's performance on a given task, understanding a person's capabilities on particular mental tasks, or observing a person's ability to apply cognitive strategies. Much of the current study regarding metacognition within the field of cognitive psychology deals with its application within the area of education. Educators strive to increase students' metacognitive abilities in order to enhance their learning, study habits, goal setting, and self-regulation.

Research Focus: Divided Attention

Relating to the field of cognitive psychology is the concept of **divided attention**, which refers to a person's *ability to focus on two or more things at one time.* A number of early studies dealt with the ability of a person wearing headphones to discern meaningful conversation when presented with different messages in each ear. Key findings demonstrated the mind's ability to focus on one message, while still being somewhat aware of information taken in by the ear that was not consciously attended to. Participants who were wearing earphones were told that they would be hearing separate messages in each ear and that they were expected to attend only to information related to basketball. When the experiment started, the message about basketball was presented to the left ear, and non-relevant information was presented to the right ear. At some point the message related to basketball was switched to the right ear, and the non-relevant information to the left ear. When this happened, the listener was usually able to repeat the entire message at the end, having attended to the left or right ear only when it was appropriate (Glucksberg & Cowan, 1970).

Evolutionary Psychology

Evolutionary psychology has emerged as a major perspective in psychology. It *seeks to develop and understand ways of expanding the emotional connection between individuals and the natural world,* thereby assisting individuals with developing sustainable lifestyles and remedying alienation from nature. The main premise of evolutionary psychology is that while today the human mind is shaped by the modern social world, it is adapted to the natural environment in which it evolved. According to the hypothesis of biologist E.O. Wilson, human beings have an innate instinct to connect emotionally

with nature. What distinguishes evolutionary psychologists from many cognitive psychologists is the proposal that the relevant internal mechanisms are **adaptations** — *products of natural selection* — that helped our ancestors get around the world, survive, and reproduce. Evolutionary psychology is founded on several core premises:

- The brain is an information-processing device, and it produces behaviour in response to external and internal inputs.
- The brain's adaptive mechanisms were shaped by natural selection.
- Different neural mechanisms are specialized for solving problems in humanity's evolutionary past.
- The brain has evolved specialized neural mechanisms that were designed for solving problems that recurred over deep evolutionary time, giving modern humans stone-age minds.
- Most contents and processes of the brain are unconscious; and most mental problems that seem easy to solve are actually extremely difficult problems that are solved unconsciously by complicated neural mechanisms.
- Human psychology consists of many specialized mechanisms, each sensitive to different classes of information or inputs. These mechanisms combine to produce manifest behaviour.

Evolutionary psychologists sometimes present their approach as potentially unifying, or providing a foundation for, all other work that aims to explain human behaviour (Tooby & Cosmides, 1992). This claim has been met with skepticism by many social scientists who see a role for multiple types of explanation of human behaviour, some of which are not reducible to biological explanations of any sort.

Key Takeaways

- Humanistic psychology emerged as the "third force" in psychology after psychodynamic and behaviourist psychologies.
- The key principles of humanistic psychology include human capacity for self-actualization, self-direction, and choice.
- Carl Rogers identified five principles of a fully functioning person as open, present, trusting, creative, and fulfilled.
- Humanistic psychology relies on subjective factors and utilizes qualitative methods of study.
- Abraham Maslow introduced a hierarchy of human needs including physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.
- With the advance of humanistic psychology, human motivation theory shifted from a purely external or extrinsic focus to the acknowledgment of an intrinsic focus.
- Positive psychology recommends focusing on people's strengths and virtues as a point of departure rather than analyzing the underlying psychopathology.
- Flow is a state of optimal performance that can be entered when a person is wholeheartedly performing a task or activity for intrinsic purposes.
- Cognitive psychology is the study of mental processes such as attention, memory, perception,

language use, problem solving, creativity, and thinking.

- The main premise of evolutionary psychology is that while today the human mind is shaped by the modern social world, it is adapted to the natural environment in which it evolved.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. What model do you believe the current educational system follows? Are students trained according to the behavioural model or do educators also address the subjective beliefs, thoughts, and feelings of the student?
2. What are some of the psychological traits you possess that might contribute to your survival or "fitness"? Can you provide an example of when this trait contributed to your success?
3. Can you see applications for the principles of evolutionary psychology in the workplace or community (e.g., certain psychological qualities will ensure that you perform more effectively in a job interview)?
4. Conduct a cultural analysis of your family, cohort, or social group. What are some of the values and beliefs communicated in your family or group? In what shape or form are these values manifested or expressed? Through what ways of doing, artifacts, activities, and/or traditions are these values communicated or expressed?

Image Attributions

Figure 2.15: Diagram of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. by J. Finkelstein (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs.png) used under CC BY SA 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en).

Figure 2.16: Challenge vs skill Commons by Dr. enh (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Challenge_vs_skill_Commons.jpg) is in the public domain.

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Long Descriptions

Figure 2.12 long description: In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, there are five levels.

1. Physiological needs: Breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion.
2. Safety needs: Security of body, of employment, of resources, of morality, of the family, of health, of property.
3. Long and belonging needs: Friendship, family, sexual intimacy.
4. Esteem needs: Self-esteem, confidence, chievement, respect of others, respect by others.
5. Self-Actualization: Morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice,

acceptance of facts.

[Return to Figure 2.15]

Figure 2.16 long description: Factors of Flow State.

	Low Skill Level	**Medium Skill Level**	**High Skill Level**
Low Challenge	Apathy	Boredom	Relaxation
Medium Challenge	Worry		Control
High Challenge	Anxiety	Arousal	***Flow***

[Return to Figure 2.16]

Notes

1. Adapted by J. Walinga.
2. A growth need allows one to reach full potential as a human being.

2.5 Chapter Summary

Jennifer Walinga

There are many different ways to think about human experience, thought, and behaviour. The multiple perspectives in modern psychology provide researchers and students a variety of ways to approach problems and to understand, explain, predict, and resolve human thought and behaviour.

Perhaps the field of psychology struggles to find a unifying paradigm because human beings are so multifaceted, and human experience so diverse and complex. As with many areas of life, psychology is perhaps best understood through its complexity: psychology seems to move between poles and require a dialectical examination. Human beings are complex systems living within complex adaptive systems (Figure 2.17), possessing multiple ways of knowing and learning and therefore requiring multiple perspectives in order to shed light on the meaning of any one human experience.

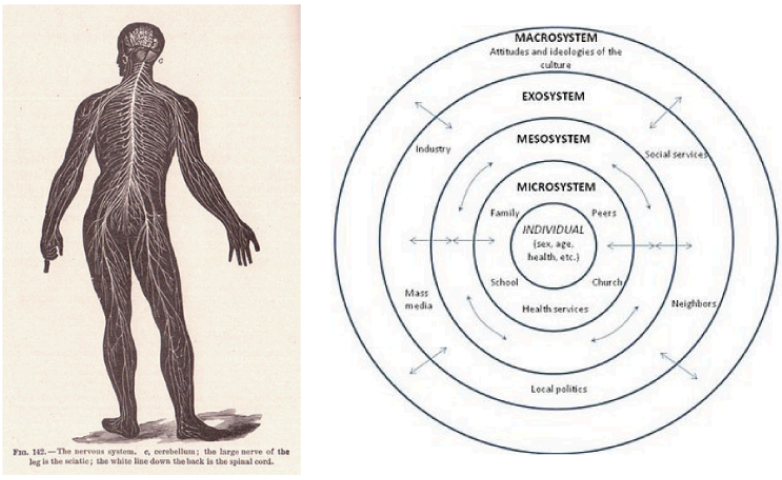


Figure 2.17 Complex Adaptive Systems. [Long Description]

The greatest challenge of modern psychology may be holding the whole of human system experience in our minds – biology, cognition, emotion, and belief over time and within an environment and culture – and distilling an understanding from the complex interactions of so many factors.

Image Attributions

Figure 2.17: body by Sue Clark (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Page_214_Nervous_System.jpg) is in the public domain; bullseye from Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecological_systems_theory) used under a CC-BY-SA license 3.0 Unported license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).

Long Description

Figure 2.17 long description: The individual is surrounded by multiple systems which exercise influence on the individual.

1. An individual's sex, age, health, etc.
2. Microsystem: Family, peers, church, health services, school.
3. Mesosystem.
4. Exosystem: Social services, neighbours, local politics, mass media, industry.
5. Macrosystem: Attitudes and ideologies of the culture.

[Return to Figure 2.17]

Chapter 3. Psychological Science

3. Psychological Science

Psychologists study the behaviour of both humans and animals. The main purpose of this research is to help us understand people and to improve the quality of human lives. The results of psychological research are relevant to problems such as learning and memory, homelessness, psychological disorders, family instability, and aggressive behaviour and violence. Psychological research is used in a range of important areas, from public policy to driver safety. It guides court rulings with respect to racism and sexism (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954; Fiske, Bersoff, Borgida, Deaux, & Heilman, 1991), as well as court procedure, in the use of lie detectors during criminal trials, for example (Saxe, Dougherty, & Cross, 1985). Psychological research helps us understand how driver behaviour affects safety (Fajen & Warren, 2003), which methods of educating children are most effective (Alexander & Winne, 2006; Woolfolk-Hoy, 2005), how to best detect deception (DePaulo et al., 2003), and the causes of terrorism (Borum, 2004).

Some psychological research is basic research. **Basic research** is *research that answers fundamental questions about behaviour*. For instance, biopsychologists study how nerves conduct impulses from the receptors in the skin to the brain, and cognitive psychologists investigate how different types of studying influence memory for pictures and words. There is no particular reason to examine such things except to acquire a better knowledge of how these processes occur. **Applied research** is *research that investigates issues that have implications for everyday life and provides solutions to everyday problems*. Applied research has been conducted to study, among many other things, the most effective methods for reducing depression, the types of advertising campaigns that serve to reduce drug and alcohol abuse, the key predictors of managerial success in business, and the indicators of effective government programs.

Basic research and applied research inform each other, and advances in science occur more rapidly when each type of research is conducted (Lewin, 1999). For instance, although research concerning the role of practice on memory for lists of words is basic in orientation, the results could potentially be applied to help children learn to read. Correspondingly, psychologist-practitioners who wish to reduce the spread of AIDS or to promote volunteering frequently base their programs on the results of basic research. This basic AIDS or volunteering research is then applied to help change people’s attitudes and behaviours.

The results of psychological research are reported primarily in research articles published in scientific journals, and your instructor may require you to read some of these. The research reported in scientific journals has been evaluated, critiqued, and improved by scientists in the field through the process of *peer review*. In this book there are many citations of original research articles, and I encourage you to read those reports when you find a topic interesting. Most of these papers are readily available online through your college or university library. It is only by reading the original reports that you will really see how the research process works. A list of some of the most important journals in psychology is provided here for your information.

Psychological Journals

The following is a list of some of the most important journals in various subdisciplines of psychology. The research articles in these journals are likely to be available in your college or university library. You should try to read the primary source material in these journals when you can.

General Psychology

- *American Journal of Psychology*
- *American Psychologist*
- *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*
- *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*
- *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology*
- *Canadian Psychology*
- *Psychological Bulletin*
- *Psychological Methods*
- *Psychological Review*
- *Psychological Science*

Biopsychology and Neuroscience

- *Behavioral Neuroscience*
- *Journal of Comparative Psychology*
- *Psychophysiology*

Clinical and Counselling Psychology

- *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*
- *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*
- *Journal of Counselling Psychology*

Cognitive Psychology

- *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology*
- *Cognition*
- *Cognitive Psychology*
- *Journal of Memory and Language*
- *Perception & Psychophysics*

Cross-Cultural, Personality, and Social Psychology

- *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*
- *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*
- *Journal of Personality*

- *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*
- *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*

Developmental Psychology

- *Child Development*
- *Developmental Psychology*

Educational and School Psychology

- *Educational Psychologist*
- *Journal of Educational Psychology*
- *Review of Educational Research*

Environmental, Industrial, and Organizational Psychology

- *Journal of Applied Psychology*
- *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*
- *Organizational Psychology*
- *Organizational Research Methods*
- *Personnel Psychology*

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3.1 Psychologists Use the Scientific Method to Guide Their Research

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the principles of the scientific method and explain its importance in conducting and interpreting research.
2. Differentiate laws from theories and explain how research hypotheses are developed and tested.
3. Discuss the procedures that researchers use to ensure that their research with humans and with animals is ethical.

Psychologists aren't the only people who seek to understand human behaviour and solve social problems. Philosophers, religious leaders, and politicians, among others, also strive to provide explanations for human behaviour. But psychologists believe that research is the best tool for understanding human beings and their relationships with others. Rather than accepting the claim of a philosopher that people do (or do not) have free will, a psychologist would collect data to empirically test whether or not people are able to actively control their own behaviour. Rather than accepting a politician's contention that creating (or abandoning) a new centre for mental health will improve the lives of individuals in the inner city, a psychologist would empirically assess the effects of receiving mental health treatment on the quality of life of the recipients. The statements made by psychologists are **empirical,** which means they are *based on systematic collection and analysis of data*.

The Scientific Method

All scientists (whether they are physicists, chemists, biologists, sociologists, or psychologists) are engaged in the basic processes of collecting data and drawing conclusions about those data. The methods used by scientists have developed over many years and provide a common framework for developing, organizing, and sharing information. The **scientific method** is *the set of assumptions, rules, and procedures scientists use to conduct research.*

In addition to requiring that science be empirical, the scientific method demands that the procedures used be **objective**, or *free from the personal bias or emotions of the scientist*. The scientific method proscribes how scientists collect and analyze data, how they draw conclusions from data, and how they share data with others. These rules increase objectivity by placing data under the scrutiny of other scientists and even the public at large. Because data are reported objectively, other scientists know exactly how the scientist collected and analyzed the data. This means that they do not have to rely only on the scientist's own interpretation of the data; they may draw their own, potentially different, conclusions.

Most new research is designed to **replicate** — that is, *to repeat, add to, or modify* — previous research findings. The scientific method therefore results in an accumulation of scientific knowledge through the reporting of research and the addition to and modification of these reported findings by other scientists.

Laws and Theories as Organizing Principles

One goal of research is to organize information into meaningful statements that can be applied in many situations. *Principles that are so general as to apply to all situations in a given domain of inquiry* are known as **laws**. There are well-known laws in the physical sciences, such as the law of gravity and the laws of thermodynamics, and there are some universally accepted laws in psychology, such as the law of effect and Weber's law. But because laws are very general principles and their validity has already been well established, they are themselves rarely directly subjected to scientific test.

The next step down from laws in the hierarchy of organizing principles is theory. A **theory** is *an integrated set of principles that explains and predicts many, but not all, observed relationships within a given domain of inquiry*. One example of an important theory in psychology is the **stage theory of cognitive development** proposed by the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget. The theory *states that children pass through a series of cognitive stages as they grow, each of which must be mastered in succession before movement to the next cognitive stage can occur*. This is an extremely useful theory in human development because it can be applied to many different content areas and can be tested in many different ways.

Good theories have four important characteristics. First, good theories are **general**, meaning *they summarize many different outcomes*. Second, they are **parsimonious**, meaning *they provide the simplest possible account of those outcomes*. The stage theory of cognitive development meets both of these requirements. It can account for developmental changes in behaviour across a wide variety of domains, and yet it does so parsimoniously — by hypothesizing a simple set of cognitive stages. Third, good theories provide ideas for future research. The stage theory of cognitive development has been applied not only to learning about cognitive skills, but also to the study of children's moral (Kohlberg, 1966) and gender (Ruble & Martin, 1998) development.

Finally, good theories are **falsifiable** (Popper, 1959), which means *the variables of interest can be adequately measured and the relationships between the variables that are predicted by the theory can be shown through research to be incorrect*. The stage theory of cognitive development is falsifiable because the stages of cognitive reasoning can be measured and because if research discovers, for instance, that children learn new tasks before they have reached the cognitive stage hypothesized to be required for that task, then the theory will be shown to be incorrect.

No single theory is able to account for all behaviour in all cases. Rather, theories are each limited in that they make accurate predictions in some situations or for some people but not in other situations or for other people. As a result, there is a constant exchange between theory and data: existing theories are modified on the basis of collected data, and the new modified theories then make new predictions that are tested by new data, and so forth. When a better theory is found, it will replace the old one. This is part of the accumulation of scientific knowledge.

The Research Hypothesis

Theories are usually framed too broadly to be tested in a single experiment. Therefore, scientists use a more precise statement of the presumed relationship between specific parts of a theory — a research hypothesis — as the basis for their research. A **research hypothesis** is *a specific and falsifiable prediction about the relationship between or among two or more variables*, where a **variable** is *any*

attribute that can assume different values among different people or across different times or places. The research hypothesis states the existence of a relationship between the variables of interest and the specific direction of that relationship. For instance, the research hypothesis "Using marijuana will reduce learning" predicts that there is a relationship between one variable, "using marijuana," and another variable called "learning." Similarly, in the research hypothesis "Participating in psychotherapy will reduce anxiety," the variables that are expected to be related are "participating in psychotherapy" and "level of anxiety."

When stated in an abstract manner, the ideas that form the basis of a research hypothesis are known as conceptual variables. **Conceptual variables** are *abstract ideas that form the basis of research hypotheses*. Sometimes the conceptual variables are rather simple — for instance, age, gender, or weight. In other cases the conceptual variables represent more complex ideas, such as anxiety, cognitive development, learning, self-esteem, or sexism.

The first step in testing a research hypothesis involves turning the conceptual variables into **measured variables**, which are *variables consisting of numbers that represent the conceptual variables*. For instance, the conceptual variable "participating in psychotherapy" could be represented as the measured variable "number of psychotherapy hours the patient has accrued," and the conceptual variable "using marijuana" could be assessed by having the research participants rate, on a scale from 1 to 10, how often they use marijuana or by administering a blood test that measures the presence of the chemicals in marijuana.

Psychologists use the term **operational definition** to refer to *a precise statement of how a conceptual variable is turned into a measured variable*. The relationship between conceptual and measured variables in a research hypothesis is diagrammed in Figure 3.1. The conceptual variables are represented in circles at the top of the figure (Psychotherapy and anxiety), and the measured variables are represented in squares at the bottom (number of hours the patient has spent in psychotherapy and anxiety concerns as reported by the patient). The two vertical arrows, which lead from the conceptual variables to the measured variables, represent the operational definitions of the two variables. The arrows indicate the expectation that changes in the conceptual variables (psychotherapy and anxiety) will cause changes in the corresponding measured variables (number of hours in psychotherapy and reported anxiety concernts). The measured variables are then used to draw inferences about the conceptual variables.

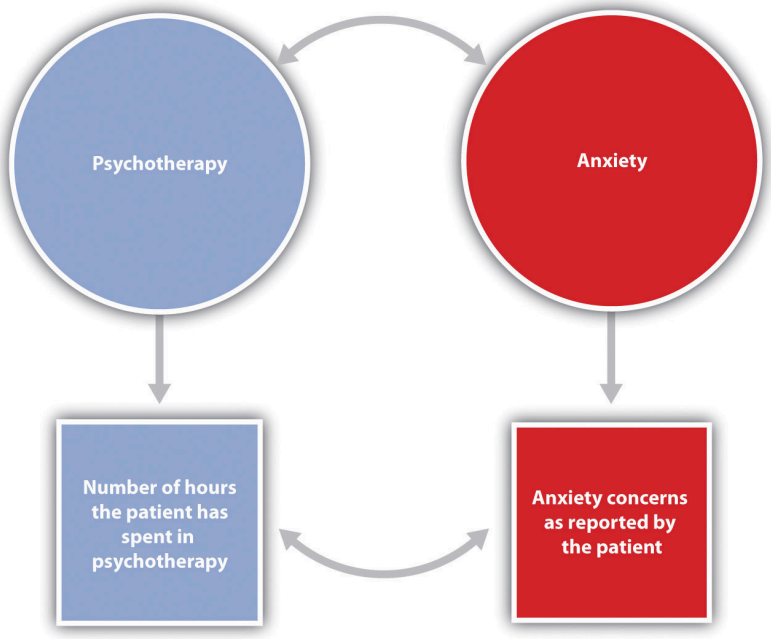


Figure 3.1. Research Hypothesis. In this research hypothesis, the conceptual variable of attending psychotherapy is operationalized using the number of hours of psychotherapy the client has completed, and the conceptual variable of anxiety is operationalized using self-reported levels of anxiety. The research hypothesis is that more psychotherapy will be related to less reported anxiety.

Table 3.1 lists some potential operational definitions of conceptual variables that have been used in psychological research. As you read through this list, note that in contrast to the abstract conceptual variables, the measured variables are very specific. This specificity is important for two reasons. First, more specific definitions mean that there is less danger that the collected data will be misunderstood by others. Second, specific definitions will enable future researchers to replicate the research.

Table 3.1 Examples of the Operational Definitions of Conceptual Variables that Have Been Used in Psychological Research

[Skip Table]	
Conceptual variable	**Operational definitions**
Aggression	• Number of presses of a button that administers shock to another student • Number of seconds taken to honk the horn at the car ahead after a stoplight turns green
Interpersonal attraction	• Number of inches that an individual places his or her chair away from another person • Number of millimeters of pupil dilation when one person looks at another
Employee satisfaction	• Number of days per month an employee shows up to work on time • Rating of job satisfaction from 1 (*not at all satisfied*) to 9 (*extremely satisfied*)
Decision-making skills	• Number of groups able to correctly solve a group performance task • Number of seconds in which a person solves a problem
Depression	• Number of negative words used in a creative story • Number of appointments made with a psychotherapist

Conducting Ethical Research

One of the questions that all scientists must address concerns the ethics of their research. Physicists are concerned about the potentially harmful outcomes of their experiments with nuclear materials. Biologists worry about the potential outcomes of creating genetically engineered human babies. Medical researchers agonize over the ethics of withholding potentially beneficial drugs from control groups in clinical trials. Likewise, psychologists are continually considering the ethics of their research.

Research in psychology may cause some stress, harm, or inconvenience for the people who participate in that research. For instance, researchers may require introductory psychology students to participate in research projects and then deceive these students, at least temporarily, about the nature of the research. Psychologists may induce stress, anxiety, or negative moods in their participants, expose them to weak electrical shocks, or convince them to behave in ways that violate their moral standards. And researchers may sometimes use animals in their research, potentially harming them in the process.

Decisions about whether research is ethical are made using established ethical codes developed by scientific organizations, such as the Canadian Psychological Association, and federal governments. In

Canada, the federal agencies, Health Canada, and the Canadian Institute for Health Research provide the guidelines for ethical standards in research. Some research, such as the research conducted by the Nazis on prisoners during World War II, is perceived as immoral by almost everyone. Other procedures, such as the use of animals in research testing the effectiveness of drugs, are more controversial.

Scientific research has provided information that has improved the lives of many people. Therefore, it is unreasonable to argue that because scientific research has costs, no research should be conducted. This argument fails to consider the fact that there are significant costs to not doing research and that these costs may be greater than the potential costs of conducting the research (Rosenthal, 1994). In each case, before beginning to conduct the research, scientists have attempted to determine the potential risks and benefits of the research and have come to the conclusion that the potential benefits of conducting the research outweigh the potential costs to the research participants.

Characteristics of an Ethical Research Project Using Human Participants

- Trust and positive rapport are created between the researcher and the participant.
- The rights of both the experimenter and participant are considered, and the relationship between them is mutually beneficial.
- The experimenter treats the participant with concern and respect and attempts to make the research experience a pleasant and informative one.
- Before the research begins, the participant is given all information relevant to his or her decision to participate, including any possibilities of physical danger or psychological stress.
- The participant is given a chance to have questions about the procedure answered, thus guaranteeing his or her free choice about participating.
- After the experiment is over, any deception that has been used is made public, and the necessity for it is explained.
- The experimenter carefully debriefs the participant, explaining the underlying research hypothesis and the purpose of the experimental procedure in detail and answering any questions.
- The experimenter provides information about how he or she can be contacted and offers to provide information about the results of the research if the participant is interested in receiving it. (Stangor, 2011)

This list presents some of the most important factors that psychologists take into consideration when designing their research. The most direct ethical concern of the scientist is to prevent harm to the research participants. One example is the well-known research of Stanley Milgram (1974) investigating obedience to authority. In these studies, participants were induced by an experimenter to administer electric shocks to another person so that Milgram could study the extent to which they would obey the demands of an authority figure. Most participants evidenced high levels of stress resulting from the psychological conflict they experienced between engaging in aggressive and dangerous behaviour and following the instructions of the experimenter. Studies such as those by Milgram are no longer conducted because the scientific community is now much more sensitized to the potential of such procedures to create emotional discomfort or harm.

Another goal of ethical research is to guarantee that participants have free choice regarding whether

they wish to participate in research. Students in psychology classes may be allowed, or even required, to participate in research, but they are also always given an option to choose a different study to be in, or to perform other activities instead. And once an experiment begins, the research participant is always free to leave the experiment if he or she wishes to. Concerns with free choice also occur in institutional settings, such as in schools, hospitals, corporations, and prisons, when individuals are required by the institutions to take certain tests, or when employees are told or asked to participate in research.

Researchers must also protect the privacy of the research participants. In some cases data can be kept anonymous by not having the respondents put any identifying information on their questionnaires. In other cases the data cannot be anonymous because the researcher needs to keep track of which respondent contributed the data. In this case, one technique is to have each participant use a unique code number to identify his or her data, such as the last four digits of the student ID number. In this way the researcher can keep track of which person completed which questionnaire, but no one will be able to connect the data with the individual who contributed them.

Perhaps the most widespread ethical concern to the participants in behavioural research is the extent to which researchers employ deception. **Deception** *occurs whenever research participants are not completely and fully informed about the nature of the research project before participating in it*. Deception may occur in an active way, such as when the researcher tells the participants that he or she is studying learning when in fact the experiment really concerns obedience to authority. In other cases the deception is more passive, such as when participants are not told about the hypothesis being studied or the potential use of the data being collected.

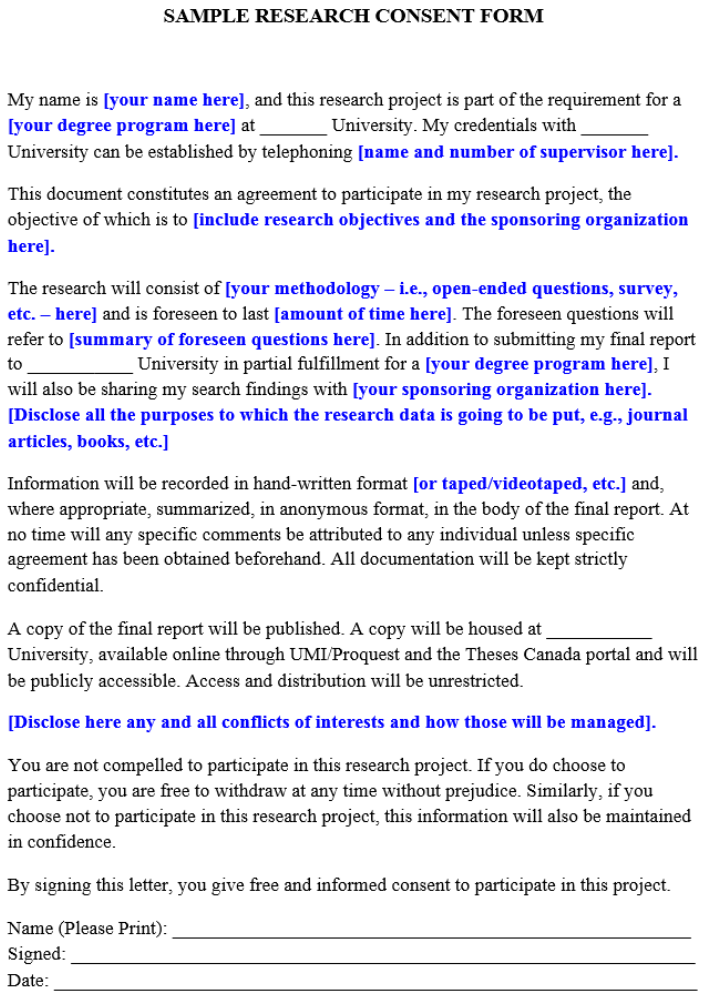
Some researchers have argued that no deception should ever be used in any research (Baumrind, 1985). They argue that participants should always be told the complete truth about the nature of the research they are in, and that when participants are deceived there will be negative consequences, such as the possibility that participants may arrive at other studies already expecting to be deceived. Other psychologists defend the use of deception on the grounds that it is needed to get participants to act naturally and to enable the study of psychological phenomena that might not otherwise get investigated. They argue that it would be impossible to study topics such as altruism, aggression, obedience, and stereotyping without using deception because if participants were informed ahead of time what the study involved, this knowledge would certainly change their behaviour. The codes of ethics of the Canadian Psychological Association and the Tri-Council Policy Statement of Canada's three federal research agencies (the Canadian Institute of Health Research [CIHR], the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada [NSERC], and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada [SSHRC] or "the Agencies") allow researchers to use deception, but these codes also require them to explicitly consider how their research might be conducted without the use of deception.

Ensuring that Research Is Ethical

Making decisions about the ethics of research involves weighing the costs and benefits of conducting versus not conducting a given research project. The costs involve potential harm to the research participants and to the field, whereas the benefits include the potential for advancing knowledge about human behaviour and offering various advantages, some educational, to the individual participants. Most generally, the ethics of a given research project are determined through a **cost-benefit analysis**, *in which the costs are compared with the benefits*. If the potential costs of the research appear to outweigh any potential benefits that might come from it, then the research should not proceed.

Arriving at a cost-benefit ratio is not simple. For one thing, there is no way to know ahead of time what the effects of a given procedure will be on every person or animal who participates or what benefit to society the research is likely to produce. In addition, what is ethical is defined by the current state of thinking within society, and thus perceived costs and benefits change over time. In Canada, the Tri-Council regulations require that all universities receiving funds from the Agencies set up an *Ethical Review Board (ERB)* to determine whether proposed research meets department regulations. The **ERB** is *a committee of at least five members whose goal it is to determine the cost-benefit ratio of research conducted within an institution*. The ERB must approve the procedures of all the research conducted at the institution before the research can begin. The board may suggest modifications to the procedures, or (in rare cases) it may inform the scientist that the research violates Tri-Council Research Policy Statement and thus cannot be conducted at all.

One important tool for ensuring that research is ethical is the use of *informed consent*. A sample informed consent form is shown in Figure 3.2, **Informed consent**, *conducted before a participant begins a research session, is designed to explain the research procedures and inform the participant of his or her rights during the investigation*. The informed consent explains as much as possible about the true nature of the study, particularly everything that might be expected to influence willingness to participate, but it may in some cases withhold some information that allows the study to work.



SAMPLE RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

My name is **[your name here]**, and this research project is part of the requirement for a **[your degree program here]** at _____ University. My credentials with _____ University can be established by telephoning **[name and number of supervisor here].**

This document constitutes an agreement to participate in my research project, the objective of which is to **[include research objectives and the sponsoring organization here].**

The research will consist of **[your methodology – i.e., open-ended questions, survey, etc. – here]** and is foreseen to last **[amount of time here]**. The foreseen questions will refer to **[summary of foreseen questions here]**. In addition to submitting my final report to _____ University in partial fulfillment for a **[your degree program here]**, I will also be sharing my search findings with **[your sponsoring organization here]. [Disclose all the purposes to which the research data is going to be put, e.g., journal articles, books, etc.]**

Information will be recorded in hand-written format **[or taped/videotaped, etc.]** and, where appropriate, summarized, in anonymous format, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

A copy of the final report will be published. A copy will be housed at _____ University, available online through UMI/Proquest and the Theses Canada portal and will be publicly accessible. Access and distribution will be unrestricted.

[Disclose here any and all conflicts of interests and how those will be managed].

You are not compelled to participate in this research project. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

By signing this letter, you give free and informed consent to participate in this project.

Name (Please Print): _____
Signed: _____
Date: _____

Figure 3.2 Sample Research Consent Form [Long Description] (by J. Walinga)

The informed consent form explains the research procedures and informs the participant of his or her rights during the investigation. Informed consent should address the following issues:

- A very general statement about the purpose of the study
- A brief description of what the participants will be asked to do
- A brief description of the risks, if any, and what the researcher will do to restore the participant
- A statement informing participants that they may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without being penalized
- A statement regarding how the participant's confidentiality will be protected
- Encouragement to ask questions about participation
- Instructions regarding whom to contact if there are concerns
- Information regarding where the subjects may be informed about the study's findings

Because participating in research has the potential for producing long-term changes in the research participants, all participants should be fully debriefed immediately after their participation. The **debriefing** is *a procedure designed to fully explain the purposes and procedures of the research and remove any harmful after-effects of participation*.

Research with Animals

Because animals make up an important part of the natural world, and because some research cannot be conducted using humans, animals are also participants in psychological research (Figure 3.3). Most psychological research using animals is now conducted with rats, mice, and birds, and the use of other animals in research is declining (Thomas & Blackman, 1992). As with ethical decisions involving human participants, a set of basic principles has been developed that helps researchers make informed decisions about such research; a summary is shown below.

Canadian Psychological Association Guidelines on Humane Care and Use of Animals in Research

The following are some of the most important ethical principles from the Canadian Psychological Association's (CPA) guidelines on research with animals.

- II.45 Not use animals in their research unless there is a reasonable expectation that the research will increase understanding of the structures and processes underlying behaviour, or increase understanding of the particular animal species used in the study, or result eventually in benefits to the health and welfare of humans or other animals.
- II.46 Use a procedure subjecting animals to pain, stress, or privation only if an alternative procedure is unavailable and the goal is justified by its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value.
- II.47 Make every effort to minimize the discomfort, illness, and pain of animals. This would include performing surgical procedures only under appropriate anaesthesia, using techniques to avoid infection and minimize pain during and after surgery and, if disposing of experimental animals is carried out at the termination of the study, doing so in a humane way. (Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists)
- II.48 Use animals in classroom demonstrations only if the instructional objectives cannot be achieved through the use of video-tapes, films, or other methods, and if the type of demonstration is warranted by the anticipated instructional gain (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000).



Figure 3.3 Animal Research. Psychologists may use animals in their research, but they make reasonable efforts to minimize the discomfort the animals experience.

Because the use of animals in research involves a personal value, people naturally disagree about this practice. Although many people accept the value of such research (Plous, 1996), a minority of people, including animal-rights activists, believe that it is ethically wrong to conduct research on animals. This argument is based on the assumption that because animals are living creatures just as humans are, no harm should ever be done to them.

Most scientists, however, reject this view. They argue that such beliefs ignore the potential benefits that have come, and continue to come, from research with animals. For instance, drugs that can reduce the incidence of cancer or AIDS may first be tested on animals, and surgery that can save human lives may first be practised on animals. Research on animals has also led to a better understanding of the physiological causes of depression, phobias, and stress, among other illnesses. In contrast to animal-rights activists, then, scientists believe that because there are many benefits that accrue from animal research, such research can and should continue as long as the humane treatment of the animals used in the research is guaranteed.

Key Takeaways

- Psychologists use the scientific method to generate, accumulate, and report scientific knowledge.
- Basic research, which answers questions about behaviour, and applied research, which finds solutions to everyday problems, inform each other and work together to advance science.
- Research reports describing scientific studies are published in scientific journals so that other scientists and laypersons may review the empirical findings.
- Organizing principles, including laws, theories, and research hypotheses, give structure and uniformity to scientific methods.
- Concerns for conducting ethical research are paramount. Researchers ensure that participants are given free choice to participate and that their privacy is protected. Informed consent and

debriefing help provide humane treatment of participants.

- A cost-benefit analysis is used to determine what research should and should not be allowed to proceed.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Give an example from personal experience of how you or someone you know has benefited from the results of scientific research.
2. Find and discuss a research project that in your opinion has ethical concerns. Explain why you find these concerns to be troubling.
3. Indicate your personal feelings about the use of animals in research. When should and should not animals be used? What principles have you used to come to these conclusions?

Image Attributions

Figure 3.3: "Wistar rat" by Janet Stephens (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wistar_rat.jpg) is in the public domain.

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Long Descriptions

Figure 3.2 long description: Sample research consent form.

My name is [insert your name], and this research project is part of the requirement for a [insert your degree program] at [blank] University. My credentials with [blank] university can be established by telephoning [insert name and number of supervisor].

This document constitutes an agreement to participate in my research project, the objective of which is to [insert research objectives and the sponsoring organization here].

The research will consist of [insert your methodology] and its foreseen to last [insert amount of time]. The foreseen questions will refer to [insert summary of foreseen questions]. In addition to submitting my final report to [blank] University in partial fulfillment for a [insert your degree program], I will also be sharing my search findings with [insert your sponsoring organization]. [Disclose all the purposes to which the research data is going to be put, e.g. journal articles, books, etc.].

Information will be recorded in hand-written format (or taped/videotaped, etc) and where appropriate, summarized, in anonymous format, in the body of the final report. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

A copy of the final report will be published. A copy will be housed at [blank] university, available online through [blank] and will be publicly accessible. Access and distribution will be unrestricted.

[Disclose any and all conflicts of interest and how those will be managed.]

You are not compelled to participate in this research project. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

By signing this letter, you give free and informed consent to participate in this project.

Name (Please print), Signed: Date: [Return to Figure 3.2]

3.2 Psychologists Use Descriptive, Correlational, and Experimental Research Designs to Understand Behaviour

Learning Objectives

1. Differentiate the goals of descriptive, correlational, and experimental research designs and explain the advantages and disadvantages of each.
2. Explain the goals of descriptive research and the statistical techniques used to interpret it.
3. Summarize the uses of correlational research and describe why correlational research cannot be used to infer causality.
4. Review the procedures of experimental research and explain how it can be used to draw causal inferences.

Psychologists agree that if their ideas and theories about human behaviour are to be taken seriously, they must be backed up by data. However, the research of different psychologists is designed with different goals in mind, and the different goals require different approaches. These varying approaches, summarized in Table 3.2, are known as *research designs*. A **research design** is *the specific method a researcher uses to collect, analyze, and interpret data*. Psychologists use three major types of research designs in their research, and each provides an essential avenue for scientific investigation. **Descriptive research** is *research designed to provide a snapshot of the current state of affairs*. **Correlational research** is *research designed to discover relationships among variables and to allow the prediction of future events from present knowledge*. **Experimental research** is *research in which initial equivalence among research participants in more than one group is created, followed by a manipulation of a given experience for these groups and a measurement of the influence of the manipulation*. Each of the three research designs varies according to its strengths and limitations, and it is important to understand how each differs.

Table 3.2 Characteristics of the Three Research Designs

[Skip Table]			
Research design	**Goal**	**Advantages**	**Disadvantages**
Descriptive	To create a snapshot of the current state of affairs	Provides a relatively complete picture of what is occurring at a given time. Allows the development of questions for further study.	Does not assess relationships among variables. May be unethical if participants do not know they are being observed.
Correlational	To assess the relationships between and among two or more variables	Allows testing of expected relationships between and among variables and the making of predictions. Can assess these relationships in everyday life events.	Cannot be used to draw inferences about the causal relationships between and among the variables.
Experimental	To assess the causal impact of one or more experimental manipulations on a dependent variable	Allows drawing of conclusions about the causal relationships among variables.	Cannot experimentally manipulate many important variables. May be expensive and time consuming.
Source: Stangor, 2011.			

Descriptive Research: Assessing the Current State of Affairs

Descriptive research is designed to create a snapshot of the current thoughts, feelings, or behaviour of individuals. This section reviews three types of **descriptive research**: *case studies*, *surveys*, and *naturalistic observation* (Figure 3.4).

Sometimes the data in a descriptive research project are based on only a small set of individuals, often only one person or a single small group. These research designs are known as **case studies** — *descriptive records of one or more individual's experiences and behaviour*. Sometimes case studies involve ordinary individuals, as when developmental psychologist Jean Piaget used his observation of his own children to develop his stage theory of cognitive development. More frequently, case studies are conducted on individuals who have unusual or abnormal experiences or characteristics or who find themselves in particularly difficult or stressful situations. The assumption is that by carefully studying individuals who are socially marginal, who are experiencing unusual situations, or who are going through a difficult phase in their lives, we can learn something about human nature.

Sigmund Freud was a master of using the psychological difficulties of individuals to draw conclusions about basic psychological processes. Freud wrote case studies of some of his most interesting patients and used these careful examinations to develop his important theories of personality. One classic example is Freud's description of "Little Hans," a child whose fear of horses the psychoanalyst interpreted in terms of repressed sexual impulses and the Oedipus complex (Freud, 1909/1964).



Figure 3.4 Descriptive Research. Political polls reported in newspapers and on the Internet are descriptive research designs that provide snapshots of the likely voting behaviour of a population.

Another well-known case study is Phineas Gage, a man whose thoughts and emotions were extensively studied by cognitive psychologists after a railroad spike was blasted through his skull in an accident. Although there are questions about the interpretation of this case study (Kotowicz, 2007), it did provide early evidence that the brain's frontal lobe is involved in emotion and morality (Damasio et al., 2005). An interesting example of a case study in clinical psychology is described by Rokeach (1964), who investigated in detail the beliefs of and interactions among three patients with schizophrenia, all of whom were convinced they were Jesus Christ.

In other cases the data from descriptive research projects come in the form of a **survey** — *a measure administered through either an interview or a written questionnaire to get a picture of the beliefs or behaviours of a sample of people of interest*. *The people chosen to participate in the research* (known as the **sample)** are selected to be representative of *all the people that the researcher wishes to know about* (the population). In election polls, for instance, a sample is taken from the population of all "likely voters" in the upcoming elections.

The results of surveys may sometimes be rather mundane, such as "Nine out of 10 doctors prefer Tymenocin" or "The median income in the city of Hamilton is $46,712." Yet other times (particularly in discussions of social behaviour), the results can be shocking: "More than 40,000 people are killed by gunfire in the United States every year" or "More than 60% of women between the ages of 50 and 60 suffer from depression." Descriptive research is frequently used by psychologists to get an *estimate of the prevalence* (or **incidence**) of psychological disorders.

A final type of descriptive research — known as **naturalistic observation** — is *research based on the*

observation of everyday events. For instance, a developmental psychologist who watches children on a playground and describes what they say to each other while they play is conducting descriptive research, as is a biopsychologist who observes animals in their natural habitats. One example of observational research involves a systematic procedure known as the *strange situation*, used to get a picture of how adults and young children interact. The data that are collected in the strange situation are systematically coded in a coding sheet such as that shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Sample Coding Form Used to Assess Child's and Mother's Behaviour in the Strange Situation

[Skip Table]				
Coder name: *Olive*				
This table represents a sample coding sheet from an episode of the "strange situation," in which an infant (usually about one year old) is observed playing in a room with two adults — the child's mother and a stranger. Each of the four coding categories is scored by the coder from 1 (the baby makes no effort to engage in the behaviour) to 7 (the baby makes a significant effort to engage in the behaviour). More information about the meaning of the coding can be found in Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978).				
Coding categories explained				
Proximity	The baby moves toward, grasps, or climbs on the adult.			
Maintaining contact	The baby resists being put down by the adult by crying or trying to climb back up.			
Resistance	The baby pushes, hits, or squirms to be put down from the adult's arms.			
Avoidance	The baby turns away or moves away from the adult.			
Episode	**Coding categories**			
	Proximity	**Contact**	**Resistance**	**Avoidance**
Mother and baby play alone	1	1	1	1
Mother puts baby down	4	1	1	1
Stranger enters room	1	2	3	1
Mother leaves room; stranger plays with baby	1	3	1	1
Mother re-enters, greets and may comfort baby, then leaves again	4	2	1	2
Stranger tries to play with baby	1	3	1	1
Mother re-enters and picks up baby	6	6	1	2
Source: Stang0r, 2011.				

The results of descriptive research projects are analyzed using **descriptive statistics** — *numbers that summarize the distribution of scores on a measured variable*. Most variables have distributions similar

to that shown in Figure 3.5 where most of the scores are located near the centre of the distribution, and the distribution is symmetrical and bell-shaped. *A data distribution that is shaped like a bell* is known as a **normal distribution**.

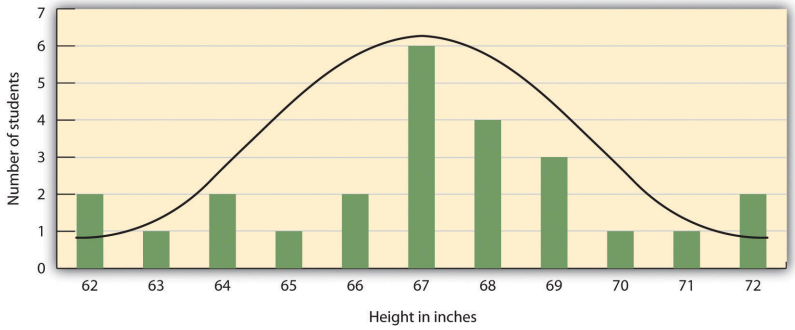


Figure 3.5 Height Distribution. The distribution of the heights of the students in a class will form a normal distribution. In this sample the mean (M) = 67.12 inches and the standard deviation (s) = 2.74.

A distribution can be described in terms of its **central tendency** — that is, *the point in the distribution around which the data are centred* — and its dispersion, or spread. The arithmetic average, or **arithmetic mean**, symbolized by the letter *M*, is *the most commonly used measure of central tendency*. It is computed by calculating the sum of all the scores of the variable and dividing this sum by the number of participants in the distribution (denoted by the letter *N*). In the data presented in Figure 3.5 the mean height of the students is 67.12 inches (170.5 cm). The sample mean is usually indicated by the letter *M*.

In some cases, however, the data distribution is not symmetrical. This occurs when there are one or more *extreme scores* (known as **outliers**) at one end of the distribution. Consider, for instance, the variable of family income (see Figure 3.6), which includes an outlier (a value of $3,800,000). In this case the mean is not a good measure of central tendency. Although it appears from Figure 3.6 that the central tendency of the family income variable should be around $70,000, the mean family income is actually $223,960. The single very extreme income has a disproportionate impact on the mean, resulting in a value that does not well represent the central tendency.

The *median* is used as an alternative measure of central tendency when distributions are not symmetrical. The **median** is *the score in the center of the distribution, meaning that 50% of the scores are greater than the median and 50% of the scores are less than the median*. In our case, the median household income ($73,000) is a much better indication of central tendency than is the mean household income ($223,960).

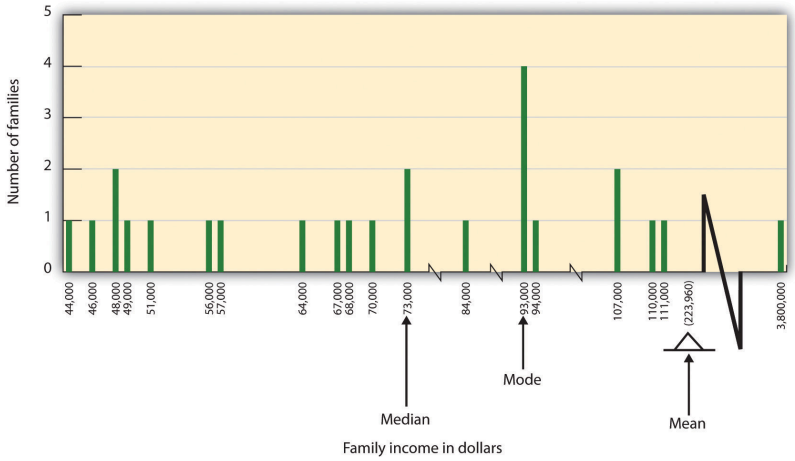


Figure 3.6 Family Income Distribution. The distribution of family incomes is likely to be nonsymmetrical because some incomes can be very large in comparison to most incomes. In this case the median or the mode is a better indicator of central tendency than is the mean. *[Long Description]*

A final measure of central tendency, known as the **mode**, represents *the value that occurs most frequently in the distribution*. You can see from Figure 3.6 that the mode for the family income variable is $93,000 (it occurs four times).

In addition to summarizing the central tendency of a distribution, descriptive statistics convey information about how the scores of the variable are spread around the central tendency. **Dispersion** refers to *the extent to which the scores are all tightly clustered around the central tendency*, as seen in Figure 3.7.

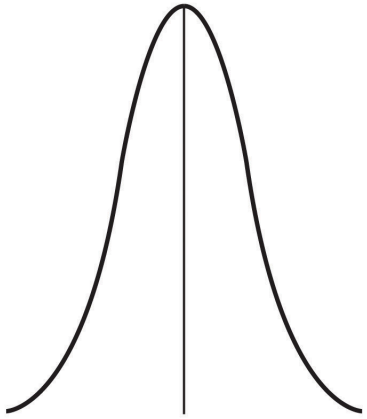


Figure 3.7

Or they may be more spread out away from it, as seen in Figure 3.8.

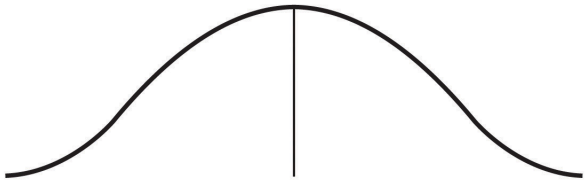


Figure 3.8

One simple measure of dispersion is to find the *largest* (the **maximum**) and the *smallest* (the **minimum**) observed values of the variable and to compute the *range* of the variable as the maximum observed score minus the minimum observed score. You can check that the range of the height variable in Figure 3.5 is 72 – 62 = 10. The **standard deviation**, symbolized as *s*, is *the most commonly used measure of dispersion*. Distributions with a larger standard deviation have more spread. The standard deviation of the height variable is $s = 2.74$, and the standard deviation of the family income variable is $s = \$745{,}337$.

An advantage of descriptive research is that it attempts to capture the complexity of everyday behaviour. Case studies provide detailed information about a single person or a small group of people, surveys capture the thoughts or reported behaviours of a large population of people, and naturalistic observation objectively records the behaviour of people or animals as it occurs naturally. Thus descriptive research is used to provide a relatively complete understanding of what is currently happening.

Despite these advantages, descriptive research has a distinct disadvantage in that, although it allows us to get an idea of what is currently happening, it is usually limited to static pictures. Although descriptions of particular experiences may be interesting, they are not always transferable to other individuals in other situations, nor do they tell us exactly why specific behaviours or events occurred. For instance, descriptions of individuals who have suffered a stressful event, such as a war or an earthquake, can be used to understand the individuals' reactions to the event but cannot tell us anything about the long-term effects of the stress. And because there is no comparison group that did not experience the stressful situation, we cannot know what these individuals would be like if they hadn't had the stressful experience.

Correlational Research: Seeking Relationships among Variables

In contrast to descriptive research, which is designed primarily to provide static pictures, **correlational research** *involves the measurement of two or more relevant variables and an assessment of the relationship between or among those variables.* For instance, the variables of height and weight are systematically related (correlated) because taller people generally weigh more than shorter people. In the same way, study time and memory errors are also related, because the more time a person is given to study a list of words, the fewer errors he or she will make. When there are two variables in the research design, one of them is called the *predictor variable* and the other the *outcome variable*. The research design can be visualized as shown in Figure 3.9, where the curved arrow represents the expected correlation between these two variables.



Figure 3.9 Predictor and Outcome Variables.

One way of organizing the data from a correlational study with two variables is to graph the values of each of the measured variables using a *scatter plot*. As you can see in Figure 3.10 a **scatter plot** is *a visual image of the relationship between two variables*. A point is plotted for each individual at the intersection of his or her scores for the two variables. *When the association between the variables on the scatter plot can be easily approximated with a straight line*, as in parts (a) and (b) of Figure 3.10 the variables are said to have a **linear relationship**.

When the straight line indicates that individuals who have above-average values for one variable also tend to have above-average values for the other variable, as in part (a), the relationship is said to be **positive linear**. Examples of positive linear relationships include those between height and weight, between education and income, and between age and mathematical abilities in children. In each case, people who score higher on one of the variables also tend to score higher on the other variable. **Negative linear relationships**, in contrast, as shown in part (b), occur when above-average values for one variable tend to be associated with below-average values for the other variable. Examples of negative linear relationships include those between the age of a child and the number of diapers the child uses, and between practice on and errors made on a learning task. In these cases, people who score higher on one of the variables tend to score lower on the other variable.

Relationships between variables that cannot be described with a straight line are known as **nonlinear relationships**. Part (c) of Figure 3.10 shows a common pattern in which the distribution of the points is essentially random. In this case there is *no relationship at all between the two variables*, and they are said to be **independent**. Parts (d) and (e) of Figure 3.10 show patterns of association in which, although there is an association, the points are not well described by a single straight line. For instance, part (d) shows the type of relationship that frequently occurs between anxiety and performance. Increases in anxiety from low to moderate levels are associated with performance increases, whereas increases in anxiety from moderate to high levels are associated with decreases in performance. *Relationships that change in direction and thus are not described by a single straight line* are called **curvilinear relationships**.

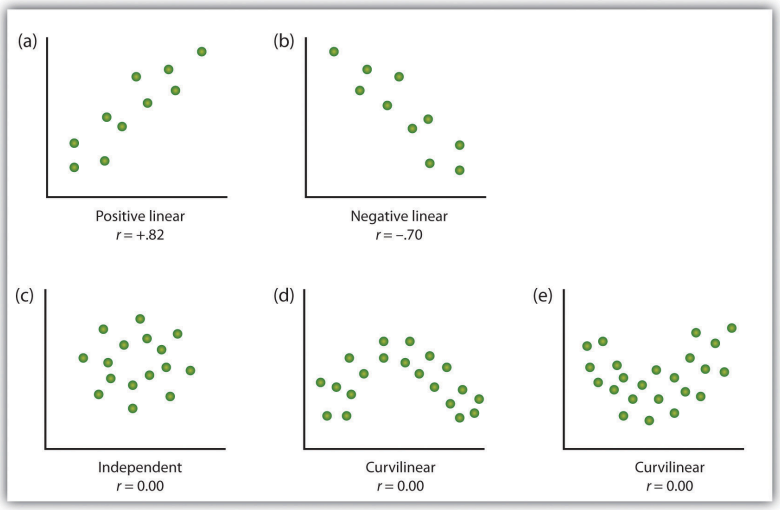


Figure 3.10 Examples of Scatter Plots. Some examples of relationships between two variables as shown in scatter plots. Note that the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between variables that have curvilinear relationships will likely be close to zero. [Long Description] Source: Adapted from Stangor (2011).

The most common statistical measure of the strength of linear relationships among variables is the **Pearson correlation coefficient**, which is symbolized by the letter *r*. The value of the correlation coefficient ranges from $r = –1.00$ to $r = +1.00$. The direction of the linear relationship is indicated by the sign of the correlation coefficient. Positive values of *r* (such as $r = .54$ or $r = .67$) indicate that the relationship is positive linear (i.e., the pattern of the dots on the scatter plot runs from the lower left to the upper right), whereas negative values of *r* (such as $r = –.30$ or $r = –.72$) indicate negative linear relationships (i.e., the dots run from the upper left to the lower right). The strength of the linear relationship is indexed by the distance of the correlation coefficient from zero (its absolute value). For instance, $r = –.54$ is a stronger relationship than $r = .30$, and $r = .72$ is a stronger relationship than $r = –.57$. Because the Pearson correlation coefficient only measures linear relationships, variables that have curvilinear relationships are not well described by *r*, and the observed correlation will be close to zero.

It is also possible to study relationships among more than two measures at the same time. A research design in which more than one predictor variable is used to predict a single outcome variable is analyzed through *multiple regression* (Aiken & West, 1991). **Multiple regression** is *a statistical technique, based on correlation coefficients among variables, that allows predicting a single outcome variable from more than one predictor variable*. For instance, Figure 3.11 shows a multiple regression analysis in which three predictor variables (Salary, job satisfaction, and years employed) are used to predict a single outcome (job performance). The use of multiple regression analysis shows an important advantage of correlational research designs — they can be used to make predictions about a person's likely score on an outcome variable (e.g., job performance) based on knowledge of other variables.

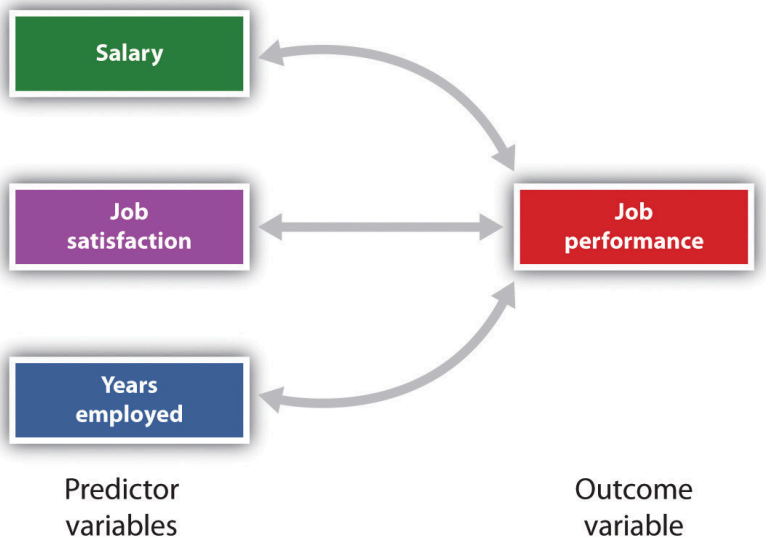


Figure 3.11 Prediction of Job Performance from Three Predictor Variables. Multiple regression allows scientists to predict the scores on a single outcome variable using more than one predictor variable.

An important limitation of correlational research designs is that they cannot be used to draw conclusions about the causal relationships among the measured variables. Consider, for instance, a researcher who has hypothesized that viewing violent behaviour will cause increased aggressive play in children. He has collected, from a sample of Grade 4 children, a measure of how many violent television shows each child views during the week, as well as a measure of how aggressively each child plays on the school playground. From his collected data, the researcher discovers a positive correlation between the two measured variables.



Figure 3.12

Although this positive correlation appears to support the researcher's hypothesis, it cannot be taken to indicate that viewing violent television causes aggressive behaviour. Although the researcher is tempted to assume that viewing violent television causes aggressive play, there are other possibilities. One alternative possibility is that the causal direction is exactly opposite from what has been hypothesized. Perhaps children who have behaved aggressively at school develop residual excitement that leads them to want to watch violent television shows at home (Figure 3.13):



Figure 3.13

Although this possibility may seem less likely, there is no way to rule out the possibility of such reverse

causation on the basis of this observed correlation. It is also possible that both causal directions are operating and that the two variables cause each other (Figure 3.14).

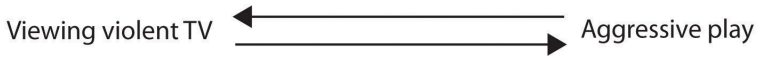


Figure 3.14

Still another possible explanation for the observed correlation is that it has been produced by the presence of a *common-causal variable* (also known as a *third variable*). A **common-causal variable** is *a variable that is not part of the research hypothesis but that causes both the predictor and the outcome variable and thus produces the observed correlation between them*. In our example, a potential common-causal variable is the discipline style of the children's parents. Parents who use a harsh and punitive discipline style may produce children who like to watch violent television and who also behave aggressively in comparison to children whose parents use less harsh discipline (Figure 3.15)

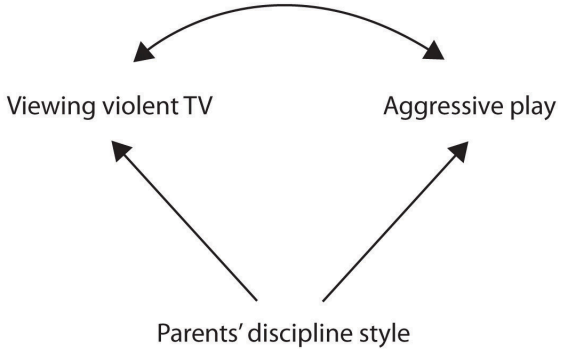


Figure 3.15

In this case, television viewing and aggressive play would be positively correlated (as indicated by the curved arrow between them), even though neither one caused the other but they were both caused by the discipline style of the parents (the straight arrows). When the predictor and outcome variables are both caused by a common-causal variable, the observed relationship between them is said to be *spurious*. A **spurious relationship** is *a relationship between two variables in which a common-causal variable produces and "explains away" the relationship*. If effects of the common-causal variable were taken away, or controlled for, the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables would disappear. In the example, the relationship between aggression and television viewing might be spurious because by controlling for the effect of the parents' disciplining style, the relationship between television viewing and aggressive behaviour might go away.

Common-causal variables in correlational research designs can be thought of as mystery variables because, as they have not been measured, their presence and identity are usually unknown to the researcher. Since it is not possible to measure every variable that could cause both the predictor and outcome variables, the existence of an unknown common-causal variable is always a possibility. For this reason, we are left with the basic limitation of correlational research: correlation does not demonstrate causation. It is important that when you read about correlational research projects, you keep in mind the possibility of spurious relationships, and be sure to interpret the findings appropriately. Although

correlational research is sometimes reported as demonstrating causality without any mention being made of the possibility of reverse causation or common-causal variables, informed consumers of research, like you, are aware of these interpretational problems.

In sum, correlational research designs have both strengths and limitations. One strength is that they can be used when experimental research is not possible because the predictor variables cannot be manipulated. Correlational designs also have the advantage of allowing the researcher to study behaviour as it occurs in everyday life. And we can also use correlational designs to make predictions — for instance, to predict from the scores on their battery of tests the success of job trainees during a training session. But we cannot use such correlational information to determine whether the training caused better job performance. For that, researchers rely on experiments.

Experimental Research: Understanding the Causes of Behaviour

The goal of experimental research design is to provide more definitive conclusions about the causal relationships among the variables in the research hypothesis than is available from correlational designs. In an experimental research design, the variables of interest are called the *independent variable* (or *variables*) and the *dependent variable*. The **independent variable** in an experiment is *the causing variable that is created (manipulated) by the experimenter*. The **dependent variable** in an experiment is *a measured variable that is expected to be influenced by the experimental manipulation*. The research hypothesis suggests that the manipulated independent variable or variables will cause changes in the measured dependent variables. We can diagram the research hypothesis by using an arrow that points in one direction. This demonstrates the expected direction of causality (Figure 3.16):



Figure 3.16

Research Focus: Video Games and Aggression

Consider an experiment conducted by Anderson and Dill (2000). The study was designed to test the hypothesis that viewing violent video games would increase aggressive behaviour. In this research, male and female undergraduates from Iowa State University were given a chance to play with either a violent video game (Wolfenstein 3D) or a nonviolent video game (Myst). During the experimental session, the participants played their assigned video games for 15 minutes. Then, after the play, each participant played a competitive game with an opponent in which the participant could deliver blasts of white noise through the earphones of the opponent. The operational definition of the dependent variable (aggressive behaviour) was the level and duration of noise delivered to the opponent. The design of the experiment is shown in Figure 3.17

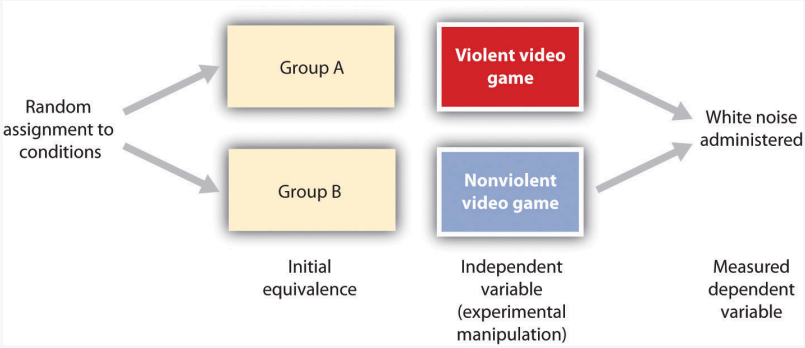


Figure 3.17 An Experimental Research Design.

Two advantages of the experimental research design are (a) the assurance that the independent variable (also known as the *experimental manipulation*) occurs prior to the measured dependent variable, and (b) the creation of initial equivalence between the conditions of the experiment (in this case by using random assignment to conditions).

Experimental designs have two very nice features. For one, they guarantee that the independent variable occurs prior to the measurement of the dependent variable. This eliminates the possibility of reverse causation. Second, the influence of common-causal variables is controlled, and thus eliminated, by creating *initial equivalence* among the participants in each of the experimental conditions before the manipulation occurs.

The most common method of creating equivalence among the experimental conditions is through **random assignment to conditions,** *a procedure in which the condition that each participant is assigned to is determined through a random process, such as drawing numbers out of an envelope or using a random number table*. Anderson and Dill first randomly assigned about 100 participants to each of their two groups (Group A and Group B). Because they used random assignment to conditions, they could be confident that, before the experimental manipulation occurred, the students in Group A were, on average, equivalent to the students in Group B on every possible variable, including variables that are likely to be related to aggression, such as parental discipline style, peer relationships, hormone levels, diet — and in fact everything else.

Then, after they had created initial equivalence, Anderson and Dill created the experimental manipulation — they had the participants in Group A play the violent game and the participants in Group B play the nonviolent game. Then they compared the dependent variable (the white noise blasts) between the two groups, finding that the students who had viewed the violent video game gave significantly longer noise blasts than did the students who had played the nonviolent game.

Anderson and Dill had from the outset created initial equivalence between the groups. This initial equivalence allowed them to observe differences in the white noise levels between the two groups after the experimental manipulation, leading to the conclusion that it was the independent variable (and not some other variable) that caused these differences. The idea is that the only thing that was different between the students in the two groups was the video game they had played.

Despite the advantage of determining causation, experiments do have limitations. One is that they are often conducted in laboratory situations rather than in the everyday lives of people. Therefore, we do not know whether results that we find in a laboratory setting will necessarily hold up in everyday life. Second, and more important, is that some of the most interesting and key social variables cannot be experimentally manipulated. If we want to study the influence of the size of a mob on the destructiveness of its behaviour, or to compare the personality characteristics of people who join suicide cults with those

of people who do not join such cults, these relationships must be assessed using correlational designs, because it is simply not possible to experimentally manipulate these variables.

Key Takeaways

- Descriptive, correlational, and experimental research designs are used to collect and analyze data.
- Descriptive designs include case studies, surveys, and naturalistic observation. The goal of these designs is to get a picture of the current thoughts, feelings, or behaviours in a given group of people. Descriptive research is summarized using descriptive statistics.
- Correlational research designs measure two or more relevant variables and assess a relationship between or among them. The variables may be presented on a scatter plot to visually show the relationships. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient (*r*) is a measure of the strength of linear relationship between two variables.
- Common-causal variables may cause both the predictor and outcome variable in a correlational design, producing a spurious relationship. The possibility of common-causal variables makes it impossible to draw causal conclusions from correlational research designs.
- Experimental research involves the manipulation of an independent variable and the measurement of a dependent variable. Random assignment to conditions is normally used to create initial equivalence between the groups, allowing researchers to draw causal conclusions.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. There is a negative correlation between the row that a student sits in in a large class (when the rows are numbered from front to back) and his or her final grade in the class. Do you think this represents a causal relationship or a spurious relationship, and why?
2. Think of two variables (other than those mentioned in this book) that are likely to be correlated, but in which the correlation is probably spurious. What is the likely common-causal variable that is producing the relationship?
3. Imagine a researcher wants to test the hypothesis that participating in psychotherapy will cause a decrease in reported anxiety. Describe the type of research design the investigator might use to draw this conclusion. What would be the independent and dependent variables in the research?

Image Attributions

Figure 3.4: "Reading newspaper" by Alaskan Dude (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reading_newspaper.jpg) is licensed under CC BY 2.0

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Long Descriptions

Figure 3.6 long description: There are 25 families. 24 families have an income between $44,000 and $111,000 and one family has an income of $3,800,000. The mean income is $223,960 while the median income is $73,000. [Return to Figure 3.6]

Figure 3.10 long description: Types of scatter plots.

1. Positive linear, r=positive .82. The plots on the graph form a rough line that runs from lower left to upper right.
2. Negative linear, r=negative .70. The plots on the graph form a rough line that runs from upper left to lower right.
3. Independent, r=0.00. The plots on the graph are spread out around the centre.
4. Curvilinear, r=0.00. The plots of the graph form a rough line that goes up and then down like a hill.
5. Curvilinear, r=0.00. The plots on the graph for a rough line that goes down and then up like a ditch.

[Return to Figure 3.10]

3.3 You Can Be an Informed Consumer of Psychological Research

Learning Objectives

1. Outline the four potential threats to the validity of research and discuss how they may make it difficult to accurately interpret research findings.
2. Describe how confounding may reduce the internal validity of an experiment.
3. Explain how generalization, replication, and meta-analyses are used to assess the external validity of research findings.

Good research is *valid* research. When research is **valid**, *the conclusions drawn by the researcher are legitimate*. For instance, if a researcher concludes that participating in psychotherapy reduces anxiety, or that taller people are smarter than shorter people, the research is valid only if the therapy really works or if taller people really are smarter. Unfortunately, there are many threats to the validity of research, and these threats may sometimes lead to unwarranted conclusions. Often, and despite researchers' best intentions, some of the research reported on websites as well as in newspapers, magazines, and even scientific journals is invalid. Validity is not an all-or-nothing proposition, which means that some research is more valid than other research. Only by understanding the potential threats to validity will you be able to make knowledgeable decisions about the conclusions that can or cannot be drawn from a research project. There are four major types of threats to the validity of research, and informed consumers of research are aware of each type.

Threats to the Validity of Research

1. *Threats to construct validity.* Although it is claimed that the measured variables measure the conceptual variables of interest, they actually may not.
2. *Threats to statistical conclusion validity.* Conclusions regarding the research may be incorrect because no statistical tests were made or because the statistical tests were incorrectly interpreted.
3. *Threats to internal validity.* Although it is claimed that the independent variable caused the dependent variable, the dependent variable actually may have been caused by a confounding variable.
4. *Threats to external validity.* Although it is claimed that the results are more general, the observed effects may actually only be found under limited conditions or for specific groups of people. (Stangor, 2011)

One threat to valid research occurs when there is a threat to *construct validity*. **Construct validity** refers to *the extent to which the variables used in the research adequately assess the conceptual variables they were designed to measure*. One requirement for construct validity is that the measure be *reliable*, where

reliability refers to *the consistency of a measured variable*. A bathroom scale is usually reliable, because if we step on and off it a couple of times, the scale will consistently measure the same weight every time. Other measures, including some psychological tests, may be less reliable, and thus less useful.

Normally, we can assume that the researchers have done their best to assure the construct validity of their measures, but it is not inappropriate for you, as an informed consumer of research, to question this. It is always important to remember that the ability to learn about the relationship between the conceptual variables in a research hypothesis is dependent on the operational definitions of the measured variables. If the measures do not really measure the conceptual variables that they are designed to assess (e.g., if a supposed IQ test does not really measure intelligence), then they cannot be used to draw inferences about the relationship between the conceptual variables (Nunnally, 1978).

The statistical methods that scientists use to test their research hypotheses are based on probability estimates. You will see statements in research reports indicating that the results were *statistically significant* or *not statistically significant*. These statements will be accompanied by statistical tests, often including statements such as $p < 0.05$ or about confidence intervals. These statements describe the *statistical significance* of the data that have been collected. **Statistical significance** refers to *the confidence with which a scientist can conclude that data are not due to chance or random error*. When a researcher concludes that a result is statistically significant, he or she has determined that the observed data was very unlikely to have been caused by chance factors alone. Hence, there is likely a real relationship between or among the variables in the research design. Otherwise, the researcher concludes that the results were not statistically significant.

Statistical conclusion validity refers to *the extent to which we can be certain that the researcher has drawn accurate conclusions about the statistical significance of the research*. Research will be invalid if the conclusions made about the research hypothesis are incorrect because statistical inferences about the collected data are in error. These errors can occur either because the scientist inappropriately infers that the data do support the research hypothesis when in fact they are due to chance, or when the researcher mistakenly fails to find support for the research hypothesis. Normally, we can assume that the researchers have done their best to ensure the statistical conclusion validity of a research design, but we must always keep in mind that inferences about data are probabilistic and never certain — this is why research never *proves* a theory.

Internal validity refers to *the extent to which we can trust the conclusions that have been drawn about the causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables* (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Internal validity applies primarily to experimental research designs, in which the researcher hopes to conclude that the independent variable has caused the dependent variable. Internal validity is maximized when the research is free from the presence of **confounding variables** — *variables other than the independent variable on which the participants in one experimental condition differ systematically from those in other conditions*.

Consider an experiment in which a researcher tested the hypothesis that drinking alcohol makes members of the opposite sex look more attractive. Participants older than 21 years of age were randomly assigned to drink either orange juice mixed with vodka or orange juice alone. To eliminate the need for deception, the participants were told whether or not their drinks contained vodka. After enough time had passed for the alcohol to take effect, the participants were asked to rate the attractiveness of pictures of

members of the opposite sex. The results of the experiment showed that, as predicted, the participants who drank the vodka rated the photos as significantly more attractive.

If you think about this experiment for a minute, it may occur to you that although the researcher wanted to draw the conclusion that the alcohol caused the differences in perceived attractiveness, the expectation of having consumed alcohol is confounded with the presence of alcohol. That is, the people who drank alcohol also knew they drank alcohol, and those who did not drink alcohol knew they did not. It is possible that simply knowing that they were drinking alcohol, rather than the effect of the alcohol itself, may have caused the differences (see Figure 3.18, "An Example of Confounding"). One solution to the problem of potential *expectancy effects* is to tell both groups that they are drinking orange juice and vodka but really give alcohol to only half of the participants (it is possible to do this because vodka has very little smell or taste). If differences in perceived attractiveness are found, the experimenter could then confidently attribute them to the alcohol rather than to the expectancy about having consumed alcohol.

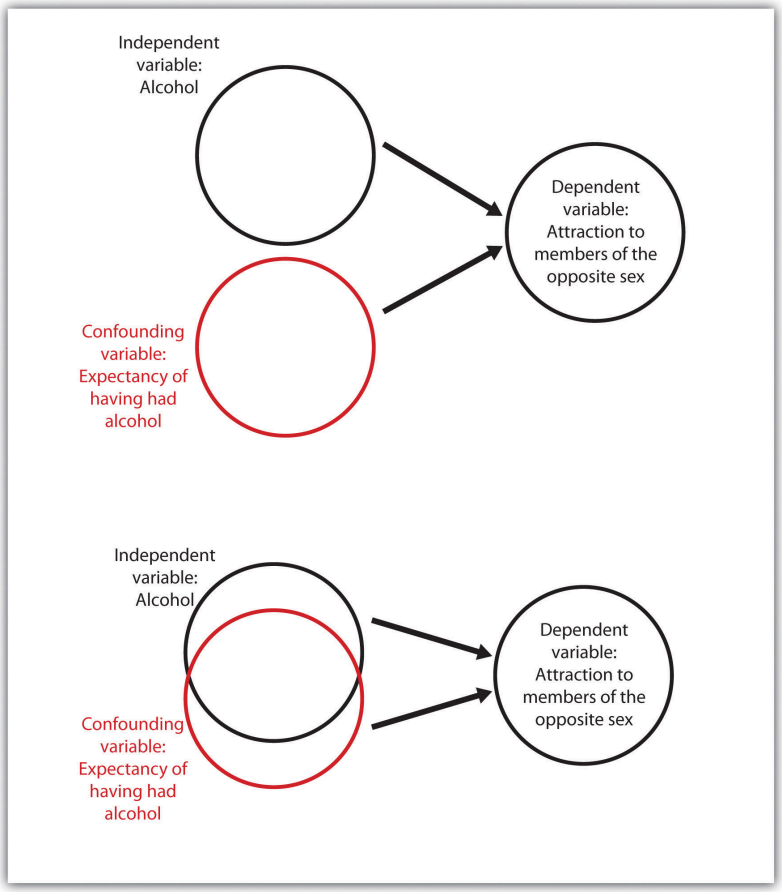


Figure 3.18 An Example of Confounding. Confounding occurs when a variable that is not part of the research hypothesis is "mixed up," or confounded, with the variable in the research hypothesis. In the bottom panel, alcohol consumed and alcohol expectancy are confounded, but in the top panel they are separate (independent). Confounding makes it impossible to be sure that the independent variable (rather than the confounding variable) caused the dependent variable.

Another threat to internal validity can occur when the experimenter knows the research hypothesis

and also knows which experimental condition the participants are in. The outcome is the potential for **experimenter bias**, *a situation in which the experimenter subtly treats the research participants in the various experimental conditions differently, resulting in an invalid confirmation of the research hypothesis*. In one study demonstrating experimenter bias, Rosenthal and Fode (1963) sent 12 students to test a research hypothesis concerning maze learning in rats. Although it was not initially revealed to the students, they were actually the participants in an experiment. Six of the students were randomly told that the rats they would be testing had been bred to be highly intelligent, whereas the other six students were led to believe that the rats had been bred to be unintelligent. In reality there were no differences among the rats given to the two groups of students. When the students returned with their data, a startling result emerged. The rats run by students who expected them to be intelligent showed significantly better maze learning than the rats run by students who expected them to be unintelligent. Somehow the students' expectations influenced their data. They evidently did something different when they tested the rats, perhaps subtly changing how they timed the maze running or how they treated the rats. And this experimenter bias probably occurred entirely out of their awareness.

To avoid experimenter bias, researchers frequently run experiments in which the researchers are **blind to condition**. This means that *although the experimenters know the research hypotheses, they do not know which conditions the participants are assigned to*. Experimenter bias cannot occur if the researcher is blind to condition. In a **double-blind experiment**, *both the researcher and the research participants are blind to condition*. For instance, in a double-blind trial of a drug, the researcher does not know whether the drug being given is the real drug or the ineffective placebo, and the patients also do not know which they are getting. Double-blind experiments eliminate the potential for experimenter effects and at the same time eliminate participant expectancy effects.

While internal validity refers to conclusions drawn about events that occurred within the experiment, **external validity** refers to *the extent to which the results of a research design can be generalized beyond the specific way the original experiment was conducted*. **Generalization** refers to *the extent to which relationships among conceptual variables can be demonstrated in a wide variety of people and a wide variety of manipulated or measured variables*.

Psychologists who use university students as participants in their research may be concerned about generalization, wondering if their research will generalize to people who are not college students. And researchers who study the behaviours of employees in one company may wonder whether the same findings would translate to other companies. Whenever there is reason to suspect that a result found for one sample of participants would not hold up for another sample, then research may be conducted with these other populations to test for generalization.

Recently, many psychologists have been interested in testing hypotheses about the extent to which a result will replicate across people from different cultures (Heine, 2010). For instance, a researcher might test whether the effects on aggression of viewing violent video games are the same for Japanese children as they are for Canadian children by showing violent and nonviolent films to a sample of both Japanese and Canadian schoolchildren. If the results are the same in both cultures, then we say that the results have generalized, *but if they are different*, then we have learned a **limiting condition** of the effect (see Table 3.4, "A Cross-Cultural Replication").

Table 3.4 A Cross-Cultural Replication.[1]

Canada	Japan	Gaming behaviour
More aggressive behaviour observed	???	Violent Games
Less aggressive behaviour observed	???	Nonviolent Games

In a cross-cultural replication, external validity is observed if the same effects that have been found in one culture are replicated in another culture. If they are not replicated in the new culture, then a limiting condition of the original results is found.

Unless the researcher has a specific reason to believe that generalization will not hold, it is appropriate to assume that a result found in one population (even if that population is college or university students) will generalize to other populations. Because the investigator can never demonstrate that the research results generalize to all populations, it is not expected that the researcher will attempt to do so. Rather, the burden of proof rests on those who claim that a result will not generalize.

Because any single test of a research hypothesis will always be limited in terms of what it can show, important advances in science are never the result of a single research project. Advances occur through the accumulation of knowledge that comes from many different tests of the same theory or research hypothesis. These tests are conducted by different researchers using different research designs, participants, and operationalizations of the independent and dependent variables. *The process of repeating previous research, which forms the basis of all scientific inquiry*, is known as **replication**.

Scientists often use a procedure known as *meta-analysis* to summarize replications of research findings. A **meta-analysis** is *a statistical technique that uses the results of existing studies to integrate and draw conclusions about those studies*. Because meta-analyses provide so much information, they are very popular and useful ways of summarizing research literature.

A meta-analysis provides a relatively objective method of reviewing research findings because it (a) specifies inclusion criteria that indicate exactly which studies will or will not be included in the analysis, (b) systematically searches for all studies that meet the inclusion criteria, and (c) provides an objective measure of the strength of observed relationships. Frequently, the researchers also include — if they can find them — studies that have not been published in journals.

Psychology in Everyday Life: Critically Evaluating the Validity of Websites

The validity of research reports published in scientific journals is likely to be high because the hypotheses, methods, results, and conclusions of the research have been rigorously evaluated by other scientists, through peer review, before the research was published. For this reason, you will want to use peer-reviewed journal articles as your major source of information about psychological research.

Although research articles are the gold standard for validity, you may also need and desire to get at least some information from other sources. The Internet is a vast source of information from which you can learn about almost anything, including psychology. Search engines — such as Google or Yahoo! — bring hundreds or thousands of hits on a topic, and online encyclopedias, such as Wikipedia, provide articles about relevant topics.

Although you will naturally use the web to help you find information about fields such as psychology, you must also realize that it is important to carefully evaluate the validity of the information you get from the web. You must try to distinguish information that is based on empirical research from information that is based on opinion, and between valid and invalid data. The following material may be helpful to you in learning to make these distinctions.

The techniques for evaluating the validity of websites are similar to those that are applied to evaluating any other source of information. Ask first about the source of the information. Is the domain a ".com" or ".ca" (business), ".gov" (government), or ".org" (nonprofit) entity? This information can help you determine the author's (or organization's) purpose in publishing the website. Try to determine where the information is coming from. Is the data being summarized from objective sources, such as journal articles or academic or government agencies? Does it seem that the author is interpreting the information as objectively as possible, or is the data being interpreted to support a particular point of view? Consider what groups, individuals, and political or commercial interests stand to gain from the site. Is the website potentially part of an advocacy group whose web pages reflect the particular positions of the group? Material from any group's site may be useful, but try to be aware of the group's purposes and potential biases.

Also, ask whether or not the authors themselves appear to be a trustworthy source of information. Do they hold positions in an academic institution? Do they have peer-reviewed publications in scientific journals? Many useful web pages appear as part of organizational sites and reflect the work of that organization. You can be more certain of the validity of the information if it is sponsored by a professional organization, such as the Canadian Psychological Association or the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Try to check on the accuracy of the material and discern whether the sources of information seem current. Is the information cited so that you can read it in its original form? Reputable websites will probably link to other reputable sources, such as journal articles and scholarly books. Try to check the accuracy of the information by reading at least some of these sources yourself.

It is fair to say that all authors, researchers, and organizations have at least some bias and that the information from any site can be invalid. But good material attempts to be fair by acknowledging other possible positions, interpretations, or conclusions. A critical examination of the nature of the websites you browse for information will help you determine if the information is valid and will give you more confidence in the information you take from it.

Key Takeaways

- Research is said to be valid when the conclusions drawn by the researcher are legitimate. Because all research has the potential to be invalid, no research ever "proves" a theory or research hypothesis.
- Construct validity, statistical conclusion validity, internal validity, and external validity are all types of validity that people who read and interpret research need to be aware of.
- Construct validity refers to the assurance that the measured variables adequately measure the conceptual variables.
- Statistical conclusion validity refers to the assurance that inferences about statistical significance are appropriate.
- Internal validity refers to the assurance that the independent variable has caused the dependent variable. Internal validity is greater when confounding variables are reduced or eliminated.

- External validity is greater when effects can be replicated across different manipulations, measures, and populations. Scientists use meta-analyses to better understand the external validity of research.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. The Pepsi-Cola Company, now PepsiCo Inc., conducted the "Pepsi Challenge" by randomly assigning individuals to taste either a Pepsi or a Coke. The researchers labelled the glasses with only an "M" (for Pepsi) or a "Q" (for Coke) and asked the participants to rate how much they liked the beverage. The research showed that subjects overwhelmingly preferred glass "M" over glass "Q," and the researchers concluded that Pepsi was preferred to Coke. Can you tell what confounding variable is present in this research design? How would you redesign the research to eliminate the confound?
2. Locate a research report of a meta-analysis. Determine the criteria that were used to select the studies and report on the findings of the research.

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Notes

1. Adapted by J. Walinga.

3.4 Chapter Summary

Psychologists study the behaviour of both humans and animals in order to understand and improve the quality of human lives.

Psychological research may be either basic or applied in orientation. Basic research and applied research inform each other, and advances in science occur more rapidly when both types of research are conducted.

The results of psychological research are reported primarily in research reports in scientific journals. These research reports have been evaluated, critiqued, and improved by other scientists through the process of peer review.

The methods used by scientists have developed over many years and provide a common framework through which information can be collected, organized, and shared.

The scientific method is the set of assumptions, rules, and procedures that scientists use to conduct research. In addition to requiring that science be empirical, the scientific method demands that the procedures used be objective, or free from personal bias.

Scientific findings are organized by theories, which are used to summarize and make new predictions, but theories are usually framed too broadly to be tested in a single experiment. Therefore, scientists normally use the research hypothesis as a basis for their research.

Scientists use operational definitions to turn the ideas of interest — conceptual variables — into measured variables.

Decisions about whether psychological research using human and animals is ethical are made using established ethical codes developed by scientific organizations and on the basis of judgments made by the local Ethical Review Board. These decisions are made through a cost-benefit analysis designed to protect human participants, in which the costs to human participants are compared with the benefits. If the potential costs of the research appear to outweigh any potential benefits that might come from it, then the research should not proceed.

Descriptive research is designed to provide a snapshot of the current state of affairs. Descriptive research allows the development of questions for further study but does not assess relationships among variables. The results of descriptive research projects are analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Correlational research assesses the relationships between and among two or more variables. It allows making predictions but cannot be used to draw inferences about the causal relationships between and among the variables. Linear relationships between variables are normally analyzed using the Pearson correlation coefficient.

The goal of experimental research is to assess the causal impact of one or more experimental manipulations on a dependent variable. Because experimental research creates initial equivalence among

the participants in the different experimental conditions, it allows drawing conclusions about the causal relationships among variables. Experimental designs are not always possible because many important variables cannot be experimentally manipulated.

Because all research has the potential for invalidity, research never “proves” a theory or hypothesis.

Threats to construct validity involve potential inaccuracies in the measurement of the conceptual variables.

Threats to statistical conclusion validity involve potential inaccuracies in the statistical testing of the relationships among variables.

Threats to internal validity involve potential inaccuracies in assumptions about the causal role of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Threats to external validity involve potential inaccuracy regarding the generality of observed findings.

Informed consumers of research are aware of the strengths of research but are also aware of its potential limitations.

Chapter 4. Brains, Bodies, and Behaviour

4. Brains, Bodies, and Behaviour

Did a Neurological Disorder Cause a Musician to Compose *Boléro* and an Artist to Paint It 66 Years Later?

In 1986, Anne Adams was working as a cell biologist at the University of Toronto in Ontario, Canada. She took a leave of absence from her work to care for a sick child, and while she was away, she completely changed her interests, dropping biology entirely and turning her attention to art. In 1994 she completed her painting *Unravelling Boléro*, a translation of Maurice Ravel's famous orchestral piece onto canvas. As you can see on the *New Scientist* website (http://www.newscientist.com/data/images/ns/cms/dn13599/dn13599-1_567.jpg), this artwork is filled with themes of repetition. Each bar of music is represented by a lacy vertical figure, with the height representing volume, the shape representing note quality, and the colour representing the music's pitch. Like Ravel's music (see the video below), which is a hypnotic piece consisting of two melodial themes repeated eight times over 340 musical bars, the theme in the painting repeats and builds, leading to a dramatic change in colour from blue to orange and pink, a representation of *Boléro*'s sudden and dramatic climax.

Maurice Ravel's composition Boléro (1928) [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-4J5j74VPw

This is a video clip of Maurice Ravel's Boléro, composed in 1928 during the early phase of his illness.

Shortly after finishing the painting, Adams began to experience behavioural problems, including increased difficulty speaking. Neuroimages of Adams's brain taken during this time show that regions in the front part of her brain, which are normally associated with language processing, had begun to deteriorate, while at the same time, regions of the brain responsible for the integration of information from the five senses were unusually well developed (Seeley et al., 2008). The deterioration of the frontal cortex is a symptom of *frontotemporal dementia*, a disease that is associated with changes in artistic and musical tastes and skills (Miller, Boone, Cummings, Read, & Mishkin, 2000), as well as with an increase in repetitive behaviours (Aldhous, 2008).

What Adams did not know at the time was that her brain may have been undergoing the same changes that Ravel's had undergone 66 years earlier. In fact, it appears that Ravel may have suffered from the same neurological disorder. Ravel composed *Boléro* at age 53, when he himself was beginning to show behavioural symptoms that were interfering with his ability to move and speak. Scientists have concluded, based on an analysis of his written notes and letters, that Ravel was also experiencing the effects of frontotemporal dementia (Amaducci, Grassi, & Boller, 2002). If Adams and Ravel were both affected by the same disease, this could explain why they both became fascinated with the repetitive aspects of their arts, and it would present a remarkable example of the influence of our brains on behaviour.

Every behaviour begins with biology. Our behaviours, as well as our thoughts and feelings, are produced by the actions of our brains, nerves, muscles, and glands. In this chapter we will begin our journey into the world of psychology by considering the biological makeup of the human being, including the most remarkable of human organs—the brain. We'll consider the structure of the brain and also the methods that psychologists use to study the brain and to understand how it works.

We will see that the body is controlled by an information highway known as the **nervous system**, *a collection of hundreds of billions of specialized and interconnected cells through which messages are sent between the brain and the rest of the body*. The nervous system consists of the **central nervous system (CNS)**, *made up of the brain and the spinal cord*, and the **peripheral nervous system (PNS)**, *the neurons that link the CNS to our skin, muscles, and glands*. And we will see that our behaviour is also influenced in large part by the **endocrine system**, *the chemical regulator of the body that consists of glands that secrete hormones*.

Although this chapter begins at a very low level of explanation, and although the topic of study may seem at first to be far from the everyday behaviours that we all engage in, a full understanding of the biology underlying psychological processes is an important cornerstone of your new understanding of psychology. We will consider throughout the chapter how our biology influences important human behaviours, including our mental and physical health, our reactions to drugs, as well as our aggressive responses and our perceptions of other people. This chapter is particularly important for contemporary psychology because the ability to measure biological aspects of behaviour, including the structure and function of the human brain, is progressing rapidly, and understanding the biological foundations of behaviour is an increasingly important line of psychological study.

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4.1 The Neuron Is the Building Block of the Nervous System

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the structure and functions of the neuron.
2. Draw a diagram of the pathways of communication within and between neurons.
3. List three of the major neurotransmitters and describe their functions.

The nervous system is composed of more than 100 billion cells known as *neurons*. A **neuron** is *a cell in the nervous system whose function it is to receive and transmit information*. As you can see in Figure 4.1, "Components of the Neuron," neurons are made up of three major parts: a cell body, or **soma**, which *contains the nucleus of the cell and keeps the cell alive*; a branching treelike fibre known as the **dendrite**, which *collects information from other cells and sends the information to the soma*; and a long, segmented fibre known as the **axon**, which *transmits information away from the cell body toward other neurons or to the muscles and glands*. Figure 4.2 shows a photograph of neurons taken using confocal microscopy.

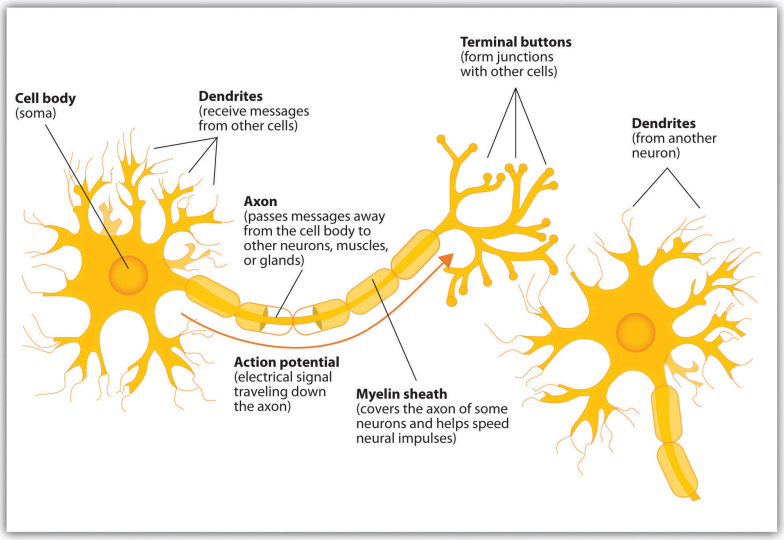


Figure 4.1 Components of the Neuron.

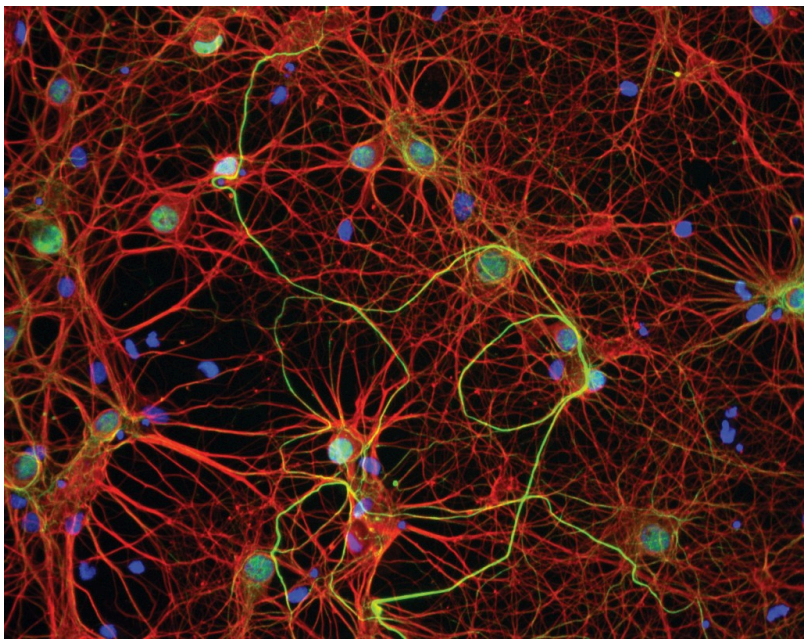


Figure 4.2 The nervous system, including the brain, is made up of billions of interlinked neurons. This vast interconnected web is responsible for all human thinking, feeling, and behaviour.

Some neurons have hundreds or even thousands of dendrites, and these dendrites may themselves be branched to allow the cell to receive information from thousands of other cells. The axons are also specialized, and some, such as those that send messages from the spinal cord to the muscles in the hands or feet, may be very long — even up to several feet in length. To improve the speed of their communication, and to keep their electrical charges from shorting out with other neurons, axons are often surrounded by a *myelin sheath*. The **myelin sheath** is *a layer of fatty tissue surrounding the axon of a neuron that both acts as an insulator and allows faster transmission of the electrical signal*. Axons branch out toward their ends, and at the tip of each branch is a *terminal button*.

Neurons Communicate Using Electricity and Chemicals

The nervous system operates using an *electrochemical* process. An electrical charge moves through the neuron itself, and chemicals are used to transmit information between neurons. Within the neuron, when a signal is received by the dendrites, it is transmitted to the soma in the form of an electrical signal, and, if the signal is strong enough, it may then be passed on to the axon and then to the terminal buttons. If the signal reaches the terminal buttons, they are signalled to emit chemicals known as *neurotransmitters*, which communicate with other neurons across the spaces between the cells, known as *synapses*.

The following video clip shows a model of the electrochemical action of the neuron and neurotransmitters:

The Electrochemical Action of the Neuron [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKG0MtH5crc

The electrical signal moves through the neuron as a result of changes in the electrical charge of the axon. Normally, the axon remains in the **resting potential**, *a state in which the interior of the neuron contains a greater number of negatively charged ions than does the area outside the cell*. When the segment of the axon that is closest to the cell body is stimulated by an electrical signal from the dendrites, and if this electrical signal is strong enough that it passes a certain level or *threshold*, the cell membrane in this first segment opens its gates, allowing positively charged sodium ions that were previously kept out to enter. This *change in electrical charge that occurs in a neuron when a nerve impulse is transmitted* is known as the **action potential**. Once the action potential occurs, the number of positive ions exceeds the number of negative ions in this segment, and the segment temporarily becomes positively charged.

As you can see in Figure 4.3, "The Myelin Sheath and the Nodes of Ranvier," the axon is segmented by a series of *breaks between the sausage-like segments of the myelin sheath*. Each of these gaps is a **node of Ranvier**.[1] The electrical charge moves down the axon from segment to segment, in a set of small jumps, moving from node to node. When the action potential occurs in the first segment of the axon, it quickly creates a similar change in the next segment, which then stimulates the next segment, and so forth as the positive electrical impulse continues all the way down to the end of the axon. As each new segment becomes positive, the membrane in the prior segment closes up again, and the segment returns to its negative resting potential. In this way the action potential is transmitted along the axon, toward the terminal buttons. The entire response along the length of the axon is very fast — it can happen up to 1,000 times each second.

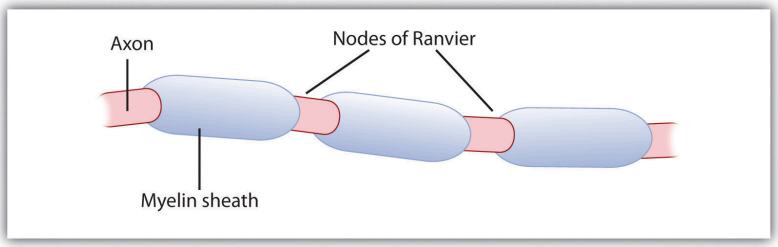


Figure 4.3 The Myelin Sheath and the Nodes of Ranvier. The myelin sheath wraps around the axon but also leaves small gaps called the nodes of Ranvier. The action potential jumps from node to node as it travels down the axon.

An important aspect of the action potential is that it operates in an *all or nothing* manner. What this means is that the neuron either fires completely, such that the action potential moves all the way down the axon, or it does not fire at all. Thus neurons can provide more energy to the neurons down the line by firing faster but not by firing more strongly. Furthermore, the neuron is prevented from repeated firing by the presence of a **refractory period** — *a brief time after the firing of the axon in which the axon cannot fire again because the neuron has not yet returned to its resting potential.*

Neurotransmitters: The Body's Chemical Messengers

Not only do the neural signals travel via electrical charges *within* the neuron, but they also travel via chemical transmission *between* the neurons. Neurons are separated by junction areas known as **synapses**,[2] *areas where the terminal buttons at the end of the axon of one neuron nearly, but don't quite, touch the dendrites of another*. The synapses provide a remarkable function because they allow each axon to communicate with many dendrites in neighbouring cells. Because a neuron may have synaptic connections with thousands of other neurons, the communication links among the neurons in the nervous system allow for a highly sophisticated communication system.

When the electrical impulse from the action potential reaches the end of the axon, it signals the terminal buttons to release *neurotransmitters* into the synapse. A **neurotransmitter** is *a chemical that relays signals across the synapses between neurons*. Neurotransmitters travel across the synaptic space between the terminal button of one neuron and the dendrites of other neurons, where they bind to the dendrites in the neighbouring neurons. Furthermore, different terminal buttons release different neurotransmitters, and different dendrites are particularly sensitive to different neurotransmitters. The dendrites will admit the neurotransmitters only if they are the right shape to fit in the receptor sites on the receiving neuron. For this reason, the receptor sites and neurotransmitters are often compared to a lock and key (Figure 4.4, "The Synapse").

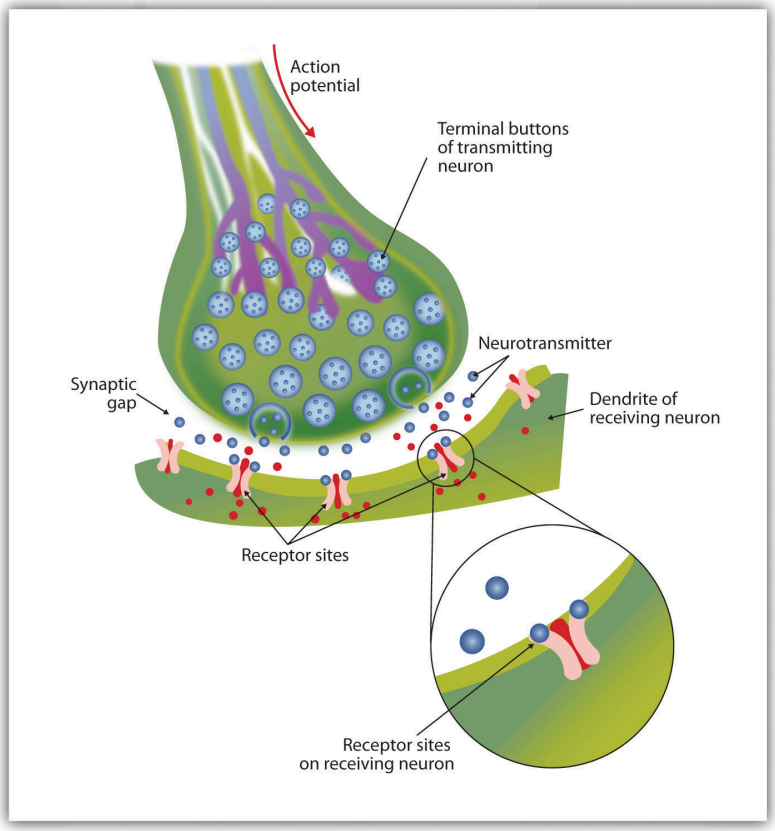


Figure 4.4 The Synapse. When the nerve impulse reaches the terminal button, it triggers the release of neurotransmitters into the synapse. The neurotransmitters fit into receptors on the receiving dendrites in the manner of a lock and key.

When neurotransmitters are accepted by the receptors on the receiving neurons, their effect may be either **excitatory** (i.e., *they make the cell more likely to fire*) or **inhibitory** (i.e., *they make the cell less likely to fire)*. Furthermore, if the receiving neuron is able to accept more than one neurotransmitter, it will be influenced by the excitatory and inhibitory processes of each. If the excitatory effects of the neurotransmitters are greater than the inhibitory influences of the neurotransmitters, the neuron moves closer to its firing threshold; if it reaches the threshold, the action potential and the process of transferring information through the neuron begins.

Neurotransmitters that are not accepted by the receptor sites must be removed from the synapse in order for the next potential stimulation of the neuron to happen. This process occurs in part through the breaking down of the neurotransmitters by enzymes, and in part through **reuptake**, *a process in which neurotransmitters that are in the synapse are reabsorbed into the transmitting terminal buttons, ready to again be released after the neuron fires*.

More than 100 chemical substances produced in the body have been identified as neurotransmitters, and these substances have a wide and profound effect on emotion, cognition, and behaviour. Neurotransmitters regulate our appetite, our memory, our emotions, as well as our muscle action and movement. And as you can see in Table 4.1, “The Major Neurotransmitters and Their Functions,” some neurotransmitters are also associated with psychological and physical diseases.

Drugs that we might ingest — either for medical reasons or recreationally — can act like neurotransmitters to influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. An **agonist** is *a drug that has chemical properties similar to a particular neurotransmitter and thus mimics the effects of the neurotransmitter*. When an agonist is ingested, it binds to the receptor sites in the dendrites to excite the neuron, acting as if more of the neurotransmitter had been present. As an example, cocaine is an agonist for the neurotransmitter dopamine. Because dopamine produces feelings of pleasure when it is released by neurons, cocaine creates similar feelings when it is ingested. An antagonist is *a drug that reduces or stops the normal effects of a neurotransmitter*. When an **antagonist** is ingested, it binds to the receptor sites in the dendrite, thereby blocking the neurotransmitter. As an example, the poison curare is an antagonist for the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. When the poison enters the brain, it binds to the dendrites, stops communication among the neurons, and usually causes death. Still other drugs work by blocking the reuptake of the neurotransmitter itself — when reuptake is reduced by the drug, more neurotransmitter remains in the synapse, increasing its action.

Table 4.1 The Major Neurotransmitters and Their Functions

[Skip Table]		
Neurotransmitter	**Description and function**	**Notes**
Acetylcholine (ACh)	A common neurotransmitter used in the spinal cord and motor neurons to stimulate muscle contractions. It's also used in the brain to regulate memory, sleeping, and dreaming.	Alzheimer's disease is associated with an undersupply of acetylcholine. Nicotine is an agonist that acts like acetylcholine.
Dopamine	Involved in movement, motivation, and emotion, Dopamine produces feelings of pleasure when released by the brain's reward system, and it's also involved in learning.	Schizophrenia is linked to increases in dopamine, whereas Parkinson's disease is linked to reductions in dopamine (and dopamine agonists may be used to treat it).
Endorphins	Released in response to behaviours such as vigorous exercise, orgasm, and eating spicy foods.	Endorphins are natural pain relievers. They are related to the compounds found in drugs such as opium, morphine, and heroin. The release of endorphins creates the runner's high that is experienced after intense physical exertion.
GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid)	The major inhibitory neurotransmitter in the brain.	A lack of GABA can lead to involuntary motor actions, including tremors and seizures. Alcohol stimulates the release of GABA, which inhibits the nervous system and makes us feel drunk. Low levels of GABA can produce anxiety, and GABA agonists (tranquilizers) are used to reduce anxiety.
Glutamate	The most common neurotransmitter, it's released in more than 90% of the brain's synapses. Glutamate is found in the food additive MSG (monosodium glutamate).	Excess glutamate can cause overstimulation, migraines, and seizures.
Serotonin	Involved in many functions, including mood, appetite, sleep, and aggression.	Low levels of serotonin are associated with depression, and some drugs designed to treat depression (known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, or SSRIs) serve to prevent their reuptake.

Key Takeaways

- The central nervous system (CNS) is the collection of neurons that make up the brain and the spinal cord.
- The peripheral nervous system (PNS) is the collection of neurons that link the CNS to our skin, muscles, and glands.

- Neurons are specialized cells, found in the nervous system, which transmit information. Neurons contain a dendrite, a soma, and an axon.
- Some axons are covered with a fatty substance known as the myelin sheath, which surrounds the axon, acting as an insulator and allowing faster transmission of the electrical signal.
- The dendrite is a treelike extension that receives information from other neurons and transmits electrical stimulation to the soma.
- The axon is an elongated fibre that transfers information from the soma to the terminal buttons.
- Neurotransmitters relay information chemically from the terminal buttons and across the synapses to the receiving dendrites using a lock and key type of system.
- The many different neurotransmitters work together to influence cognition, memory, and behaviour.
- Agonists are drugs that mimic the actions of neurotransmitters, whereas antagonists are drugs that block the actions of neurotransmitters.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Draw a picture of a neuron and label its main parts.
2. Imagine an action that you engage in every day and explain how neurons and neurotransmitters might work together to help you engage in that action.

Image Attributions

Figure 4.2: "Confocal microscopy of mouse brain, cortex" by ZEISS Microscopy (http://www.flickr.com/photos/zeissmicro/10799674936/in/photostream/) used under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/deed.en_CA) license.

Notes

1. The break in the myelin sheath of a nerve fibre.
2. The small gap between neurons across which nerve impulses are transmitted.

4.2 Our Brains Control Our Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviour

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the structures and function of the "old brain" and its influence on behaviour.
2. Explain the structure of the cerebral cortex (its hemispheres and lobes) and the function of each area of the cortex.
3. Define the concepts of brain plasticity, neurogenesis, and brain lateralization.

If you were someone who understood brain anatomy and were to look at the brain of an animal that you had never seen before, you would nevertheless be able to deduce the likely capacities of the animal. This is because the brains of all animals are very similar in overall form. In each animal the brain is layered, and the basic structures of the brain are similar (see Figure 4.5, "The Major Structures in the Human Brain"). The innermost structures of the brain — the parts nearest the spinal cord — are the oldest part of the brain, and these areas carry out the same functions they did for our distant ancestors. The "old brain" regulates basic survival functions, such as breathing, moving, resting, and feeding, and creates our experiences of emotion. Mammals, including humans, have developed further brain layers that provide more advanced functions — for instance, better memory, more sophisticated social interactions, and the ability to experience emotions. Humans have a very large and highly developed outer layer known as the *cerebral cortex* (see Figure 4.6, "Cerebral Cortex"), which makes us particularly adept at these processes.

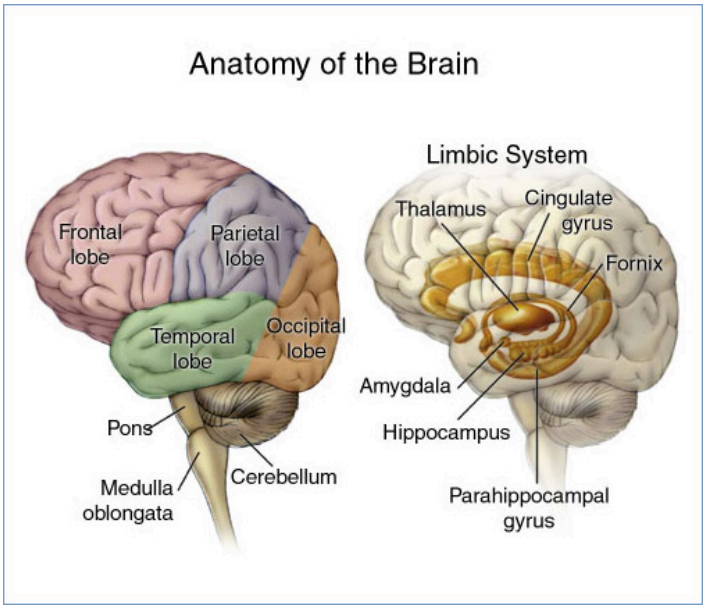


Figure 4.5 The Major Structures in the Human Brain.

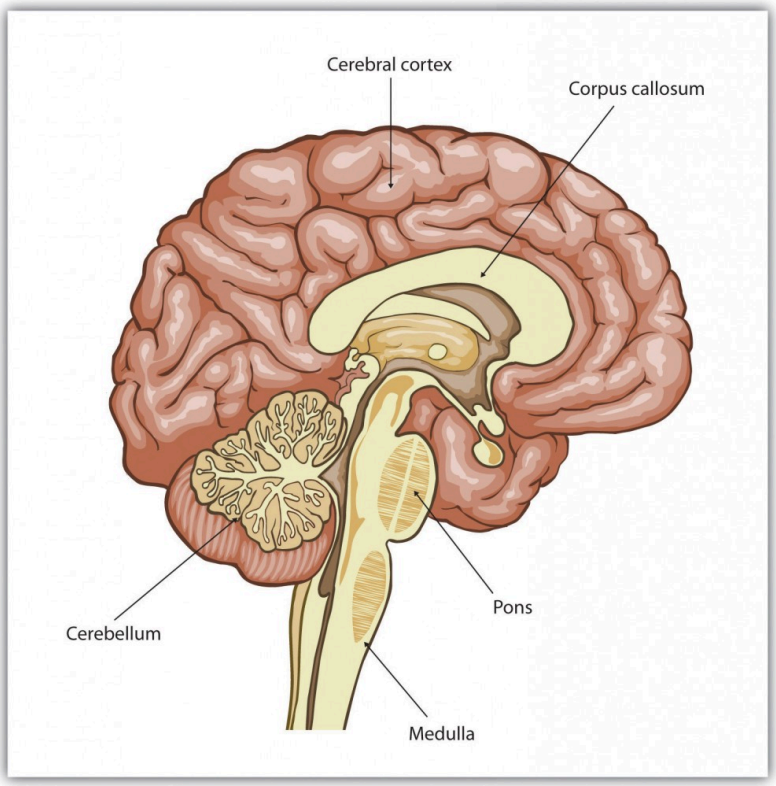


Figure 4.6 Cerebral Cortex. Humans have a very large and highly developed outer brain layer known as the cerebral cortex. The cortex provides humans with excellent memory, outstanding cognitive skills, and the ability to experience complex emotions.

The Old Brain: Wired for Survival

The **brain stem** is *the oldest and innermost region of the brain*. It's designed to control the most basic functions of life, including breathing, attention, and motor responses (Figure 4.7, "The Brain Stem and the Thalamus"). The brain stem begins where the spinal cord enters the skull and forms the **medulla**, *the area of the brain stem that controls heart rate and breathing*. In many cases the medulla alone is sufficient to maintain life — animals that have the remainder of their brains above the medulla severed are still able to eat, breathe, and even move. The spherical shape above the medulla is the **pons**, *a structure in the brain stem that helps control the movements of the body, playing a particularly important role in balance and walking*.

Running through the medulla and the pons is a long, narrow network of neurons known as the **reticular formation**. The job of the reticular formation is to filter out some of the stimuli that are coming into the brain from the spinal cord and to relay the remainder of the signals to other areas of the brain. The reticular formation also plays important roles in walking, eating, sexual activity, and sleeping. When electrical stimulation is applied to the reticular formation of an animal, it immediately becomes fully awake, and when the reticular formation is severed from the higher brain regions, the animal falls into a deep coma.

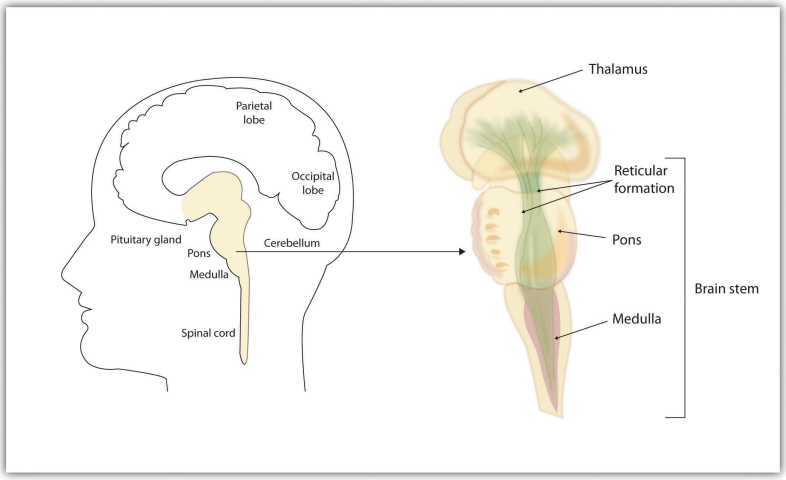


Figure 4.7 The Brain Stem and the Thalamus. The brain stem is an extension of the spinal cord, including the medulla, the pons, the thalamus, and the reticular formation.

Above the brain stem are other parts of the old brain that also are involved in the processing of behaviour and emotions (see Figure 4.8, "The Limbic System"). The **thalamus** is *the egg-shaped structure above the brain stem that applies still more filtering to the sensory information that is coming up from the spinal cord and through the reticular formation, and it relays some of these remaining signals to the higher brain levels* (Sherman & Guillery, 2006). The thalamus also receives some of the higher brain's replies, forwarding them to the medulla and the cerebellum. The thalamus is also important in sleep because it shuts off incoming signals from the senses, allowing us to rest.

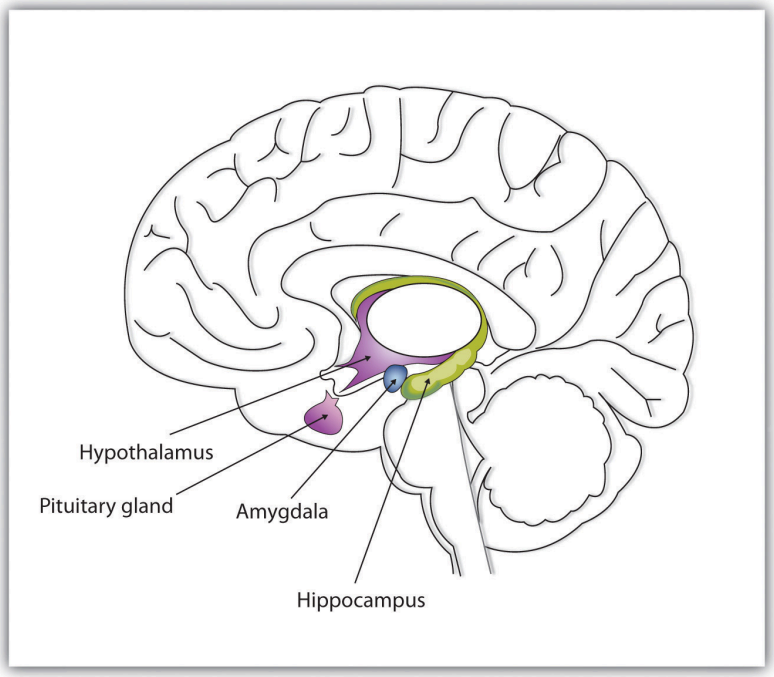


Figure 4.8 The Limbic System. This diagram shows the major parts of the limbic system, as well as the pituitary gland, which is controlled by it.

The **cerebellum** (literally, "little brain") *consists of two wrinkled ovals behind the brain stem. It functions to coordinate voluntary movement*. People who have damage to the cerebellum have difficulty walking, keeping their balance, and holding their hands steady. Consuming alcohol influences the cerebellum, which is why people who are drunk have more difficulty walking in a straight line. Also, the cerebellum contributes to emotional responses, helps us discriminate between different sounds and textures, and is important in learning (Bower & Parsons, 2003).

Whereas the primary function of the brain stem is to regulate the most basic aspects of life, including motor functions, the *limbic system* is largely responsible for memory and emotions, including our responses to reward and punishment. The **limbic system** is *a brain area, located between the brain stem and the two cerebral hemispheres, that governs emotion and memory. It includes the amygdala, the hypothalamus, and the hippocampus*.

The **amygdala** *consists of two "almond-shaped" clusters (amygdala comes from the Latin word for "almond") and is primarily responsible for regulating our perceptions of, and reactions to, aggression and fear*. The amygdala has connections to other bodily systems related to fear, including the sympathetic nervous system (which we will see later is important in fear responses), facial responses (which perceive and express emotions), the processing of smells, and the release of neurotransmitters related to stress and aggression (Best, 2009). In one early study, Klüver and Bucy (1939) damaged the amygdala of an aggressive rhesus monkey. They found that the once angry animal immediately became passive and no longer responded to fearful situations with aggressive behaviour. Electrical stimulation of the amygdala in other animals also influences aggression. In addition to helping us experience fear, the amygdala also helps us learn from situations that create fear. When we experience events that are dangerous, the amygdala stimulates the brain to remember the details of the situation so that we learn to avoid it in the future (Sigurdsson, Doyère, Cain, & LeDoux, 2007).

Located just under the thalamus (hence its name), the **hypothalamus** is *a brain structure that contains a number of small areas that perform a variety of functions, including the regulation of hunger and sexual behaviour, as well as linking the nervous system to the endocrine system via the pituitary gland.* Through its many interactions with other parts of the brain, the hypothalamus helps regulate body temperature, hunger, thirst, and sex, and responds to the satisfaction of these needs by creating feelings of pleasure. Olds and Milner (1954) discovered these reward centres accidentally after they had momentarily stimulated the hypothalamus of a rat. The researchers noticed that after being stimulated, the rat continued to move to the exact spot in its cage where the stimulation had occurred, as if it were trying to re-create the circumstances surrounding its original experience. Upon further research into these reward centres, Olds (1958) discovered that animals would do almost anything to re-create enjoyable stimulation, including crossing a painful electrified grid to receive it. In one experiment a rat was given the opportunity to electrically stimulate its own hypothalamus by pressing a pedal. The rat enjoyed the experience so much that it pressed the pedal more than 7,000 times per hour until it collapsed from sheer exhaustion.

The **hippocampus** consists of *two "horns" that curve back from the amygdala*. The hippocampus is important in *storing information in long-term memory*. If the hippocampus is damaged, a person cannot build new memories, living instead in a strange world where everything he or she experiences just fades away, even while older memories from the time before the damage are untouched.

The Cerebral Cortex Creates Consciousness and Thinking

All animals have adapted to their environments by developing abilities that help them survive. Some animals have hard shells, others run extremely fast, and some have acute hearing. Human beings do not have any of these particular characteristics, but we do have one big advantage over other animals — we are very, very smart.

You might think that we should be able to determine the intelligence of an animal by looking at the ratio of the animal's brain weight to the weight of its entire body. But this does not really work. The elephant's brain is one-thousandth of its weight, but the whale's brain is only one ten-thousandth of its body weight. On the other hand, although the human brain is one-sixtieth of its body weight, the mouse's brain represents one-fortieth of its body weight. Despite these comparisons, elephants do not seem 10 times smarter than whales, and humans definitely seem smarter than mice.

The key to the advanced intelligence of humans is not found in the size of our brains. What sets humans apart from other animals is our larger **cerebral cortex** — *the outer bark-like layer of our brain that allows us to so successfully use language, acquire complex skills, create tools, and live in social groups* (Gibson, 2002). In humans, the cerebral cortex is wrinkled and folded, rather than smooth as it is in most other animals. This creates a much greater surface area and size, and allows increased capacities for learning, remembering, and thinking. The folding of the cerebral cortex is referred to as *corticalization*.

Although the cortex is only about one-tenth of an inch thick, it makes up more than 80% of the brain's weight. The cortex contains about 20 billion nerve cells and 300 trillion synaptic connections (de Courten-Myers, 1999). Supporting all these neurons are billions more **glial cells** (glia), *cells that surround and link to the neurons, protecting them, providing them with nutrients, and absorbing unused neurotransmitters*. The glia come in different forms and have different functions. For instance, the

myelin sheath surrounding the axon of many neurons is a type of glial cell. The glia are essential partners of neurons, without which the neurons could not survive or function (Miller, 2005).

The cerebral cortex is divided into two *hemispheres*, and each hemisphere is divided into four *lobes*, each separated by folds known as *fissures*. If we look at the cortex starting at the front of the brain and moving over the top (see Figure 4.9, "The Two Hemispheres"), we see first the **frontal lobe** (behind the forehead), *which is responsible primarily for thinking, planning, memory, and judgment*. Following the frontal lobe is the **parietal lobe,** *which extends from the middle to the back of the skull and which is responsible primarily for processing information about touch*. Then comes the **occipital lobe** *at the very back of the skull, which processes visual information*. Finally, in front of the occipital lobe (pretty much between the ears) is the **temporal lobe**, *responsible primarily for hearing and language*.

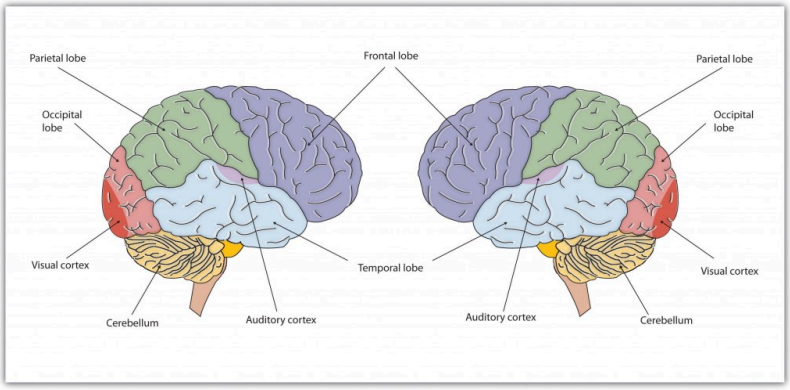


Figure 4.9 The Two Hemispheres. The brain is divided into two hemispheres (left and right), each of which has four lobes (temporal, frontal, occipital, and parietal). Furthermore, there are specific cortical areas that control different processes.

Functions of the Cortex

When the German physicists Gustav Fritsch and Eduard Hitzig (1870/2009) applied mild electric stimulation to different parts of a dog's cortex, they discovered that they could make different parts of the dog's body move. Furthermore, they discovered an important and unexpected principle of brain activity. They found that stimulating the right side of the brain produced movement in the left side of the dog's body, and vice versa. This finding follows from a general principle about how the brain is structured, called **contralateral control,** meaning *the brain is wired such that in most cases the left hemisphere receives sensations from and controls the right side of the body, and vice versa*.

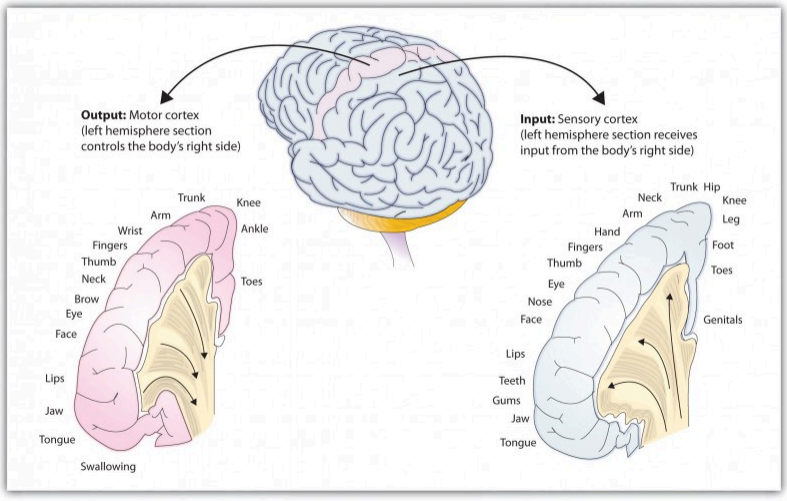


Figure 4.10 The Sensory Cortex and the Motor Cortex. The portion of the sensory and motor cortex devoted to receiving messages that control specific regions of the body is determined by the amount of fine movement that area is capable of performing. Thus the hand and fingers have as much area in the cerebral cortex as does the entire trunk of the body.

Fritsch and Hitzig also found that the movement that followed the brain stimulation only occurred when they stimulated a specific arch-shaped region that runs across the top of the brain from ear to ear, just at the front of the parietal lobe (see Figure 4.10, "The Sensory Cortex and the Motor Cortex"). Fritsch and Hitzig had discovered the **motor cortex**, *the part of the cortex that controls and executes movements of the body by sending signals to the cerebellum and the spinal cord*. More recent research has mapped the motor cortex even more fully, by providing mild electronic stimulation to different areas of the motor cortex in fully conscious patients while observing their bodily responses (because the brain has no sensory receptors, these patients feel no pain). As you can see in Figure 4.10, "The Sensory Cortex and the Motor Cortex," this research has revealed that the motor cortex is specialized for providing control over the body, in the sense that the parts of the body that require more precise and finer movements, such as the face and the hands, also are allotted the greatest amount of cortical space.

Just as the motor cortex sends out messages to the specific parts of the body, the **somatosensory cortex**, *an area just behind and parallel to the motor cortex at the back of the frontal lobe, receives information from the skin's sensory receptors and the movements of different body parts*. Again, the more sensitive the body region, the more area is dedicated to it in the sensory cortex. Our sensitive lips, for example, occupy a large area in the sensory cortex, as do our fingers and genitals.

Other areas of the cortex process other types of sensory information. The **visual cortex** is *the area located in the occipital lobe (at the very back of the brain) that processes visual information*. If you were stimulated in the visual cortex, you would see flashes of light or colour, and perhaps you remember having had the experience of "seeing stars" when you were hit in, or fell on, the back of your head. The temporal lobe, located on the lower side of each hemisphere, contains the **auditory cortex**, *which is responsible for hearing and language*. The temporal lobe also processes some visual information, providing us with the ability to name the objects around us (Martin, 2007).

The motor and sensory areas of the cortex account for a relatively small part of the total cortex. The remainder of the cortex is made up of **association areas** *in which sensory and motor information is combined and associated with our stored knowledge*. These association areas are the places in the brain that are responsible for most of the things that make human beings seem human. The association areas are involved in higher mental functions, such as learning, thinking, planning, judging, moral reflecting, figuring, and spatial reasoning.

The Brain Is Flexible: Neuroplasticity

The control of some specific bodily functions, such as movement, vision, and hearing, is performed in specified areas of the cortex, and if these areas are damaged, the individual will likely lose the ability to perform the corresponding function. For instance, if an infant suffers damage to facial recognition areas in the temporal lobe, it is likely that he or she will never be able to recognize faces (Farah, Rabinowitz, Quinn, & Liu, 2000). On the other hand, the brain is not divided up in an entirely rigid way. The brain's neurons have a remarkable capacity to reorganize and extend themselves to carry out particular functions in response to the needs of the organism and to repair damage. As a result, the brain constantly creates new neural communication routes and rewires existing ones. **Neuroplasticity** refers to *the brain's ability to change its structure and function in response to experience or damage*. Neuroplasticity enables us to learn and remember new things and adjust to new experiences.

Our brains are the most "plastic" when we are young children, as it is during this time that we learn the most about our environment. On the other hand, neuroplasticity continues to be observed even in adults (Kolb & Fantie, 1989). The principles of neuroplasticity help us understand how our brains develop to reflect our experiences. For instance, accomplished musicians have a larger auditory cortex compared with the general population (Bengtsson et al., 2005) and also require less neural activity to move their fingers over the keys than do novices (Münte, Altenmüller, & Jäncke, 2002). These observations reflect the changes in the brain that follow our experiences.

Plasticity is also observed when there is damage to the brain or to parts of the body that are represented in the motor and sensory cortexes. When a tumour in the left hemisphere of the brain impairs language, the right hemisphere will begin to compensate to help the person recover the ability to speak (Thiel et al., 2006). And if a person loses a finger, the area of the sensory cortex that previously received information from the missing finger will begin to receive input from adjacent fingers, causing the remaining digits to become more sensitive to touch (Fox, 1984).

Although neurons cannot repair or regenerate themselves as skin or blood vessels can, new evidence suggests that the brain can engage in **neurogenesis**, *the forming of new neurons* (Van Praag, Zhao, Gage, & Gazzaniga, 2004). These new neurons originate deep in the brain and may then migrate to other brain areas, where they form new connections with other neurons (Gould, 2007). This leaves open the possibility that someday scientists might be able to "rebuild" damaged brains by creating drugs that help grow neurons.

Research Focus: Identifying the Unique Functions of the Left and Right Hemispheres Using Split-Brain Patients

We have seen that the left hemisphere of the brain primarily senses and controls the motor movements on the

right side of the body, and vice versa. This fact provides an interesting way to study **brain lateralization** — *the idea that the left and the right hemispheres of the brain are specialized to perform different functions*. Gazzaniga, Bogen, and Sperry (1965) studied a patient, known as W. J., who had undergone an operation to relieve severe seizures. In this surgery, *the region that normally connects the two halves of the brain and supports communication between the hemispheres*, known as the **corpus callosum**, is severed. As a result, the patient essentially becomes a person with two separate brains. Because the left and right hemispheres are separated, each hemisphere develops a mind of its own, with its own sensations, concepts, and motivations (Gazzaniga, 2005).

In their research, Gazzaniga and his colleagues tested the ability of W. J. to recognize and respond to objects and written passages that were presented to only the left or to only the right brain hemispheres (see Figure 4.11, "Visual and Verbal Processing in the Split-Brain Patient"). The researchers had W. J. look straight ahead and then flashed, for a fraction of a second, a picture of a geometrical shape to the left of where he was looking. By doing so, they ensured that — because the two hemispheres had been separated — the image of the shape was experienced only in the right brain hemisphere (remember that sensory input from the left side of the body is sent to the right side of the brain). Gazzaniga and his colleagues found that W. J. was able to identify what he had been shown when he was asked to pick the object from a series of shapes, using his left hand, but that he could not do this when the object was shown in the right visual field. On the other hand, W. J. could easily read written material presented in the right visual field (and thus experienced in the left hemisphere) but not when it was presented in the left visual field.

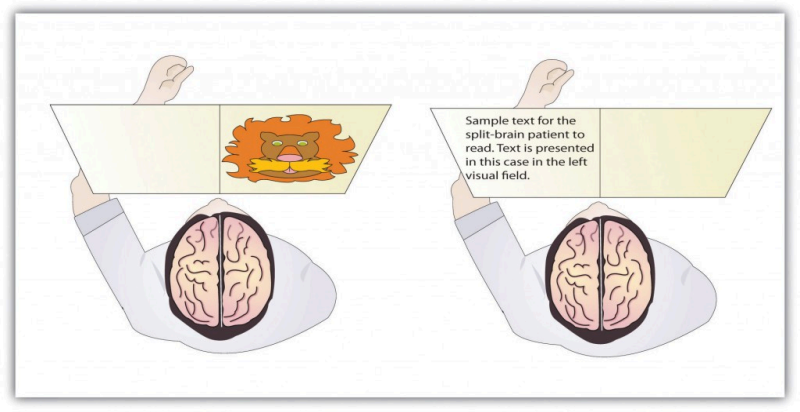


Figure 4.11 Visual and Verbal Processing in the Split-Brain Patient. The information that is presented on the left side of our field of vision is transmitted to the right brain hemisphere, and vice versa. In split-brain patients, the severed corpus callosum does not permit information to be transferred between hemispheres, which allows researchers to learn about the functions of each hemisphere. In the sample on the left, the split-brain patient could not choose which image had been presented because the left hemisphere cannot process visual information. In the sample on the right the patient could not read the passage because the right brain hemisphere cannot process language.

This research, and many other studies following it, has demonstrated that the two brain hemispheres specialize in different abilities. In most people the ability to speak, write, and understand language is located in the left hemisphere. This is why W. J. could read passages that were presented on the right side and thus transmitted to the left hemisphere, but could not read passages that were only experienced in the right brain hemisphere. The left hemisphere is also better at math and at judging time and rhythm. It is also superior in coordinating the order of complex movements — for example, lip movements needed for speech. The right hemisphere, on the other hand, has only very limited verbal abilities, and yet it excels in perceptual skills. The right hemisphere is able to recognize objects, including faces, patterns, and melodies, and it can put a puzzle

together or draw a picture. This is why W. J. could pick out the image when he saw it on the left, but not the right, visual field.

Although Gazzaniga's research demonstrated that the brain is in fact lateralized, such that the two hemispheres specialize in different activities, this does not mean that when people behave in a certain way or perform a certain activity they are only using one hemisphere of their brains at a time. That would be drastically oversimplifying the concept of brain differences. We normally use both hemispheres at the same time, and the difference between the abilities of the two hemispheres is not absolute (Soroker et al., 2005).

Psychology in Everyday Life: Why Are Some People Left-Handed?

Across cultures and ethnic groups, about 90% of people are mainly right-handed, whereas only 10% are primarily left-handed (Peters, Reimers, & Manning, 2006). This fact is puzzling, in part because the number of left-handers is so low, and in part because other animals, including our closest primate relatives, do not show any type of handedness. The existence of right-handers and left-handers provides an interesting example of the relationship among evolution, biology, and social factors and how the same phenomenon can be understood at different levels of analysis (Harris, 1990; McManus, 2002).

At least some handedness is determined by genetics. Ultrasound scans show that nine out of 10 fetuses suck the thumb of their right hand, suggesting that the preference is determined before birth (Hepper, Wells, & Lynch, 2005), and the mechanism of transmission has been linked to a gene on the X chromosome (Jones & Martin, 2000). It has also been observed that left-handed people are likely to have fewer children, and this may be in part because the mothers of left-handers are more prone to miscarriages and other prenatal problems (McKeever, Cerone, Suter, & Wu, 2000).

But culture also plays a role. In the past, left-handed children were forced to write with their right hands in many countries, and this practice continues, particularly in collectivistic cultures, such as India and Japan, where left-handedness is viewed negatively as compared with individualistic societies, such as Canada and the United States. For example, India has about half as many left-handers as the United States (Ida & Mandal, 2003).

There are both advantages and disadvantages to being left-handed in a world where most people are right-handed. One problem for lefties is that the world is designed for right-handers. Automatic teller machines (ATMs), classroom desks, scissors, microscopes, drill presses, and table saws are just some examples of everyday machinery designed with the most important controls on the right side. This may explain in part why left-handers suffer somewhat more accidents than do right-handers (Dutta & Mandal, 2006).

Despite the potential difficulty living and working in a world designed for right-handers, there seem to be some advantages to being left-handed. Throughout history, a number of prominent artists have been left-handed, including Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Pablo Picasso, and Max Escher. Because the right hemisphere is superior in imaging and visual abilities, there may be some advantage to using the left hand for drawing or painting (Springer & Deutsch, 1998). Left-handed people are also better at envisioning three-dimensional objects, which may explain why there is such a high number of left-handed architects, artists, and chess players in proportion to their numbers (Coren, 1992). However, there are also more left-handers among those with reading disabilities, allergies, and migraine headaches (Geschwind & Behan, 2007), perhaps due to the fact that a small minority of left-handers owe their handedness to a birth trauma, such as being born prematurely (Betancur, Vélez, Cabanieu, & le Moal, 1990).

In sports in which handedness may matter, such as tennis, boxing, fencing, or judo, left-handers may have an advantage. They play many games against right-handers and learn how to best handle their styles. Right-

handers, however, play very few games against left-handers, which may make them more vulnerable. This explains why a disproportionately high number of left-handers are found in sports where direct one-on-one action predominates. In other sports, such as golf, there are fewer left-handed players because the handedness of one player has no effect on the competition.

The fact that left-handers excel in some sports suggests the possibility that they may have also had an evolutionary advantage because their ancestors may have been more successful in important skills such as hand-to-hand combat (Bodmer & McKie, 1994). At this point, however, this idea remains only a hypothesis, and determinants of human handedness are yet to be fully understood.

Key Takeaways

- The old brain — including the brain stem, medulla, pons, reticular formation, thalamus, cerebellum, amygdala, hypothalamus, and hippocampus — regulates basic survival functions, such as breathing, moving, resting, feeding, emotions, and memory.
- The cerebral cortex, made up of billions of neurons and glial cells, is divided into the right and left hemispheres and into four lobes.
- The frontal lobe is primarily responsible for thinking, planning, memory, and judgment. The parietal lobe is primarily responsible for bodily sensations and touch. The temporal lobe is primarily responsible for hearing and language. The occipital lobe is primarily responsible for vision. Other areas of the cortex act as association areas, responsible for integrating information.
- The brain changes as a function of experience and potential damage in a process known as plasticity. The brain can generate new neurons through neurogenesis.
- The motor cortex controls voluntary movements. Body parts requiring the most control and dexterity take up the most space in the motor cortex.
- The sensory cortex receives and processes bodily sensations. Body parts that are the most sensitive occupy the greatest amount of space in the sensory cortex.
- The left cerebral hemisphere is primarily responsible for language and speech in most people, whereas the right hemisphere specializes in spatial and perceptual skills, visualization, and the recognition of patterns, faces, and melodies.
- The severing of the corpus callosum, which connects the two hemispheres, creates a “split-brain patient,” with the effect of creating two separate minds operating in one person.
- Studies with split-brain patients as research participants have been used to study brain lateralization.
- Neuroplasticity allows the brain to adapt and change as a function of experience or damage.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Do you think that animals experience emotion? What aspects of brain structure might lead you to believe that they do or do not?

2. Consider your own experiences and speculate on which parts of your brain might be particularly well developed as a result of these experiences.
3. Which brain hemisphere are you likely to be using when you search for a fork in the silverware drawer? Which brain hemisphere are you most likely to be using when you struggle to remember the name of an old friend?
4. Do you think that encouraging left-handed children to use their right hands is a good idea? Why or why not?

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Image Attributions

Figure 4.5: Anatomy of the Brain by artlessstacey (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brain_headBorder.jpg) is in the public domain.

Figure 4.6: Adapted from Wikia Education. (n.d.). Cerebral cortex. Retrieved from http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Cerebral_cortex

4.3 Psychologists Study the Brain Using Many Different Methods

Learning Objective

1. Compare and contrast the techniques that scientists use to view and understand brain structures and functions.

One problem in understanding the brain is that it is difficult to get a good picture of what is going on inside it. But there are a variety of empirical methods that allow scientists to look at brains in action, and the number of possibilities has increased dramatically in recent years with the introduction of new *neuroimaging* techniques. In this section we will consider the various techniques that psychologists use to learn about the brain. Each of the different techniques has some advantages, and when we put them together, we begin to get a relatively good picture of how the brain functions and which brain structures control which activities. Perhaps the most immediate approach to visualizing and understanding the structure of the brain is to directly analyze the brains of human cadavers. When Albert Einstein died in 1955, his brain was removed and stored for later analysis. Researcher Marian Diamond (1999) later analyzed a section of Einstein's cortex to investigate its characteristics. Diamond was interested in the role of glia, and she hypothesized that the ratio of glial cells to neurons was an important determinant of intelligence. To test this hypothesis, she compared the ratio of glia to neurons in Einstein's brain with the ratio in the preserved brains of 11 other more "ordinary" men. However, Diamond was able to find support for only part of her research hypothesis. Although she found that Einstein's brain had relatively more glia in all the areas that she studied than did the control group, the difference was only statistically significant in one of the areas she tested. Diamond admits a limitation in her study is that she had only one Einstein to compare with 11 ordinary men.

Lesions Provide a Picture of What Is Missing

An advantage of the cadaver approach is that the brains can be fully studied, but an obvious disadvantage is that the brains are no longer active. In other cases, however, we can study living brains. The brains of living human beings may be damaged — as a result of strokes, falls, automobile accidents, gunshots, or tumours, for instance. These *damages* are called **lesions**. In rare occasions, brain lesions may be created intentionally through surgery, such as that designed to remove brain tumours or (as in split-brain patients) reduce the effects of epilepsy. Psychologists also sometimes intentionally create lesions in animals to study the effects on their behaviour. In so doing, they hope to be able to draw inferences about the likely functions of human brains from the effects of the lesions in animals. Lesions allow the scientist to observe any loss of brain function that may occur. For instance, when an individual suffers a stroke, a blood clot deprives part of the brain of oxygen, killing the neurons in the area and rendering that area unable to process information. In some cases, the result of the stroke is a specific lack of ability. For instance, if the stroke influences the occipital lobe, then vision may suffer, and if the stroke influences the areas associated with language or speech, these functions will suffer. In fact, our earliest

understanding of the specific areas involved in speech and language were gained by studying patients who had experienced strokes.



Figure 4.12 Phineas Gage. Areas in the frontal lobe of Phineas Gage were damaged when a metal rod blasted through it.

It is now known that a good part of our moral reasoning abilities is located in the frontal lobe, and at least some of this understanding comes from lesion studies. For instance, consider the well-known case of Phineas Gage (Figure 4.12) , a 25-year-old railroad worker who, as a result of an explosion, had an iron rod driven into his cheek and out through the top of his skull, causing major damage to his frontal lobe (Macmillan, 2000). Although, remarkably, Gage was able to return to work after the wounds healed, he no longer seemed to be the same person to those who knew him. The amiable, soft-spoken Gage had become irritable, rude, irresponsible, and dishonest. Although there are questions about the interpretation of this case study (Kotowicz, 2007), it did provide early evidence that the frontal lobe is involved in emotion and morality (Damasio et al., 2005). More recent and more controlled research has also used patients with lesions to investigate the source of moral reasoning. Michael Koenigs and his colleagues (Koenigs et al., 2007) asked groups of normal persons, individuals with lesions in the frontal lobes, and individuals with lesions in other places in the brain to respond to scenarios that involved doing harm to a person, even though the harm ultimately saved the lives of other people (Miller, 2008). In one of the scenarios the participants were asked if they would be willing to kill one person in order to prevent five other people from being killed. As you can see in Figure 4.13, “The Frontal Lobe and Moral Judgment,” they found that the individuals with lesions in the frontal lobe were significantly more likely to agree to do the harm than were individuals from the two other groups.

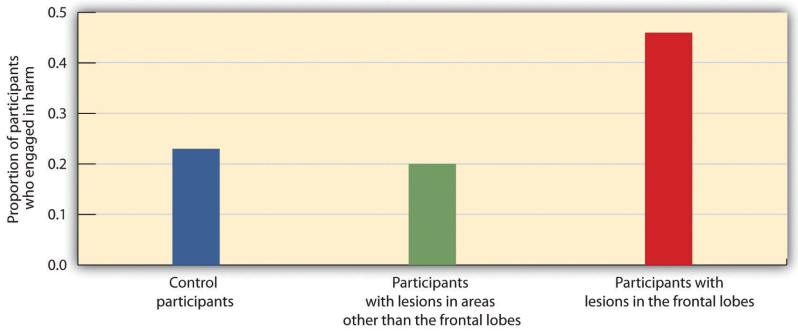


Figure 4.13 The Frontal Lobe and Moral Judgment. Koenigs and his colleagues (2007) found that the frontal lobe is important in moral judgment. Persons with lesions in the frontal lobe were more likely to be willing to harm one person in order to save the lives of five others than were control participants or those with lesions in other parts of the brain. [Long Description]

Recording Electrical Activity in the Brain

In addition to lesion approaches, it is also possible to learn about the brain by studying the electrical activity created by the firing of its neurons. One approach, primarily used with animals, is to place detectors in the brain to study the responses of specific neurons. Research using these techniques has found, for instance, that there are *specific neurons*, known as **feature detectors**, *in the visual cortex that detect movement, lines and edges, and even face*s (Kanwisher, 2000).

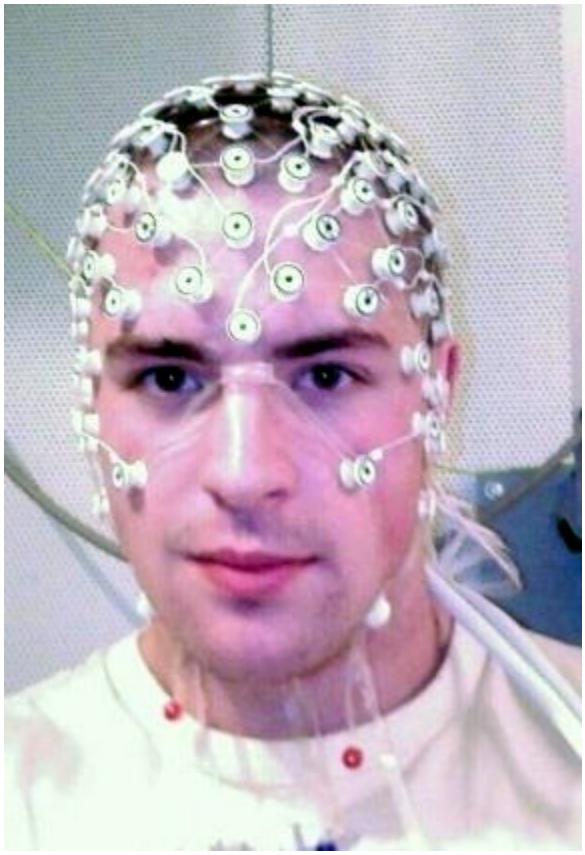


Figure 4.14 EEG Study. A participant in an EEG study with a number of electrodes placed around his head.

A less invasive approach, and one that can be used on living humans, is *electroencephalography (EEG),* as shown in Figure 4.14. The **EEG** is *a technique that records the electrical activity produced by the brain's neurons through the use of electrodes that are placed around the research participant's head.* An EEG can show if a person is asleep, awake, or anesthetized because the brainwave patterns are known to differ during each state. EEGs can also track the waves that are produced when a person is reading, writing, and speaking, and are useful for understanding brain abnormalities, such as epilepsy. A particular advantage of EEG is that the participant can move around while the recordings are being taken, which is useful when measuring brain activity in children, who often have difficulty keeping still. Furthermore, by following electrical impulses across the surface of the brain, researchers can observe changes over very fast time periods.

Peeking inside the Brain: Neuroimaging

Although the EEG can provide information about the general patterns of electrical activity within the brain, and although the EEG allows the researcher to see these changes quickly as they occur in real time, the electrodes must be placed on the surface of the skull, and each electrode measures brainwaves from large areas of the brain. As a result, EEGs do not provide a very clear picture of the structure of the brain. But techniques exist to provide more specific brain images. **Functional magnetic resonance imaging** (fMRI) is *a type of brain scan that uses a magnetic field to create images of brain activity in each brain area*. The patient lies on a bed within a large cylindrical structure containing a very strong magnet.

Neurons that are firing use more oxygen, and the need for oxygen increases blood flow to the area. The fMRI detects the amount of blood flow in each brain region, and thus is an indicator of neural activity. Very clear and detailed pictures of brain structures can be produced via fMRI (see Figure 4.15, "fMRI Image"). Often, the images take the form of cross-sectional "slices" that are obtained as the magnetic field is passed across the brain. The images of these slices are taken repeatedly and are superimposed on images of the brain structure itself to show how activity changes in different brain structures over time. When the research participant is asked to engage in tasks while in the scanner (e.g., by playing a game with another person), the images can show which parts of the brain are associated with which types of tasks. Another advantage of the fMRI is that it is noninvasive. The research participant simply enters the machine and the scans begin. Although the scanners themselves are expensive, the advantages of fMRIs are substantial, and they are now available in many university and hospital settings. The fMRI is now the most commonly used method of learning about brain structure.

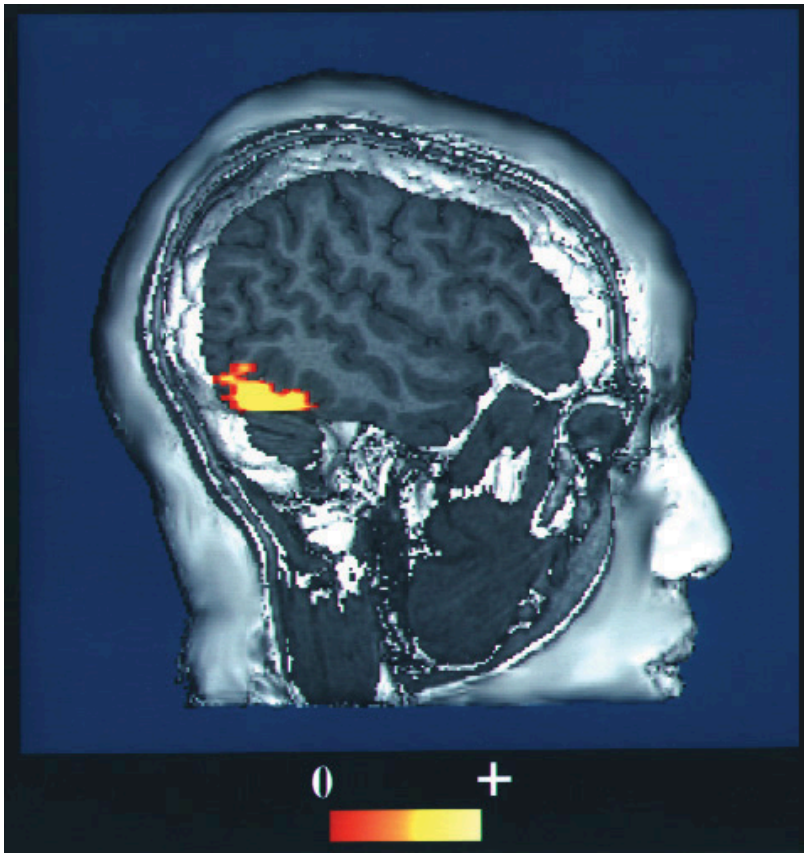


Figure 4.15 fMRI Image. The fMRI creates images of brain structure and activity. The red and yellow areas represent increased blood flow and thus increased activity.

There is still one more approach that is being more frequently implemented to understand brain function, and although it is new, it may turn out to be the most useful of all. **Transcranial magnetic stimulation** (TMS) is *a procedure in which magnetic pulses are applied to the brain of a living person with the goal of temporarily and safely deactivating a small brain region*. In TMS studies the research participant is first scanned in an fMRI machine to determine the exact location of the brain area to be tested. Then the electrical stimulation is provided to the brain before or while the participant is working on a cognitive task, and the effects of the stimulation on performance are assessed. If the participant's ability to perform the task is influenced by the presence of the stimulation, the researchers can conclude that this

particular area of the brain is important to carrying out the task. The primary advantage of TMS is that it allows the researcher to draw causal conclusions about the influence of brain structures on thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. When the TMS pulses are applied, the brain region becomes less active, and this deactivation is expected to influence the research participant's responses. Current research has used TMS to study the brain areas responsible for emotion and cognition and their roles in how people perceive intention and approach moral reasoning (Kalbe et al., 2010; Van den Eynde et al., 2010; Young, Camprodon, Hauser, Pascual-Leone, & Saxe, 2010). TMS is also used as a treatment for a variety of psychological conditions, including migraine, Parkinson's disease, and major depressive disorder.

Research Focus: Cyberostracism

Neuroimaging techniques have important implications for understanding our behaviour, including our responses to those around us. Naomi Eisenberger and her colleagues (2003) tested the hypothesis that people who were excluded by others would report emotional distress and that images of their brains would show that they experienced pain in the same part of the brain where physical pain is normally experienced. In the experiment, 13 participants were each placed into an fMRI brain-imaging machine. The participants were told that they would be playing a computer "Cyberball" game with two other players who were also in fMRI machines (the two opponents did not actually exist, and their responses were controlled by the computer). Each of the participants was measured under three different conditions. In the first part of the experiment, the participants were told that as a result of technical difficulties, the link to the other two scanners could not yet be made, and thus at first they could not engage in, but only watch, the game play. This allowed the researchers to take a baseline fMRI reading. Then, during a second, inclusion, scan, the participants played the game, supposedly with the two other players. During this time, the other players threw the ball to the participants. In the third, exclusion, scan, however, the participants initially received seven throws from the other two players but were then excluded from the game because the two players stopped throwing the ball to the participants for the remainder of the scan (45 throws). The results of the analyses showed that activity in two areas of the frontal lobe was significantly greater during the exclusion scan than during the inclusion scan. Because these brain regions are known from prior research to be active for individuals who are experiencing physical pain, the authors concluded that these results show that the physiological brain responses associated with being socially excluded by others are similar to brain responses experienced upon physical injury. Further research (Chen, Williams, Fitness, & Newton, 2008; Wesselmann, Bagg, & Williams, 2009) has documented that people react to being excluded in a variety of situations with a variety of emotions and behaviours. People who feel that they are excluded, or even those who observe other people being excluded, not only experience pain, but feel worse about themselves and their relationships with people more generally, and they may work harder to try to restore their connections with others.

Key Takeaways

- Studying the brains of cadavers can lead to discoveries about brain structure, but these studies are limited because the brain is no longer active.
- Lesion studies are informative about the effects of lesions on different brain regions.
- Electrophysiological recording may be used in animals to directly measure brain activity.
- Measures of electrical activity in the brain, such as electroencephalography (EEG), are used to assess brainwave patterns and activity.

- Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) measures blood flow in the brain during different activities, providing information about the activity of neurons and thus the functions of brain regions.
- Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) is used to temporarily and safely deactivate a small brain region, with the goal of testing the causal effects of the deactivation on behaviour.

Exercise and Critical Thinking

1. Consider the different ways that psychologists study the brain, and think of a psychological characteristic or behaviour that could be studied using each of the different techniques.

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Image Attributions

Figure 4.12: "Phineas gage – 1868 skull diagram" by John M. Harlow, M.D. (http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Phineas_gage_-_1868_skull_diagram.jpg) is in the public domain.

Figure 4.14: "EEG cap" by Thuglas (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EEG_cap.jpg) is in the public domain.

Figure 4.15: Face recognition by National Institutes of Health (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Face_recognition.jpg) is in public domain.

Long Descriptions

Figure 4.13 long description: The Frontal Lobe and Moral Judgement

	Control Participants	**Participants with lesions in areas other than the frontal lobes**	**Participants with lesions in the frontal lobes**
Proportion of participants who engaged in harm	0.23	0.20	0.46

[Return to Figure 4.13]

4.4 Putting It All Together: The Nervous System and the Endocrine System

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize the primary functions of the CNS and of the subsystems of the PNS.
2. Explain how the electrical components of the nervous system and the chemical components of the endocrine system work together to influence behaviour.

Now that we have considered how individual neurons operate and the roles of the different brain areas, it is time to ask how the body manages to put it all together. How do the complex activities in the various parts of the brain, the simple all-or-nothing firings of billions of interconnected neurons, and the various chemical systems within the body work together to allow the body to respond to the social environment and engage in everyday behaviours? In this section we will see that the complexities of human behaviour are accomplished through the joint actions of electrical and chemical processes in the nervous system and the endocrine system.

Electrical Control of Behaviour: The Nervous System

The nervous system (see Figure 4.16, "The Functional Divisions of the Nervous System"), the electrical information highway of the body, is made up of **nerves** — *bundles of interconnected neurons that fire in synchrony to carry messages*. The **central nervous system** (CNS), *made up of the brain and spinal cord, is the major controller of the body's functions, charged with interpreting sensory information and responding to it* with its own directives. The CNS interprets information coming in from the senses, formulates an appropriate reaction, and sends responses to the appropriate system to respond accordingly. Everything that we see, hear, smell, touch, and taste is conveyed to us from our sensory organs as neural impulses, and each of the commands that the brain sends to the body, both consciously and unconsciously, travels through this system as well.

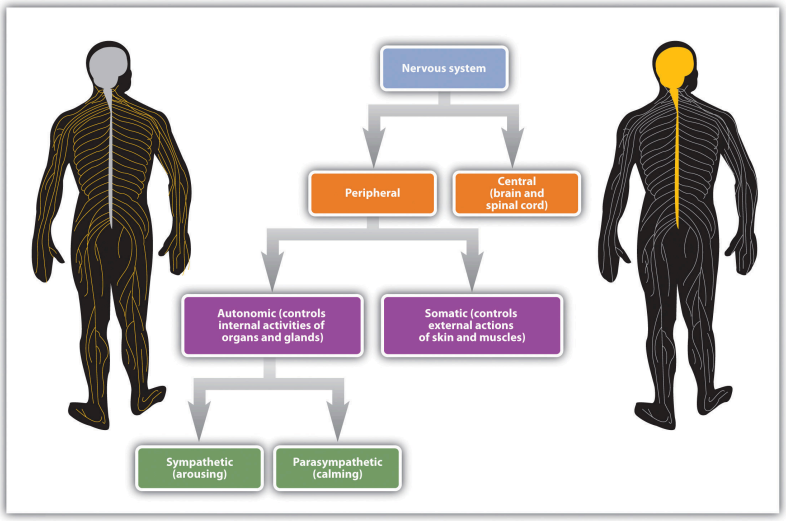


Figure 4.16 The Functional Divisions of the Nervous System. [Long Description]

Nerves are differentiated according to their function. A **sensory (or afferent) neuron** *carries information from the sensory receptors*, whereas a **motor (or efferent) neuron** *transmits information to the muscles and glands*. An **interneuron**, which is by far the most common type of neuron, is located primarily within the CNS and is *responsible for communicating among the neurons*. Interneurons allow the brain to combine the multiple sources of available information to create a coherent picture of the sensory information being conveyed.

The **spinal cord** is *the long, thin, tubular bundle of nerves and supporting cells that extends down from the brain*. It is the central throughway of information for the body. Within the spinal cord, ascending tracts of sensory neurons relay sensory information from the sense organs to the brain while descending tracts of motor neurons relay motor commands back to the body. When a quicker-than-usual response is required, the spinal cord can do its own processing, bypassing the brain altogether. A **reflex** is *an involuntary and nearly instantaneous movement in response to a stimulus*. Reflexes are triggered when sensory information is powerful enough to reach a given threshold and the interneurons in the spinal cord act to send a message back through the motor neurons without relaying the information to the brain (see Figure 4.17, “The Reflex”). When you touch a hot stove and immediately pull your hand back, or when you fumble your cell phone and instinctively reach to catch it before it falls, reflexes in your spinal cord order the appropriate responses before your brain even knows what is happening.

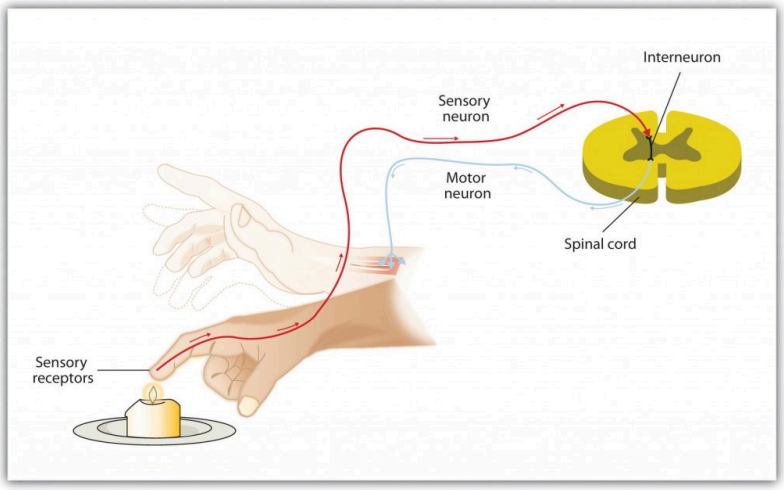


Figure 4.17 The Reflex. The central nervous system can interpret signals from sensory neurons and respond to them extremely quickly via the motor neurons without any need for the brain to be involved. These quick responses, known as reflexes, can reduce the damage that we might experience as a result of, for instance, touching a hot stove.

If the central nervous system is the command centre of the body, the *peripheral nervous system (PNS)* represents the front line. The **PNS** *links the CNS to the body's sense receptors, muscles, and glands*. As you can see in Figure 4.18, "The Autonomic Nervous System," the peripheral nervous system is itself divided into two subsystems, one controlling internal responses and one controlling external responses.

The **autonomic nervous system** (ANS) is *the division of the PNS that governs the internal activities of the human body, including heart rate, breathing, digestion, salivation, perspiration, urination, and sexual arousal*. Many of the actions of the ANS, such as heart rate and digestion, are automatic and out of our conscious control, but others, such as breathing and sexual activity, can be controlled and influenced by conscious processes.

The **somatic nervous system** (SNS) is *the division of the PNS that controls the external aspects of the body*, including the skeletal muscles, skin, and sense organs. The somatic nervous system consists primarily of motor nerves responsible for sending brain signals for muscle contraction.

The autonomic nervous system itself can be further subdivided into the *sympathetic* and *parasympathetic* systems. The **sympathetic division** of the ANS is *involved in preparing the body for behaviour, particularly in response to stress, by activating the organs and the glands in the endocrine system*. The **parasympathetic division** of the ANS *tends to calm the body by slowing the heart and breathing and by allowing the body to recover from the activities that the sympathetic system causes*. The sympathetic and the parasympathetic divisions normally function in opposition to each other, with the sympathetic division acting a bit like the accelerator pedal on a car and the parasympathetic division acting like the brake.

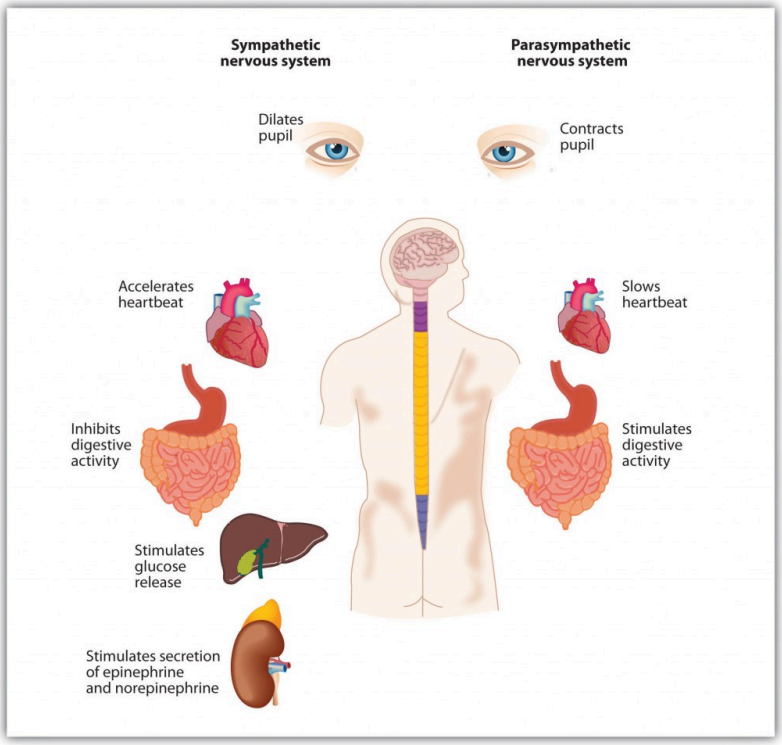


Figure 4.18 The Autonomic Nervous System. The autonomic nervous system has two divisions: The sympathetic division acts to energize the body, preparing it for action. The parasympathetic division acts to calm the body, allowing it to rest. *[Long Description]*

Our everyday activities are controlled by the interaction between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. For example, when we get out of bed in the morning, we would experience a sharp drop in blood pressure if it were not for the action of the sympathetic system, which automatically increases blood flow through the body. Similarly, after we eat a big meal, the parasympathetic system automatically sends more blood to the stomach and intestines, allowing us to efficiently digest the food. And perhaps you have had the experience of not being at all hungry before a stressful event, such as a sports game or an exam (when the sympathetic division was primarily in action), but suddenly finding yourself feeling starved afterward, as the parasympathetic takes over. The two systems work together to maintain vital bodily functions, resulting in **homeostasis**, *the natural balance in the body's systems*.

The Body's Chemicals Help Control Behaviour: The Endocrine System

The nervous system is designed to protect us from danger through its interpretation of and reactions to stimuli. But a primary function of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems is to interact with the **endocrine system** to *elicit chemicals that provide another system for influencing our feelings and behaviours*.

A **gland** in the endocrine system is made up of *groups of cells that function to secrete hormones*. A **hormone** is *a chemical that moves throughout the body to help regulate emotions and behaviours*. When the hormones released by one gland arrive at receptor tissues or other glands, these receiving receptors may trigger the release of other hormones, resulting in a series of complex chemical chain reactions. The endocrine system works together with the nervous system to influence many aspects of human

behaviour, including growth, reproduction, and metabolism. And the endocrine system plays a vital role in emotions. Because the glands in men and women differ, hormones also help explain some of the observed behavioural differences between men and women. The major glands in the endocrine system are shown in Figure 4.19, "The Major Glands of the Endocrine System."

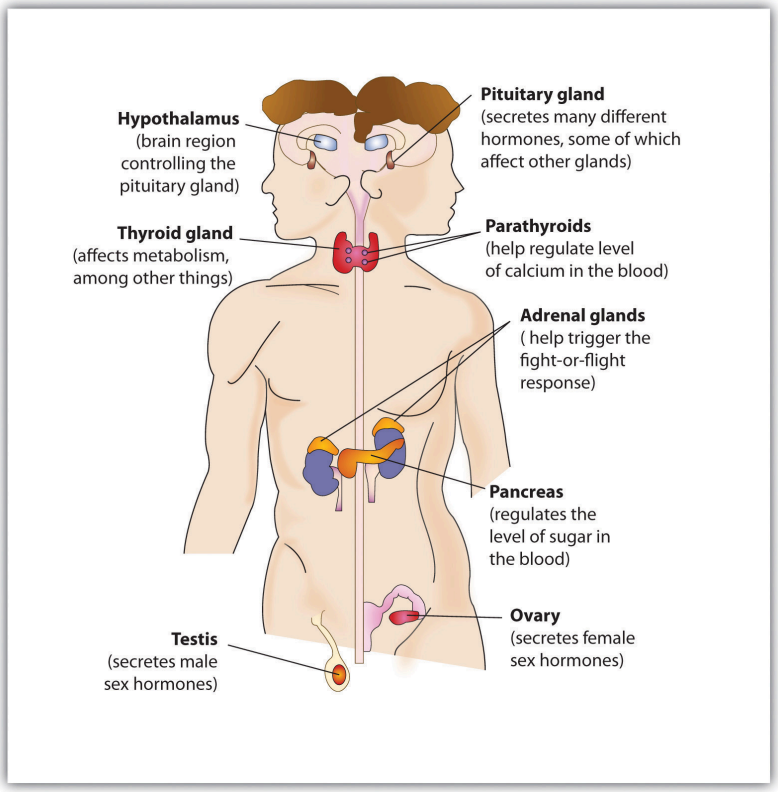


Figure 4.19 The Major Glands of the Endocrine System. The male is shown on the left and the female on the right.

The **pituitary gland**, *a small pea-sized gland located near the centre of the brain, is responsible for controlling the body's growth*, but it also has many other influences that make it of primary importance to regulating behaviour. The pituitary secretes hormones that influence our responses to pain as well as hormones that signal the ovaries and testes to make sex hormones. The pituitary gland also controls ovulation and the menstrual cycle in women. Because the pituitary has such an important influence on other glands, it is sometimes known as the "master gland."

Other glands in the endocrine system include the **pancreas**, which *secretes hormones designed to keep the body supplied with fuel to produce and maintain stores of energy*; the **pineal gland**, *located in the middle of the brain, which secretes melatonin*, a hormone that helps regulate the wake-sleep cycle; and the **thyroid** and **parathyroid glands**, which are responsible for *determining how quickly the body uses energy and hormones, and controlling the amount of calcium in the blood and bones*.

The body has two triangular *adrenal glands*, one atop each kidney. The **adrenal glands** *produce hormones that regulate salt and water balance in the body, and they are involved in metabolism, the immune system, and sexual development and function*. The most important function of the adrenal glands is to secrete the hormones *epinephrine* (also known as *adrenaline*) and *norepinephrine* (also known as *noradrenaline*) when we are excited, threatened, or stressed. Epinephrine and norepinephrine stimulate

the sympathetic division of the ANS, causing increased heart and lung activity, dilation of the pupils, and increases in blood sugar, which give the body a surge of energy to respond to a threat. The activity and role of the adrenal glands in response to stress provide an excellent example of the close relationship and interdependency of the nervous and endocrine systems. A quick-acting nervous system is essential for immediate activation of the adrenal glands, while the endocrine system mobilizes the body for action.

The male sex glands, known as the **testes**, secrete a number of hormones, the most important of which is **testosterone**, *the male sex hormone*. Testosterone regulates body changes associated with sexual development, including enlargement of the penis, deepening of the voice, growth of facial and pubic hair, and the increase in muscle growth and strength. The **ovaries**, *the female sex glands*, are located in the pelvis. They produce eggs and secrete the female hormones *estrogen* and *progesterone*. **Estrogen** is involved in the *development of female sexual features*, including breast growth, the accumulation of body fat around the hips and thighs, and the growth spurt that occurs during puberty. Both estrogen and progesterone are also involved in pregnancy and the regulation of the menstrual cycle.

Recent research has pinpointed some of the important roles of the sex hormones in social behaviour. Dabbs, Hargrove, and Heusel (1996) measured the testosterone levels of 240 men who were members of 12 fraternities at two universities. They also obtained descriptions of the fraternities from university officials, fraternity officers, yearbook and chapter house photographs, and researcher field notes. The researchers correlated the testosterone levels and the descriptions of each fraternity. They found that the fraternities with the highest average testosterone levels were also more wild and unruly, and one of these fraternities was known across campus for the crudeness of its behaviour. On the other hand, the fraternities with the lowest average testosterone levels were more well behaved, friendly and pleasant, academically successful, and socially responsible. Banks and Dabbs (1996) found that juvenile delinquents and prisoners who had high levels of testosterone also acted more violently, and Tremblay and colleagues (1998) found that testosterone was related to toughness and leadership behaviours in adolescent boys. Although testosterone levels are higher in men than in women, the relationship between testosterone and aggression is not limited to males. Studies have also shown a positive relationship between testosterone and aggression and related behaviours (such as competitiveness) in women (Cashdan, 2003).

Keep in mind that the observed relationships between testosterone levels and aggressive behaviour that have been found in these studies do not prove that testosterone causes aggression — the relationships are only correlational. In fact, there is evidence that the relationship between violence and testosterone also goes in the other direction: playing an aggressive game, such as tennis or even chess, increases the testosterone levels of the winners and decreases the testosterone levels of losers (Gladue, Boechler, & McCaul, 1989; Mazur, Booth, & Dabbs, 1992), and perhaps this is why excited soccer fans sometimes riot when their team wins.

Recent research has also begun to document the role that female sex hormones may play in reactions to others. A study about hormonal influences on social-cognitive functioning (Macrae, Alnwick, Milne, & Schloerscheidt, 2002) found that women were more easily able to perceive and categorize male faces during the more fertile phases of their menstrual cycles. Although researchers did not directly measure the presence of hormones, it is likely that phase-specific hormonal differences influenced the women's perceptions.

At this point you can begin to see the important role the hormones play in behaviour. But the hormones

we have reviewed in this section represent only a subset of the many influences that hormones have on our behaviours. In the chapters to come we will consider the important roles that hormones play in many other behaviours, including sleeping, sexual activity, and helping and harming others.

Key Takeaways

- The body uses both electrical and chemical systems to create homeostasis.
- The CNS is made up of bundles of nerves that carry messages to and from the PNS.
- The peripheral nervous system is composed of the autonomic nervous system (ANS) and the peripheral nervous system (PNS). The ANS is further divided into the sympathetic (activating) and parasympathetic (calming) nervous systems. These divisions are activated by glands and organs in the endocrine system.
- Specific nerves, including sensory neurons, motor neurons, and interneurons, each have specific functions.
- The spinal cord may bypass the brain by responding rapidly using reflexes.
- The pituitary gland is a master gland, affecting many other glands.
- Hormones produced by the pituitary and adrenal glands regulate growth, stress, sexual functions, and chemical balance in the body.
- The adrenal glands produce epinephrine and norepinephrine, the hormones responsible for our reactions to stress.
- The sex hormones, testosterone, estrogen, and progesterone, play an important role in sex differences.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Recall a time when you were threatened or stressed. What physiological reactions did you experience in the situation, and what aspects of the endocrine system do you think created those reactions?
2. Consider the emotions that you have experienced over the past several weeks. What hormones do you think might have been involved in creating those emotions?

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Long Descriptions

Figure 4.16 long description: The nervous system is made up of two parts: The central nervous system consisting of the brain and spinal cord and the peripheral nervous system. The peripheral nervous system is both autonomic (controlling internal activities of organs and glands) and somatic (controlling external actions of skin and muscles). [Return to Figure 4.16]

Figure 4.18 long description: The Sympathetic and Parasympathetic Nervous System

Sympathetic Nervous System	**Parasympathetic Nervous System**
Dilates pupil	Contracts pupil
Accelerates heartbeat	Slows heartbeat
Inhibits digestive activity	Stimulates digestive activity
Stimulates glucose release	
Stimulates secretion of epinephrine and norepinephrine	

[Return to Figure 4.18]

4.5 Chapter Summary

All human behaviour, thoughts, and feelings are produced by the actions of our brains, nerves, muscles, and glands.

The body is controlled by the nervous system, consisting of the central nervous system (CNS) and the peripheral nervous system (PNS) and the endocrine system, which is made up of glands that create and control hormones.

Neurons are the cells in the nervous system. Neurons are composed of a soma that contains the nucleus of the cell; a dendrite that collects information from other cells and sends the information to the soma; and a long segmented fiber, known as the axon, which transmits information away from the cell body toward other neurons and to the muscles and glands.

The nervous system operates using an electrochemical process. An electrical charge moves through the neuron itself, and chemicals are used to transmit information between neurons. Within the neuron, the electrical charge occurs in the form of an action potential. The action potential operates in an all-or-nothing manner.

Neurons are separated by junction areas known as synapses. Neurotransmitters travel across the synaptic space between the terminal button of one neuron and the dendrites of other neurons, where they bind to the dendrites in the neighboring neurons. More than 100 chemical substances produced in the body have been identified as neurotransmitters, and these substances have a wide and profound effect on emotion, cognition, and behaviour.

Drugs that we ingest may either mimic (agonists) or block (antagonists) the operations of neurotransmitters.

The brains of all animals are layered and generally quite similar in overall form.

The brain stem is the oldest and innermost region of the brain. It controls the most basic functions of life, including breathing, attention, and motor responses. The brain stem includes the medulla, the pons, and the reticular formation.

Above the brain stem are other parts of the old brain involved in the processing of behaviour and emotions, including the thalamus, the cerebellum, and the limbic system. The limbic system includes the amygdala, the hypothalamus, and the hippocampus.

The cerebral cortex contains about 20 billion nerve cells and 300 trillion synaptic connections, and it’s supported by billions more glial cells that surround and link to the neurons. The cerebral cortex is divided into two hemispheres, and each hemisphere is divided into four lobes, each separated by folds known as fissures.

The frontal lobe is primarily responsible for thinking, planning, memory, and judgment. The parietal lobe is responsible for processing information about touch. The occipital lobe processes visual

information, and the temporal lobe is responsible for hearing and language. The cortex also includes the motor cortex, the somatosensory cortex, the visual cortex, the auditory cortex, and the association areas.

The brain can develop new neurons, a process known as neurogenesis, as well as new routes for neural communications (neuroplasticity).

Psychologists study the brain using cadaver and lesion approaches, as well as through neuroimaging techniques that include electroencephalography (EEG), functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS).

Sensory (afferent) neurons carry information from the sensory receptors, whereas motor (efferent) neurons transmit information to the muscles and glands. Interneurons, by far the most common of neurons, are located primarily within the CNS and responsible for communicating among the neurons.

The peripheral nervous system is itself divided into two subsystems, one controlling internal responses (the autonomic nervous system, ANS) and one controlling external responses (the somatic nervous system). The sympathetic division of the ANS is involved in preparing the body for behaviour by activating the organs and the glands in the endocrine system. The parasympathetic division of the ANS tends to calm the body by slowing the heart and breathing and by allowing the body to recover from the activities that the sympathetic system causes.

Glands in the endocrine system include the pituitary gland, the pancreas, the adrenal glands, and the male and female sex glands. The male sex hormone testosterone and the female sex hormones estrogen and progesterone play important roles in behaviour and contribute to gender differences.

Chapter 5. Sensing and Perceiving

5. Sensing and Perceiving

Misperception by Those Trained to Accurately Perceive a Threat

On September 6, 2007, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) leaders' summit was being held in downtown Sydney, Australia. World leaders were attending the summit. Many roads in the area were closed for security reasons, and police presence was high.

As a prank, eight members of the Australian television satire *The Chaser's War on Everything* assembled a false motorcade made up of two black four-wheel-drive vehicles, a black sedan, two motorcycles, bodyguards, and chauffeurs (see the video below). Group member Chas Licciardello was in one of the cars disguised as Osama bin Laden. The motorcade drove through Sydney's central business district and entered the security zone of the meeting. The motorcade was waved on by police, through two checkpoints, until the Chaser group decided it had taken the gag far enough and stopped outside the InterContinental Hotel where former U.S. president George W. Bush was staying. Licciardello stepped out onto the street and complained, in character as bin Laden, about not being invited to the APEC Summit. Only at this time did the police belatedly check the identity of the group members, finally arresting them.

Watch the Chaser APEC Motorcade Stunt [YouTube]

Afterward, the group testified that it had made little effort to disguise its attempt as anything more than a prank. The group's only realistic attempt to fool police was its Canadian-flag-marked vehicles. Other than that, the group used obviously fake credentials, and its security passes were printed with "JOKE," "Insecurity," and "It's pretty obvious this isn't a real pass," all clearly visible to any police officer who might have been troubled to look closely as the motorcade passed. The required APEC 2007 official vehicle stickers had the name of the group's show printed on them, and this text: "This dude likes trees and poetry and certain types of carnivorous plants excite him." In addition, a few of the "bodyguards" were carrying camcorders, and one of the motorcyclists was dressed in jeans, both details that should have alerted police that something was amiss.

The Chaser pranksters later explained the primary reason for the stunt. They wanted to make a statement about the fact that bin Laden, a world leader, had not been invited to an APEC Summit where issues of terror were being discussed. The secondary motive was to test the event's security. The show's lawyers approved the stunt, under the assumption that the motorcade would be stopped at the APEC meeting.

The ability to detect and interpret the events that are occurring around us allows us to respond to these stimuli appropriately (Gibson & Pick, 2000). In most cases the system is successful, but as you can see from the above example, it is not perfect. In this chapter we will discuss the strengths and limitations of these capacities, focusing on both **sensation** — *awareness resulting from the stimulation of a sense organ* — and **perception** — *the organization and interpretation of sensations*. Sensation and perception work seamlessly together to allow us to experience the world through our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin, but also to combine what we are currently learning from the environment with what we already know about it to make judgments and to choose appropriate behaviours.

The study of sensation and perception is exceedingly important for our everyday lives because the knowledge generated by psychologists is used in so many ways to help so many people. Psychologists

work closely with mechanical and electrical engineers, with experts in defence and military contractors, and with clinical, health, and sports psychologists to help them apply this knowledge to their everyday practices. The research is used to help us understand and better prepare people to cope with such diverse events as driving cars, flying planes, creating robots, and managing pain (Fajen & Warren, 2003).



Figure 5.1 Sports psychologists, video game designers, and mechanical engineers use knowledge about sensation and perception to create and improve everyday objects and behaviours.

We will begin the chapter with a focus on the **six senses** of seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting, and monitoring the body's positions (**proprioception**). We will see that sensation is sometimes relatively direct, in the sense that the wide variety of stimuli around us inform and guide our behaviours quickly and accurately, but nevertheless is always the result of at least some interpretation. We do not directly experience stimuli, but rather we experience those stimuli as they are created by our senses. Each sense accomplishes the basic process of **transduction** — *the conversion of stimuli detected by receptor cells to electrical impulses that are then transported to the brain* — in different, but related, ways.

After we have reviewed the basic processes of sensation, we will turn to the topic of perception, focusing on how the brain's processing of sensory experience can not only help us make quick and accurate judgments, but also mislead us into making perceptual and judgmental errors, such as those that allowed the Chaser group to breach security at the APEC meeting.

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Image Attributions

Figure 5.1: Caroline ouellette by Genevieve2 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Caroline_Ouellette_8_janvier_2011.jpg) used under CC BY SA 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en); Arcade by Belinda Hankins Miller (http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arcade-20071020-a.jpg) used under CC BY 2.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.it); Niagara Bridge, Canada by Tony Hisgett (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Niagara_Bridge,_Canada.jpg) used under CC BY 2.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en).

5.1 We Experience Our World through Sensation

Learning Objectives

1. Review and summarize the capacities and limitations of human sensation.
2. Explain the difference between sensation and perception and describe how psychologists measure sensory and difference thresholds.

Sensory Thresholds: What Can We Experience?

Humans possess powerful sensory capacities that allow us to sense the kaleidoscope of sights, sounds, smells, and tastes that surround us. Our eyes detect light energy and our ears pick up sound waves. Our skin senses touch, pressure, hot, and cold. Our tongues react to the molecules of the foods we eat, and our noses detect scents in the air. The human perceptual system is wired for accuracy, and people are exceedingly good at making use of the wide variety of information available to them (Stoffregen & Bardy, 2001).

In many ways our senses are quite remarkable. The human eye can detect the equivalent of a single candle flame burning 30 miles away and can distinguish among more than 300,000 different colours. The human ear can detect sounds as low as 20 **hertz** (*vibrations per second*) and as high as 20,000 hertz, and it can hear the tick of a clock about 20 feet away in a quiet room. We can taste a teaspoon of sugar dissolved in two gallons of water, and we are able to smell one drop of perfume diffused in a three-room apartment. We can feel the wing of a bee on our cheek dropped from one centimeter above (Galanter, 1962).

Test your hearing

To get an idea of the range of sounds that the human ear can sense, test your hearing here: http://test-my-hearing.com



Figure 5.2 Smell. The dog's highly sensitive sense of smell is useful for searches of missing persons, explosives, foods, and drugs.

Although there is much that we do sense, there is even more that we do not. Dogs (Figure 5.2), bats, whales, and some rodents all have much better hearing than we do, and many animals have a far richer sense of smell. Birds are able to see the ultraviolet light that we cannot (see Figure 5.3, "Ultraviolet Light and Bird Vision") and can also sense the pull of the earth's magnetic field. Cats have an extremely sensitive and sophisticated sense of touch, and they are able to navigate in complete darkness using their whiskers. The fact that different organisms have different sensations is part of their evolutionary adaptation. Each species is adapted to sensing the things that are most important to them, while being blissfully unaware of the things that don't matter.

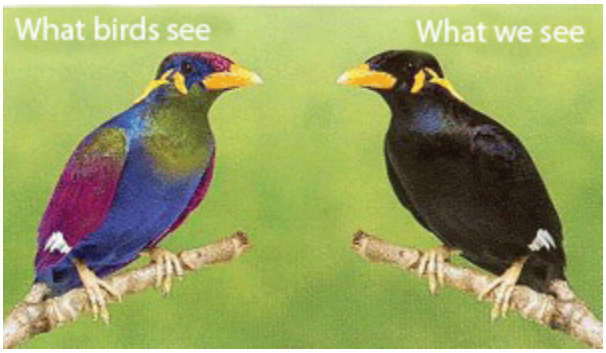


Figure 5.3 Ultraviolet Light and Bird Vision. Birds can see ultraviolet light; humans cannot. What looks like a black bird to us is in colour for a bird.

Measuring Sensation

Psychophysics is *the branch of psychology that studies the effects of physical stimuli on sensory perceptions and mental states*. The field of psychophysics was founded by the German psychologist Gustav Fechner (1801-1887), who was the first to study the relationship between the strength of a stimulus and a person's ability to detect the stimulus.

The measurement techniques developed by Fechner and his colleagues are designed in part to help determine the limits of human sensation. One important criterion is the ability to detect very faint stimuli. The **absolute threshold of a sensation** is defined as *the intensity of a stimulus that allows an organism to just barely detect it*.

In a typical psychophysics experiment, an individual is presented with a series of trials in which a signal is sometimes presented and sometimes not, or in which two stimuli are presented that are either the same or different. Imagine, for instance, that you were asked to take a hearing test. On each of the trials your task is to indicate either "yes" if you heard a sound or "no" if you did not. The signals are purposefully made to be very faint, making accurate judgments difficult.

The problem for you is that the very faint signals create uncertainty. Because our ears are constantly sending background information to the brain, you will sometimes think that you heard a sound when none was there, and you will sometimes fail to detect a sound that is there. Your task is to determine whether the neural activity that you are experiencing is due to the background noise alone or is the result of a signal within the noise.

The responses that you give on the hearing test can be analyzed using *signal detection analysis*. **Signal detection analysis** is *a technique used to determine the ability of the perceiver to separate true signals from background noise* (Macmillan & Creelman, 2005; Wickens, 2002). As you can see in Figure 5.4, "Outcomes of a Signal Detection Analysis," each judgment trial creates four possible outcomes: A *hit* occurs when you, as the listener, correctly say "yes" when there was a sound. A *false alarm* occurs when you respond "yes" to no signal. In the other two cases you respond "no" — either a *miss* (saying "no" when there was a signal) or a *correct rejection* (saying "no" when there was in fact no signal).

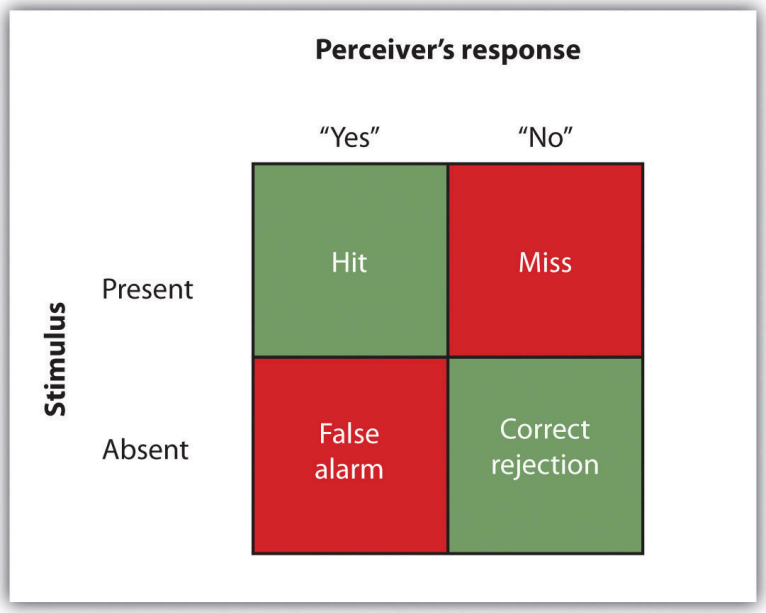


Figure 5.4 Outcomes of a Signal Detection Analysis. Our ability to accurately detect stimuli is measured using a signal detection analysis. Two of the possible decisions (hits and correct rejections) are accurate; the other two (misses and false alarms) are errors.

The analysis of the data from a psychophysics experiment creates two measures. One measure, known as **sensitivity**, refers to the *true ability of the individual to detect the presence or absence of signals*. People who have better hearing will have higher sensitivity than will those with poorer hearing. The other measure, **response bias**, refers to a *behavioural tendency to respond "yes" to the trials, which is independent of sensitivity*.

Imagine, for instance, that rather than taking a hearing test, you are a soldier on guard duty, and your job is to detect the very faint sound of the breaking of a branch that indicates that an enemy is nearby. You can see that in this case making a false alarm by alerting the other soldiers to the sound might not be as costly as a miss (a failure to report the sound), which could be deadly. Therefore, you might well adopt a very lenient response bias in which whenever you are at all unsure, you send a warning signal. In this case your responses may not be very accurate (your sensitivity may be low because you are making a lot of false alarms) and yet the extreme response bias can save lives.

Another application of signal detection occurs when medical technicians study body images for the presence of cancerous tumours. Again, a miss (in which the technician incorrectly determines that there is no tumour) can be very costly, but false alarms (referring patients who do not have tumours to further testing) also have costs. The ultimate decisions that the technicians make are based on the quality of the signal (clarity of the image), their experience and training (the ability to recognize certain shapes and textures of tumours), and their best guesses about the relative costs of misses versus false alarms.

Although we have focused to this point on the absolute threshold, a second important criterion concerns the ability to assess differences between stimuli. The **difference threshold** (or **just noticeable difference** [JND]), refers to *the change in a stimulus that can just barely be detected by the organism.* The German physiologist Ernst Weber (1795-1878) made an important discovery about the JND —

namely, that the ability to detect differences depends not so much on the size of the difference but on the size of the difference in relation to the absolute size of the stimulus. **Weber's law** maintains that the *just noticeable difference of a stimulus is a constant proportion of the original intensity of the stimulus*. As an example, if you have a cup of coffee that has only a very little bit of sugar in it (say one teaspoon), adding another teaspoon of sugar will make a big difference in taste. But if you added that same teaspoon to a cup of coffee that already had five teaspoons of sugar in it, then you probably wouldn't taste the difference as much (in fact, according to Weber's law, you would have to add five more teaspoons to make the same difference in taste).

One interesting application of Weber's law is in our everyday shopping behaviour. Our tendency to perceive cost differences between products is dependent not only on the amount of money we will spend or save, but also on the amount of money saved relative to the price of the purchase. For example, if you were about to buy a soda or candy bar in a convenience store, and the price of the items ranged from $1 to $3, you would likely think that the $3 item cost "a lot more" than the $1 item. But now imagine that you were comparing between two music systems, one that cost $397 and one that cost $399. Probably you would think that the cost of the two systems was "about the same," even though buying the cheaper one would still save you $2.

Research Focus: Influence without Awareness

If you study Figure 5.5, "Absolute Threshold," you will see that the absolute threshold is the point where we become aware of a faint stimulus. After that point, we say that the stimulus is **conscious** because we can *accurately report on its existence (or its nonexistence) more than 50% of the time*. But can **subliminal stimuli** (*events that occur below the absolute threshold and of which we are not conscious*) have an influence on our behaviour?

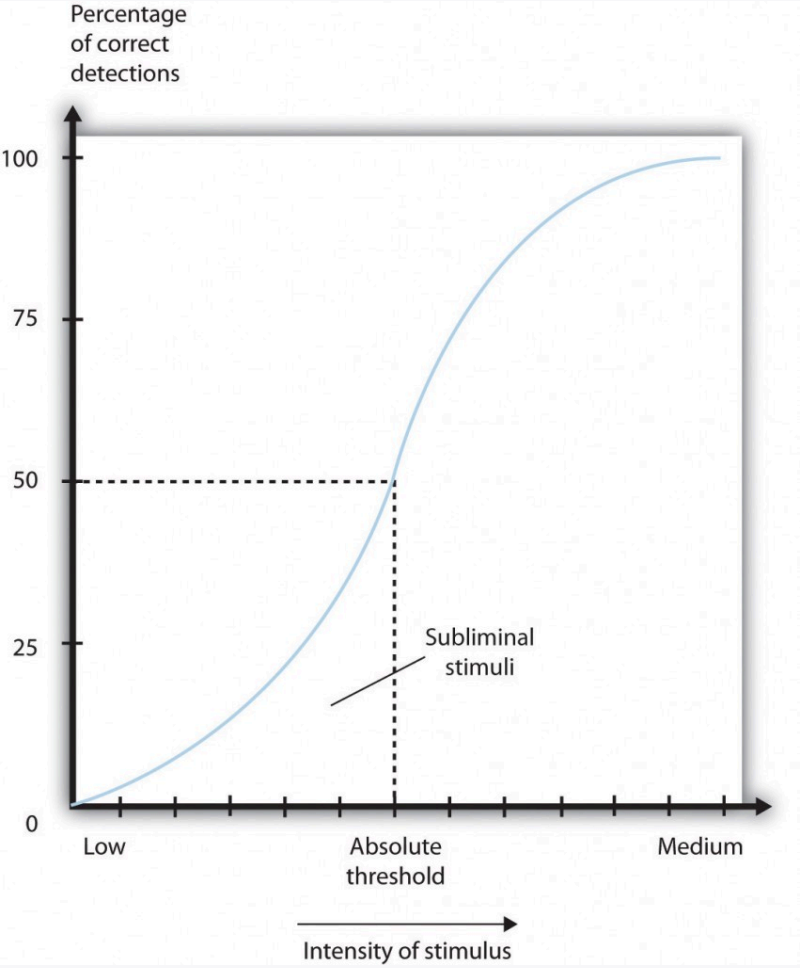


Figure 5.5 Absolute Threshold. As the intensity of a stimulus increases, we are more likely to perceive it. Stimuli below the absolute threshold can still have at least some influence on us, even though we cannot consciously detect them.

A variety of research programs have found that subliminal stimuli can influence our judgments and behaviour, at least in the short term (Dijksterhuis, 2010). But whether the presentation of subliminal stimuli can influence the products that we buy has been a more controversial topic in psychology. In one relevant experiment, Karremans, Stroebe, and Claus (2006) had Dutch college students view a series of computer trials in which a string of letters such as *BBBBBBBBB* or *BBBbBBBBB* were presented on the screen. To be sure they paid attention to the display, the students were asked to note whether the strings contained a small *b*. However, immediately before each of the letter strings, the researchers presented either the name of a drink that is popular in Holland (Lipton Ice) or a control string containing the same letters as Lipton Ice (NpeicTol). These words were presented so quickly (for only about one-fiftieth of a second) that the participants could not see them.

Then the students were asked to indicate their intention to drink Lipton Ice by answering questions such as "If you would sit on a terrace now, how likely is it that you would order Lipton Ice," and also to indicate how thirsty they were at the time. The researchers found that the students who had been exposed to the "Lipton Ice" words (and particularly those who indicated that they were already thirsty) were significantly more likely to say that they would drink Lipton Ice than were those who had been exposed to the control words.

If they were effective, procedures such as this (we can call the technique "subliminal advertising" because it

advertises a product outside awareness) would have some major advantages for advertisers, because it would allow them to promote their products without directly interrupting the consumers' activity and without the consumers' knowing they are being persuaded. People cannot counterargue with, or attempt to avoid being influenced by, messages received outside awareness. Due to fears that people may be influenced without their knowing, subliminal advertising has been banned in many countries, including Australia, Canada, Great Britain, the United States, and Russia.

Although it has been proven to work in some research, subliminal advertising's effectiveness is still uncertain. Charles Trappey (1996) conducted a meta-analysis in which he combined 23 leading research studies that had tested the influence of subliminal advertising on consumer choice. The results showed that subliminal advertising had a negligible effect on consumer choice. Saegert (1987, p. 107) concluded that "marketing should quit giving subliminal advertising the benefit of the doubt," arguing that the influences of subliminal stimuli are usually so weak that they are normally overshadowed by the person's own decision making about the behaviour.

Taken together then, the evidence for the effectiveness of subliminal advertising is weak, and its effects may be limited to only some people and in only some conditions. You probably don't have to worry too much about being subliminally persuaded in your everyday life, even if subliminal ads are allowed in your country. But even if subliminal advertising is not all that effective itself, there are plenty of other indirect advertising techniques that are used and that do work. For instance, many ads for automobiles and alcoholic beverages are subtly sexualized, which encourages the consumer to indirectly (even if not subliminally) associate these products with sexuality. And there is the ever more frequent "product placement" technique, where images of brands (cars, sodas, electronics, and so forth) are placed on websites and in popular television shows and movies. Harris, Bargh, & Brownell (2009) found that being exposed to food advertising on television significantly increased child and adult snacking behaviours, again suggesting that the effects of perceived images, even if presented above the absolute threshold, may nevertheless be very subtle.

Another example of processing that occurs outside our awareness is seen when certain areas of the visual cortex are damaged, causing **blindsight**, *a condition in which people are unable to consciously report on visual stimuli but nevertheless are able to accurately answer questions about what they are seeing.* When people with blindsight are asked directly what stimuli look like, or to determine whether these stimuli are present at all, they cannot do so at better than chance levels. They report that they cannot see anything. However, when they are asked more indirect questions, they are able to give correct answers. For example, people with blindsight are able to correctly determine an object's location and direction of movement, as well as identify simple geometrical forms and patterns (Weiskrantz, 1997). It seems that although conscious reports of the visual experiences are not possible, there is still a parallel and implicit process at work, enabling people to perceive certain aspects of the stimuli.

Key Takeaways

- Sensation is the process of receiving information from the environment through our sensory organs. Perception is the process of interpreting and organizing the incoming information so that we can understand it and react accordingly.
- Transduction is the conversion of stimuli detected by receptor cells to electrical impulses that are transported to the brain.
- Although our experiences of the world are rich and complex, humans — like all species — have

their own adapted sensory strengths and sensory limitations.

- Sensation and perception work together in a fluid, continuous process.
- Our judgments in detection tasks are influenced by both the absolute threshold of the signal as well as our current motivations and experiences. Signal detection analysis is used to differentiate sensitivity from response biases.
- The difference threshold, or just noticeable difference, is the ability to detect the smallest change in a stimulus about 50% of the time. According to Weber's law, the just noticeable difference increases in proportion to the total intensity of the stimulus.
- Research has found that stimuli can influence behaviour even when they are presented below the absolute threshold (i.e., subliminally). The effectiveness of subliminal advertising, however, has not been shown to be of large magnitude.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Leaf through a magazine or watch several advertisements on television and pay attention to the persuasive techniques being used. What impact are these ads having on your senses? Based on what you know about psychophysics, sensation, and perception, what are some of the reasons why subliminal advertising might be banned in some countries?
2. If we pick up two letters, one that weighs one ounce and one that weighs two ounces, we can notice the difference. But if we pick up two packages, one that weighs three pounds one ounce, and one that weighs three pounds two ounces, we can't tell the difference. Why?
3. Take a moment and lie down quietly in your bedroom. Notice the variety and levels of what you can see, hear, and feel. Does this experience help you understand the idea of the absolute threshold?

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Image Attributions

Figure 5.2: Police officer with sniffer dog by Harald Dettenborn, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Msc2010_dett_0036.jpg used under CC BY 3.0 license(http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/de/deed.en).

Figure 5.3: Adapted from Fatal Light Awareness Program. (2008), http://www.flap.org/research.htm.

5.2 Seeing

Learning Objectives

1. Identify the key structures of the eye and the role they play in vision.
2. Summarize how the eye and the visual cortex work together to sense and perceive the visual stimuli in the environment, including processing colours, shape, depth, and motion.

Whereas other animals rely primarily on hearing, smell, or touch to understand the world around them, human beings rely in large part on vision. A large part of our cerebral cortex is devoted to seeing, and we have substantial visual skills. Seeing begins when light falls on the eyes, initiating the process of transduction. Once this visual information reaches the visual cortex, it is processed by a variety of neurons that detect colours, shapes, and motion, and that create meaningful perceptions out of the incoming stimuli.

The air around us is filled with a sea of **electromagnetic energy**: *pulses of energy waves that can carry information from place to place*. As you can see in Figure 5.6, "The Electromagnetic Spectrum," electromagnetic waves vary in their **wavelength** — *the distance between one wave peak and the next wave peak* — with the shortest gamma waves being only a fraction of a millimeter in length and the longest radio waves being hundreds of kilometers long. Humans are blind to almost all of this energy — *our eyes detect only the range from about 400 to 700 billionths of a meter, the part of the electromagnetic spectrum known* as the **visible spectrum**.

The Sensing Eye and the Perceiving Visual Cortex

As you can see in Figure 5.7, "Anatomy of the Human Eye," light enters the eye through the **cornea**, *a clear covering that protects the eye and begins to focus the incoming light.* The light then passes through the **pupil,** *a small opening in the centre of the eye*. The pupil is surrounded by the **iris**, *the coloured part of the eye that controls the size of the pupil by constricting or dilating in response to light intensity*. When we enter a dark movie theatre on a sunny day, for instance, muscles in the iris open the pupil and allow more light to enter. Complete adaptation to the dark may take up to 20 minutes.

Behind the pupil is the **lens**, *a structure that focuses the incoming light on the* **retina**, *the layer of tissue at the back of the eye that contains photoreceptor cells*. As our eyes move from near objects to distant objects, a process known as *visual accommodation* occurs. **Visual accommodation** is *the process of changing the curvature of the lens to keep the light entering the eye focused on the retina.* Rays from the top of the image strike the bottom of the retina and vice versa, and rays from the left side of the image strike the right part of the retina and vice versa, causing the image on the retina to be upside down and backward. Furthermore, the image projected on the retina is flat, and yet our final perception of the image will be three dimensional.

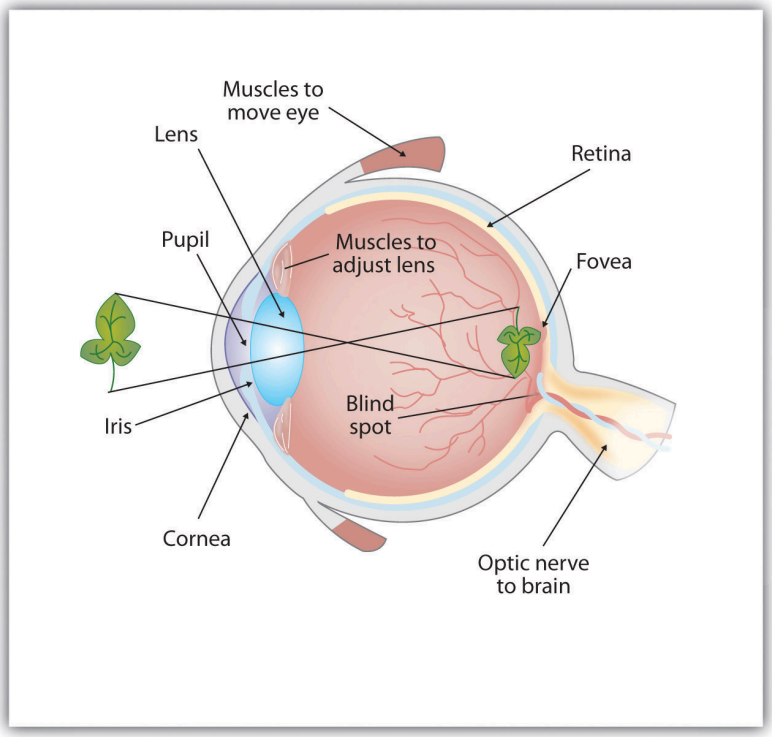


Figure 5.7 Anatomy of the Human Eye. Light enters the eye through the transparent cornea, passing through the pupil at the centre of the iris. The lens adjusts to focus the light on the retina, where it appears upside down and backward. Receptor cells on the retina send information via the optic nerve to the visual cortex.

Accommodation is not always perfect (Figure 5.8) *if the focus is in front of the retina*, we say that the person is **nearsighted**, and *when the focus is behind the retina*, we say that the person is **farsighted**. Eyeglasses and contact lenses correct this problem by adding another lens in front of the eye, and laser eye surgery corrects the problem by reshaping the eye's own lens.

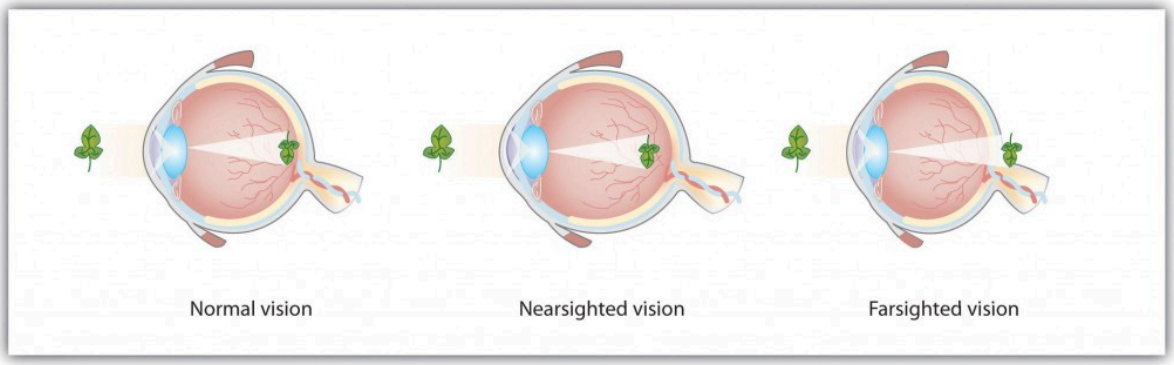


Figure 5.8 Normal, Nearsighted, and Farsighted Eyes. For people with normal vision (left), the lens properly focuses incoming light on the retina. For people who are nearsighted (centre), images from far objects focus too far in front of the retina, whereas for people who are farsighted (right), images from near objects focus too far behind the retina. Eyeglasses solve the problem by adding a secondary, corrective lens.

The retina contains layers of neurons specialized to respond to light (see Figure 5.9, "The Retina with Its Specialized Cells"). As light falls on the retina, it first activates receptor cells known as *rods* and *cones*. The activation of these cells then spreads to the *bipolar cells* and then to the *ganglion cells*, which gather together and converge, like the strands of a rope, forming the *optic nerve*. The **optic nerve** is *a collection of millions of ganglion neurons that sends vast amounts of visual information, via the thalamus, to the brain*. Because the retina and the optic nerve are active processors and analyzers of visual information, it is appropriate to think of these structures as an extension of the brain itself.

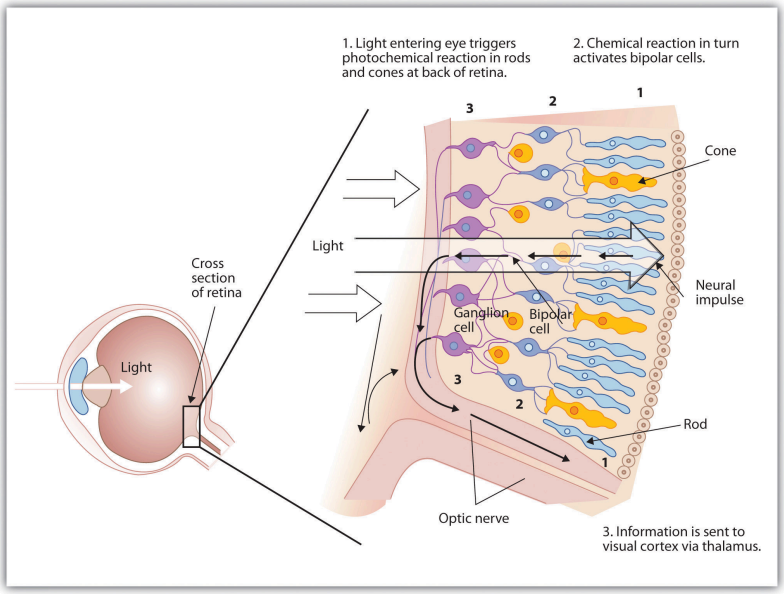


Figure 5.9 The Retina with Its Specialized Cells. When light falls on the retina, it creates a photochemical reaction in the rods and cones at the back of the retina. The reactions then continue to the bipolar cells, the ganglion cells, and eventually to the optic nerve.

Rods are *visual neurons that specialize in detecting black, white, and gray colours*. There are about 120 million rods in each eye. The rods do not provide a lot of detail about the images we see, but because they are highly sensitive to shorter-waved (darker) and weak light, they help us see in dim light — for instance, at night. Because the rods are located primarily around the edges of the retina, they are particularly active in peripheral vision (when you need to see something at night, try looking away from what you want to see). **Cones** are *visual neurons that are specialized in detecting fine detail and colours*. The five million or so cones in each eye enable us to see in colour, but they operate best in bright light. The cones are located primarily in and around the **fovea**, which is *the central point of the retina*.

To demonstrate the difference between rods and cones in attention to detail, choose a word in this text and focus on it. Do you notice that the words a few inches to the side seem more blurred? This is because the word you are focusing on strikes the detail-oriented cones, while the words surrounding it strike the less-detail-oriented rods, which are located on the periphery.

Margaret Livingstone (2000) (Figure 5.10) found an interesting effect that demonstrates the different processing capacities of the eye's rods and cones — namely, that the Mona Lisa's smile, which is widely referred to as "elusive," is perceived differently depending on how one looks at the painting. Because Leonardo da Vinci painted the smile in low-detail brush strokes, these details are better perceived by our peripheral vision (the rods) than by the cones. Livingstone found that people rated the Mona Lisa

as more cheerful when they were instructed to focus on her eyes than they did when they were asked to look directly at her mouth. As Livingstone put it, “She smiles until you look at her mouth, and then it fades, like a dim star that disappears when you look directly at it.”

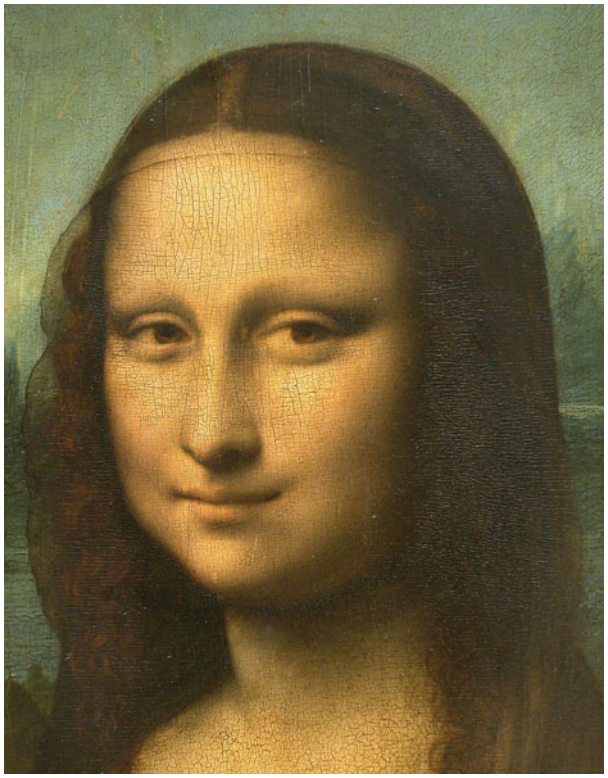


Figure 5.10 Mona Lisa’s Smile.

As you can see in Figure 5.11, “Pathway of Visual Images through the Thalamus and into the Visual Cortex,” the sensory information received by the retina is relayed through the thalamus to corresponding areas in the visual cortex, which is located in the occipital lobe at the back of the brain. Although the principle of contralateral control might lead you to expect that the left eye would send information to the right brain hemisphere and vice versa, nature is smarter than that. In fact, the left and right eyes each send information to both the left and the right hemisphere, and the visual cortex processes each of the cues separately and in parallel. This is an adaptational advantage to an organism that loses sight in one eye, because even if only one eye is functional, both hemispheres will still receive input from it.

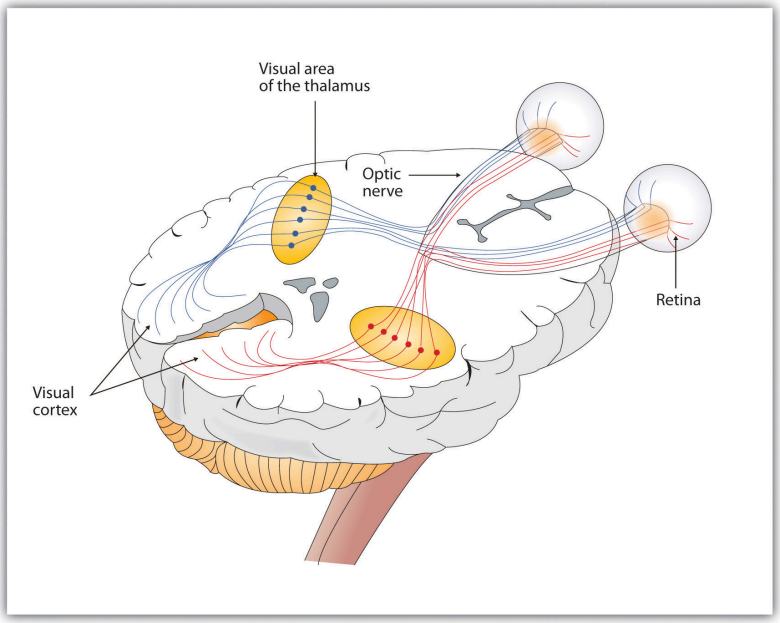


Figure 5.11 Pathway of Visual Images through the Thalamus and into the Visual Cortex. The left and right eyes each send information to both the left and the right brain hemisphere.

The visual cortex is made up of specialized neurons that turn the sensations they receive from the optic nerve into meaningful images. Because there are no photoreceptor cells at the place where the optic nerve leaves the retina, a *hole* or **blind spot** *in our vision* is created (see Figure 5.12, "Blind Spot Demonstration"). When both of our eyes are open, we don't experience a problem because our eyes are constantly moving, and one eye makes up for what the other eye misses. But the visual system is also designed to deal with this problem if only one eye is open — the visual cortex simply fills in the small hole in our vision with similar patterns from the surrounding areas, and we never notice the difference. The ability of the visual system to cope with the blind spot is another example of how sensation and perception work together to create meaningful experience.



Figure 5.12 Blind Spot Demonstration. You can get an idea of the extent of your blind spot (the place where the optic nerve leaves the retina) by trying this: close your left eye and stare with your right eye at the cross in the diagram. You should be able to see the elephant image to the right (don't look at it, just notice that it is there). If you can't see the elephant, move closer or farther away until you can. Now slowly move so that you are closer to the image while you keep looking at the cross. At one distance (probably a foot or so), the elephant will completely disappear from view because its image has fallen on the blind spot.

Perception is created in part through the simultaneous action of thousands of **feature detector neurons** — *specialized neurons, located in the visual cortex, that respond to the strength, angles, shapes, edges, and movements of a visual stimulus* (Kelsey, 1997; Livingstone & Hubel, 1988). The feature detectors work in parallel, each performing a specialized function. When faced with a red square, for instance, the parallel line feature detectors, the horizontal line feature detectors, and the red colour feature detectors all become activated. This activation is then passed on to other parts of the visual cortex, where other neurons compare the information supplied by the feature detectors with images stored in memory. Suddenly, in a flash of recognition, the many neurons fire together, creating the single image of the red square that we experience (Rodriguez et al., 1999). See Figure 5.13 for an explanation about the Necker cube.

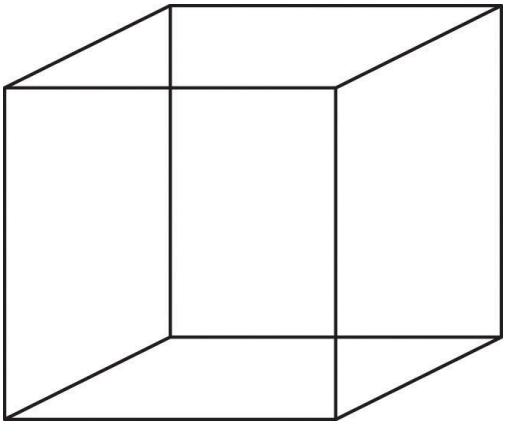


Figure 5.13 The Necker Cube. The Necker cube is an example of how the visual system creates perceptions out of sensations. We do not see a series of lines but, rather, a cube. Which cube we see varies depending on the momentary outcome of perceptual processes in the visual cortex.

Some feature detectors are tuned to selectively respond to particularly important objects, such as faces, smiles, and other parts of the body (Downing, Jiang, Shuman, & Kanwisher, 2001; Haxby et al., 2001). When researchers disrupted face recognition areas of the cortex using the magnetic pulses of transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), people were temporarily unable to recognize faces, and yet they were still able to recognize houses (McKone, Kanwisher, & Duchaine, 2007; Pitcher, Walsh, Yovel, & Duchaine, 2007).

Perceiving Colour

It has been estimated that the human visual system can detect and discriminate among seven million colour variations (Geldard, 1972), but these variations are all created by the combinations of the three primary colours: red, green, and blue. *The shade of a colour*, known as **hue**, is conveyed by the wavelength of the light that enters the eye (we see shorter wavelengths as more blue and longer wavelengths as more red), and we detect brightness from the *intensity* or height of the wave (bigger or more intense waves are perceived as brighter), as shown in Figure 5.14.

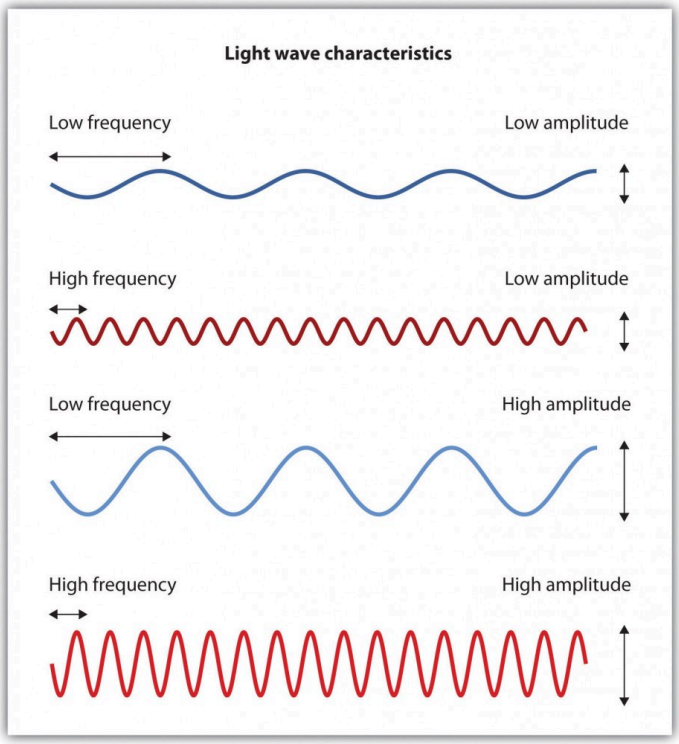


Figure 5.14 Low- and High-Frequency Sine Waves and Low- and High-Intensity Sine Waves and Their Corresponding Colours. Light waves with shorter frequencies are perceived as more blue than red; light waves with higher intensity are seen as brighter.

In his important research on colour vision, Hermann von Helmholtz (1821-1894) theorized that colour is perceived because the cones in the retina come in three types. One type of cone reacts primarily to blue light (short wavelengths), another reacts primarily to green light (medium wavelengths), and a third reacts primarily to red light (long wavelengths). The visual cortex then detects and compares the strength of the signals from each of the three types of cones, creating the experience of colour. According to this Young-Helmholtz **trichromatic colour theory** *what colour we see depends on the mix of the signals from the three types of cones*. If the brain is receiving primarily red and blue signals, for instance, it will perceive purple; if it is receiving primarily red and green signals it will perceive yellow; and if it is receiving messages from all three types of cones it will perceive white.

The different functions of the three types of cones are apparent in people who experience **colour blindness** — *the inability to detect green and/or red colours.* About one in 50 people, mostly men, lack functioning in the red- or green-sensitive cones, leaving them only able to experience either one or two colours (Figure 5.15).

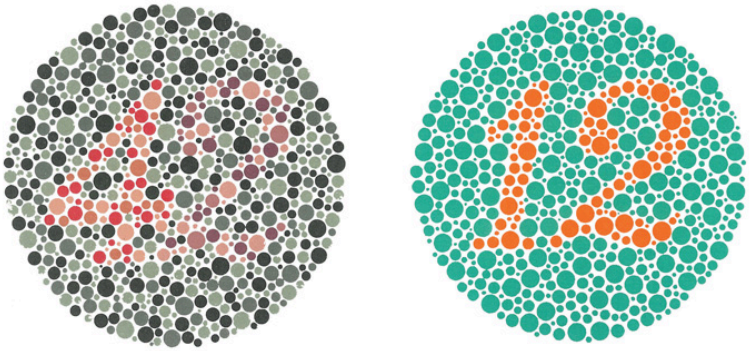


Figure 5.15 Colour Blindness. People with normal colour vision can see the number 42 in the first image and the number 12 in the second (they are vague but apparent). However, people who are colour blind cannot see the numbers at all.

The trichromatic colour theory cannot explain all of human vision, however. For one, although the colour purple does appear to us as a mix of red and blue, yellow does not appear to be a mix of red and green. And people with colour blindness, who cannot see either green or red, nevertheless can still see yellow. An alternative approach to the Young-Helmholtz theory, known as the **opponent-process colour theory**, *proposes that we analyze sensory information not in terms of three colours but rather in three sets of "opponent colours": red-green, yellow-blue, and white-black.* Evidence for the opponent-process theory comes from the fact that some neurons in the retina and in the visual cortex are excited by one colour (e.g., red) but inhibited by another colour (e.g., green).

One example of opponent processing occurs in the experience of an afterimage. If you stare at the shape on the top left side of Figure 5.16, "Afterimages," for about 30 seconds (the longer you look, the better the effect), and then move your eyes to the blank area to the right of it, you will see the afterimage. Now try this by staring at the image of the Italian flag below and then shifting your eyes to the blank area beside it. When we stare at the green stripe, our green receptors habituate and begin to process less strongly, whereas the red receptors remain at full strength. When we switch our gaze, we see primarily the red part of the opponent process. Similar processes create blue after yellow and white after black.

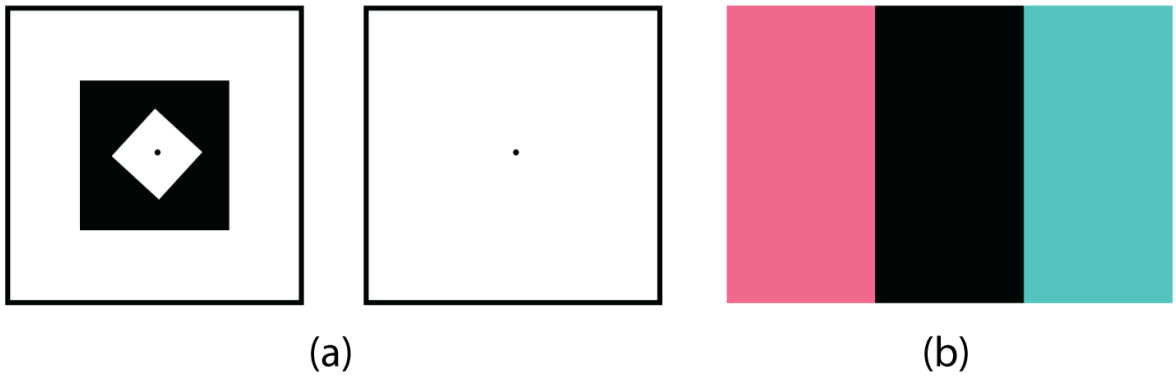


Figure 5.16 Afterimages.

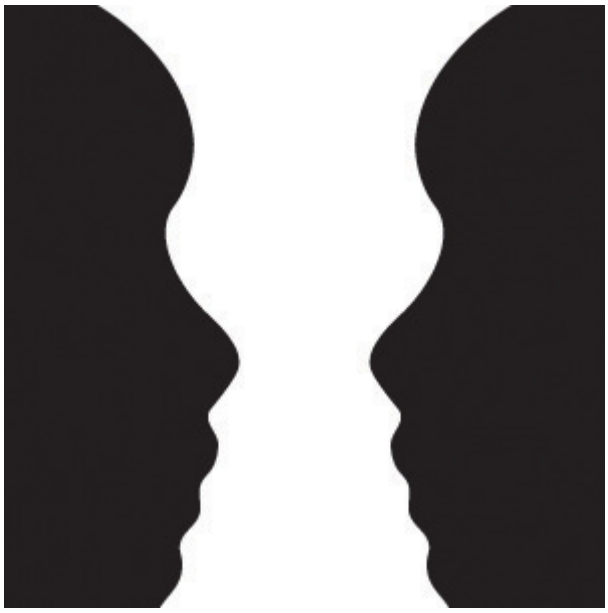
The tricolour and the opponent-process mechanisms work together to produce colour vision. When light

rays enter the eye, the red, blue, and green cones on the retina respond in different degrees and send different strength signals of red, blue, and green through the optic nerve. The colour signals are then processed both by the ganglion cells and by the neurons in the visual cortex (Gegenfurtner & Kiper, 2003).

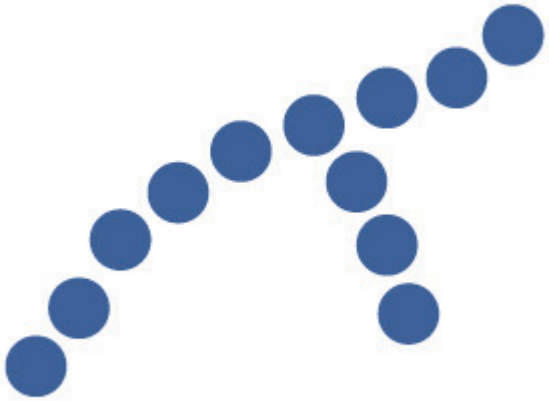
Perceiving Form

One of the important processes required in vision is the perception of form. German psychologists in the 1930s and 1940s, including Max Wertheimer (1880-1943), Kurt Koffka (1886-1941), and Wolfgang Köhler (1887-1967), argued that we create forms out of their component sensations based on the idea of the **gestalt**, *a meaningfully organized whole*. The idea of the gestalt is that the "whole is more than the sum of its parts." Some examples of how gestalt principles lead us to see more than what is actually there are summarized in Table 5.1, "Summary of Gestalt Principles of Form Perception."

Table 5.1 Summary of Gestalt Principles of Form Perception.

[Skip Table]			
Principle	**Description**	**Example**	**Image**
Figure and ground	We structure input so that we always see a figure (image) against a ground (background).	At right, you may see a vase or you may see two faces, but in either case, you will organize the image as a figure against a ground.	
Similarity	Stimuli that are similar to each other tend to be grouped together.	You are more likely to see three similar columns among the *XYX* characters at right than you are to see four rows.	X Y X X Y X X Y X X Y X

[Skip Table]

Principle	Description	Example	Image
Proximity	We tend to group nearby figures together.	Do you see four or eight images at right? Principles of proximity suggest that you might see only four.	
Continuity	We tend to perceive stimuli in smooth, continuous ways rather than in more discontinuous ways.	At right, most people see a line of dots that moves from the lower left to the upper right, rather than a line that moves from the left and then suddenly turns down. The principle of continuity leads us to see most lines as following the smoothest possible path.	

[Skip Table]			
Principle	**Description**	**Example**	**Image**
Closure	We tend to fill in gaps in an incomplete image to create a complete, whole object.	Closure leads us to see a single spherical object at right rather than a set of unrelated cones.	

Perceiving Depth

Depth perception is *the ability to perceive three-dimensional space and to accurately judge distance*. Without depth perception, we would be unable to drive a car, thread a needle, or simply navigate our way around the supermarket (Howard & Rogers, 2001). Research has found that depth perception is in part based on innate capacities and in part learned through experience (Witherington, 2005).

Psychologists Eleanor Gibson and Richard Walk (1960) tested the ability to perceive depth in six- to 14-month-old infants by placing them on a **visual cliff**, *a mechanism that gives the perception of a dangerous drop-off, in which infants can be safely tested for their perception of depth* (Figure 5.17 "Visual Cliff"). The infants were placed on one side of the "cliff," while their mothers called to them from the other side. Gibson and Walk found that most infants either crawled away from the cliff or remained on the board and cried because they wanted to go to their mothers, but the infants perceived a chasm that they instinctively could not cross. Further research has found that even very young children who cannot yet crawl are fearful of heights (Campos, Langer, & Krowitz, 1970). On the other hand, studies have also found that infants improve their hand-eye coordination as they learn to better grasp objects and as they gain more experience in crawling, indicating that depth perception is also learned (Adolph, 2000).



Figure 5.17 Visual Cliff. Babies appear to have the innate ability to perceive depth, as seen by this baby's reluctance to cross the "visual cliff."

Depth perception is the result of our use of **depth cues**, *messages from our bodies and the external environment that supply us with information about space and distance*. **Binocular depth cues** are *depth cues that are created by retinal image disparity — that is, the space between our eyes — and which thus require the coordination of both eyes.* One outcome of retinal disparity is that the images projected on each eye are slightly different from each other. The visual cortex automatically merges the two images into one, enabling us to perceive depth. Three-dimensional movies make use of retinal disparity by using 3-D glasses that the viewer wears to create a different image on each eye. The perceptual system quickly, easily, and unconsciously turns the disparity into 3-D.

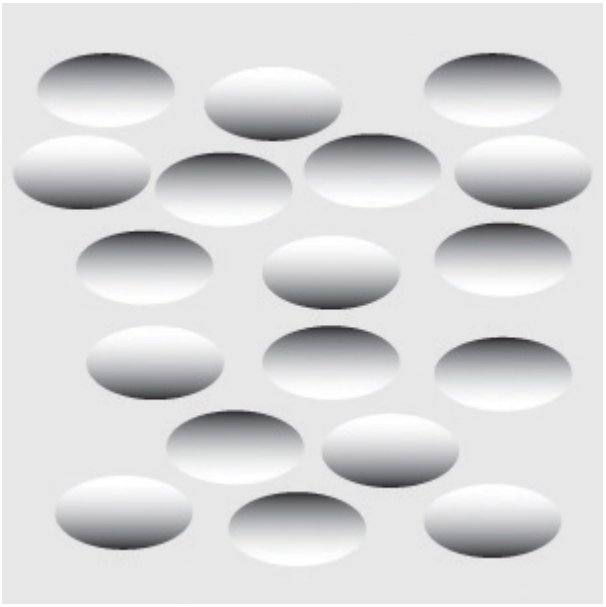
An important binocular depth cue is **convergence**, *the inward turning of our eyes that is required to focus on objects that are less than about 50 feet away from us*. The visual cortex uses the size of the convergence angle between the eyes to judge the object's distance. You will be able to feel your eyes converging if you slowly bring a finger closer to your nose while continuing to focus on it. When you close one eye, you no longer feel the tension — convergence is a binocular depth cue that requires both eyes to work.

The visual system also uses **accommodation** to *help determine depth*. As the lens changes its curvature to focus on distant or close objects, information relayed from the muscles attached to the lens helps us determine an object's distance. Accommodation is only effective at short viewing distances, however, so while it comes in handy when threading a needle or tying shoelaces, it is far less effective when driving or playing sports.

Although the best cues to depth occur when both eyes work together, we are able to see depth even with one eye closed. **Monocular depth cues** are *depth cues that help us perceive depth using only one eye* (Sekuler & Blake, 2006). Some of the most important are summarized in Table 5.2, "Monocular Depth Cues That Help Us Judge Depth at a Distance."

Table 5.2 Monocular Depth Cues That Help Us Judge Depth at a Distance.

[Skip Table]			
Name	**Description**	**Example**	**Image**
Position	We tend to see objects higher up in our field of vision as farther away.	The fence posts at right appear farther away not only because they become smaller but also because they appear higher up in the picture.	
Relative size	Assuming that the objects in a scene are the same size, smaller objects are perceived as farther away.	At right, the cars in the distance appear smaller than those nearer to us.	
Linear perspective	Parallel lines appear to converge at a distance.	We know that the tracks at right are parallel. When they appear closer together, we determine they are farther away.	

[Skip Table]			
Name	**Description**	**Example**	**Image**
Light and shadow	The eye receives more reflected light from objects that are closer to us. Normally, light comes from above, so darker images are in shadow.	We see the images at right as extending and indented according to their shadowing. If we invert the picture, the images will reverse.	
Interposition	When one object overlaps another object, we view it as closer.	At right, because the blue star covers the pink bar, it is seen as closer than the yellow moon.	

[Skip Table]			
Name	**Description**	**Example**	**Image**
Aerial perspective	Objects that appear hazy, or that are covered with smog or dust, appear farther away.	The artist who painted the picture on the right used aerial perspective to make the clouds more hazy and thus appear farther away.	

Perceiving Motion

Many animals, including human beings, have very sophisticated perceptual skills that allow them to coordinate their own motion with the motion of moving objects in order to create a collision with that object. Bats and birds use this mechanism to catch up with prey, dogs use it to catch a Frisbee, and humans use it to catch a moving football. The brain detects motion partly from the changing size of an image on the retina (objects that look bigger are usually closer to us) and in part from the relative brightness of objects.

We also experience motion when objects near each other change their appearance. The **beta effect** refers to *the perception of motion that occurs when different images are presented next to each other in succession* (see "Beta Effect and Phi Phenomenon"). The visual cortex fills in the missing part of the motion and we see the object moving. The beta effect is used in movies to create the experience of motion. A related effect is the **phi phenomenon**, in which *we perceive a sensation of motion caused by the appearance and disappearance of objects that are near each other*. The phi phenomenon looks like a moving zone or cloud of background colour surrounding the flashing objects. The beta effect and the phi phenomenon are other examples of the importance of the gestalt — our tendency to "see more than the sum of the parts."

Beta Effect and Phi Phenomenon

In the beta effect, our eyes detect motion from a series of still images, each with the object in a different place. This is the fundamental mechanism of motion pictures (movies). In the phi phenomenon, the perception of motion is based on the momentary hiding of an image.

Phi phenomenon: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6e/Lilac-Chaser.gif

Beta effect: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/09/Phi_phenomenom_no_watermark.gif

Key Takeaways

- Vision is the process of detecting the electromagnetic energy that surrounds us. Only a small fraction of the electromagnetic spectrum is visible to humans.
- The visual receptor cells on the retina detect shape, colour, motion, and depth.
- Light enters the eye through the transparent cornea and passes through the pupil at the centre of the iris. The lens adjusts to focus the light on the retina, where it appears upside down and backward. Receptor cells on the retina are excited or inhibited by the light and send information to the visual cortex through the optic nerve.
- The retina has two types of photoreceptor cells: rods, which detect brightness and respond to black and white, and cones, which respond to red, green, and blue. Colour blindness occurs when people lack function in the red- or green-sensitive cones.
- Feature detector neurons in the visual cortex help us recognize objects, and some neurons respond selectively to faces and other body parts.
- The Young-Helmholtz trichromatic colour theory proposes that colour perception is the result of the signals sent by the three types of cones, whereas the opponent-process colour theory proposes that we perceive colour as three sets of opponent colours: red-green, yellow-blue, and white-black.
- The ability to perceive depth occurs as the result of binocular and monocular depth cues.
- Motion is perceived as a function of the size and brightness of objects. The beta effect and the phi phenomenon are examples of perceived motion.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Consider some ways that the processes of visual perception help you engage in an everyday activity, such as driving a car or riding a bicycle.
2. Imagine for a moment what your life would be like if you couldn't see. Do you think you would be able to compensate for your loss of sight by using other senses?

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Image Attributions

Figure 5.10: Mona Lisa detail face (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mona_Lisa_detail_face.jpg) is in the public domain.

Figure 5.15: Ishihara Plate No.11 (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ishihara_11.PNG) and Ishihara Plate No.23 (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ishihara_23.PNG) is in the public domain.

Figure 5.16: Nachbild by Freddy2001 (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nachbild-1.svg) and Italian Flag Inverted by Pcessna (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ItalianFlagInverted.gif) is in the public domain.

Figure 5.17: Perception-Conception (http://perception-connection.wikispaces.com/3)+Key+Findings) used with CC-BY-SA 3.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/).

5.3 Hearing

Learning Objectives

1. Draw a picture of the ear, label its key structures and functions, and describe the role they play in hearing.
2. Describe the process of transduction in hearing.

Like vision and all the other senses, hearing begins with transduction. Sound waves that are collected by our ears are converted into neural impulses, which are sent to the brain where they are integrated with past experience and interpreted as the sounds we experience. The human ear is sensitive to a wide range of sounds, from the faint tick of a clock in a nearby room to the roar of a rock band at a nightclub, and we have the ability to detect very small variations in sound. But the ear is particularly sensitive to sounds in the same frequency as the human voice. A mother can pick out her child's voice from a host of others, and when we pick up the phone we quickly recognize a familiar voice. In a fraction of a second, our auditory system receives the sound waves, transmits them to the auditory cortex, compares them to stored knowledge of other voices, and identifies the caller.

The Ear

Just as the eye detects light waves, the ear detects sound waves. Vibrating objects (such as the human vocal cords or guitar strings) cause air molecules to bump into each other and produce sound waves, which travel from their source as peaks and valleys, much like the ripples that expand outward when a stone is tossed into a pond. Unlike light waves, which can travel in a vacuum, sound waves are carried within media such as air, water, or metal, and it is the changes in pressure associated with these media that the ear detects.

As with light waves, we detect both the wavelength and the *amplitude* of sound waves. The *wavelength of the sound wave* (known as **frequency**) is measured in terms of the number of waves that arrive per second and determines our perception of **pitch**, *the perceived frequency of a sound.* Longer sound waves have lower frequency and produce a lower pitch, whereas shorter waves have higher frequency and a higher pitch.

The **amplitude**, or *height of the sound wave,* determines how much energy it contains and is perceived as **loudness** (*the degree of sound volume*). Larger waves are perceived as louder. Loudness is measured using *the unit of relative loudness* known as the **decibel**. Zero decibels represent the absolute threshold for human hearing, below which we cannot hear a sound. Each increase in 10 decibels represents a tenfold increase in the loudness of the sound (see Figure 5.18, "Sounds in Everyday Life"). The sound of a typical conversation (about 60 decibels) is 1,000 times louder than the sound of a faint whisper (30 decibels), whereas the sound of a jackhammer (130 decibels) is 10 billion times louder than the whisper.

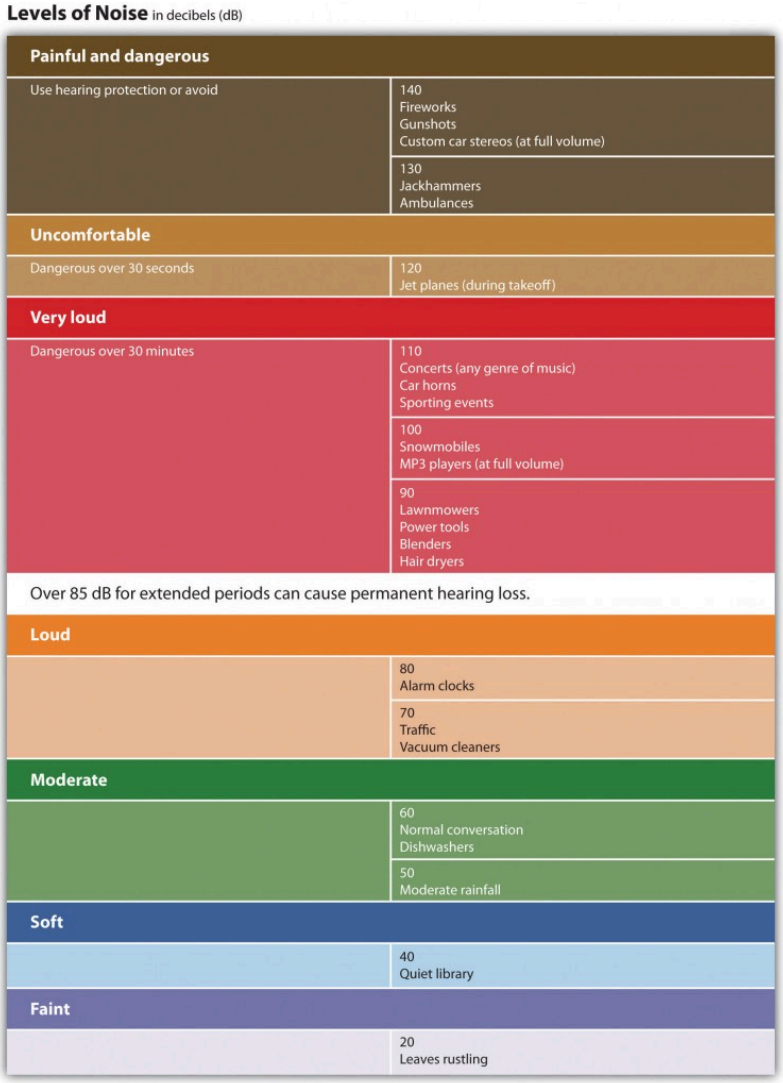


Figure 5.18 Sounds in Everyday Life. The human ear can comfortably hear sounds up to 80 decibels. Prolonged exposure to sounds above 80 decibels can cause hearing loss. [Long Description]

Audition begins in the **pinna**, *the external and visible part of the ear*, which is shaped like a funnel to draw in sound waves and guide them into the auditory canal. At the end of the canal, the sound waves strike the *tightly stretched, highly sensitive membrane* known as the **tympanic membrane** (or **eardrum**), which vibrates with the waves. The resulting vibrations are relayed into the middle ear through *three tiny bones*, known as the **ossicles** — the hammer (or malleus), anvil (or incus), and stirrup (or stapes) — to the **cochlea**, *a snail-shaped liquid-filled tube in the inner ear that contains the cilia*. The vibrations cause the **oval window**, *the membrane covering the opening of the cochlea*, to vibrate, disturbing the fluid inside the cochlea (Figure 5.19).

The movements of the fluid in the cochlea bend the hair cells of the inner ear, in much the same way that a gust of wind bends over wheat stalks in a field. The movements of the hair cells trigger nerve impulses in the attached neurons, which are sent to the auditory nerve and then to the auditory cortex in the brain. The cochlea contains about *16,000 hair cells, each of which holds a bundle of fibres* known as **cilia** on its tip. The cilia are so sensitive that they can detect a movement that pushes them the width of a single

atom. To put things in perspective, cilia swaying the width of an atom is equivalent to the tip of the Eiffel Tower swaying half an inch (Corey et al., 2004).

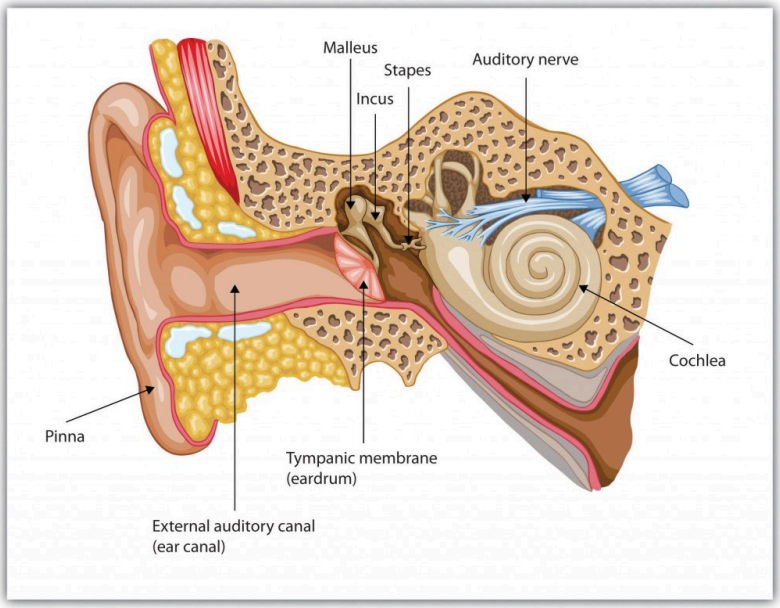


Figure 5.19 The Human Ear. Sound waves enter the outer ear and are transmitted through the auditory canal to the eardrum. The resulting vibrations are moved by the three small ossicles into the cochlea, where they are detected by hair cells and sent to the auditory nerve.

Although loudness is directly determined by the number of hair cells that are vibrating, two different mechanisms are used to detect pitch. The **frequency theory of hearing** proposes that *whatever the pitch of a sound wave, nerve impulses of a corresponding frequency will be sent to the auditory nerve*. For example, a tone measuring 600 hertz will be transduced into 600 nerve impulses a second. This theory has a problem with high-pitched sounds, however, because the neurons cannot fire fast enough. To reach the necessary speed, the neurons work together in a sort of volley system in which different neurons fire in sequence, allowing us to detect sounds up to about 4,000 hertz.

Not only is frequency important, but location is critical as well. The cochlea relays information about the specific area, or place, in the cochlea that is most activated by the incoming sound. The **place theory of hearing** proposes that *different areas of the cochlea respond to different frequencies*. Higher tones excite areas closest to the opening of the cochlea (near the oval window). Lower tones excite areas near the narrow tip of the cochlea, at the opposite end. Pitch is therefore determined in part by the area of the cochlea firing the most frequently.

Just as having two eyes in slightly different positions allows us to perceive depth, so the fact that the ears are placed on either side of the head enables us to benefit from stereophonic, or three-dimensional, hearing. If a sound occurs on your left side, the left ear will receive the sound slightly sooner than the right ear, and the sound it receives will be more intense, allowing you to quickly determine the location of the sound. Although the distance between our two ears is only about six inches, and sound waves travel at 750 miles an hour, the time and intensity differences are easily detected (Middlebrooks & Green, 1991). When a sound is equidistant from both ears, such as when it is directly in front, behind, beneath, or overhead, we have more difficulty pinpointing its location. It is for this reason that dogs (and

people, too) tend to cock their heads when trying to pinpoint a sound, so that the ears receive slightly different signals.

Hearing Loss

In 2006, 1,266,120 (5.0%) Canadians aged 15 and older reported having a hearing limitation. Over eight in 10 (83.2%) hearing limitations were mild in nature, while the remaining 16.8% were classified as severe (Statistics Canada, 2006). *Conductive hearing loss* is caused by physical damage to the ear (such as to the eardrums or ossicles) that reduces the ability of the ear to transfer vibrations from the outer ear to the inner ear. *Sensorineural hearing loss*, which is caused by damage to the cilia or to the auditory nerve, is less common overall but frequently occurs with age (Tennesen, 2007). The cilia are extremely fragile, and by the time we are 65 years old, we will have lost 40% of them, particularly those that respond to high-pitched sounds (Chisolm, Willott, & Lister, 2003).

Prolonged exposure to loud sounds will eventually create sensorineural hearing loss as the cilia are damaged by the noise. People who constantly operate noisy machinery without using appropriate ear protection are at high risk of hearing loss, as are people who listen to loud music on their headphones or who engage in noisy hobbies, such as hunting or motorcycling. Sounds that are 85 decibels or more can cause damage to your hearing, particularly if you are exposed to them repeatedly. Sounds of more than 130 decibels are dangerous even if you are exposed to them infrequently. People who experience **tinnitus** (*a ringing or a buzzing sensation*) after being exposed to loud sounds have very likely experienced some damage to their cilia. Taking precautions when being exposed to loud sounds is important, as cilia do not grow back.

While conductive hearing loss can often be improved through hearing aids that amplify the sound, they are of little help to sensorineural hearing loss. But if the auditory nerve is still intact, a *cochlear implant* may be used. A **cochlear implant** is a *device made up of a series of electrodes that are placed inside the cochlea*. The device serves to bypass the hair cells by stimulating the auditory nerve cells directly. The latest implants utilize place theory, enabling different spots on the implant to respond to different levels of pitch. The cochlear implant can help children who would normally be deaf hear. If the device is implanted early enough, these children can frequently learn to speak, often as well as children born without hearing loss do (Dettman, Pinder, Briggs, Dowell, & Leigh, 2007; Dorman & Wilson, 2004).

Key Takeaways

- Sound waves vibrating through media such as air, water, or metal are the stimulus energy that is sensed by the ear.
- The hearing system is designed to assess frequency (pitch) and amplitude (loudness).
- Sound waves enter the outer ear (the pinna) and are sent to the eardrum via the auditory canal. The resulting vibrations are relayed by the three ossicles, causing the oval window covering the cochlea to vibrate. The vibrations are detected by the cilia (hair cells) and sent via the auditory nerve to the auditory cortex.
- There are two theories as to how we perceive pitch: The frequency theory of hearing suggests that as a sound wave's pitch changes, nerve impulses of a corresponding frequency enter the auditory

nerve. The place theory of hearing suggests that we hear different pitches because different areas of the cochlea respond to higher and lower pitches.

- Conductive hearing loss is caused by physical damage to the ear or eardrum and may be improved by hearing aids or cochlear implants. Sensorineural hearing loss, caused by damage to the hair cells or auditory nerves in the inner ear, may be produced by prolonged exposure to sounds of more than 85 decibels.

Exercise and Critical Thinking

1. Given what you have learned about hearing in this chapter, are you engaging in any activities that might cause long-term hearing loss? If so, how might you change your behaviour to reduce the likelihood of suffering damage?

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Long Description

Figure 5.18 long description: Levels of Noise

Decibels (dB)	Description	Examples
140	Painful and dangerous, use hearing protection or avoid.	Fireworks, gunshots, custom car stereos (at full volume)
130	Painful and dangerous, use hearing protection or avoid.	Jackhammers, ambulances
120	Uncomfortable, dangerous over 30 seconds	Jet planes (during takeoff)
110	Very loud, dangerous over 30 seconds	Concerts, car horns, sporting events
100	Very loud, dangerous over 30 seconds	Snowmobiles, MP3 players (at full volume)
90	Very loud, dangerous over 30 seconds	Lawnmowers, power tools, blenders, hair dryers
85	Over 85 dB for extended periods can cause permanent hearing loss.	
80	Loud	Alarm clocks
70	Loud	Traffic, vacuum cleaners
60	Moderate	Normal conversation, dishwashers
50	Moderate	Moderate raindall
40	Soft	Quiet library
20	Faint	Leaves rustling

[Return to Figure 5.18]

5.4 Tasting, Smelling, and Touching

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize how the senses of taste and olfaction transduce stimuli into perceptions.
2. Describe the process of transduction in the senses of touch and proprioception.
3. Outline the gate control theory of pain. Explain why pain matters and how it may be controlled.

Although vision and hearing are by far the most important senses, human sensation is rounded out by four others, each of which provides an essential avenue to a better understanding of and response to the world around us. These other senses are *touch*, *taste*, and *smell*, and our *sense of body position and movement (proprioception)*.

Tasting

Taste is important not only because it allows us to enjoy the food we eat, but, even more crucial, because it leads us toward foods that provide energy (sugar, for instance) and away from foods that could be harmful. Many children are picky eaters for a reason — they are biologically predisposed to be very careful about what they eat. Together with the sense of smell, taste helps us maintain appetite, assess potential dangers (such as the odour of a gas leak or a burning house), and avoid eating poisonous or spoiled food.

Our ability to taste begins at the taste receptors on the tongue. The tongue detects six different taste sensations, known respectively as *sweet, salty, sour, bitter, piquancy (spicy)*, and *umami (savory)*. Umami is a meaty taste associated with meats, cheeses, soy, seaweed, and mushrooms, and is particularly found in monosodium glutamate (MSG), a popular flavour enhancer (Ikeda, 1909/2002; Sugimoto & Ninomiya, 2005).

Our tongues are covered with **taste buds**, which are *designed to sense chemicals in the mouth*. Most taste buds are located in the top outer edges of the tongue, but there are also receptors at the back of the tongue as well as on the walls of the mouth and at the back of the throat. As we chew food, it dissolves and enters the taste buds, triggering nerve impulses that are transmitted to the brain (Northcutt, 2004). Human tongues are covered with 2,000 to 10,000 taste buds, and each bud contains between 50 and 100 taste receptor cells. Taste buds are activated very quickly; a salty or sweet taste that touches a taste bud for even one-tenth of a second will trigger a neural impulse (Kelling & Halpern, 1983). On average, taste buds live for about five days, after which new taste buds are created to replace them. As we get older, however, the rate of creation decreases, making us less sensitive to taste. This change helps explain why some foods that seem so unpleasant in childhood are more enjoyable in adulthood.

The area of the sensory cortex that responds to taste is in a very similar location to the area that responds

to smell, a fact that helps explain why the sense of smell also contributes to our experience of the things we eat. You may remember having had difficulty tasting food when you had a bad cold, and if you block your nose and taste slices of raw potato, apple, and parsnip, you will not be able to taste the differences between them. Our experience of texture in a food (the way we feel it on our tongues) also influences how we taste it.

Smelling

As we breathe in air through our nostrils, we inhale airborne chemical molecules, which are detected by the *10 million to 20 million receptor cells* embedded in the **olfactory membrane** *of the upper nasal passage*. The **olfactory receptor cells** are *topped with tentacle-like protrusions that contain receptor proteins*. When an odour receptor is stimulated, the membrane sends neural messages up the olfactory nerve to the brain (see Figure 5.20. “Smell Receptors”).

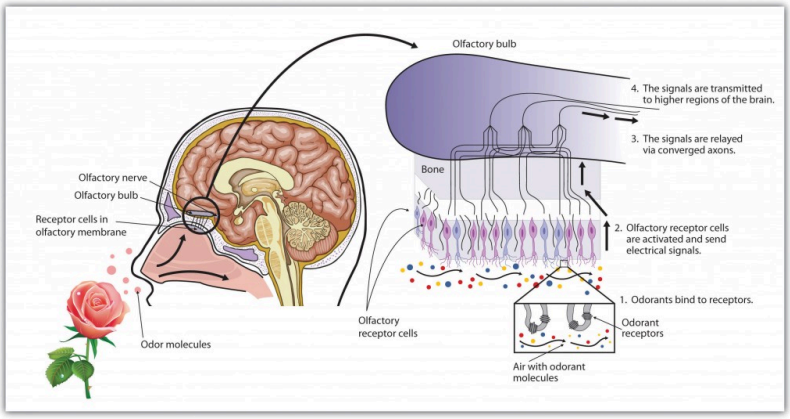


Figure 5.20 Smell Receptors. There are more than 1,000 types of odour receptor cells in the olfactory membrane.

We have approximately 1,000 types of *odour receptor cells* (Bensafi et al., 2004), and it is estimated that we can detect 10,000 different odours (Malnic, Hirono, Sato, & Buck, 1999). The receptors come in many different shapes and respond selectively to different smells. Like a lock and key, different chemical molecules fit into different receptor cells, and odours are detected according to their influence on a combination of receptor cells. Just as the 10 digits from 0 to 9 can combine in many different ways to produce an endless array of phone numbers, odour molecules bind to different combinations of receptors, and these combinations are decoded in the olfactory cortex. As you can see in Figure 5.21, “Age Differences in Smell,” the sense of smell peaks in early adulthood and then begins a slow decline. By ages 60 to 70, the sense of smell has become sharply diminished. In addition, women tend to have a more acute sense of smell than men.

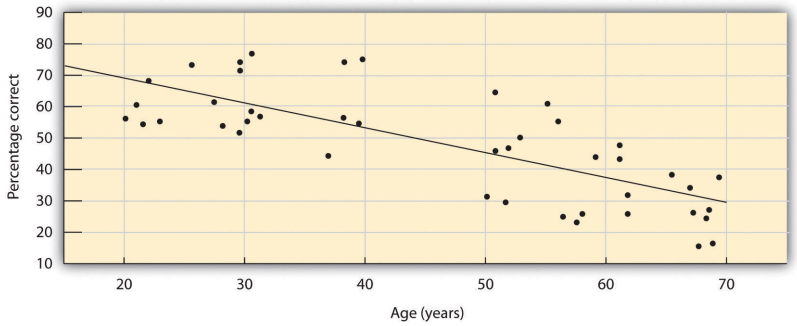


Figure 5.21 Age Differences in Smell. The ability to identify common odourants declines markedly between 20 and 70 years of age.

Touching

The sense of touch is essential to human development. Infants thrive when they are cuddled and attended to, but not if they are deprived of human contact (Baysinger, Plubell, & Harlow, 1973; Feldman, 2007; Haradon, Bascom, Dragomir, & Scripcaru, 1994). Touch communicates warmth, caring, and support, and is an essential part of the enjoyment we gain from our social interactions with close others (Field et al., 1997; Keltner, 2009).

The skin, the largest organ in the body, is the sensory organ for touch. The skin contains a variety of nerve endings, combinations of which respond to particular types of pressures and temperatures. When you touch different parts of the body, you will find that some areas are more ticklish, whereas other areas respond more to pain, cold, or heat.

The thousands of nerve endings in the skin respond to four basic sensations — *pressure*, *hot*, *cold*, and *pain* — but only the sensation of pressure has its own specialized receptors. Other sensations are created by a combination of the other four. For instance:

- The experience of a tickle is caused by the stimulation of neighbouring pressure receptors.
- The experience of heat is caused by the stimulation of hot and cold receptors.
- The experience of itching is caused by repeated stimulation of pain receptors.
- The experience of wetness is caused by repeated stimulation of cold and pressure receptors.

The skin is important not only in providing information about touch and temperature, but also in **proprioception** — *the ability to sense the position and movement of our body parts*. Proprioception is accomplished by specialized neurons located in the skin, joints, bones, ears, and tendons, which send messages about the compression and the contraction of muscles throughout the body. Without this feedback from our bones and muscles, we would be unable to play sports, walk, or even stand upright.

The ability to keep track of where the body is moving is also provided by the **vestibular system**, *a set of liquid-filled areas in the inner ear that monitors the head's position and movement, maintaining the body's balance*. As you can see in Figure 5.22, "The Vestibular System," the vestibular system includes the *semicircular canals* and the *vestibular sacs*. These sacs connect the canals with the cochlea. The semicircular canals sense the rotational movements of the body, and the vestibular sacs sense linear

accelerations. The vestibular system sends signals to the neural structures that control eye movement and to the muscles that keep the body upright.

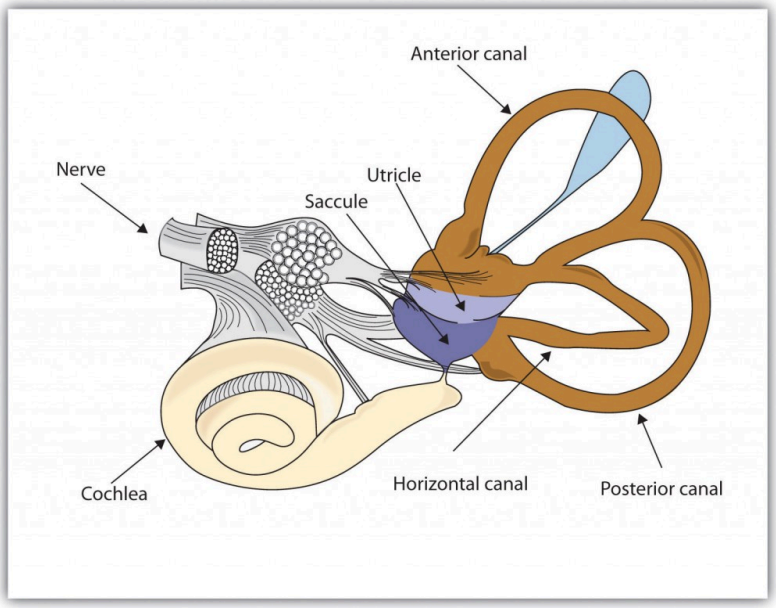


Figure 5.22 The Vestibular System. The vestibular system includes the semicircular canals (brown) that transduce the rotational movements of the body, and the vestibular sacs (blue) that sense linear accelerations.

Experiencing Pain

We do not enjoy it, but the experience of pain is how the body informs us that we are in danger. The burn when we touch a hot radiator and the sharp stab when we step on a nail lead us to change our behaviour, preventing further damage to our bodies. People who cannot experience pain are in serious danger of damage from wounds that others with pain would quickly notice and attend to.

The **gate control theory of pain** *proposes that pain is determined by the operation of two types of nerve fibres in the spinal cord*. One set of smaller nerve fibres carries pain from the body to the brain, whereas a second set of larger fibres is designed to stop or start (as a gate would) the flow of pain (Melzack & Wall, 1996). It is for this reason that massaging an area where you feel pain may help alleviate it — the massage activates the large nerve fibres that block the pain signals of the small nerve fibres (Wall, 2000).

Experiencing pain is a lot more complicated than simply responding to neural messages, however. It is also a matter of perception. We feel pain less when we are busy focusing on a challenging activity (Bantick et al., 2002), which can help explain why sports players may feel their injuries only after the game. We also feel less pain when we are distracted by humour (Zweyer, Velker, & Ruch, 2004). And pain is soothed by the brain's release of endorphins, natural hormonal pain killers. The release of endorphins can explain the euphoria experienced in the running of a marathon (Sternberg, Bailin, Grant, & Gracely, 1998).

Key Takeaways

- The ability to taste, smell, and touch are important because they help us avoid harm from environmental toxins.
- The many taste buds on our tongues and inside our mouths allow us to detect six basic taste sensations: sweet, salty, sour, bitter, piquancy, and umami.
- In olfaction, transduction occurs as airborne chemicals that are inhaled through the nostrils are detected by receptors in the olfactory membrane. Different chemical molecules fit into different receptor cells, creating different smells.
- The ability to smell diminishes with age and, on average, women have a better sense of smell than men.
- We have a range of different nerve endings embedded in the skin, combinations of which respond to the four basic sensations of pressure, hot, cold, and pain. But only the sensation of pressure has its own specialized receptors.
- Proprioception is our ability to sense the positions and movements of our body parts. Postural and movement information is detected by special neurons located in the skin, joints, bones, ears, and tendons, which pick up messages from the compression and the contraction of muscles throughout the body.
- The vestibular system, composed of structures in the inner ear, monitors the head's position and movement, maintaining the body's balance.
- Gate control theory explains how large and small neurons work together to transmit and regulate the flow of pain to the brain.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Think of the foods that you like to eat the most. Which of the six taste sensations do these foods have, and why do you think that you like these particular flavours?
2. Why do you think that women might have a better developed sense of smell than do men?
3. Why is experiencing pain a benefit for human beings?

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Image Attributions

Figure 5.21: Adapted from Murphy (1986).

5.5 Accuracy and Inaccuracy in Perception

Learning Objectives

1. Describe how sensation and perception work together through sensory interaction, selective attention, sensory adaptation, and perceptual constancy.
2. Give examples of how our expectations may influence our perception, resulting in illusions and potentially inaccurate judgments.

The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin sense the world around us, and in some cases perform preliminary information processing on the incoming data. But by and large, we do not experience sensation — we experience the outcome of perception, the total package that the brain puts together from the pieces it receives through our senses and that the brain creates for us to experience. When we look out the window at a view of the countryside, or when we look at the face of a good friend, we don't just see a jumble of colours and shapes — we see, instead, an image of a countryside or an image of a friend (Goodale & Milner, 2006).

How the Perceptual System Interprets the Environment

This meaning making involves the automatic operation of a variety of essential perceptual processes. One of these is **sensory interaction** — *the working together of different senses to create experience*. Sensory interaction is involved when taste, smell, and texture combine to create the flavour we experience in food. It is also involved when we enjoy a movie because of the way the images and the music work together.

Although you might think that we understand speech only through our sense of hearing, it turns out that the visual aspect of speech is also important. One example of sensory interaction is shown in the **McGurk effect** — *an error in perception that occurs when we misperceive sounds because the audio and visual parts of the speech are mismatched*. You can witness the effect yourself by viewing "The McGurk Effect."

Watch The McGurk Effect [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtsfidRq2tw



The McGurk effect is an error in sound perception that occurs when there is a mismatch between the senses of hearing and seeing. You can experience it here.

Other examples of sensory interaction include the experience of nausea that can occur when the sensory information being received from the eyes and the body does not match information from the vestibular system (Flanagan, May, & Dobie, 2004) and

synesthesia — *an experience in which one sensation (e.g., hearing a sound) creates experiences in another (e.g., vision)*. Most people do not experience synesthesia, but those who do link their perceptions in unusual ways, for instance, by experiencing colour when they taste a particular food or by hearing sounds when they see certain objects (Ramachandran, Hubbard, Robertson, & Sagiv, 2005).

Another important perceptual process is **selective attention** — *the ability to focus on some sensory inputs while tuning out others*. View "Video Clip: Selective Attention," and count the number of times the people in white playing with the ball pass it to each other. You may find that, like many other people who view it for the first time, you miss something important because you selectively attend to only one aspect of the video (Simons & Chabris, 1999). Perhaps knowledge of the process of selective attention can help you see why the security guards completely missed the fact that the Chaser group's motorcade was a fake — they focused on some aspects of the situation, such as the colour of the cars and the fact that they were there at all, and completely ignored others (the details of the security information).

Watch Selective Attention [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJG698U2Mvo

Watch this video and carefully count how many times the people in white pass the ball to each other.

Selective attention also allows us to focus on a single talker at a party while ignoring other conversations that are occurring around us (Broadbent, 1958; Cherry, 1953). Without this automatic selective attention, we'd be unable to focus on the single conversation we want to hear. But selective attention is not complete; we also, at the same time, monitor what's happening in the channels we are not focusing on. Perhaps you have had *the experience of being at a party and talking to someone in one part of the room, when suddenly you hear your name being mentioned by someone in another part of the room*. This **cocktail party phenomenon** shows us that although selective attention is limiting what we process, we are nevertheless simultaneously doing a lot of unconscious monitoring of the world around us — you didn't know you were attending to the background sounds of the party, but evidently you were.

A second fundamental process of perception is **sensory adaptation** — *a decreased sensitivity to a stimulus after prolonged and constant exposure*. When you step into a swimming pool, the water initially feels cold, but after a while you stop noticing it. After prolonged exposure to the same stimulus, our sensitivity toward it diminishes and we no longer perceive it. The ability to adapt to the things that don't change around us is essential to our survival, as it leaves our sensory receptors free to detect the important and informative changes in our environment and to respond accordingly. We ignore the sounds that our car makes every day, which leaves us free to pay attention to the sounds that are different from normal, and thus likely to need our attention. Our sensory receptors are alert to novelty and are fatigued after constant exposure to the same stimulus.

If sensory adaptation occurs with all senses, why doesn't an image fade away after we stare at it for a period of time? The answer is that, although we are not aware of it, our eyes are constantly flitting from one angle to the next, making *thousands of tiny movements* (called **saccades**) *every minute*. This constant eye movement guarantees that the image we are viewing always falls on fresh receptor cells. What would happen if we could stop the movement of our eyes? Psychologists have devised a way of testing the sensory adaptation of the eye by attaching an instrument that ensures a constant image is maintained on the eye's inner surface. Participants are fitted with a contact lens that has a miniature slide

projector attached to it. Because the projector follows the exact movements of the eye, the same image is always projected, stimulating the same spot, on the retina. Within a few seconds, interesting things begin to happen. The image will begin to vanish, then reappear, only to disappear again, either in pieces or as a whole. Even the eye experiences sensory adaptation (Yarbus, 1967).

One of the major problems in perception is to ensure that we always perceive the same object in the same way, even when the sensations it creates on our receptors change dramatically. *The ability to perceive a stimulus as constant despite changes in sensation* is known as **perceptual constancy**. Consider our image of a door as it swings. When it is closed, we see it as rectangular, but when it is open, we see only its edge and it appears as a line. But we never perceive the door as changing shape as it swings — perceptual mechanisms take care of the problem for us by allowing us to see a constant shape.

The visual system also corrects for colour constancy. Imagine that you are wearing blue jeans and a bright white T-shirt. When you are outdoors, both colours will be at their brightest, but you will still perceive the white T-shirt as bright and the blue jeans as darker. When you go indoors, the light shining on the clothes will be significantly dimmer, but you will still perceive the T-shirt as bright. This is because we put colours in context and see that, compared with its surroundings, the white T-shirt reflects the most light (McCann, 1992). In the same way, a green leaf on a cloudy day may reflect the same wavelength of light as a brown tree branch does on a sunny day. Nevertheless, we still perceive the leaf as green and the branch as brown.

Illusions

Although our perception is very accurate, it is not perfect. **Illusions** *occur when the perceptual processes that normally help us correctly perceive the world around us are fooled by a particular situation so that we see something that does not exist or that is incorrect*. Figure 5.23, “Optical Illusions as a Result of Brightness Constancy (Left) and Colour Constancy (Right),” presents two situations in which our normally accurate perceptions of visual constancy have been fooled.

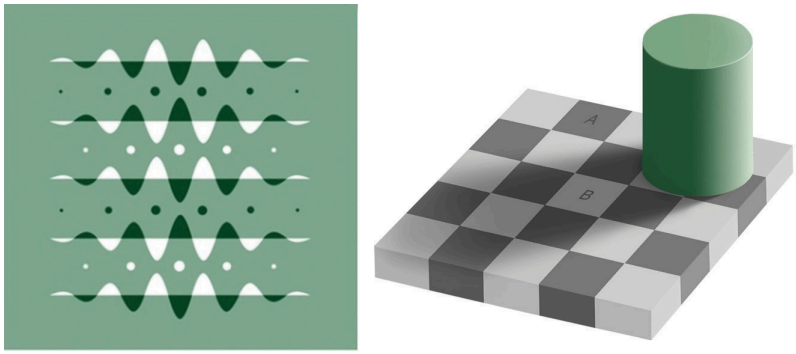


Figure 5.23 Optical Illusions as a Result of Brightness Constancy (Left) and Colour Constancy (Right). Look carefully at the snakelike pattern on the left. Are the green strips really brighter than the background? Cover the white curves and you’ll see they are not. Square A in the right-hand image looks very different from square B, even though they are exactly the same.

Another well-known illusion is the **Mueller-Lyer illusion** (see Figure 5.24, “The Mueller-Lyer Illusion”). *The line segment in the bottom arrow looks longer to us than the one on the top, even though*

they are both actually the same length. It is likely that the illusion is, in part, the result of the failure of monocular depth cues — the bottom line looks like an edge that is normally farther away from us, whereas the top one looks like an edge that is normally closer.

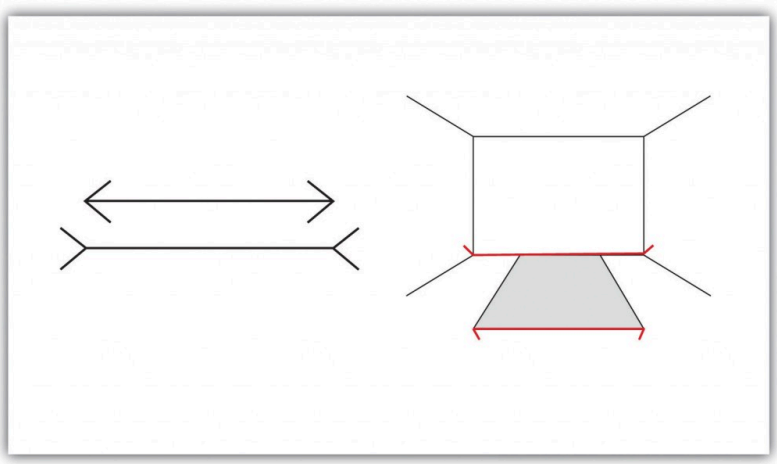


Figure 5.24 The Mueller-Lyer Illusion. The Mueller-Lyer illusion makes the line segment at the top of the left picture appear shorter than the one at the bottom. The illusion is caused, in part, by the monocular distance cue of depth — the bottom line looks like an edge that is normally farther away from us, whereas the top one looks like an edge that is normally closer.

The **moon illusion** refers to the fact that *the moon is perceived to be about 50% larger when it is near the horizon than when it is seen overhead, despite the fact that in both cases the moon is the same size* and casts the same size retinal image. The monocular depth cues of position and aerial perspective (see Figure 5.25, “The Moon Illusion”) create the illusion that things that are lower and more hazy are farther away. The skyline of the horizon (trees, clouds, outlines of buildings) also gives a cue that the moon is far away, compared to when it is at its zenith. If we look at a horizon moon through a tube of rolled-up paper, taking away the surrounding horizon cues, the moon will immediately appear smaller.



Figure 5.25 The Moon Illusion. The moon always looks larger on the horizon than when it is high above. But if we take away the surrounding distance cues of the horizon, the illusion disappears.

The *Ponzo illusion* operates on the same principle. As you can see in Figure 5.26, "The Ponzo Illusion," the top yellow bar seems longer than the bottom one, but if you measure them you'll see that they are exactly the same length. The monocular depth cue of linear perspective leads us to believe that, given two similar objects, the distant one can only cast the same size retinal image as the closer object if it is larger. The topmost bar therefore appears longer.

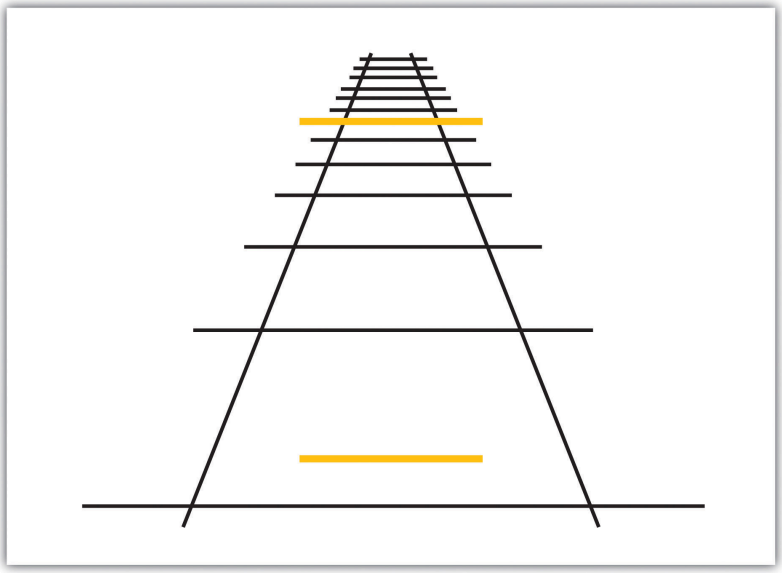


Figure 5.26 The Ponzo Illusion. The Ponzo illusion is caused by a failure of the monocular depth cue of linear perspective. Both bars are the same size, even though the top one looks larger.

Illusions demonstrate that our perception of the world around us may be influenced by our prior knowledge. But the fact that some illusions exist in some cases does not mean that the perceptual system is generally inaccurate — in fact, humans normally become so closely in touch with their environment that the physical body and the particular environment that we sense and perceive becomes **embodied** *— that is, built into and linked with our cognition, such that the world around us becomes part of our brain* (Calvo & Gomila, 2008). The close relationship between people and their environments means that, although illusions can be created in the lab and under some unique situations, they may be less common with active observers in the real world (Runeson, 1988).

The Important Role of Expectations in Perception

Our emotions, mindset, expectations, and the contexts in which our sensations occur all have a profound influence on perception. People who are warned that they are about to taste something bad rate what they do taste more negatively than people who are told that the taste won't be so bad (Nitschke et al., 2006), and people perceive a child and adult pair as looking more alike when they are told that they are parent and child (Bressan & Dal Martello, 2002). Similarly, participants who see images of the same baby rate it as stronger and bigger when they are told it is a boy as opposed to when they are told it is a girl (Stern & Karraker, 1989), and research participants who learn that a child is from a lower-class background perceive the child's scores on an intelligence test as lower than people who see the same test taken by a child they are told is from an upper-class background (Darley & Gross, 1983). Plassmann, O'Doherty, Shiv, and Rangel (2008) found that wines were rated more positively and caused greater

brain activity in brain areas associated with pleasure when they were said to cost more than when they were said to cost less. And even experts can be fooled: professional referees tended to assign more penalty cards to soccer teams for videotaped fouls when they were told that the team had a history of aggressive behaviour than when they had no such expectation (Jones, Paull, & Erskine, 2002).

Our perceptions are also influenced by our desires and motivations. When we are hungry, food-related words tend to grab our attention more than non-food-related words (Mogg, Bradley, Hyare, & Lee, 1998), we perceive objects that we can reach as bigger than those that we cannot reach (Witt & Proffitt, 2005), and people who favour a political candidate's policies view the candidate's skin colour more positively than do those who oppose the candidate's policies (Caruso, Mead, & Balcetis, 2009). Even our culture influences perception. Chua, Boland, and Nisbett (2005) showed American and Asian graduate students different images, such as an airplane, an animal, or a train, against complex backgrounds. They found that (consistent with their overall individualistic orientation) the American students tended to focus more on the foreground image, while Asian students (consistent with their interdependent orientation) paid more attention to the image's context. Furthermore, Asian-American students focused more or less on the context depending on whether their Asian or their American identity had been activated.

Psychology in Everyday Life: How Understanding Sensation and Perception Can Save Lives

Human factors is the *field of psychology that uses psychological knowledge, including the principles of sensation and perception, to improve the development of technology*. Human factors has worked on a variety of projects, ranging from nuclear reactor control centres and airplane cockpits to cell phones and websites (Proctor & Van Zandt, 2008). For instance, modern televisions and computer monitors were developed on the basis of the trichromatic colour theory, using three colour elements placed close enough together that the colours are blended by the eye. Knowledge of the visual system also helped engineers create new kinds of displays, such as those used on notebook computers and music players, and better understand how using cell phones while driving may contribute to automobile accidents (Lee & Strayer, 2004).

Human factors also has made substantial contributions to airline safety. About two-thirds of accidents on commercial airplane flights are caused by human error (Nickerson, 1998). During takeoff, travel, and landing, the pilot simultaneously communicates with ground control, maneuvers the plane, scans the horizon for other aircraft, and operates controls. The need for a usable interface that works easily and naturally with the pilot's visual perception is essential.

Psychologist Conrad Kraft (1978) hypothesized that as planes land, with no other distance cues visible, pilots may be subjected to a type of moon illusion, in which the city lights beyond the runway appear much larger on the retina than they really are, deceiving the pilot into landing too early. Kraft's findings caused airlines to institute new flight safety measures, where copilots must call out the altitude progressively during the descent, which has probably decreased the number of landing accidents.

Figure 5.27 presents images of an airplane instrument panel before and after it was redesigned by human factors psychologists. On the left is the initial design, in which the controls were crowded and cluttered, in no logical sequence, each control performing one task. The controls were more or less the same in colour, and the gauges were not easy to read. The redesigned digital cockpit (right on Figure 5.27) shows a marked improvement in usability. More of the controls are colour-coded and multifunctional so that there is less clutter on the dashboard. Screens make use of LCD and 3-D graphics. Text sizes are changeable — increasing readability — and many of the functions have become automated, freeing up the pilots' concentration for more important activities.



Figure 5.27 Airplane Cockpits. Initial design of the airplane cockpit (left); the digital design of the airplane cockpit (right), which has taken human factors into account.

One important aspect of the redesign was based on the principles of sensory adaptation. Displays that are easy to see in darker conditions quickly become unreadable when the sun shines directly on them. It takes the pilot a relatively long time to adapt to the suddenly much brighter display. Furthermore, perceptual contrast is important. The display cannot be so bright at night that the pilot is unable to see targets in the sky or on the land. Human factors psychologists used these principles to determine the appropriate stimulus intensity needed on these displays so that pilots would be able to read them accurately and quickly under a wide range of conditions. The psychologists accomplished this by developing an automatic control mechanism that senses the ambient light visible through the front cockpit windows and detects the light falling on the display surface, and then automatically adjusts the intensity of the display for the pilot (Silverstein, Krantz, Gomer, Yeh, & Monty, 1990; Silverstein & Merrifield, 1985).

Key Takeaways

- Sensory interaction occurs when different senses work together, for instance, when taste, smell, and touch together produce the flavour of food.
- Selective attention allows us to focus on some sensory experiences while tuning out others.
- Sensory adaptation occurs when we become less sensitive to some aspects of our environment, freeing us to focus on more important changes.
- Perceptual constancy allows us to perceive an object as the same, despite changes in sensation.
- Cognitive illusions are examples of how our expectations can influence our perceptions.
- Our emotions, motivations, desires, and even our culture can influence our perceptions.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Consider the role of the security personnel at the APEC meeting who let the Chaser group's car enter the security area. List some perceptual processes that might have been at play.
2. Consider some cases where your expectations about what you thought you might be going to experience have influenced your perceptions of what you actually experienced.

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Image Attributions

Figure 5.23: Grey Square Optical Illusion by Edward H. Adelson, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Grey_square_optical_illusion.PNG is in the public domain.

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Figure 5.27: "DC-9 Cockpit" by Dmitry Denisenkov (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:DC-9_Cockpit.jpg) is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported.(http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en) "Airbus A380 cockpit" by Naddsy (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Airbus_A380_cockpit.jpg) used under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en).

5.6 Chapter Summary

Sensation and perception work seamlessly together to allow us to detect both the presence of, and changes in, the stimuli around us.

The study of sensation and perception is exceedingly important for our everyday lives because the knowledge generated by psychologists is used in so many ways to help so many people.

Each sense accomplishes the basic process of transduction — the conversion of stimuli detected by receptor cells into electrical impulses that are then transported to the brain — in different, but related, ways.

Psychophysics is the branch of psychology that studies the effects of physical stimuli on sensory perceptions. Psychophysicists study the absolute threshold of sensation as well as the difference threshold, or just noticeable difference (JND). Weber's law maintains that the JND of a stimulus is a constant proportion of the original intensity of the stimulus.

Most of our cerebral cortex is devoted to seeing, and we have substantial visual skills. The eye is a specialized system that includes the cornea, pupil, iris, lens, and retina. Neurons, including rods and cones, react to light landing on the retina and send it to the visual cortex via the optic nerve.

Images are perceived, in part, through the action of feature detector neurons.

The shade of a colour, known as hue, is conveyed by the wavelength of the light that enters the eye. The Young-Helmholtz trichromatic colour theory and the opponent-process colour theory are theories of how the brain perceives colour.

Depth is perceived using both binocular and monocular depth cues. Monocular depth cues are based on gestalt principles. The beta effect and the phi phenomenon are important in detecting motion.

The ear detects both the amplitude (loudness) and frequency (pitch) of sound waves.

Important structures of the ear include the pinna, eardrum, ossicles, cochlea, and oval window.

The frequency theory of hearing proposes that as the pitch of a sound wave increases, nerve impulses of a corresponding frequency are sent to the auditory nerve. The place theory of hearing proposes that different areas of the cochlea respond to different frequencies.

Sounds that are 85 decibels or more can cause damage to your hearing, particularly if you are exposed to them repeatedly. Sounds that exceed 130 decibels are dangerous, even if you are exposed to them infrequently.

The tongue detects six different taste sensations, known respectively as sweet, salty, sour, bitter, piquancy (spicy), and umami (savory).

We have approximately 1,000 types of odour receptor cells and it is estimated that we can detect 10,000 different odours.

Thousands of nerve endings in the skin respond to four basic sensations — pressure, hot, cold, and pain — but only the sensation of pressure has its own specialized receptors. The ability to keep track of where the body is moving is provided by the vestibular system.

Perception involves the processes of sensory interaction, selective attention, sensory adaptation, and perceptual constancy.

Although our perception is very accurate, it is not perfect. Our expectations and emotions colour our perceptions and may result in illusions.

Chapter 6. States of Consciousness

6. States of Consciousness

An Unconscious Killing

During the night of May 23, 1987, Kenneth Parks, a 23-year-old Canadian with a wife, a baby daughter, and heavy gambling debts, got out of his bed, climbed into his car, and drove 15 miles to the home of his wife's parents in the suburbs of Toronto. There, he attacked them with a knife, killing his mother-in-law and severely injuring his father-in-law. Parks then drove to a police station and stumbled into the building, holding up his bloody hands and saying, "I think I killed some people…my hands." The police arrested him and took him to a hospital, where surgeons repaired several deep cuts on his hands. Only then did police discover that he had indeed assaulted his in-laws.

Parks claimed that he could not remember anything about the crime. He said that he remembered going to sleep in his bed, then awakening in the police station with bloody hands, but nothing in between. His defence was that he had been asleep during the entire incident and was not aware of his actions (Martin, 2009).

Not surprisingly, no one believed this explanation at first. However, further investigation established that he did have a long history of sleepwalking, he had no motive for the crime, and despite repeated attempts to trip him up in numerous interviews, he was completely consistent in his story, which also fit the timeline of events. Parks was examined by a team of sleep specialists, who found that the pattern of brainwaves that occurred while he slept was very abnormal (Broughton, Billings, Cartwright, & Doucette, 1994). The specialists eventually concluded that sleepwalking, probably precipitated by stress and anxiety over his financial troubles, was the most likely explanation of his aberrant behaviour. They also agreed that such a combination of stressors was unlikely to happen again, so he was not likely to undergo another such violent episode and was probably not a hazard to others. Given this combination of evidence, the jury acquitted Parks of murder and assault charges. He walked out of the courtroom a free man (Wilson, 1998).

Consciousness is defined as *our subjective awareness of ourselves and our environment* (Koch, 2004). The experience of consciousness is fundamental to human nature. We all know what it means to be conscious, and we assume (although we can never be sure) that other human beings experience their consciousness similarly to how we experience ours.

The study of consciousness has long been important to psychologists and plays a role in many important psychological theories. For instance, Sigmund Freud's personality theories differentiated between the unconscious and the conscious aspects of behaviour, and present-day psychologists distinguish between **automatic** (*unconscious*) and **controlled** (*conscious*) behaviours and between **implicit** (*unconscious)* and **explicit** (*conscious*) memory (Petty, Wegener, Chaiken, & Trope, 1999; Shanks, 2005).

Some philosophers and religious practices argue that the mind (or soul) and the body are separate entities. For instance, the French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650), shown in Figure 6.1, was a proponent of **dualism**, *the idea that the mind, a nonmaterial entity, is separate from (although connected to) the physical body*. In contrast to the dualists, psychologists believe that consciousness (and thus the mind) exists in the brain, not separate from it. In fact, psychologists believe that consciousness is the result of the activity of the many neural connections in the brain, and that we experience different states

of consciousness depending on what our brain is currently doing (Dennett, 1991; Koch & Greenfield, 2007).



Figure 6.1 Portrait of René Descartes. The French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) was a proponent of dualism, the theory that the mind and body are two separate entities. Psychologists reject this idea, however, believing that consciousness is a result of activity in the brain, not separate from it.

The study of consciousness is also important to the fundamental psychological question regarding the presence of free will. Although we may understand and believe that some of our behaviours are caused by forces that are outside our awareness (i.e., unconscious), we nevertheless believe that we have control over, and are aware that we are engaging in, most of our behaviours. To discover that we have, or someone else has, engaged in a complex behaviour, such as driving in a car and causing severe harm to others, without being at all conscious of these actions, is so unusual as to be shocking. And yet psychologists are increasingly certain that a great deal of our behaviour is caused by processes of which we are unaware and over which we have little or no control (Libet, 1999; Wegner, 2003).

Our experience of consciousness is functional because we use it to guide and control our behaviour, and to think logically about problems (DeWall, Baumeister, & Masicampo, 2008). Consciousness allows us to plan activities and to monitor our progress toward the goals we set for ourselves. And consciousness is fundamental to our sense of morality — we believe that we have the free will to perform moral actions while avoiding immoral behaviours.

But in some cases consciousness may become aversive — for instance, when we become aware that we are not living up to our own goals or expectations, or when we believe that other people perceive us negatively. In these cases we may engage in behaviours that help us escape from consciousness; for example, through the use of alcohol or other psychoactive drugs (Baumeister, 1998).

Because the brain varies in its current level and type of activity, consciousness is transitory. If we drink too much coffee or beer, the caffeine or alcohol influences the activity in our brain, and our consciousness may change. When we are anesthetized before an operation or experience a concussion after a knock on the head, we may lose consciousness entirely as a result of changes in brain activity. We also lose consciousness when we sleep, and it is with this altered state of consciousness that we begin our chapter.

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Image Attributions

Figure 6.1: Portrait of René Descartes by André Hatala, (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frans_Hals_-_Portret_van_René_Descartes.jpg) is in the public domain.

6.1 Sleeping and Dreaming Revitalize Us for Action

Learning Objectives

1. Draw a graphic showing the usual phases of sleep during a normal night and notate the characteristics of each phase.
2. Review the disorders that affect sleep and the costs of sleep deprivation.
3. Outline and explain the similarities and differences among the different theories of dreaming.

The lives of all organisms, including humans, are influenced by *regularly occurring cycles of behaviours* known as **biological rhythms**. One important biological rhythm is the annual cycle that guides the migration of birds and the hibernation of bears. Women also experience a 28-day cycle that guides their fertility and menstruation. But perhaps the strongest and most important biorhythm is the daily **circadian rhythm** (from the Latin *circa*, meaning "about" or "approximately," and *dian*, meaning "daily") *that guides the daily waking and sleeping cycle in many animals*.Many biological rhythms are coordinated by changes in the level and duration of ambient light — for instance, as winter turns into summer and as night turns into day. In some animals, such as birds, the pineal gland in the brain is directly sensitive to light, and its activation influences behaviour, such as mating and annual migrations. Light also has a profound effect on humans. We are more likely to experience *depression during the dark winter months than during the lighter summer months, an experience* known as **seasonal affective disorder** (SAD), and exposure to bright lights can help reduce this depression (McGinnis, 2007).

Sleep is also influenced by ambient light. The ganglion cells in the retina send signals to a *brain area above the thalamus* called the **suprachiasmatic nucleus**, *which is the body's primary circadian pacemaker.* The suprachiasmatic nucleus analyzes the strength and duration of the light stimulus and sends signals to the pineal gland when the ambient light level is low or its duration is short. In response, the pineal gland secretes **melatonin**, a *powerful hormone that facilitates the onset of sleep*.

Research Focus: Circadian Rhythms Influence the Use of Stereotypes in Social Judgments

The circadian rhythm influences our energy levels such that we have more energy at some times of day than others. Galen Bodenhausen (1990) argued that people may be more likely to rely on their stereotypes (i.e., their beliefs about the characteristics of social groups) as a shortcut to making social judgments when they are tired than when they have more energy. To test this hypothesis, he asked 189 research participants to consider cases of alleged misbehaviour by other college or university students and to judge the probability of the accused students' guilt. The accused students were identified as members of particular social groups, and they were accused of committing offences that were consistent with stereotypes of these groups.

One case involved a student athlete accused of cheating on an exam, one case involved a Hispanic student who allegedly physically attacked his roommate, and a third case involved an African American student who

had been accused of selling illegal drugs. Each of these offences had been judged via pretesting in the same student population to be stereotypically (although, of course, unfairly) associated with each social group. The research participants were also provided with some specific evidence about the case that made it ambiguous whether the person had actually committed the crime, and then asked to indicate the likelihood of the student's guilt on a 10-point scale (0 = extremely unlikely to 10 = extremely likely).

Participants also completed a measure designed to assess their circadian rhythms — whether they were more active and alert in the morning (morning types) or in the evening (evening types). The participants were then tested at experimental sessions held either in the morning (9 a.m.) or in the evening (8 p.m.). As you can see in Figure 6.2, "Circadian Rhythms and Stereotyping," the participants were more likely to rely on their negative stereotypes of the person they were judging at the time of day in which they reported being less active and alert. Morning people used their stereotypes more when they were tested in the evening, and evening people used their stereotypes more when they were tested in the morning.

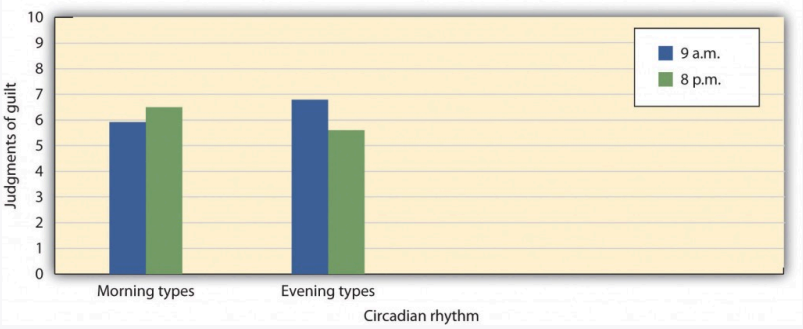


Figure 6.2 Circadian Rhythms and Stereotyping. Students who indicated that they had more energy in the morning relied on their stereotypes more at night, and students who indicated that they had more energy in the night relied on their stereotypes more in the morning. [Long Description]

Sleep Stages: Moving through the Night

Although we lose consciousness as we sleep, the brain nevertheless remains active. The patterns of sleep have been tracked in thousands of research participants who have spent nights sleeping in research labs (Figure 6.3) while their brainwaves were recorded by monitors, such as an *electroencephalogram*, or *EEG*.



Figure 6.3 Sleep Lab. Sleep researchers measure the activity of the brain, eyes, face, and other parts of the body while the participant sleeps.

Sleep researchers have found that sleeping people undergo a fairly consistent pattern of sleep stages, each lasting about 90 minutes. As you can see in Figure 6.4, "Stages of Sleep," these stages are of two major types: rapid eye movement and non-rapid eye movement. **Rapid eye movement** (REM) sleep is *a sleep stage characterized by the presence of quick eye movements and dreaming.* REM sleep accounts for about 25% of our total sleep time. During REM sleep, our awareness of external events is dramatically reduced, and consciousness is dominated primarily by internally generated images and a lack of overt thinking (Hobson, 2004). During this sleep stage our muscles shut down, and this is probably a good thing as it protects us from hurting ourselves or trying to act out the scenes that are playing in our dreams. The second major sleep type, **non-rapid eye movement** (non-REM) sleep is *a deep sleep, characterized by very slow brainwaves, that is further subdivided into three stages: N1, N2, and N3.* Each of the sleep stages has its own distinct pattern of brain activity (Dement & Kleitman, 1957).

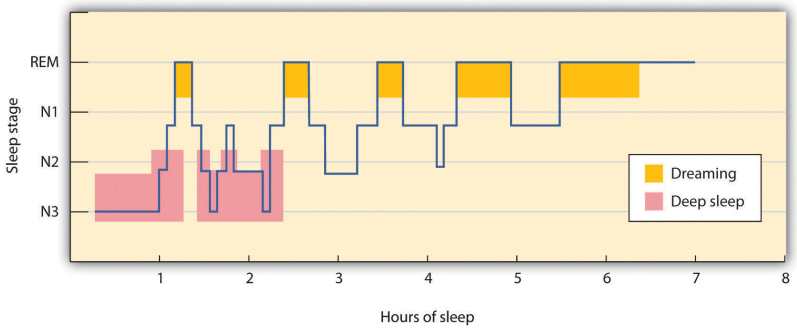


Figure 6.4 Stages of Sleep. During a typical night, our sleep cycles move between REM and non-REM sleep, with each cycle repeating at about 90-minute intervals. The deeper non-REM sleep stages usually occur earlier in the night.

As you can see in Figure 6.5, "EEG Recordings of Brain Patterns During Sleep," the brainwaves that are recorded by an EEG as we sleep show that the brain's activity changes during each stage of sleeping. When we are awake, our brain activity is characterized by the presence of very fast *beta waves.* When we first begin to fall asleep, the waves get longer (*alpha waves*), and as we move into stage N1 sleep, which is characterized by the experience of drowsiness, the brain begins to produce even slower *theta waves*. During stage N1 sleep, some muscle tone is lost, as well as most awareness of the environment.

Some people may experience sudden jerks or twitches and even vivid hallucinations during this initial stage of sleep.

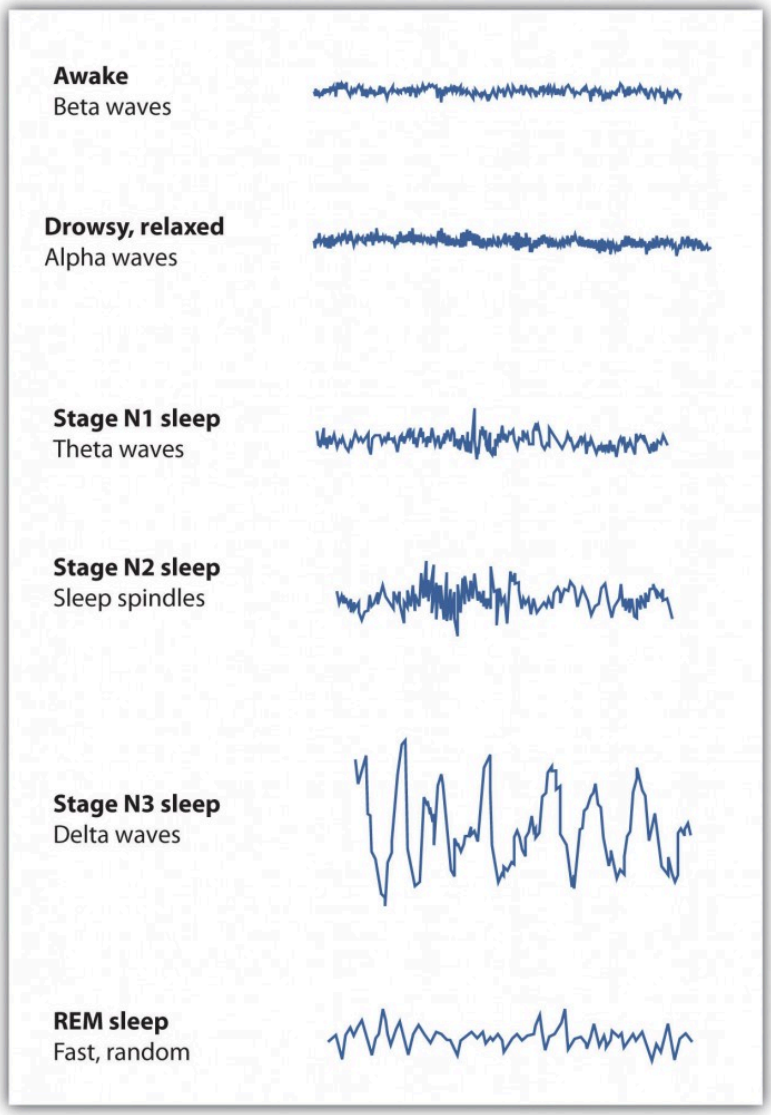


Figure 6.5 EEG Recordings of Brain Patterns During Sleep. Each stage of sleep has its own distinct pattern of brain activity.

Normally, if we are allowed to keep sleeping, we will move from stage N1 to stage N2 sleep. During stage N2, muscular activity is further decreased and conscious awareness of the environment is lost. This stage typically represents about half of the total sleep time in normal adults. Stage N2 sleep is characterized by *theta waves interspersed with bursts of rapid brain activity* known as **sleep spindles**.

Stage N3, also known as **slow wave sleep**, is *the deepest level of sleep*, characterized by an increased proportion of very slow *delta waves*. This is the stage in which most sleep abnormalities, such as sleepwalking, sleeptalking, nightmares, and bedwetting occur. The sleepwalking murders committed by Mr. Parks would have occurred in this stage. Some skeletal muscle tone remains, making it possible for affected individuals to rise from their beds and engage in sometimes very complex behaviours, but consciousness is distant. Even in the deepest sleep, however, we are still aware of the external world.

If smoke enters the room or if we hear the cry of a baby we are likely to react, even though we are sound asleep. These occurrences again demonstrate the extent to which we process information outside consciousness.

After falling initially into a very deep sleep, the brain begins to become more active again, and we normally move into the first period of REM sleep about 90 minutes after falling asleep. REM sleep is accompanied by an increase in heart rate, facial twitches, and the repeated rapid eye movements that give this stage its name. People who are awakened during REM sleep almost always report that they were dreaming, while those awakened in other stages of sleep report dreams much less often. REM sleep is also emotional sleep. Activity in the limbic system, including the amygdala, is increased during REM sleep, and the genitals become aroused, even if the content of the dreams we are having is not sexual. A typical 25-year-old man may have an erection nearly half the night, and the common "morning erection" is left over from the last REM period before waking.

Normally we will go through several cycles of REM and non-REM sleep each night (Figure 6.5, "EEG Recordings of Brain Patterns During Sleep"). The length of the REM portion of the cycle tends to increase through the night, from about five to 10 minutes early in the night to 15 to 20 minutes shortly before awakening in the morning. Dreams also tend to become more elaborate and vivid as the night goes on. Eventually, as the sleep cycle finishes, the brain resumes its faster alpha and beta waves and we awake, normally refreshed.

Sleep Disorders: Problems in Sleeping

According to a recent poll (Statistics Canada, 2011), six in 10 Canadian adults say they feel tired most of the time. These people are suffering from a sleep disorder known as **insomnia**, defined as *persistent difficulty falling or staying asleep*. Most cases of insomnia are temporary, lasting from a few days to several weeks, but in some cases insomnia can last for years.

Insomnia can result from physical disorders such as pain due to injury or illness, or from psychological problems such as stress, financial worries, or relationship difficulties. Changes in sleep patterns, such as jet lag, changes in work shift, or even the movement to or from daylight saving time can produce insomnia. Sometimes the sleep that the insomniac does get is disturbed and nonrestorative, and the lack of quality sleep produces impairment of functioning during the day. Ironically, the problem may be compounded by people's anxiety over insomnia itself: their fear of being unable to sleep may wind up keeping them awake. Some people may also develop a conditioned anxiety to the bedroom or the bed.

People who have difficulty sleeping may turn to drugs to help them sleep. Barbiturates, benzodiazepines, and other sedatives (Figure 6.6) are frequently marketed and prescribed as sleep aids, but they may interrupt the natural stages of the sleep cycle, and in the end are likely to do more harm than good. In some cases they may also promote dependence. Most practitioners of sleep medicine today recommend making environmental and scheduling changes first, followed by therapy for underlying problems, with pharmacological remedies used only as a last resort.



Figure 6.6 Sleeping Pills. Taking pills to sleep is not recommended unless all other methods of improving sleep have been tried.

According to the Canadian Sleep Society, some steps that can be used to combat insomnia include the following:

- Use the bed and bedroom for sleep and sex only. Do not spend time in bed during the day.
- Establish a regular bedtime routine and a regular sleep-wake schedule.
- Do not eat or drink too much close to bedtime.
- Create a sleep-promoting environment that is dark, cool, and comfortable.
- Avoid disturbing noises — consider a bedside fan or white-noise machine to block out disturbing sounds.
- Consume less or no caffeine, particularly late in the day.
- Avoid alcohol and nicotine, especially close to bedtime.
- Exercise, but not within three hours before bedtime.
- Avoid naps, particularly in the late afternoon or evening.

Another common sleep problem is **sleep apnea**, *a sleep disorder characterized by pauses in breathing that last at least 10 seconds during sleep* (Morgenthaler, Kagramanov, Hanak, & Decker, 2006). In addition to preventing restorative sleep, sleep apnea can also cause high blood pressure and may increase the risk of stroke and heart attack (Yaggi et al., 2005).

Most sleep apnea is caused by an obstruction of the walls of the throat that occurs when we fall asleep. It is most common in obese or older individuals who have lost muscle tone and is particularly common in men. Sleep apnea caused by obstructions is usually treated with an air machine that uses a mask to create a continuous pressure that prevents the airway from collapsing, or with mouthpieces that keep the airway open. If all other treatments have failed, sleep apnea may be treated with surgery to open the airway.

Narcolepsy is *a disorder characterized by extreme daytime sleepiness with frequent episodes of nodding off.* The syndrome may also be accompanied by attacks of **cataplexy**, in which *the individual loses muscle tone, resulting in a partial or complete collapse*. It is estimated that one in 2,000 people suffer from narcolepsy.

Narcolepsy is in part the result of genetics — people who suffer from the disease lack neurotransmitters that are important in keeping us alert (Taheri, Zeitzer, & Mignot, 2002) — and is also the result of a lack of deep sleep. While most people descend through the sequence of sleep stages, then move back up to REM sleep soon after falling asleep, narcolepsy sufferers move directly into REM and undergo numerous awakenings during the night, often preventing them from getting good sleep.

Narcolepsy can be treated with stimulants, such as amphetamines, to counteract the daytime sleepiness, or with antidepressants to treat a presumed underlying depression. However, since these drugs further disrupt already abnormal sleep cycles, these approaches may, in the long run, make the problem worse. Many sufferers find relief by taking a number of planned short naps during the day, and some individuals may find it easier to work in jobs that allow them to sleep during the day and work at night.

Other sleep disorders occur when cognitive or motor processes that should be turned off or reduced in magnitude during sleep operate at higher than normal levels (Mahowald & Schenck, 2000). One example is **somnambulism** (sleepwalking), *in which the person leaves the bed and moves around while still asleep*. Sleepwalking is more common in childhood, with the most frequent occurrences around the age of 12 years. About 4% of adults experience somnambulism (Mahowald & Schenck, 2000).

Sleep terrors is *a disruptive sleep disorder, most frequently experienced in childhood, that may involve loud screams and intense panic*. The sufferer cannot wake from sleep even though he or she is trying to. In extreme cases, sleep terrors may result in bodily harm or property damage as the sufferer moves about abruptly. Up to 3% of adults suffer from sleep terrors, which typically occur in sleep stage N3 (Mahowald & Schenck, 2000).

Other sleep disorders include **bruxism**, in which *the sufferer grinds his teeth during sleep*; **restless legs syndrome**, in which *the sufferer reports an itching, burning, or otherwise uncomfortable feeling in his legs, usually exacerbated when resting or asleep*; and **periodic limb movement disorder**, which involves *sudden involuntary movement of limbs*. The last of these, periodic limb movement disorder, can cause sleep disruption and injury for both the sufferer and bed partner.

Although many sleep disorders occur during non-REM sleep, some occur during REM sleep. **REM sleep behaviour disorder** (Mahowald & Schenck, 2005) is *a condition in which people (usually middle-aged or older men) engage in vigorous and bizarre physical activities during REM sleep in response to intense, violent dreams*. As their actions may injure themselves or their sleeping partners, this disorder, thought to be neurological in nature, is normally treated with hypnosis and medications.

The Heavy Costs of Not Sleeping

Our preferred sleep times and our sleep requirements vary throughout our life cycle. Newborns tend to sleep between 16 and 18 hours per day, preschoolers tend to sleep between 10 and 12 hours per day, school-aged children and teenagers usually prefer at least nine hours of sleep per night, and most adults say that they require seven to eight hours per night (Mercer, Merritt, & Cowell, 1998; Statistics Canada, 2011). There are also individual differences in need for sleep. Some adults do quite well with fewer than six hours of sleep per night, whereas others need nine hours or more. The most recent study by Mental Health Canada (2014) suggests that adults should get between seven and nine hours of sleep per night (Figure 6.7, “Average Hours of Required Sleep per Night”), and yet 15% of Canadians average fewer

than 6.5 hours and 47% of Canadians stated that they cut down on sleep in an attempt to squeeze more time out of the day.

How much sleep do you really need?

Age	Sleep needs
Newborns (0–2 months)	12 to 18 hours
Infants (3–11 months)	14 to 15 hours
Toddlers (1–3 years)	12 to 14 hours
Preschoolers (3–5 years)	11 to 13 hours
School-age children (5–10 years)	10 to 11 hours
Teens (10–17 years)	8.5 to 9.25 hours
Adults	7 to 9 hours

Figure 6.7 Average Hours of Required Sleep per Night. The average Canadian adult reported getting only 6.5 hours of sleep per night, which is less than the recommended range proposes. [Long Description]

Getting needed rest is difficult in part because school and work schedules still follow the early-to-rise timetable that was set years ago. We tend to stay up late to enjoy activities in the evening but then are forced to get up early to go to work or school. The situation is particularly bad for university students, who are likely to combine a heavy academic schedule with an active social life and who may, in some cases, also work. Getting enough sleep is a luxury that many of us seem to be unable or unwilling to afford, and yet sleeping is one of the most important things we can do for ourselves. Continued over time, a nightly deficit of even only one or two hours can have a substantial impact on mood and performance (Figure 6.8).

Sleep has a vital restorative function, and a prolonged lack of sleep results in increased anxiety, diminished performance, and, if severe and extended, even death. Many road accidents involve sleep deprivation, and people who are sleep deprived show decrements in driving performance similar to those who have ingested alcohol (Hack, Choi, Vijayapalan, Davies, & Stradling, 2001; Williamson & Feyer, 2000). Poor treatment by doctors (Smith-Coggins, Rosekind, Hurd, & Buccino, 1994) and a variety of industrial accidents have also been traced in part to the effects of sleep deprivation.

Good sleep is also important to our health and longevity. It is no surprise that we sleep more when we are sick, because sleep works to fight infection. Sleep deprivation suppresses immune responses that fight off infection, and can lead to obesity, hypertension, and memory impairment (Ferrie et al., 2007; Kushida, 2005). Sleeping well can even save our lives. Dew and colleagues (2003) found that older adults who had better sleep patterns also lived longer.

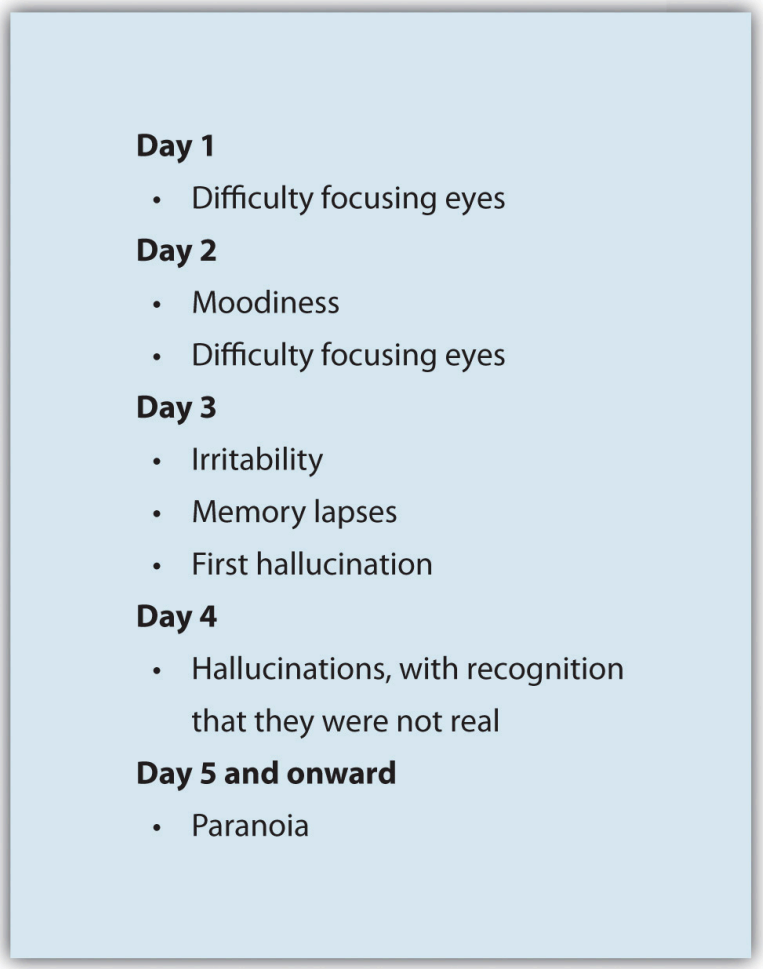


Figure 6.8 The Effects of Sleep Deprivation. In 1964, 17-year-old high school student Randy Gardner remained awake for 264 hours (11 days) in order to set a new Guinness World Record. At the request of his worried parents, he was monitored by a U.S. Navy psychiatrist, Lt. Cmdr. John J. Ross. This chart maps the progression of his behavioural changes over the 11 days. [Long Description]

Dreams and Dreaming

Dreams are *the succession of images, thoughts, sounds, and emotions that passes through our minds while sleeping*. When people are awakened from REM sleep, they normally report that they have been dreaming, suggesting that people normally dream several times a night but that most dreams are forgotten on awakening (Dement, 1997). The content of our dreams generally relates to our everyday experiences and concerns, and frequently our fears and failures (Cartwright, Agargun, Kirkby, & Friedman, 2006; Domhoff, Meyer-Gomes, & Schredl, 2005).

Many cultures regard dreams as having great significance for the dreamer, either by revealing something important about the dreamer's present circumstances or predicting his or her future. The Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud (1913/1988) analyzed the dreams of his patients to help him understand their unconscious needs and desires, and psychotherapists still make use of this technique today. Freud

believed that the primary function of dreams was **wish fulfilment**, or *the idea that dreaming allows us to act out the desires that we must repress during the day*. He differentiated between the **manifest content** of the dream (i.e., *its literal actions*) and its **latent content** (i.e., *the hidden psychological meaning of the dream*). Freud believed that the real meaning of dreams is often suppressed by the unconscious mind in order to protect the individual from thoughts and feelings that are hard to cope with. By uncovering the real meaning of dreams through *psychoanalysis*, Freud believed that people could better understand their problems and resolve the issues that create difficulties in their lives.

Although Freud and others have focused on the meaning of dreams, other theories about the causes of dreams are less concerned with their content. One possibility is that we dream primarily to help with consolidation, or the moving of information into long-term memory (Alvarenga et al., 2008; Zhang (2004). Rauchs, Desgranges, Foret, and Eustache (2005) found that rats that had been deprived of REM sleep after learning a new task were less able to perform the task again later than were rats that had been allowed to dream, and these differences were greater on tasks that involved learning unusual information or developing new behaviours. Payne and Nadel (2004) argued that the content of dreams is the result of consolidation — we dream about the things that are being moved into long-term memory. Thus dreaming may be an important part of the learning that we do while sleeping (Hobson, Pace-Schott, and Stickgold, 2000).

The **activation-synthesis theory of dreaming** (Hobson & McCarley, 1977; Hobson, 2004) *proposes still another explanation for dreaming — namely, that dreams are our brain's interpretation of the random firing of neurons in the brain stem*. According to this approach, the signals from the brain stem are sent to the cortex, just as they are when we are awake, but because the pathways from the cortex to skeletal muscles are disconnected during REM sleep, the cortex does not know how to interpret the signals. As a result, the cortex strings the messages together into the coherent stories we experience as dreams.

Although researchers are still trying to determine the exact causes of dreaming, one thing remains clear — we need to dream. If we are deprived of REM sleep, we quickly become less able to engage in the important tasks of everyday life, until we are finally able to dream again.

Key Takeaways

- Consciousness, our subjective awareness of ourselves and our environment, is functional because it allows us to plan activities and monitor our goals.
- Psychologists believe that consciousness is the result of neural activity in the brain.
- Human and animal behaviour is influenced by biological rhythms, including annual, monthly, and circadian rhythms.
- Sleep consists of two major stages: REM and non-REM sleep. Non-REM sleep has three substages, N1, N2, and N3.
- Each sleep stage is marked by a specific pattern of biological responses and brainwaves.
- Sleep is essential for adequate functioning during the day. Sleep disorders, including insomnia, sleep apnea, and narcolepsy, may make it hard for us to sleep well.
- Dreams occur primarily during REM sleep. Some theories of dreaming, such as Freud's, are

based on the content of the dreams. Other theories of dreaming propose that dreaming is related to memory consolidation. The activation-synthesis theory of dreaming is based only on neural activity.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. If you happen to be home alone one night, try this exercise: at nightfall, leave the lights and any other powered equipment off. Does this influence what time you go to sleep as opposed to your normal sleep time?
2. Review your own sleep patterns. Are you getting enough sleep? What makes you think so?
3. Review some of the dreams that you have had recently. Consider how each of the theories of dreaming we have discussed would explain your dreams.

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Image Attributions

Figure 6.2: Adapted from Bodenhausen (1990).

Figure 6.3: 140307_jwl_sleep-1 by JBLM PAO (https://www.flickr.com/photos/jblmpao/13069628253/in/photolist-bLybHR-xSqVE) used under CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0 (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/).

Figure 6.6: "The little blue painkillers" by Stephen Cummings (http://www.flickr.com/photos/spcummings/) is licensed under CC BY 2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en_CA).

Figure 6.7: Adapted by J. Walinga (Mental Health Canada, 2014).

Figure 6.8: Adapted from Ross (1965).

Long Descriptions

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Figure 6.2 long description: Guilty judgements based on stereotypes for morning and evening types depending on the time of day.

	Morning Types		**Evening Types**	
	9 am	**8 pm**	**9 am**	**8 pm**
Judgements of guilt	5.9	6.5	6.8	5.6

[Return to Figure 6.2]

Figure 6.7 long description: How much sleep do you really need?

Age	Sleep needs
Newborns (0 to 2 months)	12 to 18 hours
Infants (3 to 11 months)	14 to 15 hours
Toddlers (1 to 3 years)	12 to 14 hours
Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)	11 to 13 hours
School-age children (5 to 10 years)	10 to 11 hours
Teens (10 to 17 years)	8.5 to 9.25 hours
Adults	7 to 9 hours

[Return to Figure 6.7]

Figure 6.8 long description: Effects of Sleep deprivation. Day 1: Difficulty focusing eyes. Day 2: Moodiness, difficulty focusing eyes. Day 3: Irritability, memory lapses, first hallucination. Day 4: Hallucinations, with recognition that they were not real. Day 5 and onward: paranoia. [Return to Figure 6.8]

6.2 Altering Consciousness with Psychoactive Drugs

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize the major psychoactive drugs and their influences on consciousness and behaviour.
2. Review the evidence regarding the dangers of recreational drugs.

A **psychoactive drug** is *a chemical that changes our states of consciousness, and particularly our perceptions and moods.* These drugs are commonly found in everyday foods and beverages, including chocolate, coffee, and soft drinks, as well as in alcohol and in over-the-counter drugs, such as aspirin, Tylenol, and cold and cough medication. Psychoactive drugs are also frequently prescribed as sleeping pills, tranquilizers, and antianxiety medications, and they may be taken illegally for recreational purposes. As you can see in Table 6.1, "Psychoactive Drugs by Class," the four primary classes of psychoactive drugs are *stimulants*, *depressants*, *opioids*, and *hallucinogens*.

Psychoactive drugs affect consciousness by influencing how neurotransmitters operate at the synapses of the central nervous system (CNS). Some psychoactive drugs are agonists, which mimic the operation of a neurotransmitter; some are antagonists, which block the action of a neurotransmitter; and some work by blocking the reuptake of neurotransmitters at the synapse.

Table 6.1 Psychoactive Drugs by Class.

[Skip Table]						
Mechanism	**Symptoms**	**Drug**	**Dangers and Side Effects**	**Psychological Dependence**	**Physical Dependence**	**Addiction Potential**
Stimulants: Stimulants block the reuptake of dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin in the synapses of the CNS.	Enhanced mood and increased energy	Caffeine	May create dependence	Low	Low	Low
		Nicotine	Has major negative health effects if smoked or chewed	High	High	High
		Cocaine	Decreased appetite, headache	Low	Low	Moderate
		Amphetamines	Possible dependence, accompanied by severe "crash" with depression as drug effects wear off, particularly if smoked or injected	Moderate	Low	Moderate to High
Depressants: Depressants change consciousness by increasing the production of the neurotransmitter GABA and decreasing the production of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, usually at the level of the thalamus and the reticular formation.	Calming effects, sleep, pain relief, slowed heart rate and respiration	Alcohol	Impaired judgment, loss of coordination, dizziness, nausea, and eventually a loss of consciousness	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
		Barbiturates and benzodiazepines	Sluggishness, slowed speech, drowsiness, in severe cases, coma or death	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
		Toxic inhalants	Brain damage and death	High	High	High

[Skip Table]

Mechanism	Symptoms	Drug	Dangers and Side Effects	Psychological Dependence	Physical Dependence	Addiction Potential
Opioids: The chemical makeup of opioids is similar to the endorphins, the neurotransmitters that serve as the body's "natural pain reducers."	Slowing of many body functions, constipation, respiratory and cardiac depression, and the rapid development of tolerance	Opium	Side effects include nausea, vomiting, tolerance, and addiction.	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
		Morphine	Restlessness, irritability, headache and body aches, tremors, nausea, vomiting, and severe abdominal pain	High	Moderate	Moderate
		Heroin	All side effects of morphine but about twice as addictive as morphine	High	Moderate	High
Hallucinogens: The chemical compositions of the hallucinogens are similar to the neurotransmitters serotonin and epinephrine, and they act primarily by mimicking them.	Altered consciousness; hallucinations	Marijuana	Mild intoxication; enhanced perception	Low	Low	Low
		LSD, mescaline, PCP, and peyote	Hallucinations; enhanced perception	Low	Low	Low

In some cases the effects of psychoactive drugs mimic other naturally occurring states of consciousness. For instance, sleeping pills are prescribed to create drowsiness, and benzodiazepines are prescribed to create a state of relaxation. In other cases psychoactive drugs are taken for recreational purposes with the goal of creating states of consciousness that are pleasurable or that help us escape our normal consciousness.

The use of psychoactive drugs, especially those that are used illegally, has the potential to create very negative side effects. This does not mean that all drugs are dangerous, but rather that all drugs can be dangerous, particularly if they are used regularly over long periods of time. Psychoactive drugs create negative effects not so much through their initial use but through the continued use, accompanied by increasing doses, that ultimately may lead to drug abuse.

The problem is that many drugs create **tolerance**: *an increase in the dose required to produce the same effect*, which makes it necessary for the user to increase the dosage or the number of times per day that the drug is taken. As the use of the drug increases, the user may develop a **dependence**, defined as a *need to use a drug or other substance regularly*. Dependence can be psychological, in which case the drug is desired and has become part of the everyday life of the user, but no serious physical effects result if the drug is not obtained; or physical, in which case serious physical and mental effects appear when the drug is withdrawn. Cigarette smokers who try to quit, for example, experience physical withdrawal symptoms, such as becoming tired and irritable, as well as extreme psychological cravings to enjoy a cigarette in particular situations, such as after a meal or when they are with friends.

Users may wish to stop using the drug, but when they reduce their dosage they experience **withdrawal** — *negative experiences that accompany reducing or stopping drug use, including physical pain and other symptoms*. *When the user powerfully craves the drug and is driven to seek it out, over and over again, no matter what the physical, social, financial, and legal cost,* we say that he or she has developed an addiction to the drug.

It is a common belief that addiction is an overwhelming, irresistibly powerful force, and that withdrawal from drugs is always an unbearably painful experience. But the reality is more complicated and in many cases less extreme. For one, even drugs that we do not generally think of as being addictive, such as caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol, can be very difficult to quit using, at least for some people. On the other hand, drugs that are normally associated with addiction, including amphetamines, cocaine, and heroin, do not immediately create addiction in their users. Even for a highly addictive drug like cocaine, only about 15% of users become addicted (Robinson & Berridge, 2003; Wagner & Anthony, 2002). Furthermore, the rate of addiction is lower for those who are taking drugs for medical reasons than for those who are using drugs recreationally. Patients who have become physically dependent on morphine administered during the course of medical treatment for a painful injury or disease are able to be rapidly weaned off the drug afterward, without becoming addicts. Robins, Davis, and Goodwin (1974) found that the majority of soldiers who had become addicted to morphine while overseas were quickly able to stop using after returning home.

This does not mean that using recreational drugs is not dangerous. For people who do become addicted to drugs, the success rate of recovery is low. These drugs are generally illegal and carry with them potential criminal consequences if one is caught in possession of them and arrested. Drugs that are smoked may produce throat and lung cancers and other problems. Snorting (“sniffing”) drugs can lead to a loss of the sense of smell, nosebleeds, difficulty in swallowing, hoarseness, and chronic runny nose. Injecting drugs intravenously carries with it the risk of contracting infections such as hepatitis and HIV. Furthermore, the quality and contents of illegal drugs are generally unknown, and the doses can vary substantially from purchase to purchase. The drugs may also contain toxic chemicals.

Another problem is the unintended consequences of combining drugs, which can produce serious side effects. Combining drugs is dangerous because their combined effects on the CNS can increase dramatically and can lead to accidental or even deliberate overdoses. For instance, ingesting alcohol or benzodiazepines along with the usual dose of heroin is a frequent cause of overdose deaths in opiate addicts, and combining alcohol and cocaine can have a dangerous impact on the cardiovascular system (McCance-Katz, Kosten, & Jatlow, 1998).

Although all recreational drugs are dangerous, some can be more deadly than others. One way to

determine how dangerous recreational drugs are is to calculate a **safety ratio**, *based on the dose that is likely to be fatal divided by the normal dose needed to feel the effects of the drug*. Drugs with lower ratios are more dangerous because the difference between the normal and the lethal dose is small. For instance, heroin has a safety ratio of 6 because the average fatal dose is only six times greater than the average effective dose. On the other hand, marijuana has a safety ratio of 1,000. This is not to say that smoking marijuana cannot be deadly, but it is much less likely to be deadly than is heroin. The safety ratios of common recreational drugs are shown in Table 6.2, “Popular Recreational Drugs and Their Safety Ratios.”

Table 6.2 Popular Recreational Drugs and Their Safety Ratios. Adapted from Gable (2004).

[Skip Table]			
Drug	**Description**	**Street or brand names**	**Safety ratio**
Heroin	Strong depressant	Smack, junk, H	6
GHB (Gamma hydroxy butyrate)	“Rave” drug (not Ecstacy), also used as a “date rape” drug	Georgia home boy, liquid ecstasy, liquid X, liquid G, fantasy	8
Isobutyl nitrite	Depressant and toxic inhalant	Poppers, rush, locker room	8
Alcohol	Active compound is ethanol		10
DXM (Dextromethorphan)	Active ingredient in over-the-counter cold and cough medicines		10
Methamphetamine	May be injected or smoked	Meth, crank	10
Cocaine	May be inhaled or smoked	Crack, coke, rock, blue	15
MDMA (methylenedioxymethamphetamine)	Very powerful stimulant	Ecstasy	16
Codeine	Depressant		20
Methadone	Opioid		20
Mescaline	Hallucinogen		24
Benzodiazepine	Prescription tranquilizer	Centrax, Dalmane, Doral, Halcion, Librium, ProSom, Restoril, Xanax, Valium	30
Ketamine	Prescription anesthetic	Ketanest, Ketaset, Ketalar	40
DMT (Dimethyltryptamine)	Hallucinogen		50
Phenobarbital	Usually prescribed as a sleeping pill	Luminal (Phenobarbital), Mebaraland, Nembutal, Seconal, Sombulex	50
Prozac	Antidepressant		100
Nitrous oxide	Often inhaled from whipped-cream dispensers	Laughing gas	150
Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD)		Acid	1,000
Marijuana (Cannabis)	Active ingredient is THC	Pot, spliff, weed	1,000
Drugs with lower safety ratios have a greater risk of brain damage and death.			

Speeding Up the Brain With Stimulants: Caffeine, Nicotine, Cocaine, and Amphetamines

A **stimulant** is *a psychoactive drug that operates by blocking the reuptake of dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin in the synapses of the CNS*. Because more of these neurotransmitters remain active in the brain, the result is an increase in the activity of the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system (ANS). Effects of stimulants include increased heart and breathing rates, pupil dilation, and increases in blood sugar accompanied by decreases in appetite. For these reasons, stimulants are frequently used to help people stay awake and to control weight.

Used in moderation, some stimulants may increase alertness, but used in an irresponsible fashion they can quickly create dependency. A major problem is the "crash" that results when the drug loses its effectiveness and the activity of the neurotransmitters returns to normal. The withdrawal from stimulants can create profound depression and lead to an intense desire to repeat the high.

Caffeine is *a bitter psychoactive drug found in the beans, leaves, and fruits of plants*, where it acts as a natural pesticide. It is found in a wide variety of products, including coffee, tea, soft drinks, candy, and desserts. In North America, more than 80% of adults consume caffeine daily (Lovett, 2005). Caffeine acts as a mood enhancer and provides energy. Although Health Canada lists caffeine as a safe food substance, it has at least some characteristics of dependence. People who reduce their caffeine intake often report being irritable, restless, and drowsy, as well as experiencing strong headaches, and these withdrawal symptoms may last up to a week. Most experts feel that using small amounts of caffeine during pregnancy is safe, but larger amounts of caffeine can be harmful to the fetus (Health Canada, 2014).

Nicotine is *a psychoactive drug found in tobacco and other members of the nightshade family of plants, where it acts as a natural pesticide*. Nicotine is the main cause for the dependence-forming properties of tobacco use, and tobacco use is a major health threat. Nicotine creates both psychological and physical addiction, and it is one of the hardest addictions to break. Nicotine content in cigarettes has slowly increased over the years, making quitting smoking more and more difficult. Nicotine is also found in smokeless (chewing) tobacco.

People who want to quit smoking sometimes use other drugs to help them. For instance, the prescription drug Chantix acts as an antagonist, binding to nicotine receptors in the synapse, which prevents users from receiving the normal stimulant effect when they smoke. At the same time, the drug also releases dopamine, the reward neurotransmitter. In this way Chantix dampens nicotine withdrawal symptoms and cravings. In many cases, people are able to get past the physical dependence, allowing them to quit smoking at least temporarily. In the long run, however, the psychological enjoyment of smoking may lead to relapse.

Cocaine is *an addictive drug obtained from the leaves of the coca plant* (Figure 6.9). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it was a primary constituent in many popular tonics and elixirs and, although it was removed in 1905, was one of the original ingredients in Coca-Cola. Today cocaine is taken illegally as a recreational drug.



Figure 6.9 Cocaine. Snorting cocaine tends to cause a high that averages about 15 to 30 minutes.

Cocaine has a variety of adverse effects on the body. It constricts blood vessels, dilates pupils, and increases body temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure. It can cause headaches, abdominal pain, and nausea. Since cocaine also tends to decrease appetite, chronic users may become malnourished. The intensity and duration of cocaine's effects, which include increased energy and reduced fatigue, depend on how the drug is taken. The faster the drug is absorbed into the bloodstream and delivered to the brain, the more intense the high. Injecting or smoking cocaine produces a faster, stronger high than snorting it. However, the faster the drug is absorbed, the faster the effects subside. The high from snorting cocaine may last 30 minutes, whereas the high from smoking "crack" cocaine may last only 10 minutes. In order to sustain the high, the user must administer the drug again, which may lead to frequent use, often in higher doses, over a short period of time (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2009a). Cocaine has a safety ratio of 15, making it a very dangerous recreational drug.

An **amphetamine** is *a stimulant that produces increased wakefulness and focus, along with decreased fatigue and appetite*. Amphetamines are used in prescription medications to treat attention deficit disorder (ADD) and narcolepsy, and to control appetite. Some brand names of amphetamines are Adderall, Benzedrine, Dexedrine, and Vyvanse. But amphetamine ("speed") is also used illegally as a recreational drug. The methylated version of amphetamine, *methamphetamine* ("meth" or "crank"), is currently favoured by users, partly because it is available in ampoules ready for use by injection (Csaky & Barnes, 1984). Meth is a highly dangerous drug with a safety ratio of only 10.

Amphetamines may produce a very high level of tolerance, leading users to increase their intake, often in "jolts" taken every half hour or so. Although the level of physical dependency is small, amphetamines may produce very strong psychological dependence, effectively amounting to addiction. Continued use of stimulants may result in severe psychological depression. The effects of the stimulant methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), also known as "Ecstasy," provide a good example. MDMA is a very strong stimulant that very successfully prevents the reuptake of serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine. It is so effective that when used repeatedly it can seriously deplete the amount of neurotransmitters available in the brain, producing a catastrophic mental and physical "crash" resulting in serious, long-lasting depression. MDMA also affects the temperature-regulating mechanisms of the brain, so in high doses, and especially when combined with vigorous physical activity like dancing, it

can cause the body to become so drastically overheated that users can literally “burn up” and die from hyperthermia and dehydration.

Slowing Down the Brain with Depressants: Alcohol, Barbiturates and Benzodiazepines, and Toxic Inhalants

In contrast to stimulants, which work to increase neural activity, a *depressant* acts to slow down consciousness. A **depressant** is *a psychoactive drug that reduces the activity of the CNS*. Depressants are widely used as prescription medicines to relieve pain, to lower heart rate and respiration, and as anticonvulsants. Depressants change consciousness by increasing the production of the neurotransmitter GABA and decreasing the production of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, usually at the level of the thalamus and the reticular formation. The outcome of depressant use (similar to the effects of sleep) is a reduction in the transmission of impulses from the lower brain to the cortex (Csaky & Barnes, 1984).

The most commonly used of the depressants is **alcohol**, *a colorless liquid, produced by the fermentation of sugar or starch, that is the intoxicating agent in fermented drinks* (Figure 6.10). Alcohol is the oldest and most widely used drug of abuse in the world. In low to moderate doses, alcohol first acts to remove social inhibitions by slowing activity in the sympathetic nervous system. In higher doses, alcohol acts on the cerebellum to interfere with coordination and balance, producing the staggering gait of drunkenness. At high blood levels, further CNS depression leads to dizziness, nausea, and eventually a loss of consciousness. High enough blood levels, such as those produced by “guzzling” large amounts of hard liquor at parties, can be fatal. Alcohol is not a “safe” drug by any means — its safety ratio is only 10.

Alcohol use is highly costly to societies because so many people abuse alcohol and because judgment after drinking can be substantially impaired. It is estimated that almost half of automobile fatalities are caused by alcohol use, and excessive alcohol consumption is involved in a majority of violent crimes, including rape and murder (Abbey, Ross, McDuffie, & McAuslan, 1996). Alcohol increases the likelihood that people will respond aggressively to provocations (Bushman, 1993, 1997; Graham, Osgood, Wells, & Stockwell, 2006). Even people who are not normally aggressive may react with aggression when they are intoxicated. Alcohol use also leads to rioting, unprotected sex, and other negative outcomes.



Figure 6.10 Liquor Bottles. Alcohol is the most widely used drug of abuse in the world. Alcohol acts as a general depressant in the central nervous system, where its actions are similar to those of general anesthetics.

Alcohol increases aggression in part because it reduces the ability of the person who has consumed it to inhibit his or her aggression (Steele & Southwick, 1985). When people are intoxicated, they become more self-focused and less aware of the social situation. As a result, they become less likely to notice the social constraints that normally prevent them from engaging aggressively, and are less likely to use those social constraints to guide them. For instance, we might normally notice the presence of a police officer or other people around us, which would remind us that being aggressive is not appropriate. But when we are drunk, we are less likely to be so aware. The narrowing of attention that occurs when we are intoxicated also prevents us from being cognizant of the negative outcomes of our aggression. When we are sober, we realize that being aggressive may produce retaliation, as well as cause a host of other problems, but we are less likely to realize these potential consequences when we have been drinking (Bushman & Cooper, 1990). Alcohol also influences aggression through expectations. If we expect that alcohol will make us more aggressive, then we tend to become more aggressive when we drink.

Barbiturates are *depressants that are commonly prescribed as sleeping pills and painkillers*. Brand names include Luminal (Phenobarbital), Mebaraland, Nembutal, Seconal, and Sombulex. In small to moderate doses, barbiturates produce relaxation and sleepiness, but in higher doses symptoms may include sluggishness, difficulty in thinking, slowness of speech, drowsiness, faulty judgment, and eventually coma or even death (Medline Plus, 2008).

Related to barbiturates, **benzodiazepines** are *a family of depressants used to treat anxiety, insomnia, seizures, and muscle spasms*. In low doses, they produce mild sedation and relieve anxiety; in high doses, they induce sleep. In the United States, benzodiazepines are among the most widely prescribed medications that affect the CNS. Brand names include Centrax, Dalmane, Doral, Halcion, Librium, ProSom, Restoril, Xanax, and Valium.

Toxic inhalants are also frequently abused as depressants. These drugs are easily accessible as the *vapours of glue, gasoline, propane, hairspray, and spray paint, and are inhaled to create a change in consciousness*. Related drugs are the nitrites (amyl and butyl nitrite; “poppers,” “rush,” “locker room”)

and anesthetics such as nitrous oxide (laughing gas) and ether. Inhalants are some of the most dangerous recreational drugs, with a safety index below 10, and their continued use may lead to permanent brain damage.

Opioids: Opium, Morphine, Heroin, and Codeine

Opioids are *chemicals that increase activity in opioid receptor neurons in the brain and in the digestive system, producing euphoria, analgesia, slower breathing, and constipation*. Their chemical makeup is similar to the endorphins, the neurotransmitters that serve as the body's "natural pain reducers." Natural opioids are derived from the opium poppy, which is widespread in Eurasia, but they can also be created synthetically.

Opium is *the dried juice of the unripe seed capsule of the opium poppy*. It may be the oldest drug on record, known to the Sumerians before 4000 BC. **Morphine** and **heroin** (Figure 6.11) are *stronger, more addictive drugs derived from opium*, while **codeine** is a *weaker analgesic and less addictive member of the opiate family*. When morphine was first refined from opium in the early 19th century, it was touted as a cure for opium addiction, but it didn't take long to discover that it was actually more addicting than raw opium. When heroin was produced a few decades later, it was also initially thought to be a more potent, less addictive painkiller but was soon found to be much more addictive than morphine. Heroin is about twice as addictive as morphine, and creates severe tolerance, moderate physical dependence, and severe psychological dependence. The danger of heroin is demonstrated in the fact that it has the lowest safety ratio (6) of all the drugs listed in Table 6.1, "Psychoactive Drugs by Class."

The opioids activate the sympathetic division of the ANS, causing blood pressure and heart rate to increase, often to dangerous levels that can lead to heart attack or stroke. At the same time the drugs also influence the parasympathetic division, leading to constipation and other negative side effects. Symptoms of opioid withdrawal include diarrhea, insomnia, restlessness, irritability, and vomiting, all accompanied by a strong craving for the drug. The powerful psychological dependence of the opioids and the severe effects of withdrawal make it very difficult for morphine and heroin abusers to quit using. In addition, because many users take these drugs intravenously and share contaminated needles, they run a very high risk of being infected with diseases. Opioid addicts suffer a high rate of infections such as HIV, pericarditis (an infection of the membrane around the heart), and hepatitis B, any of which can be fatal.



Figure 6.11 Injecting Heroin. Intravenous injection of heroin typically causes a rush within seven to eight seconds. This method of drug use provides the highest intensity and quickest onset of the initial rush but is also the most dangerous.

Hallucinogens: Cannabis, Mescaline, and LSD

The drugs that produce the most extreme alteration of consciousness are the **hallucinogens**, *psychoactive drugs that alter sensation and perception and that may create hallucinations*. The hallucinogens are frequently known as "psychedelics." Drugs in this class include lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD, or "acid"), mescaline, and phencyclidine (PCP), as well as a number of natural plants including cannabis (marijuana), peyote, and psilocybin. The chemical compositions of the hallucinogens are similar to the neurotransmitters serotonin and epinephrine, and they act primarily as agonists by mimicking the action of serotonin at the synapses. The hallucinogens may produce striking changes in perception through one or more of the senses. The precise effects a user experiences are a function not only of the drug itself, but also of the user's pre-existing mental state and expectations of the drug experience. In large part, the user tends to get out of the experience what he or she brings to it. The hallucinations that may be experienced when taking these drugs are strikingly different from everyday experience and frequently are more similar to dreams than to everyday consciousness.

Cannabis (marijuana) is the most widely used hallucinogen. Marijuana also acts as a stimulant, producing giggling, laughing, and mild intoxication. It acts to enhance perception of sights, sounds, and smells, and may produce a sensation of time slowing down. It is much less likely to lead to antisocial acts than that other popular intoxicant, alcohol, and it is also the one psychedelic drug whose use has not declined in recent years (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2009b).

In recent years, cannabis has again been frequently prescribed for the treatment of pain and nausea, particularly in cancer sufferers, as well as for a wide variety of other physical and psychological disorders (Ben Amar, 2006). While medical marijuana is now legal in several Canadian provinces, it is still banned under federal law, putting those provinces in conflict with the federal government. The provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and British Columbia are known to have more relaxed enforcement of cannabis laws and do not normally pursue criminal charges for possession of relatively small amounts of cannabis. These four provinces also refuse to implement and enforce the

federal government's new "tough on crime" Bill C-10. British Columbia is taking an extraordinary step in considering the passage of legislation to effectively decriminalize cannabis by proposing a provincial law (to be called the Sensible Policing Act) that redirects police resources from the pursuit of criminal charges for simple possession of cannabis in favour of other means such as tickets and civil citations as well as diversion programs for youth. The cultivation of the hemp plant of the genus *Cannabis* (family *Cannabaceae*) is currently legal in Canada for seed, grain, and fibre production only under licenses issued by Health Canada (Health Canada, 2012).

Although the hallucinogens are powerful drugs that produce striking "mind-altering" effects, they do not produce physiological or psychological tolerance or dependence. While they are not addictive and pose little physical threat to the body, their use is not advisable in any situation in which the user needs to be alert and attentive, exercise focused awareness or good judgment, or demonstrate normal mental functioning, such as driving a car, studying, or operating machinery.

Why We Use Psychoactive Drugs

People have used, and often abused, psychoactive drugs for thousands of years. Perhaps this should not be suprising, because many people find using drugs to be fun and enjoyable. Even when we know the potential costs of using drugs, we may engage in them anyway because the pleasures of using the drugs are occurring right now, whereas the potential costs are abstract and occur in the future.

Research Focus: Risk Tolerance Predicts Cigarette Use

Because drug and alcohol abuse is a behaviour that has such important negative consequences for so many people, researchers have tried to understand what leads people to use drugs. Carl Lejuez and his colleagues (Lejuez, Aklin, Bornovalova, & Moolchan, 2005) tested the hypothesis that cigarette smoking was related to a desire to take risks. In their research they compared risk-taking behaviour in adolescents who reported having tried a cigarette at least once with those who reported that they had never tried smoking.

Participants in the research were 125 students from Grades 5 through 12 who attended after-school programs throughout inner-city neighbourhoods. Eighty percent of the adolescents indicated that they had never tried even a puff of a cigarette, and 20% indicated that they had had at least one puff of a cigarette.

The participants were tested in a laboratory where they completed the Balloon Analogue Risk Task (BART), a measure of risk taking (Lejuez et al., 2002). The BART is a computer task in which the participant pumps up a series of simulated balloons by pressing on a computer key. With each pump the balloon appears bigger on the screen, and more money accumulates in a temporary "bank account." However, when a balloon is pumped up too far, the computer generates a popping sound, the balloon disappears from the screen, and all the money in the temporary bank is lost. At any point during each balloon trial, the participant can stop pumping up the balloon, click on a button, transfer all money from the temporary bank to the permanent bank, and begin with a new balloon.

Because the participants do not have precise information about the probability of each balloon exploding, and because each balloon is programmed to explode after a different number of pumps, the participants have to determine how much to pump up the balloon. The number of pumps that participants take is used as a measure of their tolerance for risk. Low-tolerance people tend to make a few pumps and then collect the money, whereas more risky people pump more times into each balloon.

Supporting the hypothesis that risk tolerance is related to smoking, Lejuez and colleagues found that the

tendency to take risks was indeed correlated with cigarette use: the participants who indicated that they had puffed on a cigarette had significantly higher risk-taking scores on the BART than did those who had never tried smoking.

Individual ambitions, expectations, and values also influence drug use. Vaughan, Corbin, and Fromme (2009) found that university students who expressed positive academic values and strong ambitions had less alcohol consumption and fewer alcohol-related problems, and cigarette smoking has declined more among youth from wealthier and more educated homes than among those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Johnston, O'Malley, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2004).

Drug use is in part the result of socialization. Children try drugs when their friends convince them to do it, and these decisions are based on social norms about the risks and benefits of various drugs (Figure 6.12). In the period 1991 to 1997, the percentage of Grade 12 students who responded that they perceived "great harm in regular marijuana use" declined from 79% to 58%, while annual use of marijuana in this group rose from 24% to 39% (Johnston et al., 2004). And students binge drink in part when they see that many other people around them are also binging (Clapp, Reed, Holmes, Lange, & Voas, 2006).

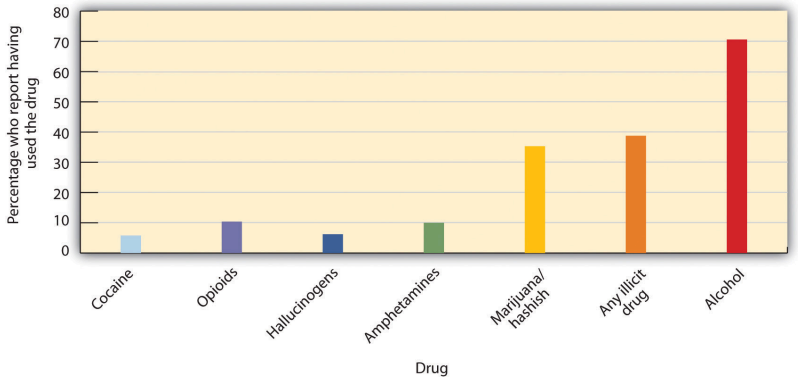


Figure 6.12 Drug Use. Use of various drugs by grade 12 students in 2005. [Long Description]

Despite the fact that young people have experimented with cigarettes, alcohol, and other dangerous drugs for many generations, it would be better if they did not. All recreational drug use is associated with at least some risks, and those who begin using drugs earlier are also more likely to use more dangerous drugs later (Lynskey et al., 2003). Furthermore, as we will see in the next section, there are many other enjoyable ways to alter consciousness that are safer.

Key Takeaways

- Psychoactive drugs are chemicals that change our state of consciousness. They work by influencing neurotransmitters in the CNS.

- Using psychoactive drugs may create tolerance and, when they are no longer used, withdrawal. Addiction may result from tolerance and the difficulty of withdrawal.
- Stimulants, including caffeine, nicotine, and amphetamines, increase neural activity by blocking the reuptake of dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin in the CNS.
- Depressants, including, alcohol, barbiturates, and benzodiazepines, decrease consciousness by increasing the production of the neurotransmitter GABA and decreasing the production of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine.
- Opioids, including codeine, opium, morphine, and heroin, produce euphoria and analgesia by increasing activity in opioid receptor neurons.
- Hallucinogens, including cannabis, mescaline, and LSD, create an extreme alteration of consciousness as well as the possibility of hallucinations.
- Recreational drug use is influenced by social norms as well as by individual differences. People who are more likely to take risks are also more likely to use drugs.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Do people you know use psychoactive drugs? Which ones? Based on what you have learned in this section, why do you think that they are used, and do you think that their side effects are harmful?
2. Consider the research reported in the research focus on risk and cigarette smoking. What are the potential implications of the research for drug use? Can you see any weaknesses in the study caused by the fact that the results are based on correlational analyses?

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Image Attributions

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Figure 6.10: "Liquor bottles" by scottfeldstein (href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Liquor_bottles.jpg) is licensed under CC BY 2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en).

Figure 6.11: "Injecting heroin" (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Injecting_heroin.jpg) is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Long Descriptions

Figure 6.12 long description: Use of drugs by grade 12 students in 2005

	Cocaine	Opioids	Hallucinogens	Amphetamines	Marijuana/ hashish	Any illicit drug	Alcohol
Percentage who reported having used the drug	6%	10%	6%	10%	35%	39%	71%

[Return to Figure 6.12]

6.3 Altering Consciousness without Drugs

Learning Objective

1. Review the ways that people may alter consciousness without using drugs.

Although the use of psychoactive drugs can easily and profoundly change our experience of consciousness, we can also — and often more safely — alter our consciousness without drugs. These altered states of consciousness are sometimes the result of simple and safe activities, such as sleeping, watching television, exercising, or working on a task that intrigues us. In this section we consider the changes in consciousness that occur through *hypnosis*, *sensory deprivation*, and *meditation*, as well as through other non-drug-induced mechanisms.

Changing Behaviour through Suggestion: The Power of Hypnosis

Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815) was an Austrian doctor who believed that all living bodies were filled with magnetic energy (Figure 6.13). In his practice, Mesmer passed magnets over the bodies of his patients while telling them their physical and psychological problems would disappear. The patients frequently lapsed into a trancelike state (they were said to be “mesmerized”) and reported feeling better when they awoke (Hammond, 2008).



Figure 6.13 Portrait of Franz Anton Mesmer.

Although subsequent research testing the effectiveness of Mesmer's techniques did not find any long-lasting improvements in his patients, the idea that people's experiences and behaviours could be changed through the power of suggestion has remained important in psychology. James Braid, a Scottish physician, coined the term *hypnosis* in 1843, basing it on the Greek word for *sleep* (Callahan, 1997).

Hypnosis is *a trancelike state of consciousness, usually induced by a procedure known as hypnotic induction, which consists of heightened suggestibility, deep relaxation, and intense focus* (Nash & Barnier, 2008). Hypnosis became famous in part through its use by Sigmund Freud in an attempt to make unconscious desires and emotions conscious and thus able to be considered and confronted (Baker & Nash, 2008).

Because hypnosis is based on the power of suggestion, and because some people are more suggestible than others, these people are more easily hypnotized. Hilgard (1965) found that about 20% of the participants he tested were entirely unsusceptible to hypnosis, whereas about 15% were highly responsive to it. The best participants for hypnosis are people who are willing or eager to be hypnotized, who are able to focus their attention and block out peripheral awareness, who are open to new experiences, and who are capable of fantasy (Spiegel, Greenleaf, & Spiegel, 2005).

People who want to become hypnotized are motivated to be good subjects, to be open to suggestions by the hypnotist, and to fulfill the role of a hypnotized person as they perceive it (Spanos, 1991). The hypnotized state results from a combination of conformity, relaxation, obedience, and suggestion (Fassler, Lynn, & Knox, 2008). This does not necessarily indicate that hypnotized people are "faking" or lying about being hypnotized. Kinnunen, Zamansky, and Block (1994) used measures of skin conductance (which indicates emotional response by measuring perspiration, and therefore renders it a reliable indicator of deception) to test whether hypnotized people were lying about having been hypnotized. Their results suggested that almost 90% of their supposedly hypnotized subjects truly believed that they had been hypnotized.

One common misconception about hypnosis is that the hypnotist is able to "take control" of hypnotized patients and thus can command them to engage in behaviours against their will. Although hypnotized people are suggestible (Jamieson & Hasegawa, 2007), they nevertheless retain awareness and control of their behaviour and are able to refuse to comply with the hypnotist's suggestions if they so choose (Kirsch & Braffman, 2001). In fact, people who have not been hypnotized are often just as suggestible as those who have been (Orne & Evans, 1965).

Another common belief is that hypnotists can lead people to forget the things that happened to them while they were hypnotized. Hilgard and Cooper (1965) investigated this question and found that they could lead people who were very highly susceptible to hypnosis to show at least some signs of post-hypnotic amnesia (i.e., forgetting where they had learned information that had been told to them while they were under hypnosis), but that this effect was not strong or common.

Some hypnotists have tried to use hypnosis to help people remember events, such as childhood experiences or details of crime scenes, that they have forgotten or repressed. The idea is that some memories have been stored but can no longer be retrieved, and that hypnosis can aid in the retrieval process. But research finds that this is not successful: people who are hypnotized and then asked to relive their childhood act like children, but they do not accurately recall the things that occurred to them in their own childhood (Silverman & Retzlaff, 1986). Furthermore, the suggestibility produced through hypnosis may lead people to erroneously recall experiences that they did not have (Newman &

Baumeister, 1996). Many states and jurisdictions have therefore banned the use of hypnosis in criminal trials because the "evidence" recovered through hypnosis is likely to be fabricated and inaccurate.

Hypnosis is also frequently used to attempt to change unwanted behaviours, such as to reduce smoking, overeating, and alcohol abuse. The effectiveness of hypnosis in these areas is controversial, although at least some successes have been reported. Kirsch, Montgomery, and Sapirstein (1995) found that adding hypnosis to other forms of therapy increased the effectiveness of the treatment, and Elkins and Perfect (2008) reported that hypnosis was useful in helping people stop smoking. Hypnosis is also effective in improving the experiences of patients who are experiencing anxiety disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Cardena, 2000; Montgomery, David, Winkel, Silverstein, & Bovbjerg, 2002), and for reducing pain (Montgomery, DuHamel, & Redd, 2000; Patterson & Jensen, 2003).

Reducing Sensation to Alter Consciousness: Sensory Deprivation

Sensory deprivation is the *intentional reduction of stimuli affecting one or more of the five senses, with the possibility of resulting changes in consciousness*. Sensory deprivation is used for relaxation or meditation purposes, and in physical and mental health-care programs to produce enjoyable changes in consciousness. But when deprivation is prolonged, it is unpleasant and can be used as a means of torture.

Although the simplest forms of sensory deprivation require nothing more than a blindfold to block the person's sense of sight or earmuffs to block the sense of sound, more complex devices have also been devised to temporarily cut off the senses of smell, taste, touch, heat, and gravity. In 1954, John Lilly, a neurophysiologist at the National Institute of Mental Health, developed the sensory deprivation tank. The tank is filled with water that is the same temperature as the human body, and salts are added to the water so that the body floats, thus reducing the sense of gravity. The tank is dark and soundproof, and the person's sense of smell is blocked by the use of chemicals in the water, such as chlorine.



Figure 6.14 Sensory Deprivation Tank.

The sensory deprivation tank has been used for therapy and relaxation (Figure 6.14). In a typical session for alternative healing and meditative purposes, a person may rest in an isolation tank for up to an hour. Treatment in isolation tanks has been shown to help with a variety of medical issues, including insomnia and muscle pain (Suedfeld, 1990b; Bood, Sundequist, Kjellgren, Nordström, & Norlander, 2007; Kjellgren, Sundequist, Norlander, & Archer, 2001), headaches (Wallbaum, Rzewnicki, Steele, & Suedfeld, 1991), and addictive behaviours such as smoking, alcoholism, and obesity (Suedfeld, 1990a).

Although relatively short sessions of sensory deprivation can be relaxing and both mentally and physically beneficial, prolonged sensory deprivation can lead to disorders of perception, including confusion and hallucinations (Yuksel, Kisa, Aydemir, & Goka, 2004). It is for this reason that sensory deprivation is sometimes used as an instrument of torture (Benjamin, 2006).

Meditation

Meditation refers to *techniques in which the individual focuses on something specific, such as an object, a word, or one's breathing, with the goal of ignoring external distractions, focusing on one's internal state, and achieving a state of relaxation and well-being*. Followers of various Eastern religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism) use meditation to achieve a higher spiritual state, and popular forms of meditation in the West, such as yoga, Zen, and Transcendental Meditation, have originated from these practices. Many meditative techniques are very simple. You simply need to sit in a comfortable position with your eyes closed and practise deep breathing. You might want to try it out for yourself (see Video Clip: "Try Meditation").

Here is a simple meditation exercise you can do in your own home: **Watch: Try Meditation [YouTube]**

Brain imaging studies have indicated that meditation is not only relaxing but can also induce an altered state of consciousness (Figure 6.15). Cahn and Polich (2006) found that experienced meditators in a meditative state had more prominent alpha and theta waves, and other studies have shown declines in heart rate, skin conductance, oxygen consumption, and carbon dioxide elimination during meditation (Dillbeck, Cavanaugh, Glenn, & Orme-Johnson, 1987; Fenwick, 1987). These studies suggest that the action of the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system (ANS) is suppressed during meditation, creating a more relaxed physiological state as the meditator moves into deeper states of relaxation and consciousness.



Figure 6.15 Meditation Exercise. Research has found that regular meditation has positive physiological and psychological effects.

Research has found that regular meditation can mediate the effects of stress and depression, and promote well-being (Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004; Reibel, Greeson, Brainard, & Rosenzweig, 2001; Salmon et al., 2004). Meditation has also been shown to assist in controlling blood pressure (Barnes, Treiber, & Davis, 2001; Walton et al., 2004). A study by Lyubimov (1992) showed that during meditation, a larger area of the brain was responsive to sensory stimuli, suggesting that there is greater coordination between the two brain hemispheres as a result of meditation. Lutz, Greischar, Rawlings, Ricard,and Davidson (2004) demonstrated that those who meditate regularly (as opposed to those who do not) tend to utilize a greater part of their brain and that their gamma waves are faster and more powerful. And a study of Tibetan Buddhist monks who meditate daily found that several areas of the brain can be permanently altered by the long-term practice of meditation (Lutz et al. 2004).

It is possible that the positive effects of meditation could also be found by using other methods of relaxation. Although advocates of meditation claim that meditation enables people to attain a higher and purer consciousness, perhaps any kind of activity that calms and relaxes the mind, such as working on crossword puzzles, watching television or movies, or engaging in other enjoyed behaviours, might be equally effective in creating positive outcomes. Regardless of the debate, the fact remains that meditation is, at the very least, a worthwhile relaxation strategy.

Psychology in Everyday Life: The Need to Escape Everyday Consciousness

We may use recreational drugs, drink alcohol, overeat, have sex, and gamble for fun, but in some cases these normally pleasurable behaviours are abused, leading to exceedingly negative consequences for us. We frequently refer to the abuse of any type of pleasurable behaviour as an "addiction," just as we refer to drug or alcohol addiction.

Roy Baumeister (Baumeister, 1991) has argued that the desire to avoid thinking about the self (what he calls the "escape from consciousness") is an essential component of a variety of self-defeating behaviours. Their approach is based on the idea that consciousness involves *self-awareness*, the process of thinking about and examining the self. Normally we enjoy being self-aware, as we reflect on our relationships with others, our goals, and our achievements. But if we have a setback or a problem, or if we behave in a way that we determine is inappropriate or immoral, we may feel stupid, embarrassed, or unlovable. In these cases self-awareness may become burdensome. And even if nothing particularly bad is happening at the moment, self-awareness may still feel unpleasant because we have fears about what might happen to us or about mistakes that we might make in the future.

Baumeister argues that when self-awareness becomes unpleasant, the need to forget about the negative aspects of the self may become so strong that we turn to altered states of consciousness. Baumeister believes that in these cases we escape the self by narrowing our focus of attention to a particular action or activity, which prevents us from having to think about ourselves and the implications of various events for our self-concept.

Baumeister has analyzed a variety of self-defeating behaviours in terms of the desire to escape consciousness. Perhaps most obvious is suicide — the ultimate self-defeating behaviour and the ultimate solution for escaping the negative aspects of self-consciousness. People who commit suicide are normally depressed and isolated. They feel bad about themselves, and suicide is a relief from the negative aspects of self-reflection. Suicidal behaviour is often preceded by a period of narrow and rigid cognitive functioning that serves as an escape from the very negative view of the self brought on by recent setbacks or traumas (Baumeister, 1990).

Alcohol abuse may also accomplish an escape from self-awareness by physically interfering with cognitive functioning, making it more difficult to recall the aspects of our self-consciousness (Steele & Josephs, 1990). And cigarette smoking may appeal to people as a low-level distractor that helps them to escape self-awareness. Heatherton and Baumeister (1991) argued that binge eating is another way of escaping from consciousness. Binge eaters, including those who suffer from bulimia nervosa, have unusually high standards for the self, including success, achievement, popularity, and body thinness. As a result they find it difficult to live up to these standards. Because these individuals evaluate themselves according to demanding criteria, they will tend to fall short periodically. Becoming focused on eating, according to Heatherton and Baumeister, is a way to focus only on one particular activity and to forget the broader, negative aspects of the self.

The removal of self-awareness has also been depicted as the essential part of the appeal of masochism, in which people engage in bondage and other aspects of submission. Masochists are frequently tied up using ropes, scarves, neckties, stockings, handcuffs, and gags, and the outcome is that they no longer feel that they are in control of themselves, which relieves them from the burdens of the self (Baumeister, 1991).

Newman and Baumeister (1996) have argued that even the belief that one has been abducted by aliens may be driven by the need to escape everyday consciousness. Every day at least several hundred (and more likely several thousand) Americans claim that they are abducted by these aliens, although most of these stories occur after the individuals have consulted with a psychotherapist or someone else who believes in alien abduction. Again, Baumeister has found a number of indications that people who believe that they have been abducted may be using the belief as a way of escaping self-consciousness.

Key Takeaways

- Hypnosis is a trancelike state of consciousness consisting of heightened susceptibility, deep relaxation, and intense focus.
- Hypnosis is not useful for helping people remember past events, but it can be used to alleviate anxiety and pain.
- Sensory deprivation is the intentional reduction of stimulation to one or more of the senses. It can be used therapeutically to treat insomnia, muscle tension, and pain.
- Meditation refers to a range of techniques that can create relaxation and well-being.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Do you think that you would be a good candidate for hypnosis? Why or why not?
2. Try the meditation exercise in this section for three consecutive days. Do you feel any different when or after you meditate?

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Image Attributions

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Figure 6.14: Flotation Tank SMC by SeanMack (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flotation_tank_SMC.jpg) used under CC BY SA 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en).

Figure 6.15: "Meditate" by RelaxingMusic (http://www.flickr.com/photos/83905817@N08/7676623576/in/photostream/) is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/deed.en_CA).

6.4 Chapter Summary

Consciousness is our subjective awareness of ourselves and our environment.

Consciousness is functional because we use it to reason logically, to plan activities, and to monitor our progress toward the goals we set for ourselves.

Consciousness has been central to many theories of psychology. Freud's personality theories differentiated between the unconscious and the conscious aspects of behaviour, and present-day psychologists distinguish between automatic (unconscious) and controlled (conscious) behaviours and between implicit (unconscious) and explicit (conscious) cognitive processes.

The French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) was a proponent of dualism, the idea that the mind, a nonmaterial entity, is separate from (although connected to) the physical body. In contrast to the dualists, psychologists believe the consciousness (and thus the mind) exists in the brain, not separate from it.

The behaviour of organisms is influenced by biological rhythms, including the daily circadian rhythms that guide the waking and sleeping cycle in many animals.

Sleep researchers have found that sleeping people undergo a fairly consistent pattern of sleep stages, each lasting about 90 minutes. Each of the sleep stages has its own distinct pattern of brain activity. Rapid eye movement (REM) accounts for about 25% of our total sleep time, during which we dream. Non-rapid eye movement (non-REM) sleep is a deep sleep characterized by very slow brain waves, and is further subdivided into three stages: N1, N2, and N3.

Sleep has a vital restorative function, and a prolonged lack of sleep results in increased anxiety, diminished performance, and, if severe and extended, even death. Sleep deprivation suppresses immune responses that fight off infection, and it can lead to obesity, hypertension, and memory impairment.

Some people suffer from sleep disorders, including insomnia, sleep apnea, narcolepsy, sleepwalking, and REM sleep behaviour disorder.

Freud believed that the primary function of dreams was wish fulfilment, and he differentiated between the manifest and latent content of dreams. Other theories of dreaming propose that we dream primarily to help with consolidation — the moving of information into long-term memory. The activation-synthesis theory of dreaming proposes that dreams are simply our brain's interpretation of the random firing of neurons in the brain stem.

Psychoactive drugs are chemicals that change our states of consciousness, and particularly our perceptions and moods. The use (especially in combination) of psychoactive drugs has the potential to create very negative side effects, including tolerance, dependence, withdrawal symptoms, and addiction.

Stimulants, including caffeine, nicotine, cocaine, and amphetamine, are psychoactive drugs that operate by blocking the reuptake of dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin in the synapses of the central

nervous system (CNS). Some amphetamines, such as Ecstasy, have very low safety ratios and thus are highly dangerous.

Depressants, including alcohol, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, and toxic inhalants, reduce the activity of the CNS. They are widely used as prescription medicines to relieve pain, to lower heart rate and respiration, and as anticonvulsants. Toxic inhalants are some of the most dangerous recreational drugs, with a safety index below 10, and their continued use may lead to permanent brain damage.

Opioids, including opium, morphine, heroin, and codeine, are chemicals that increase activity in opioid receptor neurons in the brain and in the digestive system, producing euphoria, analgesia, slower breathing, and constipation.

Hallucinogens, including cannabis, mescaline, and LSD, are psychoactive drugs that alter sensation and perception and which may create hallucinations.

Even when we know the potential costs of using drugs, we may engage in using them anyway because the rewards from using the drugs are occurring right now, whereas the potential costs are abstract and only in the future. And drugs are not the only things we enjoy or can abuse. It is normal to refer to the abuse of other behaviours, such as gambling, sex, overeating, and even overworking, as “addictions” to describe the overuse of pleasant stimuli.

Hypnosis is a trancelike state of consciousness, usually induced by a procedure known as hypnotic induction, which consists of heightened suggestibility, deep relaxation, and intense focus. Hypnosis also is frequently used to attempt to change unwanted behaviours, such as to reduce smoking, eating, and alcohol abuse.

Sensory deprivation is the intentional reduction of stimuli affecting one or more of the five senses, with the possibility of resulting changes in consciousness. Although sensory deprivation is used for relaxation or meditation purposes and to produce enjoyable changes in consciousness, when deprivation is prolonged, it is unpleasant and can be used as a means of torture.

Meditation refers to techniques in which the individual focuses on something specific, such as an object, a word, or one’s breathing, with the goal of ignoring external distractions. Meditation has a variety of positive health effects.

Chapter 7. Growing and Developing

7. Growing and Developing

The Repository for Germinal Choice

During the 1970s, American millionaire Robert Klark Graham began one of the most controversial and unique sperm banks in the world. He called it the Repository for Germinal Choice. The sperm bank was part of a project that attempted to combat the "genetic decay" Graham saw all around him. He believed human reproduction was experiencing a genetic decline, making for a population of "retrograde humans," and he was convinced that the way to save the human race was to breed the best genes of his generation (Plotz, 2001).

Graham began his project by collecting sperm samples from the most intelligent and highly achieving people he could find, including scientists, entrepreneurs, athletes, and even Nobel Prize winners. Then he advertised for potential mothers, who were required to be married to infertile men, educated, and financially well-off. Graham mailed out catalogues to the potential mothers, describing the donors using code names such as "Mr. Grey-White," who was "ruggedly handsome, outgoing, and positive, a university professor, expert marksman who enjoys the classics," and "Mr. Fuchsia," who was an "Olympic gold medalist, tall, dark, handsome, bright, a successful businessman and author" (Plotz, 2001). When the mother had made her choice, the sperm sample was delivered by courier and insemination was carried out at home. Before it closed following Graham's death in 1999, the repository claimed responsibility for the birth of 228 children.

But did Graham's project actually create superintelligent babies? Although it is difficult to be sure, because very few interviews with the offspring have been permitted, at least some of the repository's progeny are indeed smart. Reporter for *Slate* magazine David Plotz (2001) spoke to nine families who benefited from the repository, and they proudly touted their children's achievements. He found that most of the offspring in the families interviewed seem to resemble their genetic fathers. Three from donor Mr. Fuchsia, the Olympic gold medallist, are reportedly gifted athletes. Several who excel in math and science were fathered by professors of math and science.

And the offspring, by and large, seem to be doing well, often attending excellent schools and maintaining very high grade-point averages. One of the offspring, now 26 years old, is particularly intelligent. In infancy, he could mark the beat of classical music with his hands. In kindergarten, he could read *Hamlet* and was learning algebra, and at age six his IQ was already 180. But he refused to apply to prestigious universities, such as Harvard or Yale, opting instead to study at a smaller progressive college and to major in comparative religion, with the aim of becoming an elementary schoolteacher. He is now an author of children's books.

Although it is difficult to know for sure, it appears that at least some of the children of the repository are indeed outstanding. But can the talents, characteristics, and skills of this small repository sample be attributed to genetics alone? After all, consider the parents of these children: Plotz reported that the parents, particularly the mothers, were highly involved in their children's development and took their parental roles very seriously. Most of the parents studied child care manuals, coached their children's sports teams, practised reading with their kids, and either home-schooled them or sent them to the best schools in their areas. And the families were financially well-off. Furthermore, the mothers approached the repository at a relatively older child-bearing age, when all other options were exhausted. These children were desperately wanted and very well loved. It is undeniable that, in addition to their genetic backgrounds, all this excellent nurturing played a significant role in the development of the repository children.

Although the existence of the repository provides interesting insight into the potential importance of genetics on child development, the results of Graham's experiment are inconclusive. The offspring interviewed are

definitely smart and talented, but only one of them was considered a true genius and child prodigy. And nurture may have played as much a role as nature in their outcomes (Olding, 2006; Plotz, 2001).

The goal of this chapter is to investigate the fundamental, complex, and essential process of human development. **Development** refers to *the physiological, behavioural, cognitive, and social changes that occur throughout human life, which are guided by both genetic predispositions (nature) and by environmental influences (nurture)*. We will begin our study of development at the moment of conception, when the father's sperm unites with the mother's egg, and then consider prenatal development in the womb. Next we will focus on **infancy**, *the developmental stage that begins at birth and continues to one year of age*, and **childhood**, *the period between infancy and the onset of puberty*. Finally, we will consider the developmental changes that occur during **adolescence** — *the years between the onset of puberty and the beginning of adulthood*; the stages of adulthood itself, including *emerging, early, middle,* and *older adulthood*; and the preparations for and eventual facing of death.

Each of the stages of development has its unique physical, cognitive, and emotional changes that define the stage and that make each one unique from the others. The psychologist and psychoanalyst Erik Erikson (1963, p. 202) proposed a model of life-span development that provides a useful guideline for thinking about the changes we experience throughout life. As you can see in Table 7.1, "Challenges of Development as Proposed by Erik Erikson," Erikson believed that each life stage has a unique challenge that the person who reaches it must face. And according to Erikson, successful development involves dealing with and resolving the goals and demands of each of the life stages in a positive way.

Table 7.1 Challenges of Development as Proposed by Erik Erikson. Adapted from Erikson (1963).

[Skip Table]			
Stage	**Age range**	**Key challenge**	**Positive resolution of challenge**
Oral-sensory	Birth to 12 to 18 months	Trust versus mistrust	The child develops a feeling of trust in his or her caregivers.
Muscular-anal	18 months to 3 years	Autonomy versus shame/ doubt	The child learns what he or she can and cannot control and develops a sense of free will.
Locomotor	3 to 6 years	Initiative versus guilt	The child learns to become independent by exploring, manipulating, and taking action.
Latency	6 to 12 years	Industry versus inferiority	The child learns to do things well or correctly according to standards set by others, particularly in school.
Adolescence	12 to 18 years	Identity versus role confusion	The adolescent develops a well-defined and positive sense of self in relationship to others.
Young adulthood	19 to 40 years	Intimacy versus isolation	The person develops the ability to give and receive love and to make long-term commitments.
Middle adulthood	40 to 65 years	Generativity versus stagnation	The person develops an interest in guiding the development of the next generation, often by becoming a parent.
Late adulthood	65 to death	Ego integrity versus despair	The person develops acceptance of his or her life as it was lived.

As we progress through this chapter, we will see that Robert Klark Graham was in part right — nature does play a substantial role in development (it has been found, for instance, that identical twins, who share all of their genetic code, usually begin sitting up and walking on the exact same days). But nurture is also important — we begin to be influenced by our environments even while still in the womb, and these influences remain with us throughout our development. Furthermore, we will see that we play an active role in shaping our own lives. Our own behaviour influences how and what we learn, how people respond to us, and how we develop as individuals. As you read the chapter, you will no doubt get a broader view of how we each pass through our own lives. You will see how we learn and adapt to life's changes, and this new knowledge may help you better understand and better guide your own personal life journey.

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7.1 Conception and Prenatal Development

Learning Objectives

1. Review the stages of prenatal development.
2. Explain how the developing embryo and fetus may be harmed by the presence of teratogens and describe what a mother can do to reduce her risk.

Conception *occurs when an egg from the mother is fertilized by a sperm from the father*. In humans, the conception process begins with **ovulation**, *when an ovum, or egg (the largest cell in the human body), which has been stored in one of the mother's two ovaries, matures and is released into the fallopian tube*. Ovulation occurs about halfway through the woman's menstrual cycle and is aided by the release of a complex combination of hormones. In addition to helping the egg mature, the hormones also cause the lining of the uterus to grow thicker and more suitable for implantation of a fertilized egg.

If the woman has had sexual intercourse within one or two days of the egg's maturation, one of the up to 500 million sperm deposited by the man's ejaculation, which are travelling up the fallopian tube, may fertilize the egg. Although few of the sperm are able to make the long journey, some of the strongest swimmers succeed in meeting the egg. As the sperm reach the egg in the fallopian tube, they release enzymes that attack the outer jellylike protective coating of the egg, each trying to be the first to enter. As soon as one of the millions of sperm enters the egg's coating, the egg immediately responds by both blocking out all other challengers and at the same time pulling in the single successful sperm.

The Zygote

Within several hours of conception, half of the 23 chromosomes from the egg and half of the 23 chromosomes from the sperm fuse together, creating a **zygote** — *a fertilized ovum*. The zygote continues to travel down the fallopian tube to the uterus. Although the uterus is only about four inches away in the woman's body, the zygote's journey is nevertheless substantial for a microscopic organism, and fewer than half of zygotes survive beyond this earliest stage of life. If the zygote is still viable when it completes the journey, it will attach itself to the wall of the uterus, but if it is not, it will be flushed out in the woman's menstrual flow. During this time, the cells in the zygote continue to divide: the original two cells become four, those four become eight, and so on, until there are thousands (and eventually trillions) of cells. Soon the cells begin to *differentiate*, each taking on a separate function. The earliest differentiation is between the cells on the inside of the zygote, which will begin to form the developing human being, and the cells on the outside, which will form the protective environment that will provide support for the new life throughout the pregnancy.

The Embryo

Once the zygote attaches to the wall of the uterus, it is known as the **embryo**. During the embryonic phase, which will last for the next six weeks, the major internal and external organs are formed, each beginning at the microscopic level, with only a few cells. The changes in the embryo's appearance will continue rapidly from this point until birth.

While the inner layer of embryonic cells is busy forming the embryo itself, the outer layer is forming the surrounding protective environment that will help the embryo survive the pregnancy. This environment consists of three major structures: The **amniotic sac** is *the fluid-filled reservoir in which the embryo (soon to be known as a fetus) will live until birth, and which acts as both a cushion against outside pressure and as a temperature regulator*. The **placenta** is *an organ that allows the exchange of nutrients between the embryo and the mother, while at the same time filtering out harmful material*. The filtering occurs through a thin membrane that separates the mother's blood from the blood of the fetus, allowing them to share only the material that is able to pass through the filter. Finally, the **umbilical cord** *links the embryo directly to the placenta and transfers all material to the fetus*. Thus the placenta and the umbilical cord protect the fetus from many foreign agents in the mother's system that might otherwise pose a threat.

The Fetus

Beginning in the ninth week after conception, the embryo becomes a fetus. The defining characteristic of the fetal stage is growth. All the major aspects of the growing organism have been formed in the embryonic phase, and now the fetus has approximately six months to go from weighing less than an ounce to weighing an average of six to eight pounds. That's quite a growth spurt.

The fetus begins to take on many of the characteristics of a human being, including moving (by the third month the fetus is able to curl and open its fingers, form fists, and wiggle its toes), sleeping, as well as early forms of swallowing and breathing. The fetus begins to develop its senses, becoming able to distinguish tastes and respond to sounds. Research has found that the fetus even develops some initial preferences. A newborn prefers the mother's voice to that of a stranger, the languages heard in the womb over other languages (DeCasper & Fifer, 1980; Moon, Cooper, & Fifer, 1993), and even the kinds of foods that the mother ate during the pregnancy (Mennella, Jagnow, & Beauchamp, 2001). By the end of the third month of pregnancy, the sexual organs are visible.

How the Environment Can Affect the Vulnerable Fetus

Prenatal development is a complicated process and may not always go as planned. About 45% of pregnancies result in a miscarriage, often without the mother ever being aware it has occurred (Moore & Persaud, 1993). Although the amniotic sac and the placenta are designed to protect the embryo, *substances that can harm the fetus*, known as **teratogens**, may nevertheless cause problems. Teratogens include general environmental factors, such as air pollution and radiation, but also the cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs that the mother may use. Teratogens do not always harm the fetus, but they are more likely to do so when they occur in larger amounts, for longer time periods, and during the more sensitive phases, as when the fetus is growing most rapidly. The most vulnerable period for many of the fetal organs is very early in the pregnancy — before the mother even knows she is pregnant.

Harmful substances that the mother ingests may harm the child. Cigarette smoking, for example, reduces the blood oxygen for both the mother and child and can cause a fetus to be born severely underweight. Another serious threat is **fetal alcohol syndrome** (FAS), *a condition caused by maternal alcohol drinking that can lead to numerous detrimental developmental effects, including limb and facial abnormalities, genital anomalies, and intellectual disabilities*. Each year in Canada, it is estimated that nine babies in every 1,000 are born with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), and it is considered one of the leading causes of intellectual disabilities in the world today (Health Canada, 2006; Niccols, 1994). Because there is no known safe level of alcohol consumption for a pregnant woman, the Public Health Agency of Canada (2011) states that there is no safe amount or safe time to drink alcohol during pregnancy. Therefore, the best approach for expectant mothers is to avoid alcohol completely. Maternal drug abuse is also of major concern and is considered one of the greatest risk factors facing unborn children.



Figure 7.1 Performing Prenatal Screening. Prenatal screenings, including a sonogram, help detect potential birth defects and other potentially dangerous conditions.

The environment in which the mother is living also has a major impact on infant development (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Haber & Toro, 2004). Children born into homelessness or poverty are more likely to have mothers who are malnourished, who suffer from domestic violence, stress, and other psychological problems, and who smoke or abuse drugs. And children born into poverty are also more likely to be exposed to teratogens. Poverty's impact may also amplify other issues, creating substantial problems for healthy child development (Evans & English, 2002; Gunnar & Quevedo, 2007).

Mothers normally receive genetic and blood tests during the first months of pregnancy to determine the health of the embryo or fetus. They may undergo sonogram, ultrasound, amniocentesis, or other testing (Figure 7.1). The screenings detect potential birth defects, including neural tube defects, chromosomal abnormalities (such as Down syndrome), genetic diseases, and other potentially dangerous conditions. Early diagnosis of prenatal problems can allow medical treatment to improve the health of the fetus.

Key Takeaways

- Development begins at the moment of conception, when the sperm from the father merges with the egg from the mother.
- Within a span of nine months, development progresses from a single cell into a zygote and then into an embryo and fetus.
- The fetus is connected to the mother through the umbilical cord and the placenta, which allow the fetus and mother to exchange nourishment and waste. The fetus is protected by the amniotic sac.
- The embryo and fetus are vulnerable and may be harmed by the presence of teratogens.
- Smoking, alcohol use, and drug use are all likely to be harmful to the developing embryo or fetus, and the mother should entirely refrain from these behaviours during pregnancy or if she expects to become pregnant.
- Environmental factors, especially homelessness and poverty, have a substantial negative effect on healthy child development.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. What behaviours must a woman avoid engaging in when she decides to try to become pregnant, or when she finds out she is pregnant? Do you think the ability of a mother to engage in healthy behaviours should influence her choice to have a child?
2. Given the negative effects of poverty on human development, what steps do you think societies should take to try to reduce poverty?

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Image Attributions

Figure 7.1: "Leipzig, Universitätsklinik, Untersuchung" by Grubitzsch (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-1990-0417-001,_Leipzig,_Universit%C3%A4tsklinik,_Untersuchung.jpg) is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 DE (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/de/deed.en).

7.2 Infancy and Childhood: Exploring and Learning

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the abilities that newborn infants possess and how they actively interact with their environments.
2. List the stages in Piaget's model of cognitive development and explain the concepts that are mastered in each stage.
3. Critique Piaget's theory of cognitive development and describe other theories that complement and expand on it.
4. Summarize the important processes of social development that occur in infancy and childhood.

If all has gone well, a baby is born sometime around the 38th week of pregnancy. The fetus is responsible, at least in part, for its own birth because chemicals released by the developing fetal brain trigger the muscles in the mother's uterus to start the rhythmic contractions of childbirth. The contractions are initially spaced at about 15-minute intervals but come more rapidly with time. When the contractions reach an interval of two to three minutes, the mother is requested to assist in the labour and help push the baby out.

The Newborn Arrives With Many Behaviours Intact

Newborns are already prepared to face the new world they are about to experience. As you can see in Table 7.2, "Survival Reflexes in Newborns," babies are equipped with a variety of reflexes, each providing an ability that will help them survive their first few months of life as they continue to learn new routines to help them survive in and manipulate their environments.

Table 7.2 Survival Reflexes in Newborns.

[Skip Table]				
Name	**Stimulus**	**Response**	**Significance**	**Video Example**
Rooting reflex	The baby's cheek is stroked.	The baby turns its head toward the stroking, opens its mouth, and tries to suck.	Ensures the infant's feeding will be a reflexive habit	Watch "The Rooting Reflex" [YouTube]
Blink reflex	A light is flashed in the baby's eyes.	The baby closes both eyes.	Protects eyes from strong and potentially dangerous stimuli	Watch "Baby Blinking" [YouTube]
Withdrawal reflex	A soft pinprick is applied to the sole of the baby's foot.	The baby flexes the leg.	Keeps the exploring infant away from painful stimuli	Watch "Baby Withdraw Reflex" [YouTube]
Tonic neck reflex	The baby is laid down on its back.	The baby turns its head to one side and extends the arm on the same side.	Helps develop hand-eye coordination	Watch "Tonic Neck Reflex" [YouTube]
Grasp reflex	An object is pressed into the palm of the baby.	The baby grasps the object pressed and can even hold its own weight for a brief period.	Helps in exploratory learning	Watch "Grasp reflex" [YouTube]
Moro reflex	Loud noises or a sudden drop in height while holding the baby.	The baby extends arms and legs and quickly brings them in as if trying to grasp something.	Protects from falling; could have assisted infants in holding on to their mothers during rough travelling	Watch "Moro Reflex" [YouTube]
Stepping reflex	The baby is suspended with bare feet just above a surface and is moved forward.	Baby makes stepping motions as if trying to walk.	Helps encourage motor development	Watch "Stepping Reflex" [YouTube]

In addition to reflexes, newborns have preferences — they like sweet-tasting foods at first, while becoming more open to salty items by four months of age (Beauchamp, Cowart, Menellia, & Marsh, 1994; Blass & Smith, 1992). Newborns also prefer the smell of their mothers. An infant only six days old is significantly more likely to turn toward its own mother's breast pad than to the breast pad of another baby's mother (Porter, Makin, Davis, & Christensen, 1992), and a newborn also shows a preference for the face of its own mother (Bushnell, Sai, & Mullin, 1989).

Although infants are born ready to engage in some activities, they also contribute to their own development through their own behaviours. The child's knowledge and abilities increase as it babbles, talks, crawls, tastes, grasps, plays, and interacts with the objects in the environment (Gibson,

Rosenzweig, & Porter, 1988; Gibson & Pick, 2000; Smith & Thelen, 2003). Parents may help in this process by providing a variety of activities and experiences for the child. Research has found that animals raised in environments with more novel objects and that engage in a variety of stimulating activities have more brain synapses and larger cerebral cortexes, and they perform better on a variety of learning tasks compared with animals raised in more impoverished environments (Juraska, Henderson, & Müller, 1984). Similar effects are likely occurring in children who have opportunities to play, explore, and interact with their environments (Soska, Adolph, & Johnson, 2010).

Research Focus: Using the Habituation Technique to Study What Infants Know

It may seem to you that babies have little ability to view, hear, understand, or remember the world around them. Indeed, the famous psychologist William James presumed that the newborn experiences a "blooming, buzzing confusion" (James, 1890, p. 462). And you may think that, even if babies do know more than James gave them credit for, it might not be possible to find out what they know. After all, infants can't talk or respond to questions, so how would we ever find out? But over the past two decades, developmental psychologists have created new ways to determine what babies know, and they have found that they know much more than you, or William James, might have expected.

One way that we can learn about the cognitive development of babies is by measuring their behaviour in response to the stimuli around them. For instance, some researchers have given babies the chance to control which shapes they get to see or which sounds they get to hear according to how hard they suck on a pacifier (Trehub & Rabinovitch, 1972). The sucking behaviour is used as a measure of the infants' interest in the stimuli — the sounds or images they suck hardest in response to are the ones we can assume they prefer.

Another approach to understanding cognitive development by observing the behaviour of infants is through the use of the habituation technique. **Habituation** refers to *the decreased responsiveness toward a stimulus after it has been presented numerous times in succession*. Organisms, including infants, tend to be more interested in things the first few times they experience them and become less interested in them with more frequent exposure. Developmental psychologists have used this general principle to help them understand what babies remember and understand.

In the **habituation procedure**,[1] a baby is placed in a high chair and presented with visual stimuli while a video camera records the infant's eye and face movements. When the experiment begins, a stimulus (e.g., the face of an adult) appears in the baby's field of view, and the amount of time the baby looks at the face is recorded by the camera. Then the stimulus is removed for a few seconds before it appears again and the gaze is again measured. Over time, the baby starts to habituate to the face, such that each presentation elicits less gazing at the stimulus. Then a new stimulus (e.g., the face of a different adult or the same face looking in a different direction) is presented, and the researchers observe whether the gaze time significantly increases. You can see that if the infant's gaze time increases when a new stimulus is presented, this indicates that the baby can differentiate the two stimuli.

Although this procedure is very simple, it allows researchers to create variations that reveal a great deal about a newborn's cognitive ability. The trick is simply to change the stimulus in controlled ways to see if the baby "notices the difference." Research using the habituation procedure has found that babies can notice changes in colours, sounds, and even principles of numbers and physics. For instance, in one experiment reported by Karen Wynn (1995), six-month-old babies were shown a presentation of a puppet that repeatedly jumped up and down either two or three times, resting for a couple of seconds between sequences (the length of time and the speed of the jumping were controlled). After the infants habituated to this display, the presentation was changed such that the puppet jumped a different number of times. As you can see in Figure 7.2, "Can Infants Do Math?" the infants' gaze time increased when Wynn changed the presentation, suggesting that the infants could tell the difference between the number of jumps.

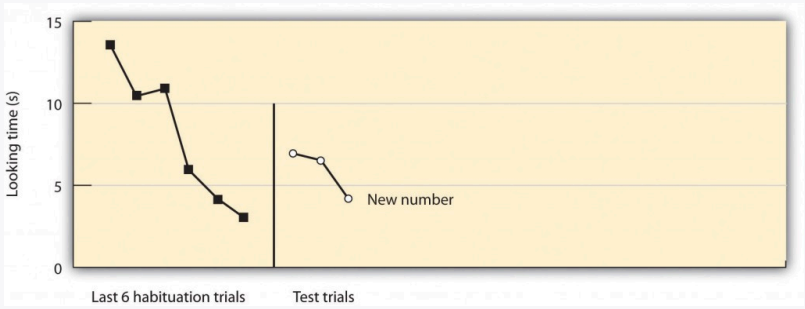


Figure 7.2 Can Infants Do Math? Karen Wynn found that babies that had habituated to a puppet jumping either two or three times significantly increased their gaze when the puppet began to jump a different number of times.

Cognitive Development During Childhood

Childhood is a time in which changes occur quickly. The child is growing physically, and cognitive abilities are also developing. During this time the child learns to actively manipulate and control the environment, and is first exposed to the requirements of society, particularly the need to control the bladder and bowels. According to Erik Erikson, the challenges that the child must attain in childhood relate to the development of *initiative*, *competence*, and *independence*. Children need to learn to explore the world, to become self-reliant, and to make their own way in the environment.



Figure 7.3 Portrait of Jean Piaget. Jean Piaget developed his theories of child development by observing the behaviours of children.

These skills do not come overnight. Neurological changes during childhood provide children the ability to do some things at certain ages, and yet make it impossible for them to do other things. This fact was made apparent through the groundbreaking work of the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (Figure 7.3). During the 1920s, Piaget was administering intelligence tests to children in an attempt to determine the kinds of logical thinking that children were capable of. In the process of testing them, Piaget became intrigued, not so much by the answers that the children got right, but more by the answers they got wrong. Piaget believed that the incorrect answers the children gave were not mere shots in the dark but rather represented specific ways of thinking unique to the children's developmental stage. Just as almost

all babies learn to roll over before they learn to sit up by themselves, and learn to crawl before they learn to walk, Piaget believed that children gain their cognitive ability in a developmental order. These insights — that children at different ages think in fundamentally different ways — led to Piaget's *stage model of cognitive development*.

Piaget argued that children do not just passively learn but also actively try to make sense of their worlds. He argued that, as they learn and mature, children develop **schemas** — *patterns of knowledge in long-term memory — that help them remember, organize, and respond to information*. Furthermore, Piaget thought that when children experience new things, they attempt to reconcile the new knowledge with existing schemas. Piaget believed that children use two distinct methods in doing so, methods that he called *assimilation* and *accommodation* (see Figure 7.4, "Assimilation and Accommodation").

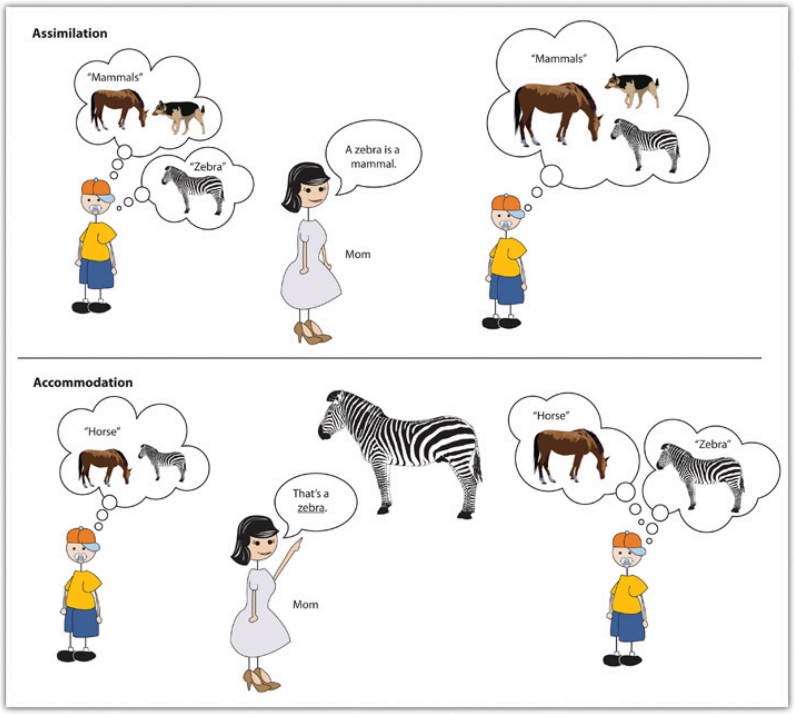


Figure 7.4 Assimilation and Accommodation.

When children employ **assimilation**, they *use already developed schemas to understand new information*. If children have learned a schema for horses, then they may call the striped animal they see at the zoo a horse rather than a zebra. In this case, children fit the existing schema to the new information and label the new information with the existing knowledge. **Accommodation**, on the other hand, involves *learning new information and thus changing the schema*. When a mother says, "No, honey, that's a zebra, not a horse," the child may adapt the schema to fit the new stimulus, learning that there are different types of four-legged animals, only one of which is a horse.

Piaget's most important contribution to understanding cognitive development, and the fundamental aspect of his theory, was the idea that development occurs in unique and distinct stages, with each stage occurring at a specific time, in a sequential manner, and in a way that allows the child to think about the world using new capacities. Piaget's stages of cognitive development are summarized in Table 7.3, "Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development."

Table 7.3 Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development.

[Skip Table]			
Stage	**Approximate age range**	**Characteristics**	**Stage attainments**
Sensorimotor	Birth to about 2 years	The child experiences the world through the fundamental senses of seeing, hearing, touching, and tasting.	Object permanence
Preoperational	2 to 7 years	Children acquire the ability to internally represent the world through language and mental imagery. They also start to see the world from other people's perspectives.	Theory of mind; rapid increase in language ability
Concrete operational	7 to 11 years	Children become able to think logically. They can increasingly perform operations on objects that are only imagined.	Conservation
Formal operational	11 years to adulthood	Adolescents can think systematically, can reason about abstract concepts, and can understand ethics and scientific reasoning.	Abstract logic

The first developmental stage for Piaget was the **sensorimotor stage**, *the cognitive stage that begins at birth and lasts until around the age of two. It is defined by the direct physical interactions that babies have with the objects around them*. During this stage, babies form their first schemas by using their primary senses — they stare at, listen to, reach for, hold, shake, and taste the things in their environments.

During the sensorimotor stage, babies' use of their senses to perceive the world is so central to their understanding that whenever babies do not directly perceive objects, as far as they are concerned, the objects do not exist. Piaget found, for instance, that if he first interested babies in a toy and then covered the toy with a blanket, children who were younger than six months of age would act as if the toy had disappeared completely — they never tried to find it under the blanket but would nevertheless smile and reach for it when the blanket was removed. Piaget found that it was not until about eight months that the children realized that the object was merely covered and not gone. Piaget used the term **object permanence** to refer to *the child's ability to know that an object exists even when the object cannot be perceived*.

Children younger than about eight months of age do not understand object permanence.

Watch: Object Permanence [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/v/nwXd7WyWNHY

At about two years of age, and until about seven years of age, children move into the **preoperational stage**. During this stage, *children begin to use language and to think more abstractly about objects, with capacity to form mental images; however, their understanding is more intuitive and they lack much ability to deduce or reason*. The thinking is preoperational, meaning that the child lacks the ability to operate on or transform objects mentally. In one study that showed the extent of this inability, Judy

DeLoache (1987) showed children a room within a small dollhouse. Inside the room, a small toy was visible behind a small couch. The researchers took the children to another lab room, which was an exact replica of the dollhouse room, but full-sized. When children who were 2.5 years old were asked to find the toy, they did not know where to look — they were simply unable to make the transition across the changes in room size. Three-year-old children, on the other hand, immediately looked for the toy behind the couch, demonstrating that they were improving their operational skills.

The inability of young children to view transitions also leads them to be **egocentric** — *unable to readily see and understand other people's viewpoints*. Developmental psychologists define the **theory of mind** as *the ability to take another person's viewpoint*, and the ability to do so increases rapidly during the preoperational stage. In one demonstration of the development of theory of mind, a researcher shows a child a video of another child (let's call her Anna) putting a ball in a red box. Then Anna leaves the room, and the video shows that while she is gone, a researcher moves the ball from the red box into a blue box. As the video continues, Anna comes back into the room. The child is then asked to point to the box where Anna will probably look to find her ball. Children who are younger than four years of age typically are unable to understand that Anna does not know that the ball has been moved, and they predict that she will look for it in the blue box. After four years of age, however, children have developed a theory of mind — they realize that different people can have different viewpoints and that (although she will be wrong) Anna will nevertheless think that the ball is still in the red box.

After about seven years of age until 11, the child moves into the **concrete operational stage**, which is *marked by more frequent and more accurate use of transitions, operations, and abstract concepts, including those of time, space, and numbers*. An important milestone during the concrete operational stage is the development of conservation — *the understanding that changes in the form of an object do not necessarily mean changes in the quantity of the object*. Children younger than seven years generally think that a glass of milk that is tall holds more milk than a glass of milk that is shorter and wider, and they continue to believe this even when they see the same milk poured back and forth between the glasses. It appears that these children focus only on one dimension (in this case, the height of the glass) and ignore the other dimension (width). However, when children reach the concrete operational stage, their abilities to understand such transformations make them aware that, although the milk looks different in the different glasses, the amount must be the same.

Children younger than about seven years of age do not understand the principles of conservation.

Watch: "Conservation" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtLEWVu815o&feature=youtu.be

At about 11 years of age, children enter the **formal operational stage**, which is *marked by the ability to think in abstract terms and to use scientific and philosophical lines of thought*. Children in the formal operational stage are better able to systematically test alternative ideas to determine their influences on outcomes. For instance, rather than haphazardly changing different aspects of a situation that allows no clear conclusions to be drawn, they systematically make changes in one thing at a time and observe what difference that particular change makes. They learn to use deductive reasoning, such as "if this, then that," and they become capable of imagining situations that "might be," rather than just those that actually exist.

Piaget's theories have made a substantial and lasting contribution to developmental psychology. His

contributions include the idea that children are not merely passive receptacles of information but rather actively engage in acquiring new knowledge and making sense of the world around them. This general idea has generated many other theories of cognitive development, each designed to help us better understand the development of the child's information-processing skills (Klahr & MacWhinney, 1998; Shrager & Siegler, 1998). Furthermore, the extensive research that Piaget's theory has stimulated has generally supported his beliefs about the order in which cognition develops. Piaget's work has also been applied in many domains — for instance, many teachers make use of Piaget's stages to develop educational approaches aimed at the level children are developmentally prepared for (Driscoll, 1994; Levin, Siegler, & Druyan, 1990).

Over the years, Piagetian ideas have been refined. For instance, it is now believed that object permanence develops gradually, rather than more immediately, as a true stage model would predict, and that it can sometimes develop much earlier than Piaget expected. Renée Baillargeon and her colleagues (Baillargeon, 2004; Wang, Baillargeon, & Brueckner, 2004) placed babies in a habituation setup, having them watch as an object was placed behind a screen, entirely hidden from view. The researchers then arranged for the object to reappear from behind another screen in a different place. Babies who saw this pattern of events looked longer at the display than did babies who witnessed the same object physically being moved between the screens. These data suggest that the babies were aware that the object still existed even though it was hidden behind the screen, and thus that they were displaying object permanence as early as three months of age, rather than the eight months that Piaget predicted.

Another factor that might have surprised Piaget is the extent to which a child's social surroundings influence learning. In some cases, children progress to new ways of thinking and retreat to old ones depending on the type of task they are performing, the circumstances they find themselves in, and the nature of the language used to instruct them (Courage & Howe, 2002). And children in different cultures show somewhat different patterns of cognitive development. Dasen (1972) found that children in non-Western cultures moved to the next developmental stage about a year later than did children from Western cultures, and that level of schooling also influenced cognitive development. In short, Piaget's theory probably understated the contribution of environmental factors to social development.

More recent theories (Cole, 1996; Rogoff, 1990; Tomasello, 1999), based in large part on the **sociocultural theory** of the Russian scholar Lev Vygotsky (1962, 1978), argue that *cognitive development is not isolated entirely within the child but occurs at least in part through social interactions*. These scholars argue that children's thinking develops through constant interactions with more competent others, including parents, peers, and teachers.

An extension of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is the idea of **community learning**, in which *children serve as both teachers and learners*. This approach is frequently used in classrooms to improve learning as well as to increase responsibility and respect for others. When children work cooperatively in groups to learn material, they can help and support each other's learning as well as learn about each other as individuals, thereby reducing prejudice (Aronson, Blaney, Stephan, Sikes, & Snapp, 1978; Brown, 1997).

Social Development During Childhood

It is through the remarkable increases in cognitive ability that children learn to interact with and understand their environments. But these cognitive skills are only part of the changes that are occurring

during childhood. Equally crucial is the development of the child's social skills — the ability to understand, predict, and create bonds with the other people in their environments.

Knowing the Self: The Development of the Self-Concept

One of the important milestones in a child's social development is learning about his or her own self-existence (Figure 7.5). This self-awareness is known as *consciousness*, and the content of consciousness is known as the *self-concept*. The **self-concept** is *a knowledge representation or schema that contains knowledge about us, including our beliefs about our personality traits, physical characteristics, abilities, values, goals, and roles, as well as the knowledge that we exist as individuals* (Kagan, 1991).



Figure 7.5 Recognizing Oneself in a Mirror. A simple test of self-awareness is the ability to recognize oneself in a mirror. Humans and chimpanzees can pass the test; dogs never do.

Some animals, including chimpanzees, orangutans, and perhaps dolphins, have at least a primitive sense of self (Boysen & Himes, 1999). In one study (Gallup, 1970), researchers painted a red dot on the foreheads of anesthetized chimpanzees and then placed each animal in a cage with a mirror. When the chimps woke up and looked in the mirror, they touched the dot on their faces, not the dot on the faces in the mirror. These actions suggest that the chimps understood that they were looking at themselves and not at other animals, and thus we can assume that they are able to realize that they exist as individuals. On the other hand, most other animals, including, for instance, dogs, cats, and monkeys, never realize that it is themselves in the mirror.

Infants who have a similar red dot painted on their foreheads recognize themselves in a mirror in the same way that the chimps do, and they do this by about 18 months of age (Povinelli, Landau, & Perilloux, 1996). The child's knowledge about the self continues to develop as the child grows. By age two, the infant becomes aware of his or her sex, as a boy or a girl. By age four, self-descriptions are likely to be based on physical features, such as hair colour and possessions, and by about age six, the child is able to understand basic emotions and the concepts of traits, being able to make statements such as "I am a nice person" (Harter, 1998).

Soon after children enter school (at about age five or six), they begin to *make comparisons with other children, a process known as* **social comparison**. For example, a child might describe himself as being faster than one boy but slower than another (Moretti & Higgins, 1990). According to Erikson, the important component of this process is the development of **competence** and **autonomy** — *the recognition of one's own abilities relative to other children*. And children increasingly show awareness of social situations — they understand that other people are looking at and judging them the same way that they are looking at and judging others (Doherty, 2009).

Successfully Relating to Others: Attachment

One of the most important behaviours a child must learn is how to be accepted by others — the development of close and meaningful social relationships. *The emotional bonds that we develop with those with whom we feel closest, and particularly the bonds that an infant develops with the mother or primary caregiver*, are referred to as **attachment** (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999). See examples in Figure 7.6.



Figure 7.6 Children's Attachment to Caregivers. Children develop appropriate attachment styles through their interactions with caregivers.

As late as the 1930s, psychologists believed that children who were raised in institutions such as orphanages, and who received good physical care and proper nourishment, would develop normally, even if they had little interaction with their caretakers. But studies by the developmental psychologist John Bowlby (1953) and others showed that these children did not develop normally — they were usually sickly, emotionally slow, and generally unmotivated. These observations helped make it clear that normal infant development requires successful attachment with a caretaker.

In one classic study showing the importance of attachment, Wisconsin University psychologists Harry and Margaret Harlow investigated the responses of young monkeys, separated from their biological mothers, to two surrogate mothers introduced to their cages. One — the wire mother — consisted of a round wooden head, a mesh of cold metal wires, and a bottle of milk from which the baby monkey could drink. The second mother was a foam-rubber form wrapped in a heated terry-cloth blanket. The Harlows found that although the infant monkeys went to the wire mother for food, they overwhelmingly preferred and spent significantly more time with the warm terry-cloth mother that provided no food but did provide comfort (Harlow, 1958).

The studies by the Harlows showed that young monkeys preferred the warm mother that provided a secure base to the cold mother that provided food.

Watch: "The Harlows's Monkeys" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmbbfisRiwA

The Harlows's studies confirmed that babies have social as well as physical needs. Both monkeys and human babies need a **secure base** that *allows them to feel safe*. From this base, they can gain the confidence they need to venture out and explore their worlds. Erikson (Table 7.1, "Challenges of Development as Proposed by Erik Erikson") was in agreement on the importance of a secure base, arguing that the most important goal of infancy was the development of a basic sense of trust in one's caregivers.

Developmental psychologist Mary Ainsworth, a student of John Bowlby, was interested in studying the development of attachment in infants. Ainsworth created a laboratory test that measured an infant's attachment to his or her parent. The test is called the **strange situation** — *a measure of attachment in young children in which the child's behaviours are assessed in a situation in which the caregiver and a stranger move in and out of the environment* — because it is conducted in a context that is unfamiliar to the child and therefore likely to heighten the child's need for his or her parent (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). During the procedure, which lasts about 20 minutes, the parent and the infant are first left alone, while the infant explores the room full of toys. Then a strange adult enters the room and talks for a minute to the parent, after which the parent leaves the room. The stranger stays with the infant for a few minutes, and then the parent again enters and the stranger leaves the room. During the entire session, a video camera records the child's behaviours, which are later coded by trained coders.

In the strange situation, children are observed responding to the comings and goings of parents and unfamiliar adults in their environments.

Watch: "The Strange Situation" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTsewNrHUHU

On the basis of their behaviours, the children are categorized into one of four groups, where each group reflects a different kind of attachment relationship with the caregiver. A child with a **secure attachment style** usually *explores freely while the mother is present and engages with the stranger*. The child may be upset when the mother departs but is also happy to see the mother return. A child with an **ambivalent** (sometimes called *insecure-resistant*) **attachment style** is *wary about the situation in general, particularly the stranger, and stays close or even clings to the mother rather than exploring the toys*. When the mother leaves, the child is extremely distressed and is ambivalent when she returns. The child may rush to the mother but then fail to cling to her when she picks up the child. A child with an **avoidant** (sometimes called *insecure-avoidant*) **attachment style** will *avoid or ignore the mother, showing little emotion when the mother departs or returns*. The child may run away from the mother when she approaches. The child will not explore very much, regardless of who is there, and the stranger will not be treated much differently from the mother.

Finally, a child with a **disorganized attachment style** seems to have *no consistent way of coping with the stress of the strange situation* — the child may cry during the separation but avoid the mother when she returns, or the child may approach the mother but then freeze or fall to the floor. Although some cultural differences in attachment styles have been found (Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake, & Morelli, 2000), research has also found that the proportion of children who fall into each of the attachment categories is relatively constant across cultures (see Figure 7.7, "Proportion of Children With Different Attachment Styles").

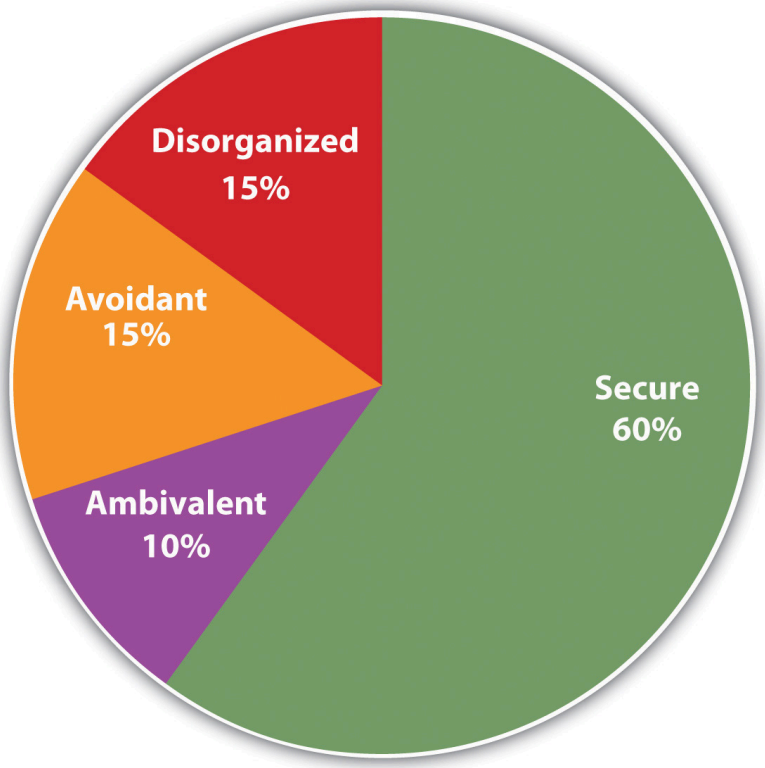


Figure 7.7 Proportion of Children With Different Attachment Styles. The graph shows the approximate proportion of children who have each of the four attachment styles. These proportions are fairly constant across cultures. [Long Description]

You might wonder whether differences in attachment style are determined more by the child (nature) or more by the parents (nurture). Most developmental psychologists believe that socialization is primary, arguing that a child becomes securely attached when the mother is available and able to meet the needs of the child in a responsive and appropriate manner, but that the insecure styles occur when the mother is insensitive and responds inconsistently to the child's needs. In a direct test of this idea, Dutch researcher Dymphna van den Boom (1994) randomly assigned some babies' mothers to a training session in which they learned to better respond to their children's needs. The research found that these mothers' babies were more likely to show a secure attachment style compared with the babies of the mothers in a control group that did not receive training.

But the attachment behaviour of the child is also likely influenced, at least in part, by **temperament**, *the innate personality characteristics of the infant*. Some children are warm, friendly, and responsive, whereas others tend to be more irritable, less manageable, and difficult to console. These differences may also play a role in attachment (Gillath, Shaver, Baek, & Chun, 2008; Seifer, Schiller, Sameroff, Resnick, & Riordan, 1996). Taken together, it seems safe to say that attachment, like most other developmental processes, is affected by an interplay of genetic and socialization influences.

Research Focus: Using a Longitudinal Research Design to Assess the Stability of Attachment

You might wonder whether the attachment style displayed by infants has much influence later in life. In fact, research has found that the attachment styles of children predict their emotions and their behaviours many years later (Cassidy & Shaver, 1999). Psychologists have studied the persistence of attachment styles over time using **longitudinal research designs** — *research designs in which individuals in the sample are followed and contacted over an extended period of time, often over multiple developmental stages*.

In one such study, Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, and Albersheim (2000) examined the extent of stability and change in attachment patterns from infancy to early adulthood. In their research, 60 middle-class infants who had been tested in the strange situation at one year of age were recontacted 20 years later and interviewed using a measure of adult attachment. Waters and colleagues found that 72% of the participants received the same secure versus insecure attachment classification in early adulthood as they had received as infants. The adults who changed categorization (usually from secure to insecure) were primarily those who had experienced traumatic events, such as the death or divorce of parents, severe illnesses (contracted by the parents or the children themselves), or physical or sexual abuse by a family member.

In addition to finding that people generally display the same attachment style over time, longitudinal studies have also found that the attachment classification received in infancy (as assessed using the strange situation or other measures) predicts many childhood and adult behaviours. Securely attached infants have closer, more harmonious relationships with peers, are less anxious and aggressive, and are better able to understand others' emotions than are those who were categorized as insecure as infants (Lucas-Thompson & Clarke-Stewart, 2007). And securely attached adolescents also have more positive peer and romantic relationships than their less securely attached counterparts (Carlson, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2004).

Conducting longitudinal research is a very difficult task, but one that has substantial rewards. When the sample is large enough and the time frame long enough, the potential findings of such a study can provide rich and important information about how people change over time and the causes of those changes. The drawbacks of longitudinal studies include the cost and the difficulty of finding a large sample that can be tracked accurately over time, and the time (many years) that it takes to get the data. In addition, because the results are delayed over an extended period, the research questions posed at the beginning of the study may become less relevant over time as the research continues.

Cross-sectional research designs represent an alternative to longitudinal designs. In a **cross-sectional research design,** *age comparisons are made between samples of different people at different ages at one time*. In one example, Jang, Livesley, and Vernon (1996) studied two groups of identical and nonidentical (fraternal) twins, one group in their 20s and the other group in their 50s, to determine the influence of genetics on personality. They found that genetics played a more significant role in the older group of twins, suggesting that genetics became more significant for personality in later adulthood.

Cross-sectional studies have a major advantage in that the scientist does not have to wait for years to pass to get results. On the other hand, the interpretation of the results in a cross-sectional study is not as clear as those from a longitudinal study, in which the same individuals are studied over time. Most important, the interpretations drawn from cross-sectional studies may be confounded by *cohort effects*. **Cohort effects** refer to *the possibility that differences in cognition or behaviour at two points in time may be caused by differences that are unrelated to the changes in age. The differences might instead be due to environmental factors that affect an entire age group*. For instance, in the study by Jang, Livesley, and Vernon (1996) that compared younger and older twins, cohort effects might be a problem. The two groups of adults necessarily grew up in different time periods, and they may have been differentially influenced by societal experiences, such as economic hardship, the presence of wars, or the introduction of new technology. As a result, it is difficult in cross-sectional studies such as this one to determine whether the differences between the groups (e.g., in terms of the relative roles of environment and genetics) are due to age or to other factors.

Key Takeaways

- Babies are born with a variety of skills and abilities that contribute to their survival, and they also actively learn by engaging with their environments.
- The habituation technique is used to demonstrate the newborn's ability to remember and learn from experience.
- Children use both assimilation and accommodation to develop functioning schemas of the world.
- Piaget's theory of cognitive development proposes that children develop in a specific series of sequential stages: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational.
- Piaget's theories have had a major impact, but they have also been critiqued and expanded.
- Social development requires the development of a secure base from which children feel free to explore. Attachment styles refer to the security of this base and more generally to the type of relationship that people, and especially children, develop with those who are important to them.
- Longitudinal and cross-sectional studies are each used to test hypotheses about development, and each approach has advantages and disadvantages.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Give an example of a situation in which you or someone else might show cognitive assimilation and cognitive accommodation. In what cases do you think each process is most likely to occur?
2. Consider some examples of how Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories of cognitive development might be used by teachers who are teaching young children.
3. Consider the attachment styles of some of your friends in terms of their relationships with their parents and other friends. Do you think their style is secure?

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Image Attributions

Figure 7.2: Adapted from Wynn (1995).

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Figure 7.6: Source: "Maternal Bond" by Koivth (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:MaternalBond.jpg)

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Long Descriptions:

Figure 7.7 long description: Childrens’ Attachment Styles. 60% are secure. 15% are disorganized. 15% are avoidant. 10% are ambivalent. [Return to Figure 7.7]

Notes

1. A procedure that uses the principles of habituation to allow researchers to infer the cognitive processes of newborns.

7.3 Adolescence: Developing Independence and Identity

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize the physical and cognitive changes that occur for boys and girls during adolescence.
2. Explain how adolescents develop a sense of morality and of self-identity.

Adolescence is defined as *the years between the onset of puberty and the beginning of adulthood*. In the past, when people were likely to marry in their early 20s or younger, this period might have lasted only 10 years or less — starting roughly between ages 12 and 13 and ending by age 20, at which time the child got a job or went to work on the family farm, married, and started his or her own family. Today, children mature more slowly, move away from home at later ages, and maintain ties with their parents longer. For instance, children may go away to university but still receive financial support from parents, and they may come home on weekends or even to live for extended time periods. Thus the period between puberty and adulthood may well last into the late 20s, merging into adulthood itself. In fact, it is appropriate now to consider the period of adolescence and that of emerging adulthood (*the ages between 18 and the middle or late 20s*) together.

During adolescence, the child continues to grow physically, cognitively, and emotionally, changing from a child into an adult. The body grows rapidly in size, and the sexual and reproductive organs become fully functional. At the same time, as adolescents develop more advanced patterns of reasoning and a stronger sense of self, they seek to forge their own identities, developing important attachments with people other than their parents. Particularly in Western societies, where the need to forge a new independence is critical (Baumeister & Tice, 1986; Twenge, 2006), this period can be stressful for many children, as it involves new emotions, the need to develop new social relationships, and an increasing sense of responsibility and independence.

Although adolescence can be a time of stress for many teenagers, most of them weather the trials and tribulations successfully. For example, the majority of adolescents experiment with alcohol sometime before high school graduation. Although many will have been drunk at least once, relatively few teenagers will develop long-lasting drinking problems or permit alcohol to adversely affect their school or personal relationships. Similarly, a great many teenagers break the law during adolescence, but very few young people develop criminal careers (Farrington, 1995). These facts do not, however, mean that using drugs or alcohol is a good idea. The use of recreational drugs can have substantial negative consequences, and the likelihood of these problems (including dependence, addiction, and even brain damage) is significantly greater for young adults who begin using drugs at an early age.

Physical Changes in Adolescence

Adolescence begins with the onset of **puberty**, *a developmental period in which hormonal changes*

cause rapid physical alterations in the body, culminating in sexual maturity. Although the timing varies to some degree across cultures, the average age range for reaching puberty is between nine and 14 years for girls and between 10 and 17 years for boys (Marshall & Tanner, 1986).

Puberty begins when the pituitary gland begins to stimulate the production of the *male sex hormone* **testosterone** in boys and *the female sex hormones* **estrogen** and **progesterone** in girls. The release of these sex hormones triggers the development of the **primary sex characteristics**, *the sex organs concerned with reproduction* (Figure 7.8, "Sex Characteristics"). These changes include the enlargement of the testicles and the penis in boys and the development of the ovaries, uterus, and vagina in girls. In addition, **secondary sex characteristics** (*features that distinguish the two sexes from each other but are not involved in reproduction*) are also developing, such as an enlarged Adam's apple, a deeper voice, and pubic and underarm hair in boys, and enlargement of the breasts and hips and the appearance of pubic and underarm hair in girls (Figure 7.8, "Sex Characteristics"). The enlargement of breasts is usually the first sign of puberty in girls and, on average, occurs between ages 10 and 12 (Marshall & Tanner, 1986). Boys typically begin to grow facial hair between ages 14 and 16, and both boys and girls experience a rapid growth spurt during this stage. The growth spurt for girls usually occurs earlier than that for boys, with some boys continuing to grow into their 20s.

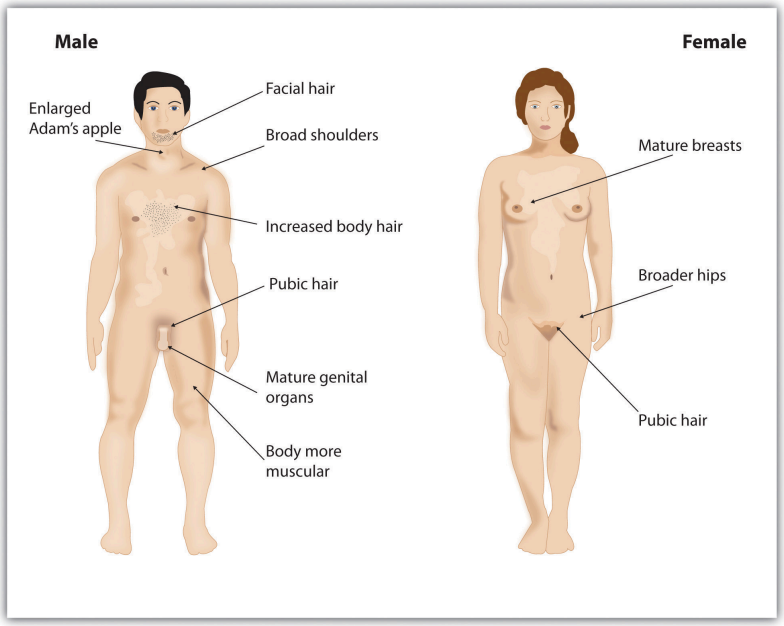


Figure 7.8 Sex Characteristics. Puberty brings dramatic changes in the body, including the development of primary and secondary sex characteristics.

A major milestone in puberty for girls is **menarche**, *the first menstrual period*, typically experienced at around 12 or 13 years of age (Anderson, Dannal, & Must, 2003). The age of menarche varies substantially and is determined by genetics, as well as by diet and lifestyle, since a certain amount of body fat is needed to attain menarche. Girls who are very slim, who engage in strenuous athletic activities, or who are malnourished may begin to menstruate later. Even after menstruation begins, girls whose level of body fat drops below the critical level may stop having their periods. The sequence of events for puberty is more predictable than the age at which they occur. Some girls may begin to grow pubic hair at age 10 but not attain menarche until age 15. In boys, facial hair may not appear until 10 years after the initial onset of puberty.

The timing of puberty in both boys and girls can have significant psychological consequences. Boys who mature earlier attain some social advantages because they are taller and stronger and, therefore, often more popular (Lynne, Graber, Nichols, Brooks-Gunn, & Botvin, 2007). At the same time, however, early-maturing boys are at greater risk for delinquency and are more likely than their peers to engage in antisocial behaviours, including drug and alcohol use, truancy, and precocious sexual activity. Girls who mature early may find their maturity stressful, particularly if they experience teasing or sexual harassment (Mendle, Turkheimer, & Emery, 2007; Pescovitz & Walvoord, 2007). Early-maturing girls are also more likely to have emotional problems, a lower self-image, and higher rates of depression, anxiety, and disordered eating than their peers (Ge, Conger, & Elder, 1996).

Cognitive Development in Adolescence

Although the most rapid cognitive changes occur during childhood, the brain continues to develop throughout adolescence, and even into the 20s (Weinberger, Elvevåg, & Giedd, 2005). During adolescence, the brain continues to form new neural connections, but also casts off unused neurons and connections (Blakemore, 2008). As teenagers mature, the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain responsible for reasoning, planning, and problem solving, also continues to develop (Goldberg, 2001). And myelin, the fatty tissue that forms around axons and neurons and helps speed transmissions between different regions of the brain, also continues to grow (Rapoport et al., 1999).

Adolescents often seem to act impulsively, rather than thoughtfully, and this may be in part because the development of the prefrontal cortex is, in general, slower than the development of the emotional parts of the brain, including the limbic system (Blakemore, 2008). Furthermore, the hormonal surge that is associated with puberty, which primarily influences emotional responses, may create strong emotions and lead to impulsive behaviour. It has been hypothesized that adolescents may engage in risky behaviour, such as smoking, drug use, dangerous driving, and unprotected sex, in part because they have not yet fully acquired the mental ability to curb impulsive behaviour or to make entirely rational judgments (Steinberg, 2007).

The new cognitive abilities that are attained during adolescence may also give rise to new feelings of egocentrism, in which adolescents believe that they can do anything and that they know better than anyone else, including their parents (Elkind, 1978). Teenagers are likely to be highly self-conscious, often creating an **imaginary audience** in which *they feel that everyone is constantly watching them* (Goossens, Beyers, Emmen, & van Aken, 2002). Because teens think so much about themselves, they mistakenly believe that others must be thinking about them, too (Rycek, Stuhr, McDermott, Benker, & Swartz, 1998). It is no wonder that everything a teen's parents do suddenly feels embarrassing to them when they are in public.

Social Development in Adolescence

Some of the most important changes that occur during adolescence involve the further development of the self-concept and the development of new attachments. Whereas young children are most strongly attached to their parents, the important attachments of adolescents move increasingly away from parents and increasingly toward peers (Harris, 1998). As a result, parents' influence diminishes at this stage.

According to Erikson (Table 7.1, "Challenges of Development as Proposed by Erik Erikson"), the main

social task of the adolescent is the search for a unique identity — the ability to answer the question "Who am I?" In the search for identity, the adolescent may experience role confusion in which he or she is balancing or choosing among identities, taking on negative or undesirable identities, or temporarily giving up looking for an identity altogether if things are not going well.

One approach to assessing identity development was proposed by James Marcia (1980). In his approach, adolescents are asked questions regarding their exploration of and commitment to issues related to occupation, politics, religion, and sexual behaviour. The responses to the questions allow the researchers to classify the adolescent into one of four identity categories (see Table 7.4, "James Marcia's Stages of Identity Development").

Table 7.4 James Marcia's Stages of Identity Development. Adapted from Marcia (1980).</caption

[Skip Table]	
Identity-diffusion status	The individual does not have firm commitments regarding the issues in question and is not making progress toward them.
Foreclosure status	The individual has not engaged in any identity experimentation and has established an identity based on the choices or values of others.
Moratorium status	The individual is exploring various choices but has not yet made a clear commitment to any of them.
Identity-achievement status	The individual has attained a coherent and committed identity based on personal decisions.

Studies assessing how teens pass through Marcia's stages show that, although most teens eventually succeed in developing a stable identity, the path to it is not always easy and there are many routes that can be taken. Some teens may simply adopt the beliefs of their parents or the first role that is offered to them, perhaps at the expense of searching for other, more promising possibilities (foreclosure status). Other teens may spend years trying on different possible identities (moratorium status) before finally choosing one.

To help them work through the process of developing an identity, teenagers may well try out different identities in different social situations. They may maintain one identity at home and a different type of persona when they are with their peers. Eventually, most teenagers do integrate the different possibilities into a single self-concept and a comfortable sense of identity (identity-achievement status).

For teenagers, the peer group provides valuable information about the self-concept. For instance, in response to the question "What were you like as a teenager? (e.g., cool, nerdy, awkward?)," posed on the website Answerbag, one teenager replied in this way:

> I'm still a teenager now, but from 8th-9th grade I didn't really know what I wanted at all. I was smart, so I hung out with the nerdy kids. I still do; my friends mean the world to me. But in the middle of 8th I started hanging out with whom you may call the "cool" kids…and I also hung out with some stoners, just for variety. I pierced various parts of my body and kept my grades up. Now, I'm just trying to find who I am. I'm even doing my sophomore year in China so I can get a better view of what I want. (Answerbag, 2007)

Responses like this one demonstrate the extent to which adolescents are developing their self-concepts

and self-identities and how they rely on peers to help them do that. The writer here is trying out several (perhaps conflicting) identities, and the identities any teen experiments with are defined by the group the person chooses to be a part of. The friendship groups (cliques, crowds, or gangs) that are such an important part of the adolescent experience allow the young adult to try out different identities, and these groups provide a sense of belonging and acceptance (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2006). A big part of what the adolescent is learning is **social identity**, *the part of the self-concept that is derived from one's group memberships*. Adolescents define their social identities according to how they are similar to and differ from others, finding meaning in the sports, religious, school, gender, and ethnic categories they belong to.

Developing Moral Reasoning: Kohlberg's Theory

The independence that comes with adolescence requires independent thinking as well as the development of **morality** — *standards of behaviour that are generally agreed on within a culture to be right or proper*. Just as Piaget believed that children's cognitive development follows specific patterns, Lawrence Kohlberg (1984) argued that children learn their moral values through active thinking and reasoning, and that moral development follows a series of stages. To study moral development, Kohlberg posed moral dilemmas to children, teenagers, and adults, such as the following:

In Europe, a woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging 10 times what the drug cost him to make. He paid $400 for the radium and charged $4,000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money and tried every legal means, but he could only get together about $2,000, which is half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, "No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it." So, having tried every legal means, Heinz gets desperate and considers breaking into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife.

1. Should Heinz steal the drug? Why or why not?
2. Is it actually right or wrong for him to steal the drug? Why is it right or wrong?
3. Does Heinz have a duty or obligation to steal the drug? Why or why not? (Kohlberg, 1984)

Watch: People Being Interviewed About Kohlberg's Stages [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/v/zY4etXWYS84

As you can see in Table 7.5, "Lawrence Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Reasoning," Kohlberg concluded, on the basis of their responses to the moral questions, that, as children develop intellectually, they pass through **three stages of moral thinking**: the *preconventional level*, the *conventional level*, and the *postconventional level*.

Table 7.5 Lawrence Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Reasoning.

[Skip Table]		
Age	**Moral Stage**	**Description**
Young children	Preconventional morality	Until about the age of nine, children focus on self-interest. At this stage, punishment is avoided and rewards are sought. A person at this level will argue, "The man shouldn't steal the drug, as he may get caught and go to jail."
Older children, adolescents, most adults	Conventional morality	By early adolescence, the child begins to care about how situational outcomes impact others and wants to please and be accepted. At this developmental phase, people are able to value the good that can be derived from holding to social norms in the form of laws or less formalized rules. For example, a person at this level may say, "He should not steal the drug, as everyone will see him as a thief, and his wife, who needs the drug, wouldn't want to be cured because of thievery," or, "No matter what, he should obey the law because stealing is a crime."
Many adults	Postconventional morality	At this stage, individuals employ abstract reasoning to justify behaviours. Moral behaviour is based on self-chosen ethical principles that are generally comprehensive and universal, such as justice, dignity, and equality. Someone with self-chosen principles may say, "The man should steal the drug to cure his wife and then tell the authorities that he has done so. He may have to pay a penalty, but at least he has saved a human life."

Although research has supported Kohlberg's idea that moral reasoning changes from an early emphasis on punishment and social rules and regulations to an emphasis on more general ethical principles, as with Piaget's approach, Kohlberg's stage model is probably too simple. For one, children may use higher levels of reasoning for some types of problems, but revert to lower levels in situations where doing so is more consistent with their goals or beliefs (Rest, 1979). Second, it has been argued that the stage model is particularly appropriate for Western, rather than non-Western, samples in which allegiance to social norms (such as respect for authority) may be particularly important (Haidt, 2001). And there is frequently little correlation between how children score on the moral stages and how they behave in real life.

Perhaps the most important critique of Kohlberg's theory is that it may describe the moral development of boys better than it describes that of girls. Carol Gilligan (1982) has argued that, because of differences in their socialization, males tend to value principles of justice and rights, whereas females value caring for and helping others. Although there is little evidence that boys and girls score differently on Kohlberg's stages of moral development (Turiel, 1998), it is true that girls and women tend to focus more on issues of caring, helping, and connecting with others than do boys and men (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000). If you don't believe this, ask yourself when you last got a thank-you note from a man.

Key Takeaways

- Adolescence is the period of time between the onset of puberty and emerging adulthood.
- Emerging adulthood is the period from age 18 years until the mid-20s in which young people begin to form bonds outside the family, attend university, and find work. Even so, they tend not to

be fully independent and have not taken on all the responsibilities of adulthood. This stage is most prevalent in Western cultures.

- Puberty is a developmental period in which hormonal changes cause rapid physical alterations in the body.
- The cerebral cortex continues to develop during adolescence and early adulthood, enabling improved reasoning, judgment, impulse control, and long-term planning.
- A defining aspect of adolescence is the development of a consistent and committed self-identity. The process of developing an identity can take time but most adolescents succeed in developing a stable identity.
- Kohlberg's theory proposes that moral reasoning is divided into the following stages: preconventional morality, conventional morality, and postconventional morality.
- Kohlberg's theory of morality has been expanded and challenged, particularly by Gilligan, who has focused on differences in morality between boys and girls.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Based on what you learned in this chapter, do you think that people should be allowed to drive at age 16? Why or why not? At what age do you think they should be allowed to vote and to drink alcohol?
2. Think about your experiences in high school. What sort of cliques or crowds were there? How did people express their identities in these groups? How did you use your groups to define yourself and develop your own identity?

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7.4 Early and Middle Adulthood: Building Effective Lives

Learning Objective

1. Review the physical and cognitive changes that accompany early and middle adulthood.

Until the 1970s, psychologists tended to treat adulthood as a single developmental stage, with few or no distinctions made between the various periods that we pass through between adolescence and death. Present-day psychologists realize, however, that physical, cognitive, and emotional responses continue to develop throughout life, with corresponding changes in our social needs and desires. Thus the three stages of *early adulthood*, *middle adulthood*, and *late adulthood* each have their own physical, cognitive, and social challenges.

In this section, we will consider the development of our cognitive and physical aspects that occur during **early adulthood** and **middle adulthood** — roughly *the ages between 25 and 45 and between 45 and 65, respectively*. These stages represent a long period of time — longer, in fact, than any of the other developmental stages — and the bulk of our lives is spent in them. These are also the periods in which most of us make our most substantial contributions to society, by meeting two of Erik Erikson's life challenges: we learn to give and receive love in a close, long-term relationship, and we develop an interest in guiding the development of the next generation, often by becoming parents.

Psychology in Everyday Life: What Makes a Good Parent?

One thing that you may have wondered about as you grew up, and which you may start to think about again if you decide to have children yourself, concerns the skills involved in parenting. Some parents are strict, others are lax; some parents spend a lot of time with their kids, trying to resolve their problems and helping to keep them out of dangerous situations, whereas others leave their children with nannies or in day care. Some parents hug and kiss their kids and say that they love them over and over every day, whereas others never do. Do these behaviours matter? And what makes a "good parent"?

We have already considered two answers to this question, in the form of what all children require: (a) babies need a conscientious mother who does not smoke, drink, or use drugs during her pregnancy, and (b) infants need caretakers who are consistently available, loving, and supportive to help them form a secure base. One case in which these basic goals are less likely to be met is when the mother is an adolescent. Adolescent mothers are more likely to use drugs and alcohol during their pregnancies, to have poor parenting skills in general, and to provide insufficient support for the child (Ekéus, Christensson, & Hjern, 2004). As a result, the babies of adolescent mothers have higher rates of academic failure, delinquency, and incarceration in comparison to children of older mothers (Moore & Brooks-Gunn, 2002).

Normally, it is the mother who provides early attachment, but fathers are not irrelevant. In fact, studies have found that children whose fathers are more involved tend to be more cognitively and socially competent, more empathetic, and psychologically better adjusted, compared with children whose fathers are less

involved (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). In fact, Amato (1994) found that, in some cases, the role of the father can be as important as, or even more important than, that of the mother in the child's overall psychological health and well-being. Amato concluded, "Regardless of the quality of the mother-child relationship, the closer adult offspring were to their fathers, the happier, more satisfied, and less distressed they reported being" (p. 1039).

As the child grows, parents take on one of four types of **parenting styles** — *parental behaviours that determine the nature of parent-child interactions* and that guide their interaction with the child. These styles depend on whether the parent is more or less *demanding* and more or less *responsive* to the child (see Figure 7.9, "Parenting Styles"). **Authoritarian parents** are *demanding but not responsive*. They impose rules and expect obedience, tending to give orders ("Eat your food!") and enforcing their commands with rewards and punishment, without providing any explanation of where the rules came from except "Because I said so!" **Permissive parents**, on the other hand, tend to *make few demands and give little punishment, but they are responsive in the sense that they generally allow their children to make their own rules*. **Authoritative parents** are *demanding* ("You must be home by curfew"), *but they are also responsive to the needs and opinions of the child* ("Let's discuss what an appropriate curfew might be"). They set rules and enforce them, but they also explain and discuss the reasons behind the rules. Finally, **rejecting-neglecting parents** are *undemanding and unresponsive overall*.

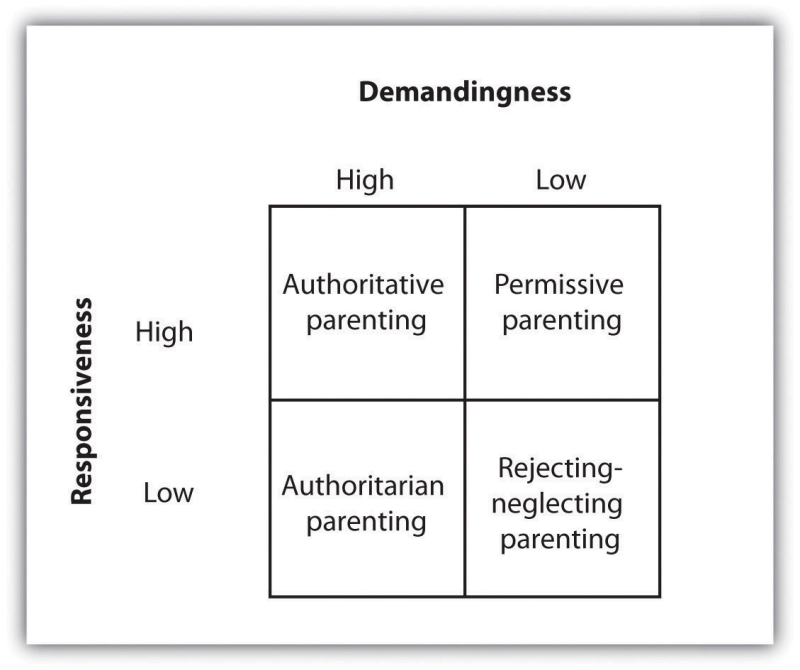


Figure 7.9 Parenting Styles. Parenting styles can be divided into four types, based on the combination of demandingness and responsiveness. The authoritative style, characterized by both responsiveness and also demandingness, is the most effective. [Long Description]

Many studies of children and their parents, using different methods, measures, and samples, have reached the same conclusion — namely, that authoritative parenting, in comparison to the other three styles, is associated with a wide range of psychological and social advantages for children. Parents who use the authoritative style, with its combination of demands on the children as well as responsiveness to the children's needs, have kids who show better psychological adjustment, school performance, and psychosocial maturity compared with the kids of parents who use the other styles (Baumrind, 1996; Grolnick & Ryan, 1989).

On the other hand, there are cultural differences in parenting styles. In a study comparing parenting styles in Canada, France, and Italy, Michael Claes and colleagues at the University of Montreal found Canadian

parents to be the most tolerant, having fewer rules and disciplinary actions. Canadian mothers and fathers were seen as less punitive, less coercive, and more tolerant than French and Italian mothers. The French were found to parent in a moderate style. French fathers, however, were perceived by teens as emotionally distant, rigid, and prone to intergenerational conflict. French mothers, for their part, were reported to foster closer bonds as their children grew into adolescence (Claes et al., 2011).

In all three countries, teens experienced a gradual decrease in behavioural control between the ages of 11 and 19: fathers and mothers reduced requirements and disciplinary constraints. "Our study found parental control is dictated by social codes and culture-specific values, which promote certain parental practices and proscribe others," says Dr. Claes, noting that Canadian parents value a democratic conception of education that promotes independence and negotiation, while European parents, especially Italians, advocate for obligations and respect for parental authority (Science Daily, 2010).

Despite the fact that different parenting styles are differentially effective overall, every child is different and parents must be adaptable. Some children have particularly difficult temperaments, and these children require more parenting. Because these difficult children demand more parenting, the behaviours of the parents matter more for the children's development than they do for other, less demanding children who require less parenting overall (Pluess & Belsky, 2010). These findings remind us how the behaviour of the child can influence the behaviour of the people in his or her environment.

Although the focus is on the child, the parents must never forget about each other. Parenting is time-consuming and emotionally taxing, and the parents must work together to create a relationship in which both mother and father contribute to the household tasks and support each other. It is also important for the parents to invest time in their own intimacy, as happy parents are more likely to stay together, and divorce has a profoundly negative impact on children, particularly during and immediately after the divorce (Burt, Barnes, McGue, & Iacono, 2008; Ge, Natsuaki, & Conger, 2006).

Physical and Cognitive Changes in Early and Middle Adulthood

Compared with the other stages, the physical and cognitive changes that occur in the stages of early and middle adulthood are less dramatic. As individuals pass into their 30s and 40s, their recovery from muscular strain becomes more prolonged, and their sensory abilities may become somewhat diminished, at least when compared with their prime years, during the teens and early 20s (Panno, 2004). Visual acuity diminishes somewhat, and many people in their late 30s and early 40s begin to notice that their eyes are changing and they need eyeglasses. Adults in their 30s and 40s may also begin to suffer some hearing loss because of damage to the hair cells (*cilia*) in the inner ear (Lacher-Fougëre & Demany, 2005). And it is during middle adulthood that many people first begin to suffer from ailments such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure as well as low bone density (Shelton, 2006). Corresponding to changes in our physical abilities, our cognitive and sensory abilities also seem to show some, but not dramatic, decline during this stage.

Menopause

The stages of both early and middle adulthood bring about a gradual decline in fertility, particularly for women. Eventually, women experience **menopause**, *the cessation of the menstrual cycle*, which usually occurs at around age 50. Menopause occurs because of the gradual decrease in the production of the female sex hormones estrogen and progesterone, which slows the production and release of eggs into the

uterus. Women whose menstrual cycles have stopped for 12 consecutive months are considered to have entered menopause (Minkin & Wright, 2004).

Researchers have found that women's responses to menopause are social as well as physical, and that they vary substantially between both individuals and cultures. Within individuals, some women may react more negatively to menopause, worrying that they have lost their femininity and that their final chance to bear children is over, whereas other women may regard menopause more positively, focusing on the new freedom from menstrual discomfort and unwanted pregnancy. In Western cultures such as in Canada, women are likely to see menopause as a challenging and potentially negative event, whereas in India, where older women enjoy more social privileges than do younger ones, menopause is more positively regarded (Avis & Crawford, 2008).

Menopause may have evolutionary benefits. Infants have better chances of survival when their mothers are younger and have more energy to care for them, and the presence of older women who do not have children of their own to care for (but who can help out with raising grandchildren) can be beneficial to the family group. Also consistent with the idea of an evolutionary benefit of menopause is that the decline in fertility occurs primarily for women, who do most of the child care and who need the energy of youth to accomplish it. If older women were able to have children, they might not be as able to effectively care for them. Most men never completely lose their fertility, but they do experience a gradual decrease in testosterone levels, sperm count, and speed of erection and ejaculation.

Social Changes in Early and Middle Adulthood

Perhaps the major marker of adulthood is the ability to create an effective and independent life. Whereas children and adolescents are generally supported by parents, adults must make their own living and must start their own families. Furthermore, the needs of adults are different from those of younger persons.

Even though the timing of the major life events that occur in early and middle adulthood varies substantially among individuals, the events nevertheless tend to follow a general sequence, known as a social clock. The **social clock** refers to *the culturally preferred "right time" for major life events, such as moving out of the childhood house, getting married, and having children*. People who do not appear to be following the social clock (e.g., young adults who still live with their parents, individuals who never marry, and couples who choose not to have children) may be seen as unusual or deviant, and they may be stigmatized by others (DePaulo, 2006; Rook, Catalano, & Dooley, 1989).

Although they are doing it later, on average, than they did even 20 or 30 years ago, most people do eventually marry. Marriage is beneficial to the partners, both in terms of mental health and physical health. People who are married report greater life satisfaction than those who are not married and also suffer fewer health problems (Gallagher & Waite, 2001; Liu & Umberson, 2008).

Divorce is more common now than it was 50 years ago. Fluctuating between 35% and 42%, the proportion of marriages projected to end in divorce has remained relatively stable during the last 20 years in Canada. In 2008, 40.7% of marriages were projected to end in divorce before the 30th wedding anniversary (Statistics Canada, 2011), although about three-quarters of people who divorce will remarry. Most divorces occur for couples in their 20s, because younger people are frequently not mature enough to make good marriage choices or to make marriages last. Marriages are more successful for older adults and for those with more education (Goodwin, Mosher, & Chandra, 2010).

Parenthood also involves a major and long-lasting commitment, and one that can cause substantial stress on the parents. The time and finances invested in children create stress, which frequently results in decreased marital satisfaction (Twenge, Campbell, & Foster, 2003). This decline is especially true for women, who bear the larger part of the burden of raising the children and taking care of the house, despite the fact they increasingly also work and have careers.

Despite the challenges of early and middle adulthood, the majority of middle-aged adults are not unhappy. These years are often very satisfying, as families have been established, careers have been entered into, and some percentage of life goals has been realized (Eid & Larsen, 2008).

Key Takeaways

- It is in early and middle adulthood that muscle strength, reaction time, cardiac output, and sensory abilities begin to decline.
- One of the key signs of aging in women is the decline in fertility, culminating in menopause, which is marked by the cessation of the menstrual period.
- The different social stages in adulthood, such as marriage, parenthood, and work, are loosely determined by a social clock, a culturally recognized time for each phase.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Compare your behaviour, values, and attitudes regarding marriage and work to the attitudes of your parents and grandparents. In what way are your values similar? In what ways are they different?
2. Draw a timeline of your own planned or preferred social clock. What factors do you think will make it more or less likely that you will be able to follow the timeline?

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Long Descriptions

Figure 7.9 long description: Parenting Styles

	High Demands	**Low Demands**
High Responsiveness	Authoritative parenting	Permissive parenting
Low Responsiveness	Authoritarian parenting	Rejecting-neglecting parenting

[Return to Figure 7.9]

7.5 Late Adulthood: Aging, Retiring, and Bereavement

Learning Objectives

1. Review the physical, cognitive, and social changes that accompany late adulthood.
2. Describe the psychological and physical outcomes of bereavement.

We have seen that, over the course of their lives, most individuals are able to develop secure attachments; reason cognitively, socially, and morally; and create families and find appropriate careers. Eventually, however, as people enter into their 60s and beyond, the aging process leads to faster changes in our physical, cognitive, and social capabilities and needs, and life begins to come to its natural conclusion, resulting in *the final life stage, beginning in the 60s*, known as **late adulthood**.

Despite the fact that the body and mind are slowing, most older adults nevertheless maintain an active lifestyle, remain as happy as they were when younger — or are happier — and increasingly value their social connections with family and friends (Angner, Ray, Saag, & Allison, 2009). Kennedy, Mather, and Carstensen (2004) found that people's memories of their lives became more positive with age, and Myers and Diener (1996) found that older adults tended to speak more positively about events in their lives, particularly their relationships with friends and family, than did younger adults.

Cognitive Changes During Aging

The changes associated with aging do not affect everyone in the same way, and they do not necessarily interfere with a healthy life. Former Beatles drummer Ringo Starr celebrated his 70th birthday in 2010 by playing at Radio City Music Hall, and Rolling Stones singer Mick Jagger (who once supposedly said, "I'd rather be dead than singing 'Satisfaction' at 45") continues to perform even as he turned 70 in 2013. The golfer Tom Watson almost won the 2010 British Open golf tournament at the age of 59, playing against competitors in their 20s and 30s. And people such as the financier Warren Buffett; Jim Pattison, a prominent Vancouver philanthropist; Hazel McCallion, mayor of Mississauga in Ontario for over 35 years; and actress Betty White, all in their 80s or 90s, all enjoy highly productive and energetic lives.

Researchers are beginning to better understand the factors that allow some people to age better than others. For one, research has found that the people who are best able to adjust well to changing situations early in life are also able to better adjust later in life (Rubin, 2007; Sroufe, Collins, Egeland, & Carlson, 2009). Perceptions also matter. People who believe that the elderly are sick, vulnerable, and grumpy often act according to such beliefs (Nemmers, 2005), and Levy, Slade, Kunkel, and Kasl (2002) found that the elderly who had more positive perceptions about aging also lived longer.

Research on the influence of cultural values and beliefs on aging attitudes has been dominated by comparisons between Eastern/Asian versus Western cultures. This belief is inspired by the idea that Asian societies are influenced by Confucian values of filial piety and the practice of ancestor worship,

which are thought to promote positive views of aging and high esteem for older adults (Davis, 1983; Ho, 1994; Sher, 1984). Western societies, in contrast, were thought to be youth-oriented and to hold more negative views about the aging process and the elderly (Palmore, 1975). Empirical evidence for the proposed East-West differences is scarce. Although some studies have found support for the notion that aging attitudes are more positive in Asian as compared to Western cultures (Levy & Langer, 1994; Tan, Zhang, & Fan, 2004), others report effects in the opposite direction (Giles et al., 2000; Harwood et al., 2001; Sharps, Price-Sharps, & Hanson, 1998; Zhou, 2007), or fail to find any marked cultural differences (Boduroglu, Yoon, Luo, & Park, 2006; Ryan, Jin, Anas, & Luh, 2004).

Whereas it was once believed that almost all older adults suffered from a generalized memory loss, research now indicates that healthy older adults actually experience only some particular types of memory deficits, while other types of memory remain relatively intact or may even improve with age. Older adults do seem to process information more slowly — it may take them longer to evaluate information and to understand language, and it takes them longer, on average, than it does younger people, to recall a word that they know, even though they are perfectly able to recognize the word once they see it (Burke, Shafto, Craik, & Salthouse, 2008). Older adults also have more difficulty inhibiting and controlling their attention (Persad, Abeles, Zacks, & Denburg, 2002), making them, for example, more likely to talk about topics that are not relevant to the topic at hand when conversing (Pushkar et al., 2000).

But slower processing and less accurate executive control do not always mean worse memory, or even worse intelligence. Perhaps the elderly are slower in part because they simply have more knowledge. Indeed, older adults have more **crystallized intelligence** — that is, *general knowledge about the world, as reflected in semantic knowledge, vocabulary, and language*. As a result, adults generally outperform younger people on measures of history, geography, and even on crossword puzzles, where this information is useful (Salthouse, 2004). It is this superior knowledge combined with a slower and more complete processing style, along with a more sophisticated understanding of the workings of the world around them, that gives the elderly the advantage of wisdom over the advantages of **fluid intelligence** — *the ability to think and acquire information quickly and abstractly* — which favour the young (Baltes, Staudinger, & Lindenberger, 1999; Scheibe, Kunzmann, & Baltes, 2009).

The differential changes in crystallized versus fluid intelligence help explain why the elderly do not necessarily show poorer performance on tasks that also require experience (i.e., crystallized intelligence), although they show poorer memory overall. A young chess player may think more quickly, for instance, but a more experienced chess player has more knowledge to draw on. Older adults are also more effective at understanding the nuances of social interactions than younger adults are, in part because they have more experience in relationships (Blanchard-Fields, Mienaltowski, & Seay, 2007).

Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease

Some older adults suffer from biologically based cognitive impairments in which the brain is so adversely affected by aging that it becomes very difficult for the person to continue to function effectively. **Dementia** is defined as *a progressive neurological disease that includes loss of cognitive abilities significant enough to interfere with everyday behaviours*, and **Alzheimer's disease** is *a form of dementia that, over a period of years, leads to a loss of emotions, cognitions, and physical functioning, and that is ultimately fatal*. Dementia and Alzheimer's disease are most likely to be observed in individuals who are 65 and older, and the likelihood of developing Alzheimer's doubles about every five

years after age 65. After age 85, the risk reaches nearly 8% per year (Hebert et al., 1995). Dementia and Alzheimer's disease both produce a gradual decline in functioning of the brain cells that produce the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. Without this neurotransmitter, the neurons are unable to communicate, leaving the brain less and less functional, as shown in Figure 7.10.

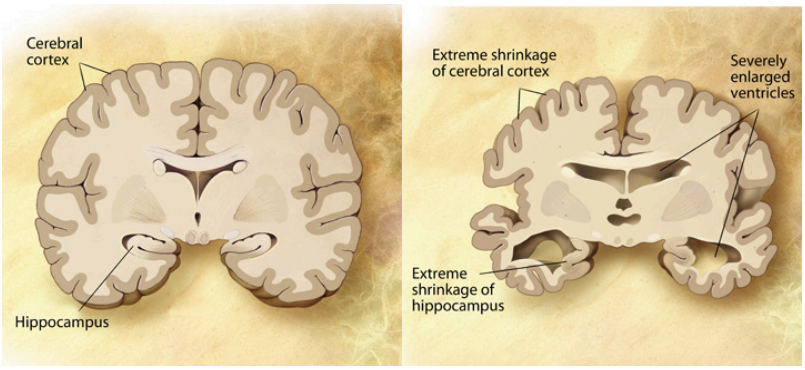


Figure 7.10 Brains. A healthy brain (left) versus a brain with advanced Alzheimer's disease (right).

Dementia and Alzheimer's are in part heritable, but there is increasing evidence that the environment also plays a role. And current research is helping us understand the things that older adults can do to help them slow down or prevent the negative cognitive outcomes of aging, including dementia and Alzheimer's (Pushkar, Bukowski, Schwartzman, Stack, & White, 2007). Older adults who continue to keep their minds active by engaging in cognitive activities, such as reading, playing musical instruments, attending lectures, or doing crossword puzzles, who maintain social interactions with others, and who keep themselves physically fit have a greater chance of maintaining their mental acuity than those who do not (Cherkas et al., 2008; Verghese et al., 2003). In short, although physical illnesses may occur to anyone, the more people keep their brains active and the more they maintain a healthy and active lifestyle, the more healthy their brains will remain (Ertel, Glymour, & Berkman, 2008).

Social Changes During Aging: Retiring Effectively

Because of increased life expectancy in the 21st century, elderly people can expect to spend approximately a quarter of their lives in retirement. Leaving one's career is a major life change and can be a time when people experience anxiety, depression, and other negative changes in the self-concept and in self-identity. On the other hand, retirement may also serve as an opportunity for a positive transition from work and career roles to stronger family and community member roles, and the latter may have a variety of positive outcomes for the individual. Retirement may be a relief for people who have worked in boring or physically demanding jobs, particularly if they have other outlets for stimulation and expressing self-identity.

Psychologist Mo Wang (2007) observed the well-being of 2,060 people between the ages of 51 and 61 over an eight-year period and made the following recommendations to make the retirement phase a positive one:

1. Continue to work part-time past retirement in order to ease into retirement status slowly.
2. Plan for retirement — this is a good idea financially, but also making plans to incorporate other kinds of work or hobbies into post-employment life makes sense.

3. Retire with someone — if the retiree is still married, it is a good idea to retire at the same time as a spouse, so that people can continue to work part-time and follow a retirement plan together.
4. Have a happy marriage — people with marital problems tend to find retirement more stressful because they do not have a positive home life to return to and can no longer seek refuge in long working hours. Couples that work on their marriages can make their retirements a lot easier.
5. Take care of physical and financial health — a sound financial plan and good physical health can ensure a healthy, peaceful retirement.
6. Retire early from a stressful job — people who stay in stressful jobs for fear that they will lose their pensions or won't be able to find work somewhere else feel trapped. Toxic environments can take a severe emotional toll on an employee. Leaving an unsatisfying job early may make retirement a relief.
7. Retire "on time" — retiring too early or too late can cause people to feel "out of sync" or to feel they have not achieved their goals.

Whereas these seven tips are helpful for a smooth transition to retirement, Wang also notes that people tend to be adaptable, and that no matter how they do it, retirees will eventually adjust to their new lifestyles.

Death, Dying, and Bereavement

Living includes dealing with our own and our loved ones' mortality. In her book *On Death and Dying* (1997), Elisabeth Kübler-Ross describes five phases of grief through which people pass in grappling with the knowledge that they or someone close to them is dying:

1. Denial: "I feel fine." "This can't be happening; not to me."
2. Anger: "Why me? It's not fair!" "How can this happen to me?" "Who is to blame?"
3. Bargaining: "Just let me live to see my children graduate." "I'd do anything for a few more years." "I'd give my life savings if…"
4. Depression: "I'm so sad, why bother with anything?" "I'm going to die. What's the point?" "I miss my loved ones — why go on?"
5. Acceptance: "I know my time has come; it's almost my time."

Despite Kübler-Ross's popularity, there are a growing number of critics of her theory who argue that her five-stage sequence is too constraining because attitudes toward death and dying have been found to vary greatly across cultures and religions, and these variations make the process of dying different according to culture (Bonanno, 2009). As an example, Japanese Americans restrain their grief (Corr, Nabe, & Corr, 2009) so as not to burden other people with their pain. By contrast, Jews observe a seven-day, publicly announced mourning period. In some cultures the elderly are more likely to be living and coping alone, or perhaps only with their spouse, whereas in other cultures, such as the Hispanic culture, the elderly are more likely to be living with their sons and daughters and other relatives, and this social support may create a better quality of life for them (Diaz-Cabello, 2004).

Margaret Stroebe and her colleagues (2008) found that although most people adjusted to the loss of a loved one without seeking professional treatment, many had an increased risk of mortality, particularly within the early weeks and months after the loss. These researchers also found that people going through the grieving process suffered more physical and psychological symptoms and illnesses and used more medical services.

The health of survivors during the end of life is influenced by factors such as circumstances surrounding the loved one's death, individual personalities, and ways of coping. People serving as caretakers to partners or other family members who are ill frequently experience a great deal of stress themselves, making the dying process even more stressful. Despite the trauma of the loss of a loved one, people do recover and are able to continue with effective lives. Grief intervention programs can go a long way in helping people cope during the bereavement period (Neimeyer, Holland, Currier, & Mehta, 2008).

Key Takeaways

- Most older adults maintain an active lifestyle, remain as happy as they were when younger, or happier, and increasingly value their social connections with family and friends.
- Although older adults have slower cognitive processing overall (fluid intelligence), their experience in the form of crystallized intelligence — or existing knowledge about the world and the ability to use it — is maintained and even strengthened during old age.
- Expectancies about change in aging vary across cultures and may influence how people respond to getting older.
- A portion of the elderly suffer from age-related brain diseases, such as dementia, a progressive neurological disease that includes significant loss of cognitive abilities, and Alzheimer's disease, a fatal form of dementia that is related to changes in the cerebral cortex.
- Two significant social stages in late adulthood are retirement and dealing with grief and bereavement. Studies show that a well-planned retirement can be a pleasant experience.
- A significant number of people going through the grieving process are at increased risk of mortality and physical and mental illness, but grief counselling can be effective in helping these people cope with their loss.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. How do the people in your culture view aging? What stereotypes are there about the elderly? Are there other ways that people in your society might learn to think about aging that would be more beneficial?
2. Based on the information you have read in this chapter, what would you tell your parents about how they can best maintain healthy physical and cognitive function into late adulthood?

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7.6 Chapter Summary

Development begins at conception when a sperm from the father fertilizes an egg from the mother, creating a new life. The resulting zygote grows into an embryo and then a fetus.

Babies are born prepared with reflexes and cognitive skills that contribute to their survival and growth.

Piaget's stage model of cognitive development proposes that children learn through assimilation and accommodation and that cognitive development follows specific sequential stages: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational, and formal operational.

An important part of development is the attainment of social skills, including the formation of the self-concept and attachment.

Adolescence involves rapid physical changes, including puberty, as well as continued cognitive changes. Moral development continues in adolescence. In Western cultures, adolescence blends into emerging adulthood, the period from age 18 until the mid-20s.

Muscle strength, reaction time, cardiac output, and sensory abilities begin to slowly decline in early and middle adulthood. Fertility, particularly for women, also decreases, and women eventually experience menopause.

Most older adults maintain an active lifestyle — remaining as happy as they were when they were younger, or happier — and increasingly value their social connections with family and friends.

Although older adults have slower cognitive processing overall (fluid intelligence), their experience in the form of crystallized intelligence, or existing knowledge about the world and the ability to use it, is maintained and even strengthened during aging. A portion of the elderly suffer from age-related brain diseases, such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Chapter 8. Learning

8. Learning

My Story of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

It is a continuous challenge living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and I've suffered from it for most of my life. I can look back now and gently laugh at all the people who thought I had the perfect life. I was young, beautiful, and talented, but unbeknownst to them, I was terrorized by an undiagnosed debilitating mental illness.

Having been properly diagnosed with PTSD at age 35, I know that there is not one aspect of my life that has gone untouched by this mental illness. My PTSD was triggered by several traumas, most importantly a sexual attack at knifepoint that left me thinking I would die. I would never be the same after that attack. For me there was no safe place in the world, not even my home. I went to the police and filed a report. Rape counselors came to see me while I was in the hospital, but I declined their help, convinced that I didn't need it. This would be the most damaging decision of my life.

For months after the attack, I couldn't close my eyes without envisioning the face of my attacker. I suffered horrific flashbacks and nightmares. For four years after the attack I was unable to sleep alone in my house. I obsessively checked windows, doors, and locks. By age 17, I'd suffered my first panic attack. Soon I became unable to leave my apartment for weeks at a time, ending my modeling career abruptly. This just became a way of life. Years passed when I had few or no symptoms at all, and I led what I thought was a fairly normal life, just thinking I had a "panic problem."

Then another traumatic event retriggered the PTSD. It was as if the past had evaporated, and I was back in the place of my attack, only now I had uncontrollable thoughts of someone entering my house and harming my daughter. I saw violent images every time I closed my eyes. I lost all ability to concentrate or even complete simple tasks. Normally social, I stopped trying to make friends or get involved in my community. I often felt disoriented, forgetting where, or who, I was. I would panic on the freeway and became unable to drive, again ending a career. I felt as if I had completely lost my mind. For a time, I managed to keep it together on the outside, but then I became unable to leave my house again.

Around this time I was diagnosed with PTSD. I cannot express to you the enormous relief I felt when I discovered my condition was real and treatable. I felt safe for the first time in 32 years. Taking medication and undergoing behavioural therapy marked the turning point in my regaining control of my life. I'm rebuilding a satisfying career as an artist, and I am enjoying my life. The world is new to me and not limited by the restrictive vision of anxiety. It amazes me to think back to what my life was like only a year ago, and just how far I've come.

For me there is no cure, no final healing. But there are things I can do to ensure that I never have to suffer as I did before being diagnosed with PTSD. I'm no longer at the mercy of my disorder, and I would not be here today had I not had the proper diagnosis and treatment. The most important thing to know is that it's never too late to seek help. (Philips, 2010)

The topic of this chapter is **learning** — *the relatively permanent change in knowledge or behaviour that is the result of experience*. Although you might think of learning in terms of what you need to do before an upcoming exam, the knowledge that you take away from your classes, or new skills that you acquire through practice, these changes represent only one component of learning. In fact, learning is a broad

topic that is used to explain not only how we acquire new knowledge and behaviour but also how we acquire a wide variety of other psychological processes, including the development of both appropriate and inappropriate social behaviours, and even how a person may acquire a debilitating psychological disorder such as PTSD.

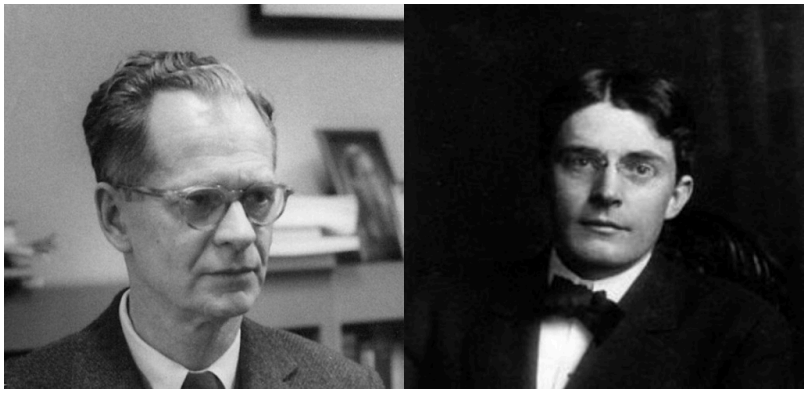


Figure 8.1 Skinner and Watson. B. F. Skinner (left) and John B. Watson (right) were champions of the behaviourist school of learning.

Learning is perhaps the most important human capacity. Learning allows us to create effective lives by being able to respond to changes. We learn to avoid touching hot stoves, to find our way home from school, and to remember which people have helped us in the past and which people have been unkind. Without the ability to learn from our experiences, our lives would be remarkably dangerous and inefficient. The principles of learning can also be used to explain a wide variety of social interactions, including social dilemmas in which people make important, and often selfish, decisions about how to behave by calculating the costs and benefits of different outcomes.

The study of learning is closely associated with the behaviourist school of psychology, in which it was seen as an alternative scientific perspective to the failure of introspection. The behaviourists, including John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner (Figure 8.1), focused their research entirely on behaviour, to the exclusion of any kinds of mental processes. For behaviourists, the fundamental aspect of learning is the process of **conditioning** — *the ability to connect* **stimuli** *(the changes that occur in the environment) with* **responses** *(behaviours or other actions).*

But conditioning is just one type of learning. We will also consider other types, including learning through *insight,* as well as *observational learning* (also known as *modelling*). In each case we will see not only what psychologists have learned about the topics but also the important influence that learning has on many aspects of our everyday lives. And we will see that in some cases learning can be maladaptive — for instance, when a person like P. K. Philips continually experiences disruptive memories and emotional responses to a negative event.

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Image Attributions

Figure 8.1: "B.F. Skinner" (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:B.F._Skinner_at_Harvard_circa_1950.jpg) is licensed under the CC BY 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en). "John Broadus Watson" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:John_Broadus_Watson.JPG) is in the public domain.

8.1 Learning by Association: Classical Conditioning

Learning Objectives

1. Describe how Pavlov's early work in classical conditioning influenced the understanding of learning.
2. Review the concepts of classical conditioning, including unconditioned stimulus (US), conditioned stimulus (CS), unconditioned response (UR), and conditioned response (CR).
3. Explain the roles that extinction, generalization, and discrimination play in conditioned learning.

Pavlov Demonstrates Conditioning in Dogs

In the early part of the 20th century, Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936), shown in Figure 8.2, was studying the digestive system of dogs when he noticed an interesting behavioural phenomenon: the dogs began to salivate when the lab technicians who normally fed them entered the room, even though the dogs had not yet received any food. Pavlov realized that the dogs were salivating because they knew that they were about to be fed; the dogs had begun to associate the arrival of the technicians with the food that soon followed their appearance in the room.

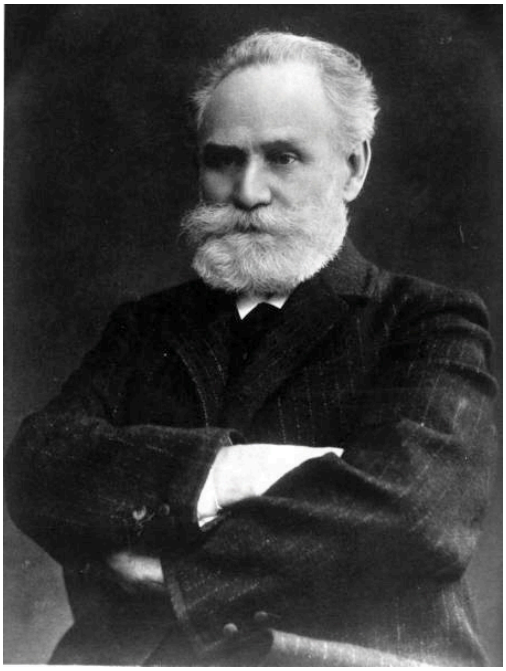


Figure 8.2 Ivan Pavlov.

With his team of researchers, Pavlov began studying this process in more detail. He conducted a series of experiments in which, over a number of trials, dogs were exposed to a sound immediately before

receiving food. He systematically controlled the onset of the sound and the timing of the delivery of the food, and recorded the amount of the dogs' salivation. Initially the dogs salivated only when they saw or smelled the food, but after several pairings of the sound and the food, the dogs began to salivate as soon as they heard the sound. The animals had learned to associate the sound with the food that followed.

Pavlov had identified a fundamental associative learning process called classical conditioning. **Classical conditioning** refers to *learning that occurs when a neutral stimulus (e.g., a tone) becomes associated with a stimulus (e.g., food) that naturally produces a behaviour*. After the association is learned, the previously neutral stimulus is sufficient to produce the behaviour.

As you can see in Figure 8.3, "4-Panel Image of Whistle and Dog," psychologists use specific terms to identify the stimuli and the responses in classical conditioning. The **unconditioned stimulus (US)** is *something (such as food) that triggers a naturally occurring response*, and the **unconditioned response (UR)** is *the naturally occurring response (such as salivation) that follows the unconditioned stimulus*. The **conditioned stimulus (CS)** is *a neutral stimulus that, after being repeatedly presented prior to the unconditioned stimulus, evokes a similar response as the unconditioned stimulus*. In Pavlov's experiment, the sound of the tone served as the conditioned stimulus that, after learning, produced the **conditioned response (CR)**, which is *the acquired response to the formerly neutral stimulus*. Note that the UR and the CR are the same behaviour — in this case salivation — but they are given different names because they are produced by different stimuli (the US and the CS, respectively).

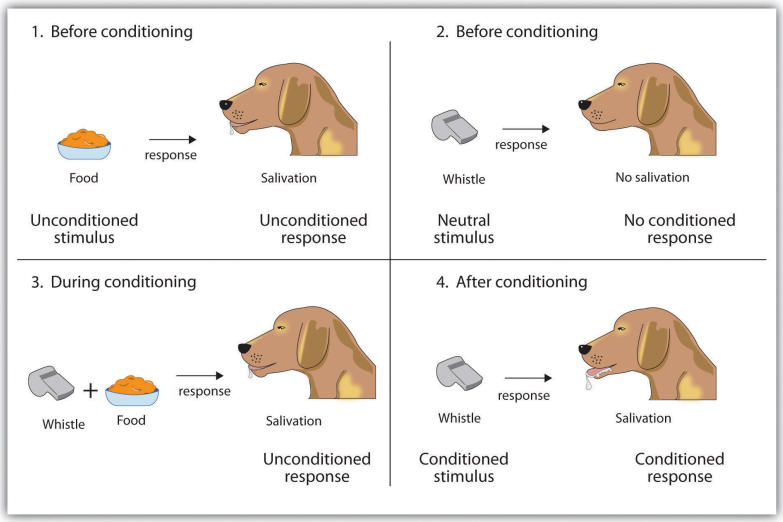


Figure 8.3 4-Panel Image of Whistle and Dog.

Conditioning is evolutionarily beneficial because it allows organisms to develop expectations that help them prepare for both good and bad events. Imagine, for instance, that an animal first smells a new food, eats it, and then gets sick. If the animal can learn to associate the smell (CS) with the food (US), it will quickly learn that the food creates the negative outcome and will not eat it the next time.

The Persistence and Extinction of Conditioning

After he had demonstrated that learning could occur through association, Pavlov moved on to study the variables that influenced the strength and the persistence of conditioning. In some studies, after the conditioning had taken place, Pavlov presented the sound repeatedly but without presenting the food

afterward. Figure 8.4, "Acquisition, Extinction, and Spontaneous Recovery," shows what happened. As you can see, after the initial acquisition (learning) phase in which the conditioning occurred, when the CS was then presented alone, the behaviour rapidly decreased — the dogs salivated less and less to the sound, and eventually the sound did not elicit salivation at all. **Extinction** refers to *the reduction in responding that occurs when the conditioned stimulus is presented repeatedly without the unconditioned stimulus*.

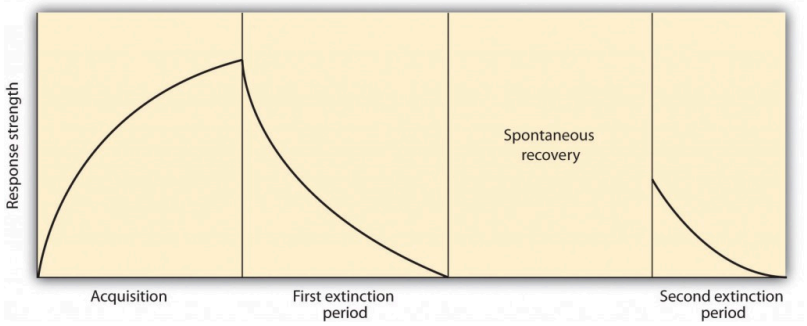


Figure 8.4 Acquisition, Extinction, and Spontaneous Recovery. Acquisition: The CS and the US are repeatedly paired together and behaviour increases. Extinction: The CS is repeatedly presented alone, and the behaviour slowly decreases. Spontaneous recovery: After a pause, when the CS is again presented alone, the behaviour may again occur and then again show extinction.

Although at the end of the first extinction period the CS was no longer producing salivation, the effects of conditioning had not entirely disappeared. Pavlov found that, after a pause, sounding the tone again elicited salivation, although to a lesser extent than before extinction took place. *The increase in responding to the CS following a pause after extinction* is known as **spontaneous recovery**. When Pavlov again presented the CS alone, the behaviour again showed extinction until it disappeared again.

Although the behaviour has disappeared, extinction is never complete. If conditioning is again attempted, the animal will learn the new associations much faster than it did the first time.

Pavlov also experimented with presenting new stimuli that were similar, but not identical, to the original conditioned stimulus. For instance, if the dog had been conditioned to being scratched before the food arrived, the stimulus would be changed to being rubbed rather than scratched. He found that the dogs also salivated upon experiencing the similar stimulus, a process known as *generalization*. **Generalization** refers to *the tendency to respond to stimuli that resemble the original conditioned stimulus*. The ability to generalize has important evolutionary significance. If we eat some red berries and they make us sick, it would be a good idea to think twice before we eat some purple berries. Although the berries are not exactly the same, they nevertheless are similar and may have the same negative properties.

Lewicki (1985) conducted research that demonstrated the influence of stimulus generalization and how quickly and easily it can happen. In his experiment, high school students first had a brief interaction with a female experimenter who had short hair and glasses. The study was set up so that the students had to ask the experimenter a question, and (according to random assignment) the experimenter responded either in a negative way or a neutral way toward the students. Then the students were told to go into a second room in which two experimenters were present and to approach either one of them. However, the

researchers arranged it so that one of the two experimenters looked a lot like the original experimenter, while the other one did not (she had longer hair and no glasses). The students were significantly more likely to avoid the experimenter who looked like the earlier experimenter when that experimenter had been negative to them than when she had treated them more neutrally. The participants showed stimulus generalization such that the new, similar-looking experimenter created the same negative response in the participants as had the experimenter in the prior session.

The flip side of generalization is **discrimination** — *the tendency to respond differently to stimuli that are similar but not identical*. Pavlov's dogs quickly learned, for example, to salivate when they heard the specific tone that had preceded food, but not upon hearing similar tones that had never been associated with food. Discrimination is also useful — if we do try the purple berries, and if they do not make us sick, we will be able to make the distinction in the future. And we can learn that although two people in our class, Courtney and Sarah, may look a lot alike, they are nevertheless different people with different personalities.

In some cases, *an existing conditioned stimulus can serve as an unconditioned stimulus for a pairing with a new conditioned stimulus* — a process known as **second-order conditioning**. In one of Pavlov's studies, for instance, he first conditioned the dogs to salivate to a sound and then repeatedly paired a new CS, a black square, with the sound. Eventually he found that the dogs would salivate at the sight of the black square alone, even though it had never been directly associated with the food. Secondary conditioners in everyday life include our attractions to things that stand for or remind us of something else, such as when we feel good on a Friday because it has become associated with the paycheque that we receive on that day, which itself is a conditioned stimulus for the pleasures that the paycheque buys us.

The Role of Nature in Classical Conditioning

As we have seen in Chapter 1, "Introducing Psychology," scientists associated with the behaviourist school argued that all learning is driven by experience, and that nature plays no role. Classical conditioning, which is based on learning through experience, represents an example of the importance of the environment. But classical conditioning cannot be understood entirely in terms of experience. Nature also plays a part, as our evolutionary history has made us better able to learn some associations than others.

Clinical psychologists make use of classical conditioning to explain the learning of a **phobia** — *a strong and irrational fear of a specific object, activity, or situation*. For example, driving a car is a neutral event that would not normally elicit a fear response in most people. But if a person were to experience a panic attack in which he or she suddenly experienced strong negative emotions while driving, that person may learn to associate driving with the panic response. The driving has become the CS that now creates the fear response.

Psychologists have also discovered that people do not develop phobias to just anything. Although people may in some cases develop a driving phobia, they are more likely to develop phobias toward objects (such as snakes and spiders) or places (such as high locations and open spaces) that have been dangerous to people in the past. In modern life, it is rare for humans to be bitten by spiders or snakes, to fall from trees or buildings, or to be attacked by a predator in an open area. Being injured while riding in a car or being cut by a knife are much more likely. But in our evolutionary past, the potential for being bitten by

snakes or spiders, falling out of a tree, or being trapped in an open space were important evolutionary concerns, and therefore humans are still evolutionarily prepared to learn these associations over others (Öhman & Mineka, 2001; LoBue & DeLoache, 2010).

Another evolutionarily important type of conditioning is conditioning related to food. In his important research on food conditioning, John Garcia and his colleagues (Garcia, Kimeldorf, & Koelling, 1955; Garcia, Ervin, & Koelling, 1966) attempted to condition rats by presenting either a taste, a sight, or a sound as a neutral stimulus before the rats were given drugs (the US) that made them nauseous. Garcia discovered that taste conditioning was extremely powerful — the rat learned to avoid the taste associated with illness, even if the illness occurred several hours later. But conditioning the behavioural response of nausea to a sight or a sound was much more difficult. These results contradicted the idea that conditioning occurs entirely as a result of environmental events, such that it would occur equally for any kind of unconditioned stimulus that followed any kind of conditioned stimulus. Rather, Garcia's research showed that genetics matters — organisms are evolutionarily prepared to learn some associations more easily than others. You can see that the ability to associate smells with illness is an important survival mechanism, allowing the organism to quickly learn to avoid foods that are poisonous.

Classical conditioning has also been used to help explain the experience of *post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)*, as in the case of P. K. Philips described in the chapter opener. **PTSD** is *a severe anxiety disorder that can develop after exposure to a fearful event, such as the threat of death* (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). PTSD occurs when the individual develops a strong association between the situational factors that surrounded the traumatic event (e.g., military uniforms or the sounds or smells of war) and the US (the fearful trauma itself). As a result of the conditioning, being exposed to or even thinking about the situation in which the trauma occurred (the CS) becomes sufficient to produce the CR of severe anxiety (Keane, Zimering, & Caddell, 1985).

PTSD develops because the emotions experienced during the event have produced neural activity in the amygdala and created strong conditioned learning. In addition to the strong conditioning that people with PTSD experience, they also show slower extinction in classical conditioning tasks (Milad et al., 2009). In short, people with PTSD have developed very strong associations with the events surrounding the trauma and are also slow to show extinction to the conditioned stimulus.

Key Takeaways

- In classical conditioning, a person or animal learns to associate a neutral stimulus (the conditioned stimulus, or CS) with a stimulus (the unconditioned stimulus, or US) that naturally produces a behaviour (the unconditioned response, or UR). As a result of this association, the previously neutral stimulus comes to elicit the same response (the conditioned response, or CR).
- Extinction occurs when the CS is repeatedly presented without the US, and the CR eventually disappears, although it may reappear later in a process known as spontaneous recovery.
- Stimulus generalization occurs when a stimulus that is similar to an already-conditioned stimulus begins to produce the same response as the original stimulus does.
- Stimulus discrimination occurs when the organism learns to differentiate between the CS and other similar stimuli.
- In second-order conditioning, a neutral stimulus becomes a CS after being paired with a

previously established CS.

- Some stimuli — response pairs, such as those between smell and food — are more easily conditioned than others because they have been particularly important in our evolutionary past.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. A teacher places gold stars on the chalkboard when the students are quiet and attentive. Eventually, the students start becoming quiet and attentive whenever the teacher approaches the chalkboard. Can you explain the students' behaviour in terms of classical conditioning?
2. Recall a time in your life, perhaps when you were a child, when your behaviours were influenced by classical conditioning. Describe in detail the nature of the unconditioned and conditioned stimuli and the response, using the appropriate psychological terms.
3. If post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a type of classical conditioning, how might psychologists use the principles of classical conditioning to treat the disorder?

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Image Attributions

Figure 8.2: Ivan Pavlov (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ivan_Pavlov_LIFE.jpg) is in the public domain.

8.2 Changing Behaviour through Reinforcement and Punishment: Operant Conditioning

Learning Objectives

1. Outline the principles of operant conditioning.
2. Explain how learning can be shaped through the use of reinforcement schedules and secondary reinforcers.

In classical conditioning the organism learns to associate new stimuli with natural biological responses such as salivation or fear. The organism does not learn something new but rather begins to perform an existing behaviour in the presence of a new signal. **Operant conditioning**, on the other hand, is *learning that occurs based on the consequences of behaviour* and can involve the learning of new actions. Operant conditioning occurs when a dog rolls over on command because it has been praised for doing so in the past, when a schoolroom bully threatens his classmates because doing so allows him to get his way, and when a child gets good grades because her parents threaten to punish her if she doesn't. In operant conditioning the organism learns from the consequences of its own actions.

How Reinforcement and Punishment Influence Behaviour: The Research of Thorndike and Skinner

Psychologist Edward L. Thorndike (1874-1949) was the first scientist to systematically study operant conditioning. In his research Thorndike (1898) observed cats who had been placed in a "puzzle box" from which they tried to escape ("Video Clip: Thorndike's Puzzle Box"). At first the cats scratched, bit, and swatted haphazardly, without any idea of how to get out. But eventually, and accidentally, they pressed the lever that opened the door and exited to their prize, a scrap of fish. The next time the cat was constrained within the box, it attempted fewer of the ineffective responses before carrying out the successful escape, and after several trials the cat learned to almost immediately make the correct response.

Observing these changes in the cats' behaviour led Thorndike to develop his **law of effect**, *the principle that responses that create a typically pleasant outcome in a particular situation are more likely to occur again in a similar situation, whereas responses that produce a typically unpleasant outcome are less likely to occur again in the situation* (Thorndike, 1911). The essence of the law of effect is that successful responses, because they are pleasurable, are "stamped in" by experience and thus occur more frequently. Unsuccessful responses, which produce unpleasant experiences, are "stamped out" and subsequently occur less frequently.

When Thorndike placed his cats in a puzzle box, he found that they learned to engage in the important

escape behaviour faster after each trial. Thorndike described the learning that follows reinforcement in terms of the law of effect.

Watch: "Thorndike's Puzzle Box" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDujDOLre-8

The influential behavioural psychologist B. F. Skinner (1904-1990) expanded on Thorndike's ideas to develop a more complete set of principles to explain operant conditioning. Skinner created specially designed environments known as *operant chambers* (usually called *Skinner boxes*) to systematically study learning. **A Skinner box** (operant chamber) is *a structure that is big enough to fit a rodent or bird and that contains a bar or key that the organism can press or peck to release food or water. It also contains a device to record the animal's responses* (Figure 8.5).

The most basic of Skinner's experiments was quite similar to Thorndike's research with cats. A rat placed in the chamber reacted as one might expect, scurrying about the box and sniffing and clawing at the floor and walls. Eventually the rat chanced upon a lever, which it pressed to release pellets of food. The next time around, the rat took a little less time to press the lever, and on successive trials, the time it took to press the lever became shorter and shorter. Soon the rat was pressing the lever as fast as it could eat the food that appeared. As predicted by the law of effect, the rat had learned to repeat the action that brought about the food and cease the actions that did not.

Skinner studied, in detail, how animals changed their behaviour through reinforcement and punishment, and he developed terms that explained the processes of operant learning (Table 8.1, "How Positive and Negative Reinforcement and Punishment Influence Behaviour"). Skinner used the term **reinforcer** to refer to *any event that strengthens or increases the likelihood of a behaviour,* and the term **punisher** to refer to *any event that weakens or decreases the likelihood of a behaviour*. And he used the terms *positive* and *negative* to refer to whether a reinforcement was presented or removed, respectively. Thus, **positive reinforcement** *strengthens a response by presenting something pleasant after the response*, and **negative reinforcement** *strengthens a response by reducing or removing something unpleasant*. For example, giving a child praise for completing his homework represents positive reinforcement, whereas taking Aspirin to reduce the pain of a headache represents negative reinforcement. In both cases, the reinforcement makes it more likely that behaviour will occur again in the future.

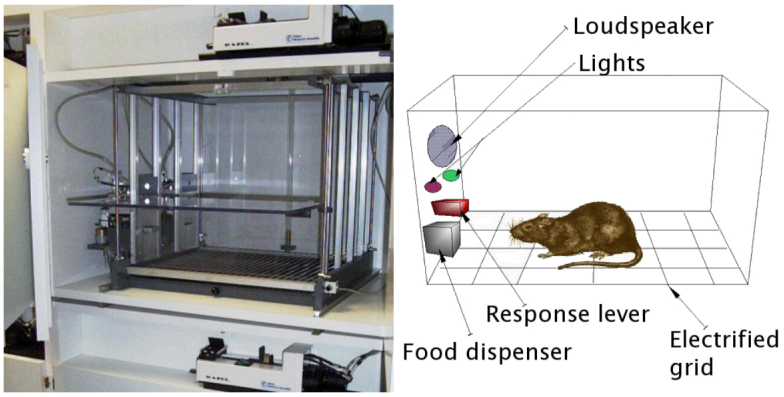


Figure 8.5 Skinner Box. B. F. Skinner used a Skinner box to study operant learning. The box contains a bar or key that the organism can press to receive food and water, and a device that records the organism's responses.

Table 8.1 How Positive and Negative Reinforcement and Punishment Influence Behaviour.

[Skip Table]			
Operant conditioning term	**Description**	**Outcome**	**Example**
Positive reinforcement	Add or increase a pleasant stimulus	Behaviour is strengthened	Giving a student a prize after he or she gets an A on a test
Negative reinforcement	Reduce or remove an unpleasant stimulus	Behaviour is strengthened	Taking painkillers that eliminate pain increases the likelihood that you will take painkillers again
Positive punishment	Present or add an unpleasant stimulus	Behaviour is weakened	Giving a student extra homework after he or she misbehaves in class
Negative punishment	Reduce or remove a pleasant stimulus	Behaviour is weakened	Taking away a teen's computer after he or she misses curfew

Reinforcement, either positive or negative, works by increasing the likelihood of a behaviour. **Punishment**, on the other hand, refers to *any event that weakens or reduces the likelihood of a behaviour*. **Positive punishment** *weakens a response by presenting something unpleasant after the response*, whereas **negative punishment** *weakens a response by reducing or removing something pleasant.* A child who is grounded after fighting with a sibling (positive punishment) or who loses out on the opportunity to go to recess after getting a poor grade (negative punishment) is less likely to repeat these behaviours.

Although the distinction between reinforcement (which increases behaviour) and punishment (which decreases it) is usually clear, in some cases it is difficult to determine whether a reinforcer is positive or negative. On a hot day a cool breeze could be seen as a positive reinforcer (because it brings in cool air) or a negative reinforcer (because it removes hot air). In other cases, reinforcement can be both positive and negative. One may smoke a cigarette both because it brings pleasure (positive reinforcement) and because it eliminates the craving for nicotine (negative reinforcement).

It is also important to note that reinforcement and punishment are not simply opposites. The use of positive reinforcement in changing behaviour is almost always more effective than using punishment. This is because positive reinforcement makes the person or animal feel better, helping create a positive relationship with the person providing the reinforcement. Types of positive reinforcement that are effective in everyday life include verbal praise or approval, the awarding of status or prestige, and direct financial payment. Punishment, on the other hand, is more likely to create only temporary changes in behaviour because it is based on coercion and typically creates a negative and adversarial relationship with the person providing the reinforcement. When the person who provides the punishment leaves the situation, the unwanted behaviour is likely to return.

Creating Complex Behaviours through Operant Conditioning

Perhaps you remember watching a movie or being at a show in which an animal — maybe a dog, a horse, or a dolphin — did some pretty amazing things. The trainer gave a command and the dolphin swam to the bottom of the pool, picked up a ring on its nose, jumped out of the water through a hoop in the air, dived again to the bottom of the pool, picked up another ring, and then took both of the rings to the trainer at the edge of the pool. The animal was trained to do the trick, and the principles of operant conditioning were used to train it. But these complex behaviours are a far cry from the simple stimulus-response relationships that we have considered thus far. How can reinforcement be used to create complex behaviours such as these?

One way to expand the use of operant learning is to modify the schedule on which the reinforcement is applied. To this point we have only discussed a **continuous reinforcement schedule**, in which *the desired response is reinforced every time it occurs*; whenever the dog rolls over, for instance, it gets a biscuit. Continuous reinforcement results in relatively fast learning but also rapid extinction of the desired behaviour once the reinforcer disappears. The problem is that because the organism is used to receiving the reinforcement after every behaviour, the responder may give up quickly when it doesn't appear.

Most real-world reinforcers are not continuous; they occur on a **partial (or intermittent) reinforcement schedule** — *a schedule in which the responses are sometimes reinforced and sometimes not*. In comparison to continuous reinforcement, partial reinforcement schedules lead to slower initial learning, but they also lead to greater resistance to extinction. Because the reinforcement does not appear after every behaviour, it takes longer for the learner to determine that the reward is no longer coming, and thus extinction is slower. The four types of partial reinforcement schedules are summarized in Table 8.2, "Reinforcement Schedules."

Table 8.2 Reinforcement Schedules.

[Skip Table]		
Reinforcement schedule	**Explanation**	**Real-world example**
Fixed-ratio	Behaviour is reinforced after a specific number of responses.	Factory workers who are paid according to the number of products they produce
Variable-ratio	Behaviour is reinforced after an average, but unpredictable, number of responses.	Payoffs from slot machines and other games of chance
Fixed-interval	Behaviour is reinforced for the first response after a specific amount of time has passed.	People who earn a monthly salary
Variable-interval	Behaviour is reinforced for the first response after an average, but unpredictable, amount of time has passed.	Person who checks email for messages

Partial reinforcement schedules are determined by whether the reinforcement is presented on the basis of the time that elapses between reinforcement (interval) or on the basis of the number of responses that the organism engages in (ratio), and by whether the reinforcement occurs on a regular (fixed) or unpredictable (variable) schedule. In a **fixed-interval schedule**, *reinforcement occurs for the first response made after a specific amount of time has passed*. For instance, on a one-minute fixed-interval schedule the animal receives a reinforcement every minute, assuming it engages in the behaviour at least once during the minute. As you can see in Figure 8.6, "Examples of Response Patterns by Animals Trained under Different Partial Reinforcement Schedules," animals under fixed-interval schedules tend to slow down their responding immediately after the reinforcement but then increase the behaviour again as the time of the next reinforcement gets closer. (Most students study for exams the same way.) In a **variable-interval schedule**, *the reinforcers appear on an interval schedule, but the timing is varied around the average interval, making the actual appearance of the reinforcer unpredictable*. An example might be checking your email: you are reinforced by receiving messages that come, on average, say, every 30 minutes, but the reinforcement occurs only at random times. Interval reinforcement schedules tend to produce slow and steady rates of responding.

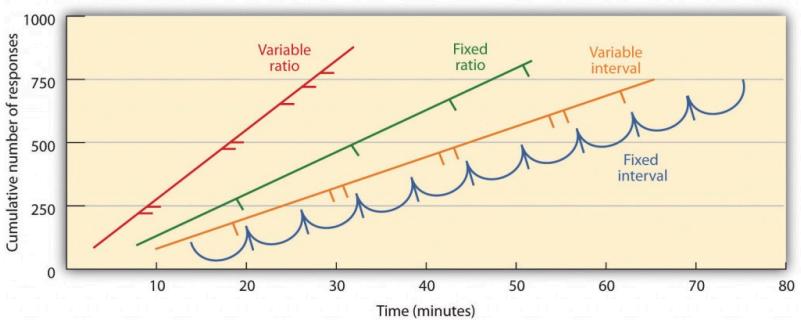


Figure 8.6 Examples of Response Patterns by Animals Trained under Different Partial Reinforcement Schedules. Schedules based on the number of responses (ratio types) induce greater response rate than do schedules based on elapsed time (interval types). Also, unpredictable schedules (variable types) produce stronger responses than do predictable schedules (fixed types).

In a **fixed-ratio schedule**, *a behaviour is reinforced after a specific number of responses*. For instance, a rat's behaviour may be reinforced after it has pressed a key 20 times, or a salesperson may receive a bonus after he or she has sold 10 products. As you can see in Figure 8.6, "Examples of Response Patterns by Animals Trained under Different Partial Reinforcement Schedules," once the organism has learned to act in accordance with the fixed-ratio schedule, it will pause only briefly when reinforcement occurs before returning to a high level of responsiveness. A **variable-ratio schedule** *provides reinforcers after a specific but average number of responses*. Winning money from slot machines or on a lottery ticket is an example of reinforcement that occurs on a variable-ratio schedule. For instance, a slot machine (see Figure 8.7, "Slot Machine") may be programmed to provide a win every 20 times the user pulls the handle, on average. Ratio schedules tend to produce high rates of responding because reinforcement increases as the number of responses increases.



Figure 8.7 Slot Machine. Slot machines are examples of a variable-ratio reinforcement schedule.

Complex behaviours are also created through **shaping**, *the process of guiding an organism's behaviour to the desired outcome through the use of successive approximation to a final desired behaviour*. Skinner made extensive use of this procedure in his boxes. For instance, he could train a rat to press a bar two times to receive food, by first providing food when the animal moved near the bar. When that behaviour had been learned, Skinner would begin to provide food only when the rat touched the bar. Further shaping limited the reinforcement to only when the rat pressed the bar, to when it pressed the bar and touched it a second time, and finally to only when it pressed the bar twice. Although it can take a long time, in this way operant conditioning can create chains of behaviours that are reinforced only when they are completed.

Reinforcing animals if they correctly discriminate between similar stimuli allows scientists to test the animals' ability to learn, and the discriminations that they can make are sometimes remarkable. Pigeons have been trained to distinguish between images of Charlie Brown and the other Peanuts characters (Cerella, 1980), and between different styles of music and art (Porter & Neuringer, 1984; Watanabe, Sakamoto & Wakita, 1995).

Behaviours can also be trained through the use of *secondary reinforcers*. Whereas a **primary reinforcer** includes *stimuli that are naturally preferred or enjoyed by the organism, such as food, water,*

and relief from pain, a **secondary reinforcer** (sometimes called *conditioned reinforcer*) is a *neutral event that has become associated with a primary reinforcer through classical conditioning*. An example of a secondary reinforcer would be the whistle given by an animal trainer, which has been associated over time with the primary reinforcer, food. An example of an everyday secondary reinforcer is money. We enjoy having money, not so much for the stimulus itself, but rather for the primary reinforcers (the things that money can buy) with which it is associated.

Key Takeaways

- Edward Thorndike developed the law of effect: the principle that responses that create a typically pleasant outcome in a particular situation are more likely to occur again in a similar situation, whereas responses that produce a typically unpleasant outcome are less likely to occur again in the situation.
- B. F. Skinner expanded on Thorndike's ideas to develop a set of principles to explain operant conditioning.
- Positive reinforcement strengthens a response by presenting something that is typically pleasant after the response, whereas negative reinforcement strengthens a response by reducing or removing something that is typically unpleasant.
- Positive punishment weakens a response by presenting something typically unpleasant after the response, whereas negative punishment weakens a response by reducing or removing something that is typically pleasant.
- Reinforcement may be either partial or continuous. Partial reinforcement schedules are determined by whether the reinforcement is presented on the basis of the time that elapses between reinforcements (interval) or on the basis of the number of responses that the organism engages in (ratio), and by whether the reinforcement occurs on a regular (fixed) or unpredictable (variable) schedule.
- Complex behaviours may be created through shaping, the process of guiding an organism's behaviour to the desired outcome through the use of successive approximation to a final desired behaviour.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Give an example from daily life of each of the following: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, positive punishment, negative punishment.
2. Consider the reinforcement techniques that you might use to train a dog to catch and retrieve a Frisbee that you throw to it.
3. Watch the following two videos from current television shows. Can you determine which learning procedures are being demonstrated?
    1. *The Office*: http://www.break.com/usercontent/2009/11/the-office-altoid-experiment-1499823
    2. *The Big Bang Theory* [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JA96Fba-WHk

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Image Attributions

Figure 8.5: "Skinner box" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Skinner_box_photo_02.jpg) is licensed under the CC BY SA 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en). "Skinner box scheme" by Andreas1 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Skinner_box_scheme_01.png) is licensed under the CC BY SA 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en)

Figure 8.6: Adapted from Kassin (2003).

Figure 8.7: "Slot Machines in the Hard Rock Casino" by Ted Murpy (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HardRockCasinoSlotMachines.jpg) is licensed under CC BY 2.0. (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en).

8.3 Learning by Insight and Observation

Learning Objective

1. Understand the principles of learning by insight and observation.

John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner were behaviourists who believed that all learning could be explained by the processes of conditioning — that is, that associations, and associations alone, influence learning. But some kinds of learning are very difficult to explain using only conditioning. Thus, although classical and operant conditioning play a key role in learning, they constitute only a part of the total picture.

One type of learning that is not determined only by conditioning occurs when we suddenly find the solution to a problem, as if the idea just popped into our head. This type of learning is known as **insight**, *the sudden understanding of a solution to a problem*. The German psychologist Wolfgang Köhler (1925) carefully observed what happened when he presented chimpanzees with a problem that was not easy for them to solve, such as placing food in an area that was too high in the cage to be reached. He found that the chimps first engaged in trial-and-error attempts at solving the problem, but when these failed they seemed to stop and contemplate for a while. Then, after this period of contemplation, they would suddenly seem to know how to solve the problem: for instance, by using a stick to knock the food down or by standing on a chair to reach it. Köhler argued that it was this flash of insight, not the prior trial-and-error approaches, which were so important for conditioning theories, that allowed the animals to solve the problem.

Edward Tolman studied the behaviour of three groups of rats that were learning to navigate through mazes (Tolman & Honzik, 1930). The first group always received a reward of food at the end of the maze. The second group never received any reward, and the third group received a reward, but only beginning on the 11th day of the experimental period. As you might expect when considering the principles of conditioning, the rats in the first group quickly learned to negotiate the maze, while the rats of the second group seemed to wander aimlessly through it. The rats in the third group, however, although they wandered aimlessly for the first 10 days, quickly learned to navigate to the end of the maze as soon as they received food on day 11. By the next day, the rats in the third group had caught up in their learning to the rats that had been rewarded from the beginning.

It was clear to Tolman that the rats that had been allowed to experience the maze, even without any reinforcement, had nevertheless learned something, and Tolman called this *latent learning*. **Latent learning** refers to *learning that is not reinforced and not demonstrated until there is motivation to do so*. Tolman argued that the rats had formed a “cognitive map” of the maze but did not demonstrate this knowledge until they received reinforcement.

Observational Learning: Learning by Watching

The idea of latent learning suggests that animals, and people, may learn simply by experiencing or watching. **Observational learning (modelling)** is *learning by observing the behaviour of others*. To demonstrate the importance of observational learning in children, Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1963) showed children a live image of either a man or a woman interacting with a Bobo doll, a filmed version of the same events, or a cartoon version of the events. As you can see in "Video Clip: Bandura Discussing Clips From His Modelling Studies," the Bobo doll is an inflatable balloon with a weight in the bottom that makes it bob back up when you knock it down. In all three conditions, the model violently punched the clown, kicked the doll, sat on it, and hit it with a hammer.

Take a moment to see how Albert Bandura explains his research into the modelling of aggression in children.



Watch: "Bandura Discussing Clips from His Modelling Studies" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWsxfoJEwQQ&feature=youtu.be

The researchers first let the children view one of the three types of modelling, and then let them play in a room in which there were some really fun toys. To create some frustration in the children, Bandura let the children play with the fun toys for only a couple of minutes before taking them away. Then Bandura gave the children a chance to play with the Bobo doll.

If you guessed that most of the children imitated the model, you would be correct. Regardless of which type of modelling the children had seen, and regardless of the sex of the model or the child, the children who had seen the model behaved aggressively — just as the model had done. They also punched, kicked, sat on the doll, and hit it with the hammer. Bandura and his colleagues had demonstrated that these children had learned new behaviours simply by observing and imitating others.

Observational learning is useful for animals and for people because it allows us to learn without having to actually engage in what might be a risky behaviour. Monkeys that see other monkeys respond with fear to the sight of a snake learn to fear the snake themselves, even if they have been raised in a laboratory and have never actually seen a snake (Cook & Mineka, 1990). As Bandura put it,

> the prospects for [human] survival would be slim indeed if one could learn only by suffering the consequences of trial and error. For this reason, one does not teach children to swim, adolescents to drive automobiles, and novice medical students to perform surgery by having them discover the appropriate behaviour through the consequences of their successes and failures. The more costly and hazardous the possible mistakes, the heavier is the reliance on observational learning from competent learners. (Bandura, 1977, p. 212)

Although modelling is normally adaptive, it can be problematic for children who grow up in violent families. These children are not only the victims of aggression, but they also see it happening to their parents and siblings. Because children learn how to be parents in large part by modelling the actions of their own parents, it is no surprise that there is a strong correlation between family violence in childhood and violence as an adult. Children who witness their parents being violent or who are themselves abused are more likely as adults to inflict abuse on intimate partners or their children, and to be victims of

intimate violence (Heyman & Slep, 2002). In turn, their children are more likely to interact violently with each other and to aggress against their parents (Patterson, Dishion, & Bank, 1984).

Research Focus: The Effects of Violent Video Games on Aggression

The average North American child watches more than four hours of television every day, and two out of three of the programs they watch contain aggression. It has been estimated that by the age of 12, the average North American child has seen more than 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence. At the same time, children are also exposed to violence in movies, video games, and virtual reality games, as well as in music videos that include violent lyrics and imagery (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2003; Schulenburg, 2007; Coyne & Archer, 2005).

It might not surprise you to hear that these exposures to violence have an effect on aggressive behaviour. The evidence is impressive and clear: the more media violence that people, including children, view, the more aggressive they are likely to be (Anderson et al., 2003; Cantor et al., 2001). The relationship between viewing television violence and aggressive behaviour is about as strong as the relationship between smoking and cancer or between studying and academic grades. People who watch more violence become more aggressive than those who watch less violence.

It is clear that watching television violence can increase aggression, but what about violent video games? These games are more popular than ever, and also more graphically violent. Youths spend countless hours playing these games, many of which involve engaging in extremely violent behaviours. The games often require the player to take the role of a violent person, to identify with the character, to select victims, and of course to kill the victims. These behaviours are reinforced by winning points and moving on to higher levels, and are repeated over and over.

Again, the answer is clear — playing violent video games leads to aggression. A recent meta-analysis by Anderson and Bushman (2001) reviewed 35 research studies that had tested the effects of playing violent video games on aggression. The studies included both experimental and correlational studies, with both male and female participants in both laboratory and field settings. They found that exposure to violent video games is significantly linked to increases in aggressive thoughts, aggressive feelings, psychological arousal (including blood pressure and heart rate), as well as aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, playing more video games was found to relate to less altruistic behaviour.

In one experiment, Bushman and Anderson (2002) assessed the effects of viewing violent video games on aggressive thoughts and behaviour. Participants were randomly assigned to play either a violent or a nonviolent video game for 20 minutes. Each participant played one of four violent video games (Carmageddon, Duke Nukem, Mortal Kombat, or Future Cop) or one of four nonviolent video games (Glider Pro, 3D Pinball, Austin Powers, or Tetra Madness).

Participants then read a story — for instance, this one about Todd — and were asked to list 20 thoughts, feelings, and actions they would have if they were Todd:

Todd was on his way home from work one evening when he had to brake quickly for a yellow light. The person in the car behind him must have thought Todd was going to run the light because he crashed into the back of Todd's car, causing a lot of damage to both vehicles. Fortunately, there were no injuries. Todd got out of his car and surveyed the damage. He then walked over to the other car.

As you can see in Figure 8.8, "Results From Bushman and Anderson, 2002," the students who had played one of the violent video games responded much more aggressively to the story than did those who played the nonviolent games. In fact, their responses were often extremely aggressive. They said things like "Call the guy an idiot," "Kick the other driver's car," "This guy's dead meat!" and "What a dumbass!"

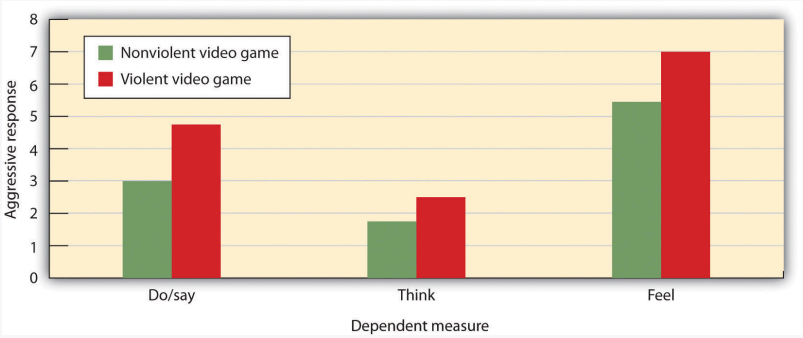


Figure 8.8 Researchers found that undergraduate students who had just played a violent video game expressed significantly more violent responses to a story than did those who had just played a nonviolent video game. [Long Description] Adapted from Bushman & Anderson (2002).

However, although modelling can increase violence, it can also have positive effects. Research has found that, just as children learn to be aggressive through observational learning, they can also learn to be altruistic in the same way (Seymour, Yoshida, & Dolan, 2009).

Key Takeaways

- Not all learning can be explained through the principles of classical and operant conditioning.
- Insight is the sudden understanding of the components of a problem that makes the solution apparent.
- Latent learning refers to learning that is not reinforced and not demonstrated until there is motivation to do so.
- Observational learning occurs by viewing the behaviours of others.
- Both aggression and altruism can be learned through observation.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Describe a time when you learned something by insight. What do you think led to your learning?
2. Imagine that you had a 12-year-old brother who spent many hours a day playing violent video games. Basing your answer on the material covered in this chapter, do you think that your parents should limit his exposure to the games? Why or why not?
3. How might we incorporate principles of observational learning to encourage acts of kindness and selflessness in our society?

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Long Descriptions

Figure 8.8 long description: Effect of Violent and Non-violent Video Games

	Non-violent video game	Violent video game
Do/say	3.0	4.8
Think	1.8	2.5
Feel	5.5	7.0

[Return to Figure 8.8]

8.4 Using the Principles of Learning to Understand Everyday Behaviour

Learning Objectives

1. Review the ways that learning theories can be applied to understanding and modifying everyday behaviour.
2. Describe the situations under which reinforcement may make people *less* likely to enjoy engaging in a behaviour.
3. Explain how principles of reinforcement are used to understand social dilemmas, such as the prisoner's dilemma, and why people are likely to make competitive choices in them.

The principles of learning are some of the most general and most powerful in all of psychology. It would be fair to say that these principles account for more behaviour using fewer principles than any other set of psychological theories. The principles of learning are applied in numerous ways in everyday settings. For example, operant conditioning has been used to motivate employees, to improve athletic performance, to increase the functioning of those suffering from developmental disabilities, and to help parents successfully toilet train their children (Azrin & Foxx, 1974; McGlynn, 1990; Pedalino & Gamboa, 1974; Simek & O'Brien, 1981). In this section we will consider how learning theories are used in advertising, in education, and in understanding competitive relationships between individuals and groups.

Using Classical Conditioning in Advertising

Classical conditioning has long been, and continues to be, an effective tool in marketing and advertising (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 1998). The general idea is to create an advertisement that has positive features such that the ad creates enjoyment in the person exposed to it. The enjoyable ad serves as the unconditioned stimulus (US), and the enjoyment is the unconditioned response (UR). Because the product being advertised is mentioned in the ad, it becomes associated with the US, and then becomes the conditioned stimulus (CS). In the end, if everything has gone well, seeing the product online or in the store will then create a positive response in the buyer, leading him or her to be more likely to purchase the product.

Can you determine how classical conditioning is being used in these commercials?

Watch: "Television Ads" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/v/dsESVrArhbk

A similar strategy is used by corporations that sponsor teams or events. For instance, if people enjoy watching a university basketball team playing basketball, and if that team is sponsored by a product, such as Pepsi, then people may end up experiencing positive feelings when they view a can of Pepsi.

Of course, the sponsor wants to sponsor only good teams and good athletes because these create more pleasurable responses.

Advertisers use a variety of techniques to create positive advertisements, including enjoyable music, cute babies, attractive models, and funny spokespeople. In one study, Gorn (1982) showed research participants pictures of different writing pens of different colours, but paired one of the pens with pleasant music and the other with unpleasant music. When given a choice as a free gift, more people chose the pen colour associated with the pleasant music. And Schemer, Matthes, Wirth, and Textor (2008) found that people were more interested in products that had been embedded in music videos of artists that they liked and less likely to be interested when the products were in videos featuring artists that they did not like.

Another type of ad that is based on principles of classical conditioning is one that associates fear with the use of a product or behaviour, such as those that show pictures of deadly automobile accidents to encourage seatbelt use or images of lung cancer surgery to discourage smoking. These ads have also been found to be effective (Das, de Wit, & Stroebe, 2003; Perloff, 2003; Witte & Allen, 2000), due in large part to conditioning. When we see a cigarette and the fear of dying has been associated with it, we are hopefully less likely to light up.

Taken together then, there is ample evidence of the utility of classical conditioning, using both positive as well as negative stimuli, in advertising. This does not, however, mean that we are always influenced by these ads. The likelihood of conditioning being successful is greater for products that we do not know much about, where the differences between products are relatively minor, and when we do not think too carefully about the choices (Schemer et al., 2008).

Psychology in Everyday Life: Operant Conditioning in the Classroom

John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner believed that all learning was the result of reinforcement, and thus that reinforcement could be used to educate children. For instance, Watson wrote in his book on behaviourism,

> Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select — doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and, yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors. I am going beyond my facts and I admit it, but so have the advocates of the contrary and they have been doing it for many thousands of years (Watson, 1930, p. 82).

Skinner promoted the use of **programmed instruction**, *an educational tool that consists of self-teaching with the aid of a specialized textbook or teaching machine that presents material in a logical sequence* (Skinner, 1965). Programmed instruction allows students to progress through a unit of study at their own rate, checking their own answers and advancing only after answering correctly. Programmed instruction is used today in many classes — for instance, to teach computer programming (Emurian, 2009).

Although reinforcement can be effective in education, and teachers make use of it by awarding gold stars, good grades, and praise, there are also substantial limitations to using reward to improve learning. To be most effective, rewards must be contingent on appropriate behaviour. In some cases teachers may distribute rewards indiscriminately — for instance, by giving praise or good grades to children whose work does not warrant it — in the hope that students will "feel good about themselves" and that this self-esteem will lead to better performance. Studies indicate, however, that high self-esteem alone does not improve academic

performance (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). When rewards are not earned, they become meaningless and no longer provide motivation for improvement.

Another potential limitation of rewards is that they may teach children that the activity should be performed for the reward, rather than for one's own interest in the task. If rewards are offered too often, the task itself becomes less appealing. Mark Lepper and his colleagues (Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973) studied this possibility by leading some children to think that they engaged in an activity for a reward, rather than because they simply enjoyed it. First, they placed some fun felt-tipped markers in the classroom of the children they were studying. The children loved the markers and played with them right away. Then the markers were taken out of the classroom, and the children were given a chance to play with the markers individually at an experimental session with the researcher. At the research session, the children were randomly assigned to one of three experimental groups. One group of children (the *expected reward* condition) was told that if they played with the markers they would receive a good drawing award. A second group (the *unexpected reward* condition) also played with the markers, and also got the award — but they were not told ahead of time that they would be receiving the award; it came as a surprise after the session. The third group (the *no reward* group) played with the markers too, but got no award.

Then the researchers placed the markers back in the classroom and observed how much the children in each of the three groups played with them. As you can see in Figure 8.9, "Undermining Intrinsic Interest," the children who had been led to expect a reward for playing with the markers during the experimental session played with the markers less at the second session than they had at the first session. The idea is that, when the children had to choose whether or not to play with the markers when the markers reappeared in the classroom, they based their decision on their own prior behaviour. The children in the no reward group and the children in the unexpected reward group realized that they played with the markers because they liked them. Children in the expected award condition, however, remembered that they were promised a reward for the activity the last time they played with the markers. These children, then, were more likely to draw the inference that they play with the markers only for the external reward, and because they did not expect to get an award for playing with the markers in the classroom, they determined that they didn't like them. Expecting to receive the award at the session had undermined their initial interest in the markers.

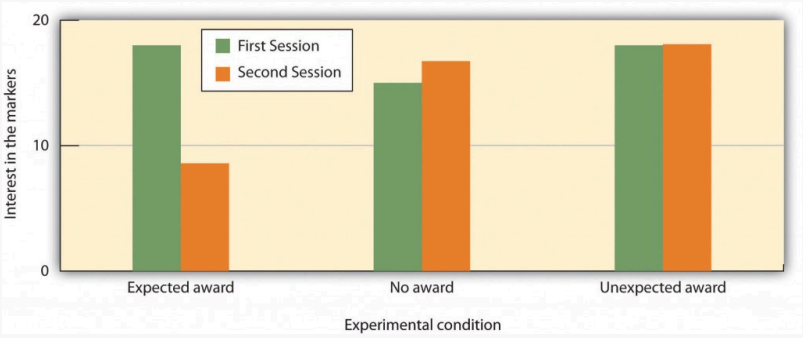


Figure 8.9 Undermining Intrinsic Interest. Mark Lepper and his colleagues (1973) found that giving rewards for playing with markers, which the children naturally enjoyed, could reduce their interest in the activity. [Long Description]

This research suggests that, although receiving a reward may in many cases lead us to perform an activity more frequently or with more effort, a reward may not always increase our liking for the activity. In some cases a reward may actually make us like an activity less than we did before we were rewarded for it. This outcome is particularly likely when the reward is perceived as an obvious attempt on the part of others to get us to do something. When children are given money by their parents to get good grades in school, they may improve their school performance to gain the reward. But at the same time their liking for school may decrease. On the other hand, rewards that are seen as more internal to the activity, such as rewards that praise

us, remind us of our achievements in the domain, and make us feel good about ourselves as a result of our accomplishments, are more likely to be effective in increasing not only the performance of, but also the liking of, the activity (Hulleman, Durik, Schweigert, & Harackiewicz, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2002).Other research findings also support the general principle that punishment is generally less effective than reinforcement in changing behaviour. In a recent meta-analysis, Gershoff (2002) found that although children who were spanked by their parents were more likely to immediately comply with the parents' demands, they were also more aggressive, showed less ability to control aggression, and had poorer mental health in the long term than children who were not spanked. The problem seems to be that children who are punished for bad behaviour are likely to change their behaviour only to avoid the punishment, rather than by internalizing the norms of being good for its own sake. Punishment also tends to generate anger, defiance, and a desire for revenge. Moreover, punishment models the use of aggression and ruptures the important relationship between the teacher and the learner (Kohn, 1993).

Reinforcement in Social Dilemmas

The basic principles of reinforcement, reward, and punishment have been used to help understand a variety of human behaviours (Bandura, 1977; Miller & Dollard, 1941; Rotter, 1945). The general idea is that, as predicted by principles of operant learning and the law of effect, people act in ways that maximize their *outcomes*, where **outcomes** are defined as *the presence of reinforcers and the absence of punishers*.

Consider, for example, a situation known as the *commons dilemma*, as proposed by the ecologist Garrett Hardin (1968). Hardin noted that in many European towns there was at one time a centrally located pasture, known as the commons, which was shared by the inhabitants of the village to graze their livestock. But the commons was not always used wisely. The problem was that each individual who owned livestock wanted to be able to use the commons to graze his or her own animals. However, when each group member took advantage of the commons by grazing many animals, the commons became overgrazed, the pasture died, and the commons was destroyed.

Although Hardin focused on the particular example of the commons, the basic dilemma of individual desires versus the benefit of the group as a whole can also be found in many contemporary public goods issues, including the use of limited natural resources, air pollution, and public land. In large cities, most people may prefer the convenience of driving their own car to work each day rather than taking public transportation. Yet this behaviour uses up public goods (the space on limited roadways, crude oil reserves, and clean air). People are lured into the dilemma by short-term rewards, seemingly without considering the potential long-term costs of the behaviour, such as air pollution and the necessity of building even more highways.

A **social dilemma** such as the commons dilemma is *a situation in which the behaviour that creates the most positive outcomes for the individual may in the long term lead to negative consequences for the group as a whole*. The dilemmas are arranged in such a way that it is easy to be selfish, because the personally beneficial choice (such as using water during a water shortage or driving to work alone in one's own car) produces reinforcements for the individual. Furthermore, social dilemmas tend to work on a type of time delay. The problem is that, because the long-term negative outcome (the extinction of fish species or dramatic changes in the earth's climate) is far away in the future and the individual benefits are occurring right now, it is difficult for an individual to see how many costs there really are.

The paradox, of course, is that if everyone takes the personally selfish choice in an attempt to maximize his or her own outcomes, the long-term result is poorer outcomes for every individual in the group. Each individual prefers to make use of the public goods for himself or herself, whereas the best outcome for the group as a whole is to use the resources more slowly and wisely.

One method of understanding how individuals and groups behave in social dilemmas is to create such situations in the laboratory and observe how people react to them. The best known of these laboratory simulations is called the **prisoner's dilemma game** (Poundstone, 1992). This game *represents a social dilemma in which the goals of the individual compete with the goals of another individual (or sometimes with a group of other individuals)*. Like all social dilemmas, the prisoner's dilemma assumes that individuals will generally try to maximize their own outcomes in their interactions with others.

In the prisoner's dilemma game, the participants are shown a **payoff matrix** in which *numbers are used to express the potential outcomes for each of the players in the game, given the decisions each player makes*. The payoffs are chosen beforehand by the experimenter to create a situation that models some real-world outcome. Furthermore, in the prisoner's dilemma game, the payoffs are normally arranged as they would be in a typical social dilemma, such that each individual is better off acting in his or her immediate self-interest, and yet if all individuals act according to their self-interests, then everyone will be worse off.

In its original form, the prisoner's dilemma game involves a situation in which two prisoners (we'll call them Frank and Malik) have been accused of committing a crime. The police believe that the two worked together on the crime, but they have only been able to gather enough evidence to convict each of them of a more minor offence. In an attempt to gain more evidence, and thus be able to convict the prisoners of the larger crime, each of the prisoners is interrogated individually, with the hope that he will confess to having been involved in the more major crime in return for a promise of a reduced sentence if he confesses first. Each prisoner can make either the *cooperative choice* (which is to not confess) or the *competitive choice* (which is to confess).

The incentives for either confessing or not confessing are expressed in a payoff matrix such as the one shown in Figure 8.10, "The Prisoner's Dilemma." The top of the matrix represents the two choices that Malik might make (to either confess that he did the crime or not confess), and the side of the matrix represents the two choices that Frank might make (also to either confess or not confess). The payoffs that each prisoner receives, given the choices of each of the two prisoners, are shown in each of the four squares.

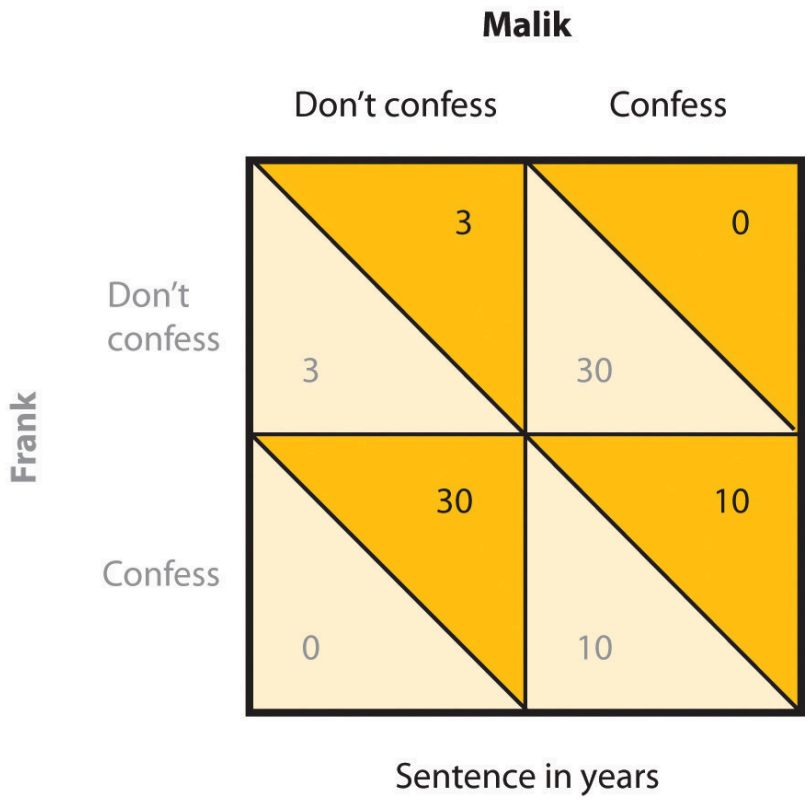


Figure 8.10 The Prisoner's Dilemma. In the prisoner's dilemma game, two suspected criminals are interrogated separately. The matrix indicates the outcomes for each prisoner, measured as the number of years each is sentenced to prison, as a result of each combination of cooperative (don't confess) and competitive (confess) decisions. Outcomes for Malik are in black and outcomes for Frank are in grey. [Long Description]

If both prisoners take the cooperative choice by not confessing (the situation represented in the upper left square of the matrix), there will be a trial, the limited available information will be used to convict each prisoner, and they each will be sentenced to a relatively short prison term of three years. However, if either of the prisoners confesses, turning "state's evidence" against the other prisoner, then there will be enough information to convict the other prisoner of the larger crime, and that prisoner will receive a sentence of 30 years, whereas the prisoner who confesses will get off free. These outcomes are represented in the lower left and upper right squares of the matrix. Finally, it is possible that both players confess at the same time. In this case there is no need for a trial, and in return the prosecutors offer a somewhat reduced sentence (of 10 years) to each of the prisoners.

The prisoner's dilemma has two interesting characteristics that make it a useful model of a social dilemma. For one, the prisoner's dilemma is arranged in such a way that a positive outcome for one player does not necessarily mean a negative outcome for the other player. If you consider again the matrix in Figure 8.10, "The Prisoner's Dilemma," you can see that if one player takes the cooperative choice (to not confess) and the other takes the competitive choice (to confess), then the prisoner who cooperates loses, whereas the other prisoner wins. However, if both prisoners make the cooperative choice, each remaining quiet, then neither gains more than the other, and both prisoners receive a relatively light sentence. In this sense, both players can win at the same time.

Second, the prisoner's dilemma matrix is arranged so that each individual player is motivated to take the competitive choice because this choice leads to a higher payoff regardless of what the other player does. Imagine for a moment that you are Malik, and you are trying to decide whether to cooperate (don't confess) or to compete (confess). And imagine that you are not really sure what Frank is going to do. Remember the goal of the individual is to maximize outcomes. The values in the matrix make it clear that if you think that Frank is going to confess, you should confess yourself (to get 10 rather than 30 years in prison). And it is also clear that if you think Frank is not going to confess, you should still confess (to get no time in prison rather than three years). So the matrix is arranged so that the "best" alternative for each player, at least in the sense of pure reward and self-interest, is to make the competitive choice, even though in the end both players would prefer the combination in which both players cooperate to the one in which they both compete.

Although initially specified in terms of the two prisoners, similar payoff matrices can be used to predict behaviour in many different types of dilemmas involving two or more parties and including choices of helping and not helping, working and loafing, and paying and not paying debts. For instance, we can use the prisoner's dilemma to help us understand roommates living together in a house who might not want to contribute to the housework. Each of them would be better off if they relied on the other to clean the house. Yet if neither of them makes an effort to clean the house (the cooperative choice), the house becomes a mess and they will both be worse off.

Key Takeaways

- Learning theories have been used to change behaviours in many areas of everyday life.
- Some advertising uses classical conditioning to associate a pleasant response with a product.
- Rewards are frequently and effectively used in education but must be carefully designed to be contingent on performance and to avoid undermining interest in the activity.
- Social dilemmas, such as the prisoner's dilemma, can be understood in terms of a desire to maximize one's outcomes in a competitive relationship.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Find and share with your class some examples of advertisements that make use of classical conditioning to create positive attitudes toward products.
2. Should parents use both punishment as well as reinforcement to discipline their children? On what principles of learning do you base your opinion?
3. Think of a social dilemma other than one that has been discussed in this chapter, and explain people's behaviour in it in terms of principles of learning.

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Image Attributions

Figure 8.9: Adapted from Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett (1973).

Long Descriptions

Figure 8.9 long description: Undermining intrinsic interest.

	First Session	Second Session
Expected award	17	8
No award	15	16
Unexpected award	17	17

[Return to Figure 8.9]

Figure 8.10 long description: The prisoner's Dilemma. If both Malik and Frank don't confess, they each get three years in prison. If only one of them confesses, the confessor gets no years in prison while the person who did not confess gets 30 years in prison. If they both confess, they each get 10 years in prison. [Return to Figure 8.10]

8.5 Chapter Summary

Classical conditioning was first studied by physiologist Ivan Pavlov. In classical conditioning, a person or animal learns to associate a neutral stimulus (the conditioned stimulus, or CS) with a stimulus (the unconditioned stimulus, or US) that naturally produces a behaviour (the unconditioned response, or UR). As a result of this association, the previously neutral stimulus comes to elicit the same or similar response (the conditioned response, or CR).

Classically conditioned responses show extinction if the CS is repeatedly presented without the US. The CR may reappear later in a process known as spontaneous recovery.

Organisms may show stimulus generalization, in which stimuli similar to the CS may produce similar behaviours, or stimulus discrimination, in which the organism learns to differentiate between the CS and other similar stimuli.

Second-order conditioning occurs when a second CS is conditioned to a previously established CS.

Psychologist Edward Thorndike developed the law of effect: the idea that responses that are reinforced are “stamped in” by experience and thus occur more frequently, whereas responses that are punished are “stamped out” and subsequently occur less frequently.

B. F. Skinner expanded on Thorndike’s ideas to develop a set of principles to explain operant conditioning.

Positive reinforcement strengthens a response by presenting something pleasant after the response, and negative reinforcement strengthens a response by reducing or removing something unpleasant. Positive punishment weakens a response by presenting something unpleasant after the response, whereas negative punishment weakens a response by reducing or removing something pleasant.

Shaping is the process of guiding an organism’s behaviour to the desired outcome through the use of reinforcers.

Reinforcement may be either partial or continuous. Partial-reinforcement schedules are determined by whether the reward is presented on the basis of the time that elapses between rewards (interval) or on the basis of the number of responses that the organism engages in (ratio), and by whether the reinforcement occurs on a regular (fixed) or unpredictable (variable) schedule.

Not all learning can be explained through the principles of classical and operant conditioning. Insight is the sudden understanding of the components of a problem that makes the solution apparent, and latent learning refers to learning that is not reinforced and not demonstrated until there is motivation to do so.

Learning by observing the behaviour of others and the consequences of those behaviours is known as observational learning. Aggression, altruism, and many other behaviours are learned through observation.

Learning theories can be and have been applied to change behaviours in many areas of everyday life. Some advertising uses classical conditioning to associate a pleasant response with a product.

Rewards are frequently and effectively used in education but must be carefully designed to be contingent on performance and to avoid undermining interest in the activity.

Social dilemmas, such as the prisoner's dilemma, can be understood in terms of a desire to maximize one's outcomes in a competitive relationship.

Chapter 9. Remembering and Judging

9. Remembering and Judging

Canada has had its share of memories being introduced into legal cases with devastating results: Thomas Sophonow was accused of murdering a young waitress who worked in a donut shop in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Several eyewitnesses testified against Sophonow but there were problems with each one. For example, the photo array shown to a number of witnesses contained a picture of Sophonow, which was significantly different than the other men in the array.

Dubious allegations of repressed memories forced Michael Kliman, a teacher at James McKinney Elementary School in Richmond, B.C., to endure three trials before his ultimate acquittal. His world came crashing down when he was accused of molesting a Grade 6 student some 20 years earlier, a student who "recovered" her memories 17 years after the abuse allegedly happened. According to an article in the *Vancouver Sun* (Brook, 1999): "In 1992, after years of psychiatric treatment, she 'recovered' long-lost memories of a year-long series of assaults by Kliman and, encouraged by the Richmond RCMP, laid charges."

She Was Certain, but She Was Wrong

In 1984 Jennifer Thompson was a 22-year-old college student in North Carolina. One night a man broke into her apartment, put a knife to her throat, and raped her. According to her own account, Ms. Thompson studied her rapist throughout the incident with great determination to memorize his face. She said:

"I studied every single detail on the rapist's face. I looked at his hairline; I looked for scars, for tattoos, for anything that would help me identify him. When and if I survived."

Ms. Thompson went to the police that same day to create a sketch of her attacker, relying on what she believed was her detailed memory. Several days later, the police constructed a photographic lineup. Thompson identified Ronald Cotton as the rapist, and she later testified against him at trial. She was positive it was him, with no doubt in her mind.

"I was sure. I knew it. I had picked the right guy, and he was going to go to jail. If there was the possibility of a death sentence, I wanted him to die. I wanted to flip the switch."

As positive as she was, it turned out that Jennifer Thompson was wrong. But it was not until after Mr. Cotton had served 11 years in prison for a crime he did not commit that conclusive DNA evidence indicated that Bobby Poole was the actual rapist, and Cotton was released from jail. Jennifer Thompson's memory had failed her, resulting in a substantial injustice. It took definitive DNA testing to shake her confidence, but she now knows that despite her confidence in her identification, it was wrong. Consumed by guilt, Thompson sought out Cotton when he was released from prison, and they have since become friends (Innocence Project, n.d.; Thompson, 2000).

Although Jennifer Thompson was positive that it was Ronald Cotton who had raped her, her memory was inaccurate. Conclusive DNA testing later proved that he was not the attacker. Watch this book trailer about the story.

Watch: "Picking Cotton: A Memoir of Injustice and Redemption" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLGXrviy5Iw



Jennifer Thompson is not the only person to have been fooled by her memory of events. Over the past 10 years, almost 400 people have been released from prison when DNA evidence confirmed that they could not have committed the crime for which they had been convicted. And in more than three-quarters of these cases, the cause of the innocent people being falsely convicted was erroneous eyewitness testimony (Wells, Memon, & Penrod, 2006).

Watch this video for Lesley Stahl's 60 Minutes segment on this case.

Watch: "Eyewitness Testimony" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-SBTRLoPuo



The two subjects of this chapter are **memory**, defined as *the ability to store and retrieve information over time*, and **cognition**, defined as *the processes of acquiring and using knowledge*. It is useful to consider memory and cognition in the same chapter because they work together to help us interpret and understand our environments.

Memory and cognition represent the two major interests of cognitive psychologists. The cognitive approach became the most important school of psychology during the 1960s, and the field of psychology has remained in large part cognitive since that time. The cognitive school was greatly influenced by the development of the electronic computer, and although the differences between computers and the human mind are vast, cognitive psychologists have used the computer as a model for understanding the workings of the mind.

Differences between Brains and Computers

- In computers, information can be accessed only if one knows the exact location of the memory. In the brain, information can be accessed through *spreading activation* from closely related concepts.
- The brain operates primarily in parallel, meaning that it is multitasking on many different actions at the same time. Although this is changing as new computers are developed, most computers are primarily serial — they finish one task before they start another.
- In computers, short-term (random-access) memory is a subset of long-term (read-only) memory. In the brain, the processes of short-term memory and long-term memory are distinct.
- In the brain, there is no difference between hardware (the mechanical aspects of the computer) and software (the programs that run on the hardware).
- In the brain, synapses, which operate using an electrochemical process, are much slower but also vastly more complex and useful than the transistors used by computers.
- Computers differentiate memory (e.g., the hard drive) from processing (the central processing

unit), but in brains there is no such distinction. In the brain (but not in computers) existing memory is used to interpret and store incoming information, and retrieving information from memory changes the memory itself.

- The brain is self-organizing and self-repairing, but computers are not. If a person suffers a stroke, neural plasticity will help him or her recover. If we drop our laptop and it breaks, it cannot fix itself.
- The brain is significantly bigger than any current computer. The brain is estimated to have 25,000,000,000,000,000 (25 million billion) interactions among axons, dendrites, neurons, and neurotransmitters, and that doesn't include the approximately 1 trillion glial cells that may also be important for information processing and memory.

Although cognitive psychology began in earnest at about the same time that the electronic computer was first being developed, and although cognitive psychologists have frequently used the computer as a model for understanding how the brain operates, research in cognitive neuroscience has revealed many important differences between brains and computers. The neuroscientist Chris Chatham (2007) provided the list of differences between brains and computers shown here. You might want to check out the website and the responses to it at http://scienceblogs.com/developingintelligence/2007/03/27/why-the-brain-is-not-like-a-co/

We will begin the chapter with the study of memory. Our memories allow us to do relatively simple things, such as remembering where we parked our car or the name of the current prime minister of Canada, but also allow us to form complex memories, such as how to ride a bicycle or to write a computer program. Moreover, our memories define us as individuals — they are our experiences, our relationships, our successes, and our failures. Without our memories, we would not have a life.

At least for some things, our memory is very good (Bahrick, 2000). Once we learn a face, we can recognize that face many years later. We know the lyrics of many songs by heart, and we can give definitions for tens of thousands of words. Mitchell (2006) contacted participants 17 years after they had been briefly exposed to some line drawings in a lab and found that they still could identify the images significantly better than participants who had never seen them.



Figure 9.1 Kim Peek.

For some people, memory is truly amazing. Consider, for instance, the case of Kim Peek, who was the inspiration for the Academy Award-winning film *Rain Man* (Figure 9.1 "Kim Peek" and "Video Clip: Kim Peek"). Although Peek's IQ was only 87, significantly below the average of about 100, it is estimated that he memorized more than 10,000 books in his lifetime (Wisconsin Medical Society, n.d.; Kim Peek, 2004). The Russian psychologist A. R. Luria (2004) has described the abilities of a man known as "S," who seems to have unlimited memory. S remembers strings of hundreds of random letters for years at a time, and seems in fact to never forget anything.
You can view an interview with Kim Peek and see some of his amazing memory abilities at this link.

Watch: "Kim Peek" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhcQG_KItZM



In this chapter we will see how psychologists use behavioural responses (such as memory tests and reaction times) to draw inferences about what and how people remember. And we will see that although we have very good memories for some things, our memories are far from perfect (Schacter, 1996). The errors that we make are due to the fact that our memories are not simply recording devices that input, store, and retrieve the world around us. Rather, we actively process and interpret information as we remember and recollect it, and these cognitive processes influence what we remember and how we remember it. Because memories are constructed, not recorded, when we remember events we don't reproduce exact replicas of those events (Bartlett, 1932).

In the last section of the chapter we will focus primarily on cognition, with a particular consideration for cases in which cognitive processes lead us to distort our judgments or misremember information. We will see that our prior knowledge can influence our memory. People who read the words "dream, sheets, rest, snore, blanket, tired, and bed" and then are asked to remember the words often think that they saw the word *sleep* even though that word was not in the list (Roediger & McDermott, 1995). And we will see that in other cases we are influenced by the ease with which we can retrieve information from memory or by the information that we are exposed to after we first learn something.

Although much research in the area of memory and cognition is basic in orientation, the work also has profound influence on our everyday experiences. Our cognitive processes influence the accuracy and inaccuracy of our memories and our judgments, and they lead us to be vulnerable to the types of errors that eyewitnesses such as Jennifer Thompson may make. Understanding these potential errors is the first step in learning to avoid them.

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Image Attributions

Figure 9.1: Kim Peek by Darold A. Treffert, MD, and the Wisconsin Medical Society (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peek1.jpg) used under CC BY license.

9.1 Memories as Types and Stages

Learning Objectives

1. Compare and contrast explicit and implicit memory, identifying the features that define each.
2. Explain the function and duration of eidetic and echoic memories.
3. Summarize the capacities of short-term memory and explain how working memory is used to process information in it.

As you can see in Table 9.1, "Memory Conceptualized in Terms of Types, Stages, and Processes," psychologists conceptualize memory in terms of *types*, in terms of *stages*, and in terms of *processes*. In this section we will consider the two **types of memory**, *explicit memory* and *implicit memory*, and then the three major **memory stages**: *sensory*, *short-term*, and *long-term* (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968). Then, in the next section, we will consider the nature of long-term memory, with a particular emphasis on the cognitive techniques we can use to improve our memories. Our discussion will focus on the three processes that are central to **long-term memory**: *encoding*, *storage*, and *retrieval*.

Table 9.1 Memory Conceptualized in Terms of Types, Stages, and Processes.

As types	• Explicit memory • Implicit memory
As stages	• Sensory memory • Short-term memory • Long-term memory
As processes	• Encoding • Storage • Retrieval

Explicit Memory

When we assess memory by asking a person to consciously remember things, we are measuring *explicit memory*. **Explicit memory** refers to *knowledge or experiences that can be consciously remembered*. As

you can see in Figure 9.2, "Types of Memory," there are two types of explicit memory: *episodic* and *semantic*. **Episodic memory** refers to *the firsthand experiences that we have had* (e.g., recollections of our high school graduation day or of the fantastic dinner we had in New York last year). **Semantic memory** refers to *our knowledge of facts and concepts about the world* (e.g., that the absolute value of −90 is greater than the absolute value of 9 and that one definition of the word "affect" is "the experience of feeling or emotion").

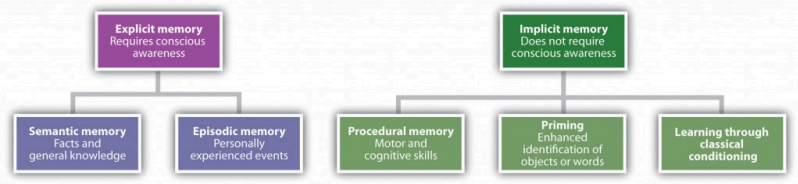


Figure 9.2 Types of Memory.

Explicit memory is assessed using measures in which the individual being tested must consciously attempt to remember the information. A **recall memory** test is *a measure of explicit memory that involves bringing from memory information that has previously been remembered*. We rely on our recall memory when we take an essay test, because the test requires us to generate previously remembered information. A multiple-choice test is an example of a **recognition memory test**, *a measure of explicit memory that involves determining whether information has been seen or learned before*.

Your own experiences taking tests will probably lead you to agree with the scientific research finding that recall is more difficult than recognition. Recall, such as required on essay tests, involves two steps: first generating an answer and then determining whether it seems to be the correct one. Recognition, as on multiple-choice test, only involves determining which item from a list seems most correct (Haist, Shimamura, & Squire, 1992). Although they involve different processes, recall and recognition memory measures tend to be correlated. Students who do better on a multiple-choice exam will also, by and large, do better on an essay exam (Bridgeman & Morgan, 1996).

A third way of measuring memory is known as *relearning* (Nelson, 1985). Measures of **relearning** (or savings) *assess how much more quickly information is processed or learned when it is studied again after it has already been learned but then forgotten*. If you have taken some French courses in the past, for instance, you might have forgotten most of the vocabulary you learned. But if you were to work on your French again, you'd learn the vocabulary much faster the second time around. Relearning can be a more sensitive measure of memory than either recall or recognition because it allows assessing memory in terms of "how much" or "how fast" rather than simply "correct" versus "incorrect" responses. Relearning also allows us to measure memory for procedures like driving a car or playing a piano piece, as well as memory for facts and figures.

Implicit Memory

While explicit memory consists of the things that we can consciously report that we know, implicit memory refers to knowledge that we cannot consciously access. However, implicit memory is nevertheless exceedingly important to us because it has a direct effect on our behaviour. **Implicit memory** refers to *the influence of experience on behaviour, even if the individual is not aware of those influences*. As you can see in Figure 9.2, "Types of Memory," there are three general types of implicit memory: procedural memory, classical conditioning effects, and priming.

Procedural memory refers to *our often unexplainable knowledge of how to do things*. When we walk from one place to another, speak to another person in English, dial a cell phone, or play a video game, we are using procedural memory. Procedural memory allows us to perform complex tasks, even though we may not be able to explain to others how we do them. There is no way to tell someone how to ride a bicycle; a person has to learn by doing it. The idea of implicit memory helps explain how infants are able to learn. The ability to crawl, walk, and talk are procedures, and these skills are easily and efficiently developed while we are children despite the fact that as adults we have no conscious memory of having learned them.

A second type of implicit memory is **classical conditioning effects**, in which *we learn, often without effort or awareness, to associate neutral stimuli (such as a sound or a light) with another stimulus (such as food), which creates a naturally occurring response, such as enjoyment or salivation*. The memory for the association is demonstrated when the conditioned stimulus (the sound) begins to create the same response as the unconditioned stimulus (the food) did before the learning.

The final type of implicit memory is known as **priming**, or *changes in behaviour as a result of experiences that have happened frequently or recently*. Priming refers both to the activation of knowledge (e.g., we can prime the concept of kindness by presenting people with words related to kindness) and to the influence of that activation on behaviour (people who are primed with the concept of kindness may act more kindly).

One measure of the influence of priming on implicit memory is the *word fragment test*, in which a person is asked to fill in missing letters to make words. You can try this yourself: First, try to complete the following word fragments, but work on each one for only three or four seconds. Do any words pop into mind quickly?

_ i b _ a _ y

_ h _ s _ _ i _ n

_ o _ k

_ h _ i s _

Now read the following sentence carefully:

“He got his materials from the shelves, checked them out, and then left the building.”

Then try again to make words out of the word fragments.

I think you might find that it is easier to complete fragments 1 and 3 as “library” and “book,” respectively, after you read the sentence than it was before you read it. However, reading the sentence didn’t really help you to complete fragments 2 and 4 as “physician” and “chaise.” This difference in implicit memory probably occurred because as you read the sentence, the concept of “library” (and perhaps “book”) was primed, even though they were never mentioned explicitly. Once a concept is primed it influences our behaviours, for instance, on word fragment tests.

Our everyday behaviours are influenced by priming in a wide variety of situations. Seeing an advertisement for cigarettes may make us start smoking, seeing the flag of our home country may arouse

our patriotism, and seeing a student from a rival school may arouse our competitive spirit. And these influences on our behaviours may occur without our being aware of them.

Research Focus: Priming Outside Awareness Influences Behaviour

One of the most important characteristics of implicit memories is that they are frequently formed and used *automatically*, without much effort or awareness on our part. In one demonstration of the automaticity and influence of priming effects, John Bargh and his colleagues (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996) conducted a study in which they showed undergraduate students lists of five scrambled words, each of which they were to make into a sentence. Furthermore, for half of the research participants, the words were related to stereotypes of the elderly. These participants saw words such as the following:

in Victoria retired live people

bingo man the forgetful plays

The other half of the research participants also made sentences, but from words that had nothing to do with elderly stereotypes. The purpose of this task was to prime stereotypes of elderly people in memory for some of the participants but not for others.

The experimenters then assessed whether the priming of elderly stereotypes would have any effect on the students' behaviour — and indeed it did. When the research participant had gathered all of his or her belongings, thinking that the experiment was over, the experimenter thanked him or her for participating and gave directions to the closest elevator. Then, without the participants knowing it, the experimenters recorded the amount of time that the participant spent walking from the doorway of the experimental room toward the elevator. As you can see in Figure 9.3, "Research Results." participants who had made sentences using words related to elderly stereotypes took on the behaviours of the elderly — they walked significantly more slowly as they left the experimental room.

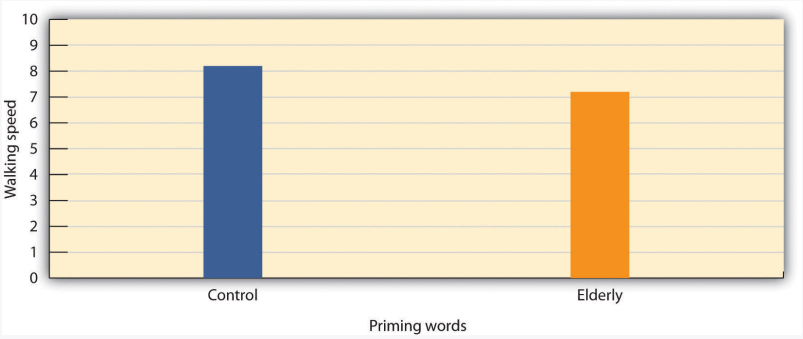


Figure 9.3 Research Results. Bargh, Chen, and Burrows found that priming words associated with the elderly made people walk more slowly (1996).

To determine if these priming effects occurred out of the awareness of the participants, Bargh and his colleagues asked still another group of students to complete the priming task and then to indicate whether they thought the words they had used to make the sentences had any relationship to each other, or could possibly have influenced their behaviour in any way. These students had no awareness of the possibility that the words might have been related to the elderly or could have influenced their behaviour.

Stages of Memory: Sensory, Short-Term, and Long-Term Memory

Another way of understanding memory is to think about it in terms of stages that describe the length of time that information remains available to us. According to this approach (see Figure 9.4, "Memory

Duration"), information begins in *sensory memory*, moves to *short-term memory*, and eventually moves to *long-term memory*. But not all information makes it through all three stages; most of it is forgotten. Whether the information moves from shorter-duration memory into longer-duration memory or whether it is lost from memory entirely depends on how the information is attended to and processed.

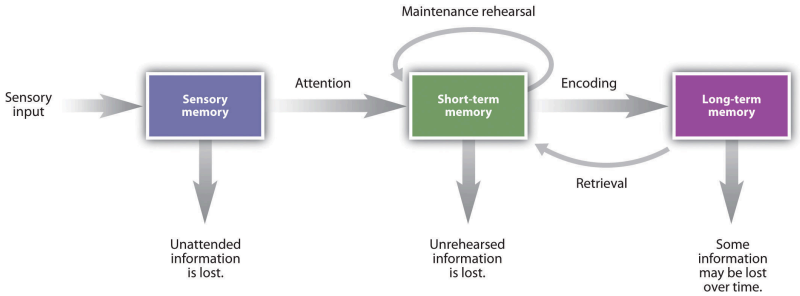


Figure 9.4 Memory Duration. Memory can characterized in terms of stages — the length of time that information remains available to us.

Sensory Memory

Sensory memory refers to *the brief storage of sensory information*. Sensory memory is a memory buffer that lasts only very briefly and then, unless it is attended to and passed on for more processing, is forgotten. The purpose of sensory memory is to give the brain some time to process the incoming sensations, and to allow us to see the world as an unbroken stream of events rather than as individual pieces.

Visual sensory memory is known as **iconic memory**. Iconic memory was first studied by the psychologist George Sperling (1960). In his research, Sperling showed participants a display of letters in rows, similar to that shown in Figure 9.5, "Measuring Iconic Memory." However, the display lasted only about 50 milliseconds (1/20 of a second). Then, Sperling gave his participants a recall test in which they were asked to name all the letters that they could remember. On average, the participants could remember only about one-quarter of the letters that they had seen.

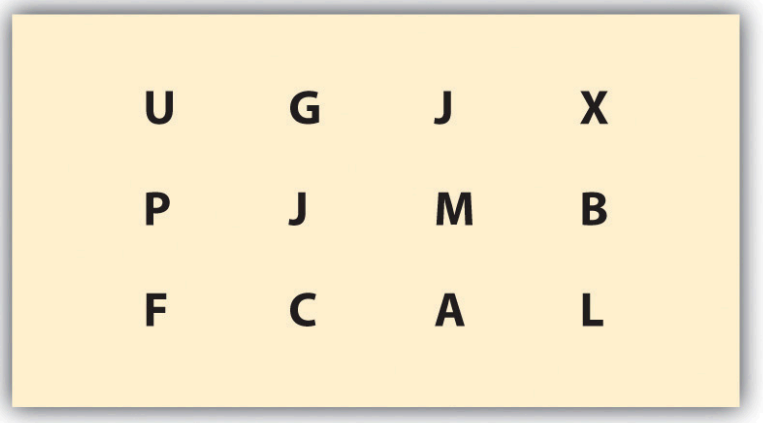


Figure 9.5 Measuring Iconic Memory. Sperling showed his participants displays such as this one for only 1/20th of a second. He found that when he cued the participants to report one of the three rows of letters, they could do it, even if the cue was given shortly after the display had been removed. The research demonstrated the existence of iconic memory.

Sperling reasoned that the participants had seen all the letters but could remember them only very briefly, making it impossible for them to report them all. To test this idea, in his next experiment, he first showed the same letters, but then after the display had been removed, he signaled to the participants to report the letters from either the first, second, or third row. In this condition, the participants now reported almost all the letters in that row. This finding confirmed Sperling's hunch: participants had access to all of the letters in their iconic memories, and if the task was short enough, they were able to report on the part of the display he asked them to. The "short enough" is the length of iconic memory, which turns out to be about 250 milliseconds (¼ of a second).

Auditory sensory memory is known as **echoic memory**. In contrast to iconic memories, which decay very rapidly, echoic memories can last as long as four seconds (Cowan, Lichty, & Grove, 1990). This is convenient as it allows you — among other things — to remember the words that you said at the beginning of a long sentence when you get to the end of it, and to take notes on your psychology professor's most recent statement even after he or she has finished saying it.

In some people iconic memory seems to last longer, a phenomenon known as **eidetic imagery** (or *photographic memory*) in which *people can report details of an image over long periods of time*. These people, who often suffer from psychological disorders such as autism, claim that they can "see" an image long after it has been presented, and can often report accurately on that image. There is also some evidence for eidetic memories in hearing; some people report that their echoic memories persist for unusually long periods of time. The composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart may have possessed eidetic memory for music, because even when he was very young and had not yet had a great deal of musical training, he could listen to long compositions and then play them back almost perfectly (Solomon, 1995).

Short-Term Memory

Most of the information that gets into sensory memory is forgotten, but information that we turn our attention to, with the goal of remembering it, may pass into *short-term memory*. **Short-term memory**

(STM) is *the place where small amounts of information can be temporarily kept for more than a few seconds but usually for less than one minute* (Baddeley, Vallar, & Shallice, 1990). Information in short-term memory is not stored permanently but rather becomes available for us to process, and *the processes that we use to make sense of, modify, interpret, and store information in STM* are known as **working memory**.

Although it is called memory, working memory is not a store of memory like STM but rather a set of memory procedures or operations. Imagine, for instance, that you are asked to participate in a task such as this one, which is a measure of working memory (Unsworth & Engle, 2007). Each of the following questions appears individually on a computer screen and then disappears after you answer the question:

Is 10 × 2 − 5 = 15? (Answer YES OR NO) Then remember “S”
Is 12 ÷ 6 − 2 = 1? (Answer YES OR NO) Then remember “R”
Is 10 × 2 = 5? (Answer YES OR NO) Then remember “P”
Is 8 ÷ 2 − 1 = 1? (Answer YES OR NO) Then remember “T”
Is 6 × 2 − 1 = 8? (Answer YES OR NO) Then remember “U”
Is 2 × 3 − 3 = 0? (Answer YES OR NO) Then remember “Q”

To successfully accomplish the task, you have to answer each of the math problems correctly and at the same time remember the letter that follows the task. Then, after the six questions, you must list the letters that appeared in each of the trials in the correct order (in this case S, R, P, T, U, Q).

To accomplish this difficult task you need to use a variety of skills. You clearly need to use STM, as you must keep the letters in storage until you are asked to list them. But you also need a way to make the best use of your available attention and processing. For instance, you might decide to use a strategy of repeat the letters twice, then quickly solve the next problem, and then repeat the letters twice again including the new one. Keeping this strategy (or others like it) going is the role of working memory’s **central executive** — *the part of working memory that directs attention and processing*. The central executive will make use of whatever strategies seem to be best for the given task. For instance, the central executive will direct the rehearsal process, and at the same time direct the visual cortex to form an image of the list of letters in memory. You can see that although STM is involved, the processes that we use to operate on the material in memory are also critical.

Short-term memory is limited in both the length and the amount of information it can hold. Peterson and Peterson (1959) found that when people were asked to remember a list of three-letter strings and then were immediately asked to perform a distracting task (counting backward by threes), the material was quickly forgotten (see Figure 9.6, “STM Decay”), such that by 18 seconds it was virtually gone.

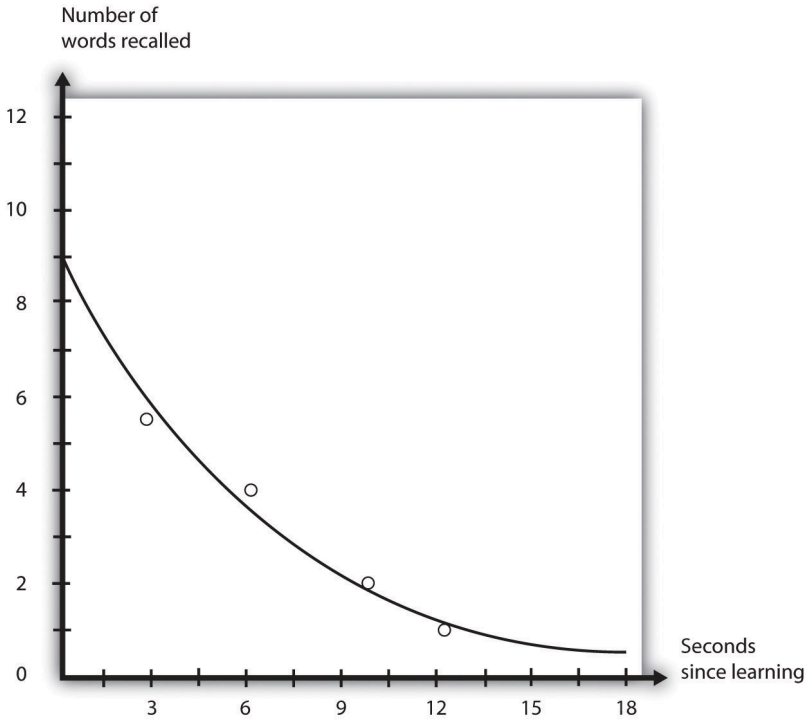


Figure 9.6 STM Decay. Researchers found that information that was not rehearsed decayed quickly from memory.

One way to prevent the decay of information from short-term memory is to use working memory to rehearse it. **Maintenance rehearsal** is *the process of repeating information mentally or out loud with the goal of keeping it in memory*. We engage in maintenance rehearsal to keep something that we want to remember (e.g., a person's name, email address, or phone number) in mind long enough to write it down, use it, or potentially transfer it to long-term memory.

If we continue to rehearse information, it will stay in STM until we stop rehearsing it, but there is also a capacity limit to STM. Try reading each of the following rows of numbers, one row at a time, at a rate of about one number each second. Then when you have finished each row, close your eyes and write down as many of the numbers as you can remember.

019

3586

10295

861059

1029384

75674834

657874104

6550423897

If you are like the average person, you will have found that on this test of working memory, known as a *digit span test*, you did pretty well up to about the fourth line, and then you started having trouble. I bet you missed some of the numbers in the last three rows, and did pretty poorly on the last one.

The digit span of most adults is between five and nine digits, with an average of about seven. The cognitive psychologist George Miller (1956) referred to "seven plus or minus two" pieces of information as the magic number in short-term memory. But if we can only hold a maximum of about nine digits in short-term memory, then how can we remember larger amounts of information than this? For instance, how can we ever remember a 10-digit phone number long enough to dial it?

One way we are able to expand our ability to remember things in STM is by using a memory technique called *chunking*. **Chunking** is *the process of organizing information into smaller groupings (chunks), thereby increasing the number of items that can be held in STM*. For instance, try to remember this string of 12 letters:

XOFCBANNCVTM

You probably won't do that well because the number of letters is more than the magic number of seven.

Now try again with this one:

CTVCBCTSNHBO

Would it help you if I pointed out that the material in this string could be chunked into four sets of three letters each? I think it would, because then rather than remembering 12 letters, you would only have to remember the names of four television stations. In this case, chunking changes the number of items you have to remember from 12 to only four.

Experts rely on chunking to help them process complex information. Herbert Simon and William Chase (1973) showed chess masters and chess novices various positions of pieces on a chessboard for a few seconds each. The experts did a lot better than the novices in remembering the positions because they were able to see the "big picture." They didn't have to remember the position of each of the pieces individually, but chunked the pieces into several larger layouts. But when the researchers showed both groups random chess positions — positions that would be very unlikely to occur in real games — both groups did equally poorly, because in this situation the experts lost their ability to organize the layouts (see Figure 9.7, "Possible and Impossible Chess Positions"). The same occurs for basketball. Basketball players recall actual basketball positions much better than do nonplayers, but only when the positions make sense in terms of what is happening on the court, or what is likely to happen in the near future, and thus can be chunked into bigger units (Didierjean & Marmèche, 2005).

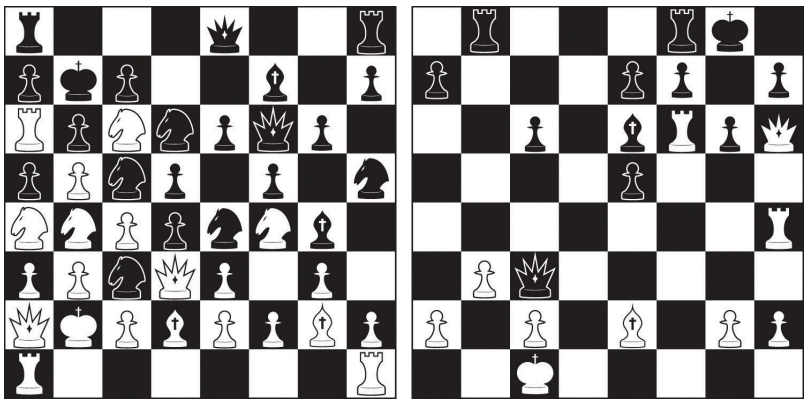


Figure 9.7 Possible and Impossible Chess Positions. Experience matters: Experienced chess players are able to recall the positions of the game on the right much better than are those who are chess novices. But the experts do no better than the novices in remembering the positions on the left, which cannot occur in a real game.

If information makes it past short term-memory it may enter **long-term memory (LTM)**, *memory storage that can hold information for days, months, and years*. The capacity of long-term memory is large, and there is no known limit to what we can remember (Wang, Liu, & Wang, 2003). Although we may forget at least some information after we learn it, other things will stay with us forever. In the next section we will discuss the principles of long-term memory.

Key Takeaways

- Memory refers to the ability to store and retrieve information over time.
- For some things our memory is very good, but our active cognitive processing of information ensures that memory is never an exact replica of what we have experienced.
- Explicit memory refers to experiences that can be intentionally and consciously remembered, and it is measured using recall, recognition, and relearning. Explicit memory includes episodic and semantic memories.
- Measures of relearning (also known as “savings”) assess how much more quickly information is learned when it is studied again after it has already been learned but then forgotten.
- Implicit memory refers to the influence of experience on behaviour, even if the individual is not aware of those influences. The three types of implicit memory are procedural memory, classical conditioning, and priming.
- Information processing begins in sensory memory, moves to short-term memory, and eventually moves to long-term memory.
- Maintenance rehearsal and chunking are used to keep information in short-term memory.
- The capacity of long-term memory is large, and there is no known limit to what we can remember.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. List some situations in which sensory memory is useful for you. What do you think your experience of the stimuli would be like if you had no sensory memory?
2. Describe a situation in which you need to use working memory to perform a task or solve a problem. How do your working memory skills help you?

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Image Attributions

Figure 9.4: Adapted from Atkinson & Shiffrin (1968).

Figure 9.5: Adapted from Sperling (1960).

Figure 9.6: Adapted from Peterson & Peterson (1959).

9.2 How We Remember: Cues to Improving Memory

Learning Objectives

1. Label and review the principles of encoding, storage, and retrieval.
2. Summarize the types of amnesia and their effects on memory.
3. Describe how the context in which we learn information can influence our memory of that information.

Although it is useful to hold information in sensory and short-term memory, we also rely on our long-term memory (LTM). We want to remember the name of the new boy in the class, the name of the movie we saw last week, and the material for our upcoming psychology test. Psychological research has produced a great deal of knowledge about long-term memory, and this research can be useful as you try to learn and remember new material (see Table 9.2, “Helpful Memory Techniques Based on Psychological Research”). In this section we will consider this question in terms of the types of processing that we do of the information we want to remember. To be successful, the information that we want to remember must be *encoded* and *stored*, and then *retrieved*.

Table 9.2 Helpful Memory Techniques Based on Psychological Research.

[Skip Table]		
Technique	**Description**	**Useful example**
Use elaborative encoding.	Material is better remembered if it is processed more fully.	Think, for instance, "Proactive interference is like retroactive interference but it occurs in a forward manner."
Make use of the self-reference effect.	Material is better remembered if it is linked to thoughts about the self.	Think, for instance, "I remember a time when I knew the answer to an exam question but couldn't quite get it to come to mind. This was an example of the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon."
Be aware of the forgetting curve.	Information that we have learned drops off rapidly with time.	Review the material that you have already studied right before the exam to increase the likelihood it will remain in memory.
Make use of the spacing effect.	Information is learned better when it is studied in shorter periods spaced over time.	Study a little bit every day; do not cram at the last minute.
Rely on overlearning.	We can continue to learn even after we think we know the information perfectly.	Keep studying, even if you think you already have it down.
Use context-dependent retrieval.	We have better retrieval when it occurs in the same situation in which we learned the material.	If possible, study under conditions similar to the conditions in which you will take the exam.
Use state-dependent retrieval.	We have better retrieval when we are in the same psychological state as we were when we learned the material.	Many possibilities, but don't study under the influence of drugs or alcohol, unless you plan to use them on the day of the exam (which is not recommended).

Encoding and Storage: How Our Perceptions Become Memories

Encoding is *the process by which we place the things that we experience into memory*. Unless information is encoded, it cannot be remembered. I'm sure you've been to a party where you've been introduced to someone and then — maybe only seconds later — you realize that you do not remember the person's name. Of course it's not really surprising that you can't remember the name, because you probably were distracted and you never encoded the name to begin with.

Not everything we experience can or should be encoded. We tend to encode things that we need to remember and not bother to encode things that are irrelevant. Look at Figure 9.8, "American Pennies in Different Styles," which shows different images of U.S. pennies. Can you tell which one is the real one? Nickerson and Adams (1979) found that very few of the American participants they tested could identify the right one.



Figure 9.8 American Pennies in Different Styles. Can you identify the "real" penny? We tend to have poor memory for things that don't matter, even if we see them frequently.

One way to improve our memory is to use better encoding strategies. Some ways of studying are more effective than others. Research has found that we are better able to remember information if we encode it in a meaningful way. When we engage in **elaborative encoding**we *process new information in ways that make it more relevant or meaningful* (Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Harris & Qualls, 2000).

Imagine that you are trying to remember the characteristics of the different schools of psychology we discussed in Chapter 1, "Introducing Psychology." Rather than simply trying to remember the schools and their characteristics, you might try to relate the information to things you already know. For instance, you might try to remember the fundamentals of the cognitive school of psychology by linking the characteristics to the computer model. The cognitive school focuses on how information is input, processed, and retrieved, and you might think about how computers do pretty much the same thing. You might also try to organize the information into meaningful units. For instance, you might link the cognitive school to structuralism because both were concerned with mental processes. You also might try to use visual cues to help you remember the information. You might look at the image of Freud and imagine what he looked like as a child. That image might help you remember that childhood experiences were an important part of Freudian theory. Each person has his or her unique way of elaborating on information; the important thing is to try to develop unique and meaningful associations among the materials.

Research Focus: Elaboration and Memory

In an important study showing the effectiveness of elaborative encoding, Rogers, Kuiper, and Kirker (1977) studied how people recalled information that they had learned under different processing conditions. All the participants were presented with the same list of 40 adjectives to learn, but through the use of random assignment, the participants were given one of four different sets of instructions about how to process the adjectives.

Participants assigned to the *structural task condition* were asked to judge whether the word was printed in

uppercase or lowercase letters. Participants in the *phonemic task condition* were asked whether or not the word rhymed with another given word. In the *semantic task condition*, the participants were asked if the word was a synonym of another word. And in the *self-reference task condition*, participants were asked to indicate whether or not the given adjective was or was not true of themselves. After completing the specified task, each participant was asked to recall as many adjectives as he or she could remember.

Rogers and his colleagues hypothesized that different types of processing would have different effects on memory. As you can see in Figure 9.9, "Self-Reference Effect Results," the students in the self-reference task condition recalled significantly more adjectives than did students in any other condition. This finding, known as the *self-reference effect*, is powerful evidence that the self-concept helps us organize and remember information. The next time you are studying for an exam, you might try relating the material to your own experiences. The self-reference effect suggests that doing so will help you better remember the information (Symons & Johnson, 1997).

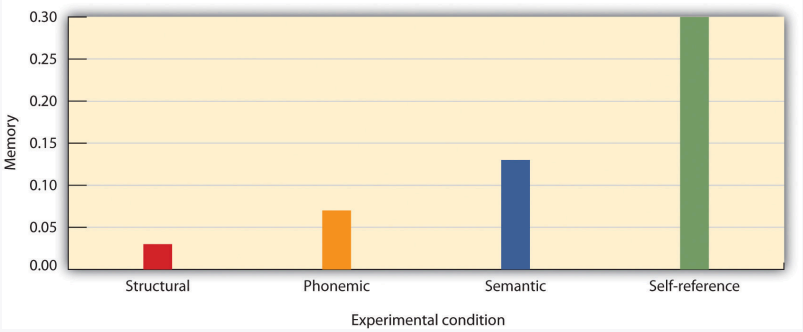


Figure 9.9 Self-Reference Effect Results. Participants recalled the same words significantly better when they were processed in relation to the self than when they were processed in other ways. [Long Description]

Using the Contributions of Hermann Ebbinghaus to Improve Your Memory

Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850-1909) was a pioneer of the study of memory. In this section we consider three of his most important findings, each of which can help you improve your memory. In his research, in which he was the only research participant, Ebbinghaus practised memorizing lists of nonsense syllables, such as the following:

DIF, LAJ, LEQ, MUV, WYC, DAL, SEN, KEP, NUD

You can imagine that because the material that he was trying to learn was not at all meaningful, it was not easy to do. Ebbinghaus plotted how many of the syllables he could remember against the time that had elapsed since he had studied them. He discovered an important principle of memory: Memory decays rapidly at first, but the amount of decay levels off with time (Figure 9.10, "Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve"). Although Ebbinghaus looked at forgetting after days had elapsed, the same effect occurs on longer and shorter time scales. Bahrick (1984) found that students who took a Spanish language course forgot about one half of the vocabulary that they had learned within three years, but that after that time their memory remained pretty much constant. Forgetting also drops off quickly on a shorter time frame. This suggests that you should try to review the material that you have already studied right before you take an exam; that way, you will be more likely to remember the material during the exam.

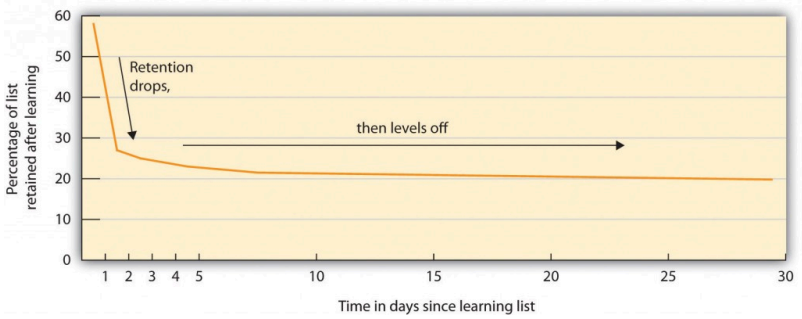


Figure 9.10 Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve. Hermann Ebbinghaus found that memory for information drops off rapidly at first but then levels off after time.

Ebbinghaus also discovered another important principle of learning, known as the *spacing effect*. The **spacing effect** refers to *the fact that learning is better when the same amount of study is spread out over periods of time than it is when it occurs closer together or at the same time*. This means that even if you have only a limited amount of time to study, you'll learn more if you study continually throughout the semester (a little bit every day is best) than if you wait to cram at the last minute before your exam (Figure 9.11, "Effects of Massed versus Distributed Practice on Learning"). Another good strategy is to study and then wait as long as you can before you forget the material. Then review the information and again wait as long as you can before you forget it. (This probably will be a longer period of time than the first time.) Repeat and repeat again. The spacing effect is usually considered in terms of the difference between *distributed practice* (practice that is spread out over time) and *massed practice* (practice that comes in one block), with the former approach producing better memory.

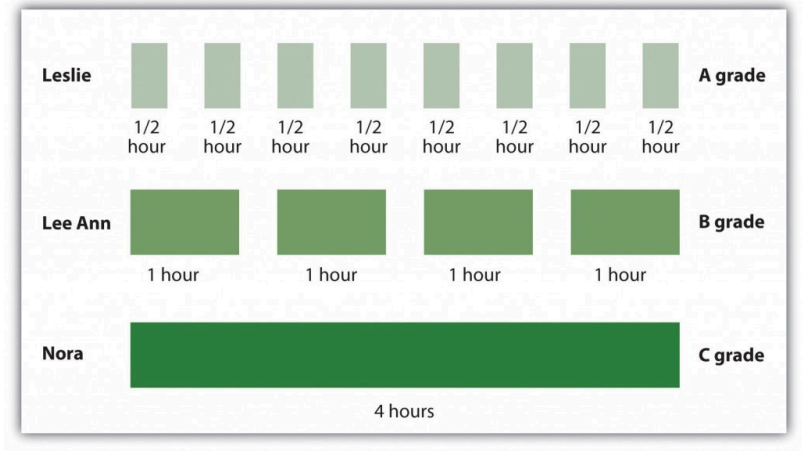


Figure 9.11 Effects of Massed versus Distributed Practice on Learning. The spacing effect refers to the fact that memory is better when it is distributed rather than massed. Leslie, Lee Ann, and Nora all studied for four hours total, but the students who spread out their learning into smaller study sessions did better on the exam.

Ebbinghaus also considered the role of **overlearning** — that is, *continuing to practice and study even when we think that we have mastered the material*. Ebbinghaus and other researchers have found that overlearning helps encoding (Driskell, Willis, & Copper, 1992). Students frequently think that they have already mastered the material but then discover when they get to the exam that they have not. The point is clear: try to keep studying and reviewing, even if you think you already know all the material.

Retrieval

Even when information has been adequately encoded and stored, it does not do us any good if we cannot retrieve it. **Retrieval** refers to *the process of reactivating information that has been stored in memory*. You can get an idea of the difficulty posed by retrieval by simply reading each of the words (but not the categories) in the sidebar below to someone. Tell the person that after you have read all the words, you will ask her to recall the words.

After you read the list to your friend, give her enough time to write down all the words that she can recall. Make sure that she cannot recall any more and then, for the words that were not listed, prompt your friend with some of the category names: “Do you remember any words that were furniture? Do you remember any words that were tools?” I think you will find that the category names, which serve as retrieval cues, will help your friend remember information that she could not retrieve otherwise.

Retrieval Demonstration

Try this test of the ability to retrieve information with a classmate. The instructions are in the text.

Apple	(Fruit)
Dresser	(Furniture)
Sander	(Tool)
Pomegranate	(Fruit)
Sunflower	(Flower)
Tangerine	(Fruit)
Chair	(Furniture)
Peony	(Flower)
Banana	(Fruit)
Sofa	(Furniture)
Bench	(Furniture)
Strawberry	(Fruit)
Television stand	(Furniture)
Magnolia	(Flower)
Rose	(Flower)
Wrench	(Tool)
Screwdriver	(Tool)
Dahlia	(Flower)
Drill press	(Tool)
Hammer	(Tool)

We have all experienced retrieval failure in the form of the frustrating **tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon**, in which *we are certain that we know something that we are trying to recall but cannot quite come up with it*. You can try this one on your friends as well. Read your friend the names of the 10 provinces listed in the sidebar, and ask him to name the capital city of each province. Now, for the capital cities that your friend can't name, give him just the first letter of the capital city. You'll probably find that having the first letters of the cities helps with retrieval. The tip-of-the-tongue experience is a very good example of the inability to retrieve information that is actually stored in memory.

Provinces and Capital Cities

Try this demonstration of the tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon with a classmate. Instructions are in the text.

Alberta	Edmonton
British Columbia	Victoria
Manitoba	Winnipeg
New Brunswick	Fredericton
Newfoundland/Labrador	St. John's
Nova Scotia	Halifax
Ontario	Toronto
Prince Edward Island	Charlottetown
Quebec	Quebec City
Saskatchewan	Regina

We are more likely to be able to retrieve items from memory when conditions at retrieval are similar to the conditions under which we encoded them. **Context-dependent learning** refers to *an increase in retrieval when the external situation in which information is learned matches the situation in which it is remembered*. Godden and Baddeley (1975) conducted a study to test this idea using scuba divers. They asked the divers to learn a list of words either when they were on land or when they were underwater. Then they tested the divers on their memory, either in the same or the opposite situation. As you can see in Figure 9.12, "Context-dependent Learning," the divers' memory was better when they were tested in the same context in which they had learned the words than when they were tested in the other context.

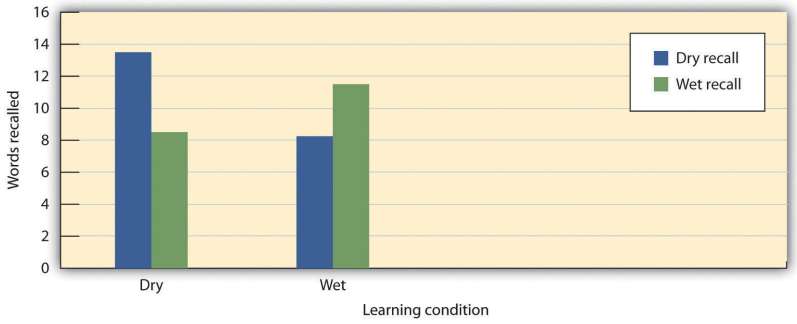


Figure 9.12 Context-dependent Learning. Researchers tested the memory of scuba divers to learn and retrieve information in different contexts and found strong evidence for context-dependent learning. [Long Description]

You can see that context-dependent learning might also be important in improving your memory. For instance, you might want to try to study for an exam in a situation that is similar to the one in which you are going to take the exam.

Whereas context-dependent learning refers to a match in the external situation between learning and remembering, **state-dependent learning** refers to *superior retrieval of memories when the individual is*

in the same physiological or psychological state as during encoding. Research has found, for instance, that animals that learn a maze while under the influence of one drug tend to remember their learning better when they are tested under the influence of the same drug than when they are tested without the drug (Jackson, Koek, & Colpaert, 1992). And research with humans finds that bilinguals remember better when tested in the same language in which they learned the material (Marian & Kaushanskaya, 2007). Mood states may also produce state-dependent learning. People who learn information when they are in a bad (rather than a good) mood find it easier to recall these memories when they are tested while they are in a bad mood, and vice versa. It is easier to recall unpleasant memories than pleasant ones when we're sad, and easier to recall pleasant memories than unpleasant ones when we're happy (Bower, 1981; Eich, 2008).

Variations in the ability to retrieve information are also seen in the *serial position curve*. When we give people a list of words one at a time (e.g., on flashcards) and then ask them to recall them, the results look something like those in Figure 9.13, "The Serial Position Curve." *People are able to retrieve more words that were presented to them at the beginning and the end of the list than they are words that were presented in the middle of the list*. This pattern, known as the **serial position curve**, is caused by two retrieval phenomenon: The **primacy effect** refers to *a tendency to better remember stimuli that are presented early in a list*. The recency effect refers to *the tendency to better remember stimuli that are presented later in a list*.

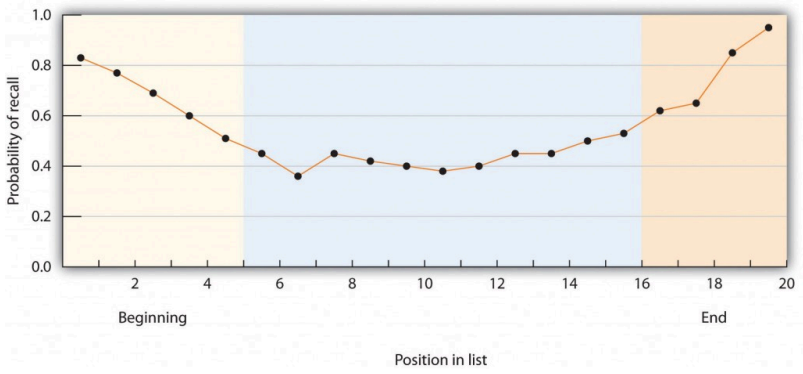


Figure 9.13 The Serial Position Curve. The serial position curve is the result of both primacy effects and recency effects.

There are a number of explanations for primacy and recency effects, but one of them is in terms of the effects of rehearsal on short-term and long-term memory (Baddeley, Eysenck, & Anderson, 2009). Because we can keep the last words that we learned in the presented list in short-term memory by rehearsing them before the memory test begins, they are relatively easily remembered. So the recency effect can be explained in terms of maintenance rehearsal in short-term memory. And the primacy effect may also be due to rehearsal — when we hear the first word in the list we start to rehearse it, making it more likely that it will be moved from short-term to long-term memory. And the same is true for the other words that come early in the list. But for the words in the middle of the list, this rehearsal becomes much harder, making them less likely to be moved to LTM.

In some cases our existing memories influence our new learning. This may occur either in a backward way or a forward way (Figure 9.14, "Proactive and Retroactive Interference"). **Retroactive interference** occurs when *learning something new impairs our ability to retrieve information that was learned earlier*. For example, if you have learned to program in one computer language, and then you learn to program in another similar one, you may start to make mistakes programming the first language that you never

would have made before you learned the new one. In this case the new memories work backward (retroactively) to influence retrieval from memory that is already in place.

In contrast to retroactive interference, *proactive interference* works in a forward direction. **Proactive interference** occurs when *earlier learning impairs our ability to encode information that we try to learn later*. For example, if we have learned French as a second language, this knowledge may make it more difficult, at least in some respects, to learn a third language (say Spanish), which involves similar but not identical vocabulary.

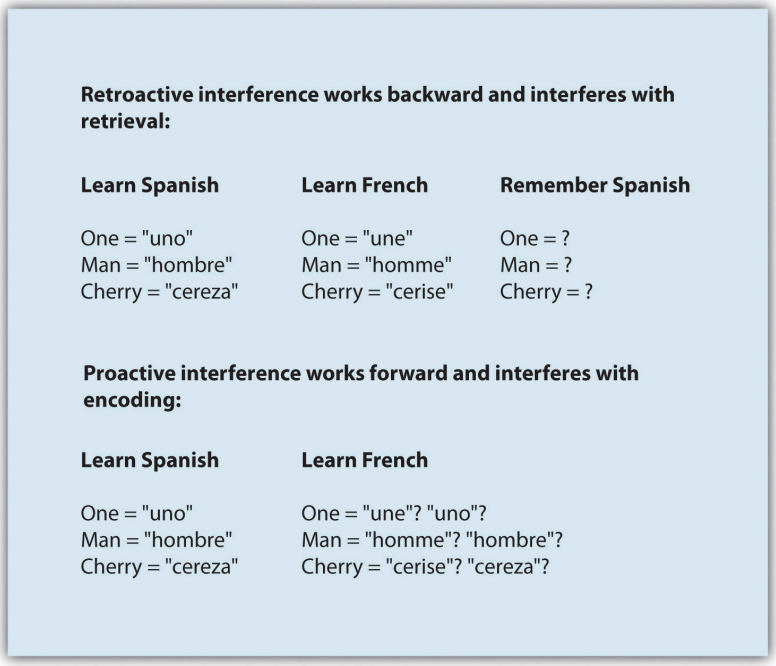


Figure 9.14 Proactive and Retroactive Interference. Retroactive and proactive interference can both influence memory.

The Structure of LTM: Categories, Prototypes, and Schemas

Memories that are stored in LTM are not isolated but rather are linked together into **categories**— *networks of associated memories that have features in common with each other*. Forming categories, and using categories to guide behaviour, is a fundamental part of human nature. Associated concepts within a category are connected through *spreading activation*, which occurs when activating one element of a category activates other associated elements. For instance, because tools are associated in a category, reminding people of the word “screwdriver” will help them remember the word “wrench.” And, when people have learned lists of words that come from different categories (e.g., as in “Retrieval Demonstration”), they do not recall the information haphazardly. If they have just remembered the word “wrench,” they are more likely to remember the word “screwdriver” next than they are to remember the word “dahlia,” because the words are organized in memory by category and because “dahlia” is activated by spreading activation from “wrench” (Srull & Wyer, 1989).

Some categories have *defining features* that must be true of all members of the category. For instance, all members of the category triangles have three sides, and all members of the category birds lay eggs. But most categories are not so well defined; the members of the category share some common features,

but it is impossible to define which are or are not members of the category. For instance, there is no clear definition of the category "tool." Some examples of the category, such as a hammer and a wrench, are clearly and easily identified as category members, whereas other members are not so obvious. Is an ironing board a tool? What about a car?

Members of categories (even those with defining features) can be compared with the **category prototype**, which is *the member of the category that is most average or typical of the category*. Some category members are more prototypical of, or similar to, the category than others (Figure 9.15, "Prototypicality"). For instance, some category members (robins and sparrows) are highly prototypical of the category birds, whereas other category members (penguins and ostriches) are less prototypical. We retrieve information that is prototypical of a category faster than we retrieve information that is less prototypical (Rosch, 1975).



Figure 9.15 Prototypicality. Category members vary in terms of their prototypicality. Some cats are "better" members of the category than are others.

Mental categories are sometimes referred to as **schemas**— *patterns of knowledge in long-term memory that help us organize information*. We have schemas about objects (that a triangle has three sides and may take on different angles), about people (that Sam is friendly, likes to golf, and always wears sandals), about events (the particular steps involved in ordering a meal at a restaurant), and about social groups (we call these group schemas *stereotypes*) – Figure 9.16, "Different Schemas".

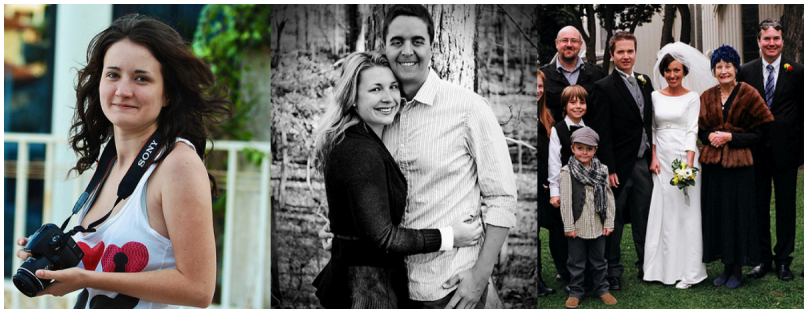


Figure 9.16 Different Schemas. Our schemas about people, couples, and events help us organize and remember information.

Schemas are important in part because they help us remember new information by providing an organizational structure for it. Read the following paragraph (Bransford & Johnson, 1972) and then try to write down everything you can remember.

> The procedure is actually quite simple. First you arrange things into different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending on how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities, that is the next step; otherwise you are pretty well set. It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do too few things at once than too many. In the short run this may not seem important, but complications can easily arise. A mistake can be expensive as well. At first the whole procedure will seem complicated. Soon, however, it will become just another facet of life. It is difficult to foresee any end to the necessity for this task in the immediate future, but then one never can tell. After the procedure is completed, one arranges the materials into different groups again. Then they can be put into their appropriate places. Eventually they will be used once more and the whole cycle will then have to be repeated. However, that is part of life.

It turns out that people's memory for this information is quite poor, unless they have been told ahead of time that the information describes "doing the laundry," in which case their memory for the material is much better. This demonstration of the role of schemas in memory shows how our existing knowledge can help us organize new information, and how this organization can improve encoding, storage, and retrieval.

The Biology of Memory

Just as information is stored on digital media such as DVDs and flash drives, the information in LTM must be stored in the brain. The ability to maintain information in LTM involves a gradual strengthening of the connections among the neurons in the brain. When pathways in these neural networks are frequently and repeatedly fired, the synapses become more efficient in communicating with each other, and these changes create memory. This process, known as **long-term potentiation (LTP)**, refers to *the strengthening of the synaptic connections between neurons as result of frequent stimulation* (Lynch, 2002). Drugs that block LTP reduce learning, whereas drugs that enhance LTP increase learning (Lynch et al., 1991). Because the new patterns of activation in the synapses take time to develop, LTP happens gradually. The period of time in which LTP occurs and in which memories are stored is known as the period of *consolidation*.

Memory is not confined to the cortex; it occurs through sophisticated interactions between new and

old brain structures (Figure 9.17, "Schematic Image of Brain with Hippocampus, Amygdala, and Cerebellum Highlighted"). One of the most important brain regions in explicit memory is the hippocampus, which serves as a preprocessor and elaborator of information (Squire, 1992). The hippocampus helps us encode information about spatial relationships, the context in which events were experienced, and the associations among memories (Eichenbaum, 1999). The hippocampus also serves in part as a switching point that holds the memory for a short time and then directs the information to other parts of the brain, such as the cortex, to actually do the rehearsing, elaboration, and long-term storage (Jonides, Lacey, & Nee, 2005). Without the hippocampus, which might be described as the brain's "librarian," our explicit memories would be inefficient and disorganized.

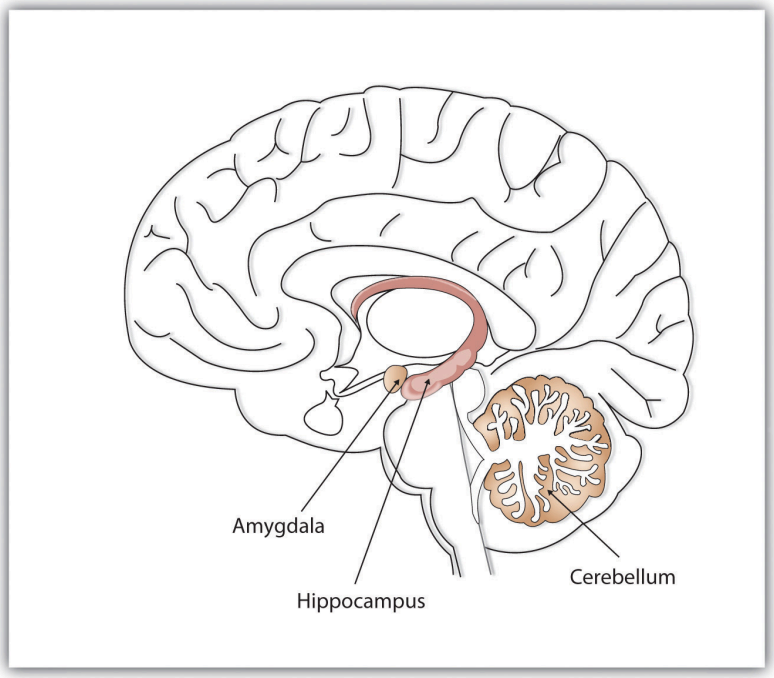


Figure 9.17 Schematic Image of Brain with Hippocampus, Amygdala, and Cerebellum Highlighted. Different brain structures help us remember different types of information. The hippocampus is particularly important in explicit memories, the cerebellum is particularly important in implicit memories, and the amygdala is particularly important in emotional memories.

While the hippocampus is handling explicit memory, the cerebellum and the amygdala are concentrating on implicit and emotional memories, respectively. Research shows that the cerebellum is more active when we are learning associations and in priming tasks, and animals and humans with damage to the cerebellum have more difficulty in classical conditioning studies (Krupa, Thompson, & Thompson, 1993; Woodruff-Pak, Goldenberg, Downey-Lamb, Boyko, & Lemieux, 2000). The storage of many of our most important emotional memories, and particularly those related to fear, is initiated and controlled by the amygdala (Sigurdsson, Doyère, Cain, & LeDoux, 2007).

Evidence for the role of different brain structures in different types of memories comes in part from case studies of patients who suffer from **amnesia**, *a memory disorder that involves the inability to remember information*. As with memory interference effects, amnesia can work in either a forward or a backward direction, affecting retrieval or encoding. For people who suffer damage to the brain, for instance, as

a result of a stroke or other trauma, the amnesia may work backward. The outcome is **retrograde amnesia**, *a memory disorder that produces an inability to retrieve events that occurred before a given time*. Demonstrating the fact that LTP takes time (the process of consolidation), retrograde amnesia is usually more severe for memories that occurred just prior to the trauma than it is for older memories, and events that occurred just before the event that caused memory loss may never be recovered because they were never completely encoded.

Organisms with damage to the hippocampus develop a type of amnesia that works in a forward direction to affect encoding, known as *anterograde amnesia*. **Anterograde amnesia** is *the inability to transfer information from short-term into long-term memory*, making it impossible to form new memories. One well-known case study was a man named Henry Gustav Molaison (before he died in 2008, he was referred to only as H. M.) who had parts of his hippocampus removed to reduce severe seizures (Corkin, Amaral, González, Johnson, & Hyman, 1997). Following the operation, Molaison developed virtually complete anterograde amnesia. Although he could remember most of what had happened before the operation, and particularly what had occurred early in his life, he could no longer create new memories. Molaison was said to have read the same magazines over and over again without any awareness of having seen them before.

Cases of anterograde amnesia also provide information about the brain structures involved in different types of memory (Bayley & Squire, 2005; Helmuth, 1999; Paller, 2004). Although Molaison's explicit memory was compromised because his hippocampus was damaged, his implicit memory was not (because his cerebellum was intact). He could learn to trace shapes in a mirror, a task that requires procedural memory, but he never had any explicit recollection of having performed this task or of the people who administered the test to him.

Kent Cochrane, born in Toronto in 1951, lived with severe amnesia after a motorcycle accident in 1981. His brain was among the most studied in the world. Cochrane suffered from both anterograde amnesia and temporally graded retrograde amnesia. Both forms of amnesia are characterized by damage to the medial temporal lobes, specifically within the hippocampal region. The trauma caused by Cochrane's accident made it impossible for him to remember both new personal experiences and semantic information. Research conducted on Cochrane has shown that he was able to recall factual information learned prior to his accident, such as the difference between stalactites and stalagmites, but was unable to remember emotional details such as his brother's death and a dangerous fall he had.

Although some brain structures are particularly important in memory, this does not mean that all memories are stored in one place. The psychologist Karl Lashley (1929) attempted to determine where memories were stored in the brain by teaching rats how to run mazes, and then lesioning different brain structures to see if they were still able to complete the maze. This idea seemed straightforward, and Lashley expected to find that memory was stored in certain parts of the brain. But he discovered that no matter where he removed brain tissue, the rats retained at least some memory of the maze, leading him to conclude that memory isn't located in a single place in the brain, but rather is distributed around it.

Long-term potentiation occurs as a result of changes in the synapses, which suggests that chemicals, particularly neurotransmitters and hormones, must be involved in memory. There is quite a bit of evidence that this is true. **Glutamate**, a *neurotransmitter and a form of the amino acid glutamic acid, is perhaps the most important neurotransmitter in memory* (McEntee & Crook, 1993). When animals, including people, are under stress, more glutamate is secreted, and this glutamate can help

them remember (McGaugh, 2003). The neurotransmitter *serotonin* is also secreted when animals learn, and *epinephrine* may also increase memory, particularly for stressful events (Maki & Resnick, 2000; Sherwin, 1998). *Estrogen*, a female sex hormone, also seems critical, because women who are experiencing menopause, along with a reduction in estrogen, frequently report memory difficulties (Chester, 2001).

Our knowledge of the role of biology in memory suggests that it might be possible to use drugs to improve our memories, and North Americans spend several hundred million dollars per year on memory supplements with the hope of doing just that. Yet controlled studies comparing memory enhancers, including Ritalin, methylphenidate, ginkgo biloba, and amphetamines, with placebo drugs find very little evidence for their effectiveness (Gold, Cahill, & Wenk, 2002; McDaniel, Maier, & Einstein, 2002). Memory supplements are usually no more effective than drinking a sugared soft drink, which also releases glucose and thus improves memory slightly. This is not to say that we cannot someday create drugs that will significantly improve our memory. It is likely that this will occur in the future, but the implications of these advances are as yet unknown (Farah et al., 2004; Turner & Sahakian, 2006).

Although the most obvious potential use of drugs is to attempt to improve memory, drugs might also be used to help us forget. This might be desirable in some cases, such as for those suffering from *post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)* who are unable to forget disturbing memories. Although there are no existing therapies that involve using drugs to help people forget, it is possible that they will be available in the future. These possibilities will raise some important ethical issues: is it ethical to erase memories, and if it is, is it desirable to do so? Perhaps the experience of emotional pain is a part of being a human being. And perhaps the experience of emotional pain may help us cope with the trauma.

Key Takeaways

- Information is better remembered when it is meaningfully elaborated.
- Hermann Ebbinghaus made important contributions to the study of learning, including modelling the forgetting curve, and studying the spacing effect and the benefits of overlearning.
- Context- and state-dependent learning, as well as primacy and recency effects, influence long-term memory.
- Memories are stored in connected synapses through the process of long-term potentiation (LTP). In addition to the cortex, other parts of the brain, including the hippocampus, cerebellum, and the amygdala, are also important in memory.
- Damage to the brain may result in retrograde amnesia or anterograde amnesia. Case studies of patients with amnesia can provide information about the brain structures involved in different types of memory.
- Memory is influenced by chemicals including glutamate, serotonin, epinephrine, and estrogen.
- Studies comparing memory enhancers with placebo drugs find very little evidence for their effectiveness.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Plan a course of action to help you study for your next exam, incorporating as many of the techniques mentioned in this section as possible. Try to implement the plan.
2. Make a list of some of the schemas that you have stored in your memory. What are the contents of each schema, and how might you use the schema to help you remember new information?
3. In the film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, the characters undergo a medical procedure designed to erase their memories of a painful romantic relationship. Would you engage in such a procedure if it were safely offered to you?

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Image Attributions

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Long Descriptions

Figure 9.9 long description: Self-Reference Effect Results

	Experimental Condition			
	Structural	Phonemic	Semantic	Self-reference
Memory	0.03	0.07	0.13	0.30

[Return to Figure 9.9]

Figure 9.12 long description: Context-Dependent Learning

	Number of words recalled on land	**Number of words recalled in water**
Words learned on land	13	8.6
Words learned in water	8	10.4

[Return to Figure 9.12]

9.3 Accuracy and Inaccuracy in Memory and Cognition

Learning Objectives

1. Outline the variables that can influence the accuracy of our memory for events.
2. Explain how schemas can distort our memories.
3. Describe the representativeness heuristic and the availability heuristic and explain how they may lead to errors in judgment.

As we have seen, our memories are not perfect. They fail in part due to our inadequate encoding and storage, and in part due to our inability to accurately retrieve stored information. But memory is also influenced by the setting in which it occurs, by the events that occur to us after we have experienced an event, and by the cognitive processes that we use to help us remember. Although our cognition allows us to attend to, rehearse, and organize information, cognition may also lead to distortions and errors in our judgments and our behaviours.

In this section we consider some of the *cognitive biases* that are known to influence humans. **Cognitive biases** are *errors in memory or judgment that are caused by the inappropriate use of cognitive processes* (Table 9.3 ,"Cognitive Processes That Pose Threats to Accuracy"). The study of cognitive biases is important both because it relates to the important psychological theme of accuracy versus inaccuracy in perception, and because being aware of the types of errors that we may make can help us avoid them and therefore improve our decision-making skills.

Table 9.3 Cognitive Processes That Pose Threats to Accuracy.

[Skip Table]		
Cognitive process	**Description**	**Potential threat to accuracy**
Source monitoring	The ability to accurately identify the source of a memory	Uncertainty about the source of a memory may lead to mistaken judgments.
Confirmation bias	The tendency to verify and confirm our existing memories rather than to challenge and disconfirm them	Once beliefs become established, they become self-perpetuating and difficult to change.
Functional fixedness	When schemas prevent us from seeing and using information in new and nontraditional ways	Creativity may be impaired by the overuse of traditional, expectancy-based thinking.
Misinformation effect	Errors in memory that occur when new but incorrect information influences existing accurate memories	Eyewitnesses who are questioned by the police may change their memories of what they observed at the crime scene.
Overconfidence	When we are more certain that our memories and judgments are accurate than we should be	Eyewitnesses may be very confident that they have accurately identified a suspect, even though their memories are incorrect.
Salience	When some stimuli (e.g., those that are colourful, moving, or unexpected) grab our attention and make them more likely to be remembered	We may base our judgments on a single salient event while we ignore hundreds of other equally informative events that we do not see.
Representativeness heuristic	Tendency to make judgments according to how well the event matches our expectations	After a coin has come up “heads” many times in a row, we may erroneously think that the next flip is more likely to be “tails” (the gambler’s fallacy).
Availability heuristic	Idea that things that come to mind easily are seen as more common	We may overestimate the crime statistics in our own area, because these crimes are so easy to recall.
Cognitive accessibility	Idea that some memories are more highly activated than others	We may think that we contributed more to a project than we really did because it is so easy to remember our own contributions.
Counterfactual thinking	When we “replay” events such that they turn out differently (especially when only minor changes in the events leading up to them make a difference)	We may feel particularly bad about events that might not have occurred if only a small change had occurred before them.

Source Monitoring: Did It Really Happen?

One potential error in memory involves mistakes in differentiating the sources of information. **Source monitoring** refers to *the ability to accurately identify the source of a memory*. Perhaps you’ve had the experience of wondering whether you really experienced an event or only dreamed or imagined it. If so, you wouldn’t be alone. Rassin, Merkelbach, and Spaan (2001) reported that up to 25% of undergraduate students reported being confused about real versus dreamed events. Studies suggest that people who

are fantasy-prone are more likely to experience source monitoring errors (Winograd, Peluso, & Glover, 1998), and such errors also occur more often for both children and the elderly than for adolescents and younger adults (Jacoby & Rhodes, 2006).

In other cases we may be sure that we remembered the information from real life but be uncertain about exactly where we heard it. Imagine that you read a news story in a tabloid magazine such as *HELLO! Canada*. Probably you would have discounted the information because you know that its source is unreliable. But what if later you were to remember the story but forget the source of the information? If this happens, you might become convinced that the news story is true because you forget to discount it. The **sleeper effect** refers to *attitude change that occurs over time when we forget the source of information* (Pratkanis, Greenwald, Leippe, & Baumgardner, 1988).

In still other cases we may forget where we learned information and mistakenly assume that we created the memory ourselves. Canadian authors Wayson Choy, Sky Lee, and Paul Yee launched a $6 million copyright infringement lawsuit against the parent company of Penguin Group Canada, claiming that the novel *Gold Mountain Blues* contained "substantial elements" of certain works by the plaintiffs (Cbc.ca, 2011). The suit was filed against Pearson Canada Inc., author Ling Zhang, and the novel's U.K.-based translator Nicky Harman. Zhang claimed that the book shared a few general plot similarities with the other works but that those similarities reflect common events and experiences in the Chinese immigrant community. She argued that the novel was "the result of years of research and several field trips to China and Western Canada," and that she had not read the other works. Nothing was proven in court.

Finally, the musician George Harrison claimed that he was unaware that the melody of his song *My Sweet Lord* was almost identical to an earlier song by another composer. The judge in the copyright suit that followed ruled that Harrison did not intentionally commit the plagiarism. (Please use this knowledge to become extra vigilant about source attributions in your written work, not to try to excuse yourself if you are accused of plagiarism.)

Schematic Processing: Distortions Based on Expectations

We have seen that schemas help us remember information by organizing material into coherent representations. However, although schemas can improve our memories, they may also lead to cognitive biases. Using schemas may lead us to falsely remember things that never happened to us and to distort or misremember things that did. For one, schemas lead to the **confirmation bias**, which is *the tendency to verify and confirm our existing memories rather than to challenge and disconfirm them*. The confirmation bias occurs because once we have schemas, they influence how we seek out and interpret new information. The confirmation bias leads us to remember information that fits our schemas better than we remember information that disconfirms them (Stangor & McMillan, 1992), a process that makes our stereotypes very difficult to change. And we ask questions in ways that confirm our schemas (Trope & Thompson, 1997). If we think that a person is an extrovert, we might ask her about ways that she likes to have fun, thereby making it more likely that we will confirm our beliefs. In short, once we begin to believe in something — for instance, a stereotype about a group of people — it becomes very difficult to later convince us that these beliefs are not true; the beliefs become self-confirming.

Darley and Gross (1983) demonstrated how schemas about social class could influence memory. In their research they gave participants a picture and some information about a Grade 4 girl named Hannah. To activate a schema about her social class, Hannah was pictured sitting in front of a nice suburban house

for one-half of the participants and pictured in front of an impoverished house in an urban area for the other half. Then the participants watched a video that showed Hannah taking an intelligence test. As the test went on, Hannah got some of the questions right and some of them wrong, but the number of correct and incorrect answers was the same in both conditions. Then the participants were asked to remember how many questions Hannah got right and wrong. Demonstrating that stereotypes had influenced memory, the participants who thought that Hannah had come from an upper-class background remembered that she had gotten more correct answers than those who thought she was from a lower-class background.

Our reliance on schemas can also make it more difficult for us to "think outside the box." Peter Wason (1960) asked undergraduate students to determine the rule that was used to generate the numbers 2-4-6 by asking them to generate possible sequences and then telling them if those numbers followed the rule. The first guess that students made was usually "consecutive ascending even numbers," and they then asked questions designed to confirm their hypothesis ("Does 102-104-106 fit?" "What about 404-406-408?"). Upon receiving information that those guesses did fit the rule, the students stated that the rule was "consecutive ascending even numbers." But the students' use of the confirmation bias led them to ask only about instances that confirmed their hypothesis, and not about those that would disconfirm it. They never bothered to ask whether 1-2-3 or 3-11-200 would fit, and if they had they would have learned that the rule was not "consecutive ascending even numbers," but simply "any three ascending numbers." Again, you can see that once we have a schema (in this case a hypothesis), we continually retrieve that schema from memory rather than other relevant ones, leading us to act in ways that tend to confirm our beliefs.

Functional fixedness occurs when *people's schemas prevent them from using an object in new and nontraditional ways*. Duncker (1945) gave participants a candle, a box of thumbtacks, and a book of matches, and asked them to attach the candle to the wall so that it did not drip onto the table below (Figure 9.18, "Functional Fixedness"). Few of the participants realized that the box could be tacked to the wall and used as a platform to hold the candle. The problem again is that our existing memories are powerful, and they bias the way we think about new information. Because the participants were "fixated" on the box's normal function of holding thumbtacks, they could not see its alternative use.

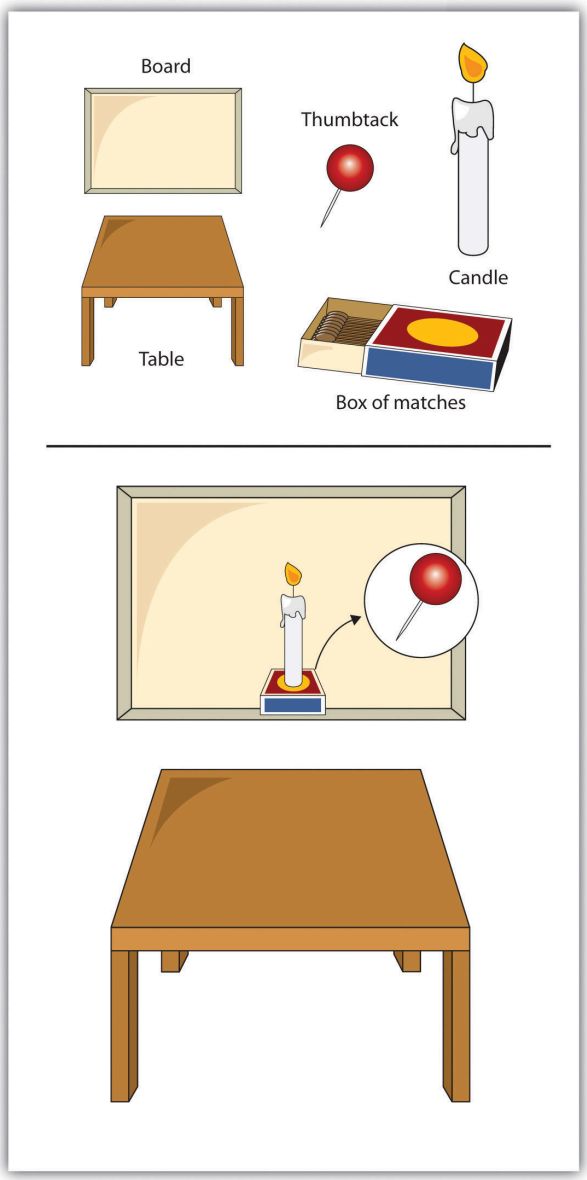


Figure 9.18 Functional Fixedness. In the candle-tack-box problem, functional fixedness may lead us to see the box only as a box and not as a potential candleholder.

Misinformation Effects: How Information That Comes Later Can Distort Memory

A particular problem for eyewitnesses such as the Winnipeg waitress in the introduction of this chapter is that our memories are often influenced by the things that occur to us after we have learned the information (Erdmann, Volbert, & Böhm, 2004; Loftus, 1979; Zaragoza, Belli, & Payment, 2007). This new information can distort our original memories such that we are no longer sure what is the real information and what was provided later. The **misinformation effect** refers to *errors in memory that occur when new information influences existing memories.*

In an experiment by Loftus and Palmer (1974), participants viewed a film of a traffic accident and then, according to random assignment to experimental conditions, answered one of three questions:

1. "About how fast were the cars going when they hit each other?"
2. "About how fast were the cars going when they smashed each other?"
3. "About how fast were the cars going when they contacted each other?"

As you can see in Figure 9.19, "Misinformation Effect," although all the participants saw the same accident, their estimates of the cars' speed varied by condition. Participants who had been asked about the cars "smashing" each other estimated the highest average speed, and those who had been asked the "contacted" question estimated the lowest average speed.

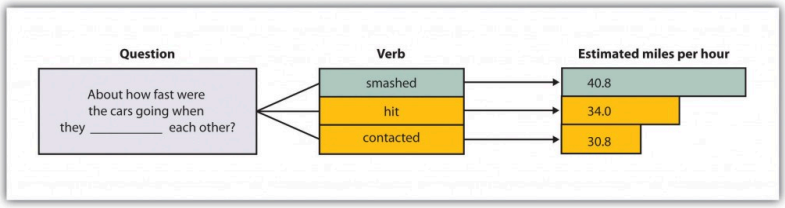


Figure 9.19 Misinformation Effect. Participants viewed a film of a traffic accident and then answered a question about the accident. According to random assignment, the verb in the question was filled by either "hit," "smashed," or "contacted" each other. The wording of the question influenced the participants' memory of the accident.

In addition to distorting our memories for events that have actually occurred, misinformation may lead us to falsely remember information that never occurred. Loftus and her colleagues asked parents to provide them with descriptions of events that did happen to their children (e.g., moving to a new house) and that did not happen (e.g., being lost in a shopping mall). Then (without telling the children which events were real or made up) the researchers asked the children to imagine both types of events. The children were instructed to "think real hard" about whether the events had occurred (Ceci, Huffman, Smith, & Loftus, 1994). More than half of the children generated stories regarding at least one of the made-up events, and they remained insistent that the events did in fact occur even when told by the researcher that they could not possibly have occurred (Loftus & Pickrell, 1995). Even college or university students are susceptible to manipulations that make events that did not actually occur seem as if they did (Mazzoni, Loftus, & Kirsch, 2001).

The ease with which memories can be created or implanted is particularly problematic when the events to be recalled have important consequences. Therapists often argue that patients may repress memories of traumatic events they experienced as children, such as childhood sexual abuse, and then recover the events years later as the therapist leads them to recall the information — for instance, by using dream interpretation and hypnosis (Brown, Scheflin, & Hammond, 1998).

But other researchers argue that painful memories such as sexual abuse are usually very well remembered, that few memories are actually repressed, and that even if they are it is virtually impossible for patients to accurately retrieve them years later (McNally, Bryant, & Ehlers, 2003; Pope, Poliakoff, Parker, Boynes, & Hudson, 2007). These researchers have argued that the procedures used by the therapists to "retrieve" the memories are more likely to actually implant false memories, leading the

patients to erroneously recall events that did not actually occur. Because hundreds of people have been accused, and even imprisoned, on the basis of claims about *recovered memory* of child sexual abuse, the accuracy of these memories has important societal implications. Many psychologists now believe that most of these claims of recovered memories are due to implanted, rather than real, memories (Loftus & Ketcham, 1994).

Overconfidence

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Winnipeg waitress's mistaken identification of James Sophonow was her certainty. But research reveals a pervasive cognitive bias toward **overconfidence**, which is *the tendency for people to be too certain about their ability to accurately remember events and to make judgments*. David Dunning and his colleagues (Dunning, Griffin, Milojkovic, & Ross, 1990) asked undergraduate students to predict how another student would react in various situations. Some participants made predictions about a fellow student whom they had just met and interviewed, and others made predictions about their roommates whom they knew very well. In both cases, participants reported their confidence in each prediction, and accuracy was determined by the responses of the people themselves. The results were clear: regardless of whether they judged a stranger or a roommate, the participants consistently overestimated the accuracy of their own predictions.

Eyewitnesses to crimes are also frequently overconfident in their memories, and there is only a small correlation between how accurate and how confident an eyewitness is. The witness who claims to be absolutely certain about his or her identification is not much more likely to be accurate than one who appears much less sure, making it almost impossible to determine whether a particular witness is accurate or not (Wells & Olson, 2003).

I am sure that you have a clear memory of when you first heard about the 9/11 attacks in the United States in 2001, and perhaps also when you heard that Princess Diana was killed in 1997, or when the Canadian men's and women's hockey teams scored the winning goals in the 2010 and 2014 Winter Olympics. This type of memory, which we experience along with a great deal of emotion, is known as a **flashbulb memory** — *a vivid and emotional memory of an unusual event that people believe they remember very well* (Brown & Kulik, 1977).

People are very certain of their memories of these important events, and frequently overconfident. Talarico and Rubin (2003) tested the accuracy of flashbulb memories by asking students to write down their memory of how they had heard the news about either the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks or about an everyday event that had occurred to them during the same time frame. These recordings were made on September 12, 2001. Then the participants were asked again, either one, six, or 32 weeks later, to recall their memories. The participants became less accurate in their recollections of both the emotional event and the everyday events over time. But the participants' confidence in the accuracy of their memory of learning about the attacks did not decline over time. After 32 weeks the participants were overconfident; they were much more certain about the accuracy of their flashbulb memories than they should have been.

Heuristic Processing: Availability and Representativeness

Another way that our information processing may be biased occurs when we use **heuristics**, which are

information-processing strategies that are useful in many cases but may lead to errors when misapplied. Let's consider two of the most frequently applied (and misapplied) heuristics: the *representativeness heuristic* and the *availability heuristic*.

In many cases we *base our judgments on information that seems to represent, or match, what we expect will happen, while ignoring other potentially more relevant statistical information*. When we do so, we are using the **representativeness heuristic**. Consider, for instance, the puzzle presented in Table9.4″>Table 9.4, "The Representativeness Heuristic." Let's say that you went to a hospital, and you checked the records of the babies that were born today. Which pattern of births do you think you are most likely to find?

Table 9.4 The Representativeness Heuristic.

[Skip Table]			
List A		**List B**	
6:31 a.m.	Girl	6:31 a.m.	Boy
8:15 a.m.	Girl	8:15 a.m.	Girl
9:42 a.m.	Girl	9:42 a.m.	Boy
1:13 p.m.	Girl	1:13 p.m.	Girl
3:39 p.m.	Boy	3:39 p.m.	Girl
5:12 p.m.	Boy	5:12 p.m.	Boy
7:42 p.m.	Boy	7:42 p.m.	Girl
11:44 p.m.	Boy	11:44 p.m.	Boy
Using the representativeness heuristic may lead us to incorrectly believe that some patterns of observed events are more likely to have occurred than others. In this case, list B seems more random, and thus is judged as more likely to have occurred, but statistically both lists are equally likely.			

Most people think that list B is more likely, probably because list B looks more random, and thus matches (is "representative of") our ideas about randomness. But statisticians know that any pattern of four girls and four boys is mathematically equally likely. The problem is that we have a schema of what randomness should be like, which doesn't always match what is mathematically the case. Similarly, people who see a flipped coin come up "heads" five times in a row will frequently predict, and perhaps even wager money, that "tails" will be next. This behaviour is known as the *gambler's fallacy*. But mathematically, the gambler's fallacy is an error: the likelihood of any single coin flip being "tails" is always 50%, regardless of how many times it has come up "heads" in the past.

Our judgments can also be influenced by how easy it is to retrieve a memory. *The tendency to make judgments of the frequency or likelihood that an event occurs on the basis of the ease with which it can be retrieved from memory* is known as the **availability heuristic** (MacLeod & Campbell, 1992; Tversky & Kahneman, 1973). Imagine, for instance, that I asked you to indicate whether there are more words in the English language that begin with the letter "R" or that have the letter "R" as the third letter. You would probably answer this question by trying to think of words that have each of the characteristics, thinking

of all the words you know that begin with "R" and all that have "R" in the third position. Because it is much easier to retrieve words by their first letter than by their third, we may incorrectly guess that there are more words that begin with "R," even though there are in fact more words that have "R" as the third letter.

The availability heuristic may also operate on episodic memory. We may think that our friends are nice people, because we see and remember them primarily when they are around us (their friends, who they are, of course, nice to). And the traffic might seem worse in our own neighbourhood than we think it is in other places, in part because nearby traffic jams are more easily retrieved than are traffic jams that occur somewhere else.

Salience and Cognitive Accessibility

Still another potential for bias in memory occurs because we are more likely to attend to, and thus make use of and remember, some information more than other information. For one, we tend to attend to and remember things that are highly salient, meaning that they attract our attention. Things that are unique, colourful, bright, moving, and unexpected are more salient (McArthur & Post, 1977; Taylor & Fiske, 1978). In one relevant study, Loftus, Loftus, and Messo (1987) showed people images of a customer walking up to a bank teller and pulling out either a pistol or a chequebook. By tracking eye movements, the researchers determined that people were more likely to look at the gun than at the chequebook, and that this reduced their ability to accurately identify the criminal in a lineup that was given later. The salience of the gun drew people's attention away from the face of the criminal.

The salience of the stimuli in our social worlds has a big influence on our judgment, and in some cases may lead us to behave in ways that might not benefit us. Imagine, for instance, that you wanted to buy a new music player for yourself. You've been trying to decide whether to get the iPod or the Zune. You checked *Consumer Reports* online and found that, although the players differed on many dimensions, including price, battery life, ability to share music, and so forth, the Zune was nevertheless rated significantly higher by owners than was the iPod. As a result, you decide to purchase the Zune the next day. That night, however, you go to a party, and a friend shows you her iPod. You check it out, and it seems really cool. You tell her that you were thinking of buying a Zune, and she tells you that you are crazy. She says she knows someone who had one and it had a lot of problems — it didn't download music correctly, the battery died right after the warranty expired, and so forth — and that she would never buy one. Would you still buy the Zune, or would you switch your plans?

If you think about this question logically, the information that you just got from your friend isn't really all that important. You now know the opinion of one more person, but that can't change the overall rating of the two machines very much. On the other hand, the information your friend gives you, and the chance to use her iPod, are highly salient. The information is right there in front of you, in your hand, whereas the statistical information from *Consumer Reports* is only in the form of a table that you saw on your computer. The outcome in cases such as this is that people frequently ignore the less salient but more important information, such as the likelihood that events occur across a large population (these statistics are known as *base rates*), in favour of the less important but nevertheless more salient information.

People also vary in the schemas that they find important to use when judging others and when thinking about themselves. **Cognitive accessibility** refers to *the extent to which knowledge is activated in memory, and thus likely to be used in cognition and behaviour*. For instance, you probably know a person

who is a golf nut (or fanatic of another sport). All he can talk about is golf. For him, we would say that golf is a highly accessible construct. Because he loves golf, it is important to his self-concept, he sets many of his goals in terms of the sport, and he tends to think about things and people in terms of it ("if he plays golf, he must be a good person!"). Other people have highly accessible schemas about environmental issues, eating healthy food, or drinking really good coffee. When schemas are highly accessible, we are likely to use them to make judgments of ourselves and others, and this overuse may inappropriately colour our judgments.

Counterfactual Thinking

In addition to influencing our judgments about ourselves and others, the ease with which we can retrieve potential experiences from memory can have an important effect on our own emotions. If we can easily imagine an outcome that is better than what actually happened, then we may experience sadness and disappointment; on the other hand, if we can easily imagine that a result might have been worse than what actually happened, we may be more likely to experience happiness and satisfaction. *The tendency to think about and experience events according to "what might have been"* is known as **counterfactual thinking** (Kahneman & Miller, 1986; Roese, 2005).

Imagine, for instance, that you were participating in an important contest, and you won the silver (second-place) medal. How would you feel? Certainly you would be happy that you won the silver medal, but wouldn't you also be thinking about what might have happened if you had been just a little bit better — you might have won the gold medal! On the other hand, how might you feel if you won the bronze (third-place) medal? If you were thinking about the *counterfactuals* (the "what might have beens") perhaps the idea of not getting any medal at all would have been highly accessible; you'd be happy that you got the medal that you did get, rather than coming in fourth.



Figure 9.20 Counterfactual Thinking. Does the bronze medalist look happier to you than the silver medalist? Medvec, Madey, and Gilovich (1995) found that, on average, bronze medalists were happier.

Tom Gilovich and his colleagues (Medvec, Madey, & Gilovich, 1995) investigated this idea by videotaping the responses of athletes who won medals in the 1992 Summer Olympic Games (Figure 9.20). They videotaped the athletes both as they learned that they had won a silver or a bronze medal and

again as they were awarded the medal. Then the researchers showed these videos, without any sound, to raters who did not know which medal which athlete had won. The raters were asked to indicate how they thought the athlete was feeling, using a range of feelings from "agony" to "ecstasy." The results showed that the bronze medalists were, on average, rated as happier than were the silver medalists. In a follow-up study, raters watched interviews with many of these same athletes as they talked about their performance. The raters indicated what we would expect on the basis of counterfactual thinking — the silver medalists talked about their disappointments in having finished second rather than first, whereas the bronze medalists focused on how happy they were to have finished third rather than fourth.

You might have experienced counterfactual thinking in other situations. Once I was driving across country, and my car was having some engine trouble. I really wanted to make it home when I got near the end of my journey; I would have been extremely disappointed if the car broke down only a few miles from my home. Perhaps you have noticed that once you get close to finishing something, you feel like you really need to get it done. Counterfactual thinking has even been observed in juries. Jurors who were asked to award monetary damages to others who had been in an accident offered them substantially more in compensation if they barely avoided injury than they offered if the accident seemed inevitable (Miller, Turnbull, & McFarland, 1988).

Psychology in Everyday Life: Cognitive Biases in the Real World

Perhaps you are thinking that the kinds of errors that we have been talking about don't seem that important. After all, who really cares if we think there are more words that begin with the letter "R" than there actually are, or if bronze medal winners are happier than the silver medalists? These are not big problems in the overall scheme of things. But it turns out that what seem to be relatively small cognitive biases on the surface can have profound consequences for people.

Why would so many people continue to purchase lottery tickets, buy risky investments in the stock market, or gamble their money in casinos when the likelihood of them ever winning is so low? One possibility is that they are victims of salience; they focus their attention on the salient likelihood of a big win, forgetting that the base rate of the event occurring is very low. The belief in astrology, which all scientific evidence suggests is not accurate, is probably driven in part by the salience of the occasions when the predictions are correct. When a horoscope comes true (which will, of course, happen sometimes), the correct prediction is highly salient and may allow people to maintain the overall false belief.

People may also take more care to prepare for unlikely events than for more likely ones, because the unlikely ones are more salient. For instance, people may think that they are more likely to die from a terrorist attack or a homicide than they are from diabetes, stroke, or tuberculosis. But the odds are much greater of dying from the latter than the former. And people are frequently more afraid of flying than driving, although the likelihood of dying in a car crash is hundreds of times greater than dying in a plane crash (about 1.2 million people are killed in road crashes globally each year, and about 20 to 50 million are injured). Because people don't accurately calibrate their behaviours to match the true potential risks (e.g., they drink and drive or don't wear their seatbelts), the individual and societal level costs are often quite large (Peden, 2010; Slovic, 2000).

Salience and accessibility also colour how we perceive our social worlds, which may have a big influence on our behaviour. For instance, people who watch a lot of violent television shows also view the world as more dangerous (Doob & Macdonald, 1979), probably because violence becomes more cognitively accessible for them. We also unfairly overestimate our contribution to joint projects (Ross & Sicoly, 1979), perhaps in part because our own contributions are highly accessible, whereas the contributions of others are much less so.

Even people who should know better, and who *need* to know better, are subject to cognitive biases.

Economists, stock traders, managers, lawyers, and even doctors make the same kinds of mistakes in their professional activities that people make in their everyday lives (Gilovich, Griffin, & Kahneman, 2002). Just like us, these people are victims of overconfidence, heuristics, and other biases.

Furthermore, every year thousands of individuals, such as Ronald Cotton, are charged with and often convicted of crimes based largely on eyewitness evidence. When eyewitnesses testify in courtrooms regarding their memories of a crime, they often are completely sure that they are identifying the right person. But the most common cause of innocent people being falsely convicted is erroneous eyewitness testimony (Wells, Wright, & Bradfield, 1999). The many people who were convicted by mistaken eyewitnesses prior to the advent of forensic DNA and who have now been exonerated by DNA tests have certainly paid for all-too-common memory errors (Wells, Memon, & Penrod, 2006).

Although cognitive biases are common, they are not impossible to control, and psychologists and other scientists are working to help people make better decisions. One possibility is to provide people with better feedback about their judgments. Weather forecasters, for instance, learn to be quite accurate in their judgments because they have clear feedback about the accuracy of their predictions. Other research has found that accessibility biases can be reduced by leading people to consider multiple alternatives rather than focus only on the most obvious ones, and particularly by leading people to think about opposite possible outcomes than the ones they are expecting (Lilienfeld, Ammirtai, & Landfield, 2009). Forensic psychologists are also working to reduce the incidence of false identification by helping police develop better procedures for interviewing both suspects and eyewitnesses (Steblay, Dysart, Fulero, & Lindsay, 2001).

Key Takeaways

- Our memories fail in part due to inadequate encoding and storage, and in part due to the inability to accurately retrieve stored information.
- The human brain is wired to develop and make use of social categories and schemas. Schemas help us remember new information but may also lead us to falsely remember things that never happened to us and to distort or misremember things that did.
- A variety of cognitive biases influence the accuracy of our judgments.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Consider a time when you were uncertain if you really experienced an event or only imagined it. What impact did this have on you, and how did you resolve it?
2. Consider again some of the cognitive schemas that you hold in your memory. How do these knowledge structures bias your information processing and behaviour, and how might you prevent them from doing so?
3. Imagine that you were involved in a legal case in which an eyewitness claimed that he had seen a person commit a crime. Based on your knowledge about memory and cognition, what techniques would you use to reduce the possibility that the eyewitness was making a mistaken identification?

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Image Attributions

Figure 9.19: Adapted from Loftus & Palmer (1974).

Figure 9.20: 2010 Winter Ol ympic Men's Snowboard Cross medalists by kinnigurl (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/

File:2010_Winter_Olympic_Men's_Snowboard_Cross_medalists.jpg) used under CC BY SA 2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/deed.en).

9.4 Chapter Summary

Memory and cognition are the two major interests of cognitive psychologists. The cognitive school was influenced in large part by the development of the electronic computer. Psychologists conceptualize memory in terms of types, stages, and processes.

Explicit memory is assessed using measures in which the individual being tested must consciously attempt to remember the information. Explicit memory includes semantic and episodic memory. Explicit memory tests include recall memory tests, recognition memory tests, and measures of relearning (also known as savings).

Implicit memory refers to the influence of experience on behaviour, even if the individual is not aware of those influences. Implicit memory is made up of procedural memory, classical conditioning effects, and priming. Priming refers both to the activation of knowledge and to the influence of that activation on behaviour. An important characteristic of implicit memories is that they are frequently formed and used automatically, without much effort or awareness on our part.

Sensory memory, including iconic and echoic memory, is a memory buffer that lasts only very briefly and then, unless it is attended to and passed on for more processing, is forgotten.

Information that we turn our attention to may move into short-term memory (STM). STM is limited in both the length and the amount of information it can hold. Working memory is a set of memory procedures or operations that operates on the information in STM. Working memory's central executive directs the strategies used to keep information in STM, such as maintenance rehearsal, visualization, and chunking.

Long-term memory (LTM) is memory storage that can hold information for days, months, and years. The information that we want to remember in LTM must be encoded and stored, and then retrieved. Some strategies for improving LTM include elaborative encoding, relating information to the self, making use of the forgetting curve and the spacing effect, overlearning, and being aware of context- and state-dependent retrieval effects.

Memories that are stored in LTM are not isolated but rather are linked together into categories and schemas. Schemas are important in part because they help us encode and retrieve information by providing an organizational structure for it.

The ability to maintain information in LTM involves a gradual strengthening of the connections among the neurons in the brain, known as long-term potentiation (LTP). The hippocampus is important in explicit memory, the cerebellum is important in implicit memory, and the amygdala is important in emotional memory. A number of neurotransmitters are important in consolidation and memory. Evidence for the role of different brain structures in different types of memories comes in part from case studies of patients who suffer from amnesia.

Cognitive biases are errors in memory or judgment that are caused by the inappropriate use of cognitive

processes. These biases are caused by the overuse of schemas, the reliance on salient and cognitive accessible information, and the use of rule-of-thumb strategies known as heuristics. These biases include errors in source monitoring, the confirmation bias, functional fixedness, the misinformation effect, overconfidence, and counterfactual thinking. Understanding the potential cognitive errors we frequently make can help us make better decisions and engage in more appropriate behaviours.

Chapter 10. Intelligence and Language

10. Intelligence and Language

How We Talk (or Do Not Talk) about Intelligence

In January 2005, the president of Harvard University, Lawrence H. Summers, sparked an uproar during a presentation at an economic conference on women and minorities in the science and engineering workforce. During his talk, Summers proposed three reasons why there are so few women who have careers in math, physics, chemistry, and biology. One explanation was that it might be due to discrimination against women in these fields, and a second was that it might be a result of women's preference for raising families rather than for competing in academia. But Summers also argued that women might be less genetically capable of performing science and mathematics — that they may have less "intrinsic aptitude" than men do.

Summers's comments on genetics set off a flurry of responses. One of the conference participants, a biologist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, walked out on the talk, and other participants said that they were deeply offended. Summers replied that he was only putting forward hypotheses based on the scholarly work assembled for the conference, and that research has shown that genetics have been found to be very important in many domains compared with environmental factors. As an example, he mentioned the psychological disorder of autism, which was once believed to be a result of parenting but is now known to be primarily genetic in origin.

The controversy did not stop with the conference. Many Harvard faculty members were appalled that a prominent person could even consider the possibility that mathematical skills were determined by genetics, and the controversy and protests that followed the speech led to a first-ever faculty vote for a motion expressing a "lack of confidence" in a Harvard president. Summers resigned his position, in large part as a result of the controversy, in 2006 (Goldin, Goldin, & Foulkes, 2005).

Researchers at the University of Western Ontario in Canada (Vingilis-Jeremko & Vingilis, 2006), conducting a meta-analysis of three decades of research on gender differences in performance and participation within the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) areas, state: "…clearly, gender stereotypic messages and priming can have negative effects. Unfortunately gender stereotypic messages abound and remain ubiquitous in the 21st century. Much work has yet to be done" (p. 6).

Yet, the 2010 Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP) from the Council of Ministers of Education in Canada shows that in studying 32,000 Grade 8 students from across Canada, female Grade 8 students outperformed their male counterparts on reading and science, with no significant difference between the two genders in math skills. Researchers believe that the cultural shift to making math and science more gender neutral may be an influencing factor. Girls scored better than boys in both science and reading. Researchers hypothesize that boys appear to believe that reading and writing is a feminine act and are therefore reluctant to partake fully in these subject areas. Stereotype-threat, the reduction in performance of individuals who belong to negatively stereotyped groups, seems to apply to both genders (CMEC, 2010).

In this chapter we consider how psychologists conceptualize and measure **human intelligence** — *the ability to think, to learn from experience, to solve problems, and to adapt to new situations*. We'll consider whether intelligence involves a single ability or many different abilities, how we measure intelligence, what intelligence predicts, and how cultures and societies think about it. We'll also consider intelligence in terms of nature versus nurture and in terms of similarities versus differences among people.

Intelligence is important because it has an impact on many human behaviours. Intelligence is more strongly related than any other individual difference variable to successful educational, occupational, economic, and social outcomes. Scores on intelligence tests predict academic and military performance, as well as success in a wide variety of jobs (Ones, Viswesvaran, & Dilchert, 2005; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). Intelligence is also negatively correlated with criminal behaviours — the average *intelligence quotient (IQ)* of delinquent adolescents is about seven points lower than that of other adolescents (Wilson & Herrnstein, 1985) — and positively correlated with health-related outcomes, including longevity (Gottfredson, 2004; Gottfredson & Deary, 2004). At least some of this latter relationship may be due to the fact that people who are more intelligent are better able to predict and avoid accidents and to understand and follow instructions from doctors or on drug labels.

The advantages of having a higher IQ increase as life settings become more complex. The correlation between IQ and job performance is higher in more mentally demanding occupations, such as physician or lawyer, than in less mentally demanding occupations, like clerk or newspaper delivery person (Salgado et al., 2003). Although some specific personality traits, talents, and physical abilities are important for success in some jobs, intelligence predicts performance across all types of jobs.

Our vast intelligence also allows us to have **language**, *a system of communication that uses symbols in a regular way to create meaning*. Language gives us the ability communicate our intelligence to others by talking, reading, and writing. As the psychologist Steven Pinker put it, language is the "the jewel in the crown of cognition" (Pinker, 1994). Although other species have at least some ability to communicate, none of them have language. In the last section of this chapter we will consider the structure and development of language, as well as its vital importance to human beings.

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10.1 Defining and Measuring Intelligence

Learning Objectives

1. Define intelligence and list the different types of intelligences psychologists study.
2. Summarize the characteristics of a scientifically valid intelligence test.
3. Outline the biological and environmental determinants of intelligence.

Psychologists have long debated how to best conceptualize and measure intelligence (Sternberg, 2003). These questions include how many types of intelligence there are, the role of nature versus nurture in intelligence, how intelligence is represented in the brain, and the meaning of group differences in intelligence.

General (g) versus Specific (s) Intelligences

In the early 1900s, the French psychologist Alfred Binet (1857-1914) and his colleague Henri Simon (1872-1961) began working in Paris to develop a measure that would differentiate students who were expected to be better learners from students who were expected to be slower learners. The goal was to help teachers better educate these two groups of students. Binet and Simon developed what most psychologists today regard as the first intelligence test (Figure 10.1, “Intelligence Tests in Schools”), which consisted of a wide variety of questions that included the ability to name objects, define words, draw pictures, complete sentences, compare items, and construct sentences.

Binet and Simon (Binet, Simon, & Town, 1915; Siegler, 1992) believed that the questions they asked their students, even though they were on the surface dissimilar, all assessed the basic abilities to understand, reason, and make judgments. And it turned out that the correlations among these different types of measures were in fact all positive; students who got one item correct were more likely to also get other items correct, even though the questions themselves were very different.



Figure 10.1 Intelligence Tests in Schools. This child is completing an intelligence test, in this case answering questions about pictures.

On the basis of these results, the psychologist Charles Spearman (1863-1945) hypothesized that there must be a single underlying construct that all of these items measure. He called *the construct that the different abilities and skills measured on intelligence tests have in common* **the general intelligence factor** (g). Virtually all psychologists now believe that there is a generalized intelligence factor, g, that relates to abstract thinking and that includes the abilities to acquire knowledge, to reason abstractly, to adapt to novel situations, and to benefit from instruction and experience (Gottfredson, 1997; Sternberg, 2003). People with higher general intelligence learn faster.

Soon after Binet and Simon introduced their test, the American psychologist Lewis Terman (1877-1956) developed an American version of Binet's test that became known as the *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test*. The **Stanford-Binet** is *a measure of general intelligence made up of a wide variety of tasks including vocabulary, memory for pictures, naming of familiar objects, repeating sentences, and following commands*.

Although there is general agreement among psychologists that g exists, there is also evidence for **specific intelligence** (s), *a measure of specific skills in narrow domains*. One empirical result in support of the idea of s comes from intelligence tests themselves. Although the different types of questions do correlate with each other, some items correlate more highly with each other than do other items; they form clusters or clumps of intelligences.

One distinction is between **fluid intelligence**, which refers to *the capacity to learn new ways of solving problems and performing activities*, and **crystallized intelligence**, which refers to *the accumulated knowledge of the world we have acquired throughout our lives* (Salthouse, 2004). These intelligences must be different because crystallized intelligence increases with age — older adults are as good as or better than young people in solving crossword puzzles — whereas fluid intelligence tends to decrease with age (Horn, Donaldson, & Engstrom, 1981; Salthouse, 2004).

Other researchers have proposed even more types of intelligences. L. L. Thurstone (1938) proposed that there were seven clusters of **primary mental abilities**, made up of *word fluency, verbal comprehension, spatial ability, perceptual speed, numerical ability, inductive reasoning, and memory*. But even these dimensions tend to be at least somewhat correlated, showing again the importance of g.

One advocate of the idea of multiple intelligences is the psychologist Robert Sternberg. Sternberg has proposed a triarchic (three-part) **theory of intelligence** that proposes that *people may display more or less analytical intelligence, creative intelligence, and practical intelligence*. Sternberg (1985, 2003) argued that traditional intelligence tests assess analytical intelligence, the ability to answer problems with a single right answer, but that they do not well assess creativity (the ability to adapt to new situations and create new ideas) or practicality (e.g., the ability to write good memos or to effectively delegate responsibility).

As Sternberg proposed, research has found that creativity is not highly correlated with analytical intelligence (Furnham & Bachtiar, 2008), and exceptionally creative scientists, artists, mathematicians, and engineers do not score higher on intelligence than do their less creative peers (Simonton, 2000). Furthermore, the brain areas that are associated with **convergent thinking**, *thinking that is directed toward finding the correct answer to a given problem*, are different from those associated with **divergent thinking**, *the ability to generate many different ideas for or solutions to a single problem* (Tarasova, Volf, & Razoumnikova, 2010), as suggested by Figure 10.2, "Test Your Divergent Thinking." On the other hand, being creative often takes some of the basic abilities measured by g, including the abilities to learn from experience, to remember information, and to think abstractly (Bink & Marsh, 2000).



Figure 10.2 Test Your Divergent Thinking. How many uses for a paper clip can you think of?

Studies of creative people suggest at least five components that are likely to be important for creativity:

1. *Expertise*. Creative people have carefully studied and know a lot about the topic that they are working in. Creativity comes with a lot of hard work (Ericsson, 1998; Weisberg, 2006).
2. *Imaginative thinking*. Creative people often view a problem in a visual way, allowing them to see it from a new and different point of view.
3. *Risk taking*. Creative people are willing to take on new but potentially risky approaches.
4. *Intrinsic interest*. Creative people tend to work on projects because they love doing them, not because they are paid for them. In fact, research has found that people who are paid to be creative are often less creative than those who are not (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010).
5. *Working in a creative environment*. Creativity is in part a social phenomenon. Simonton

(1992) found that the most creative people were supported, aided, and challenged by other people working on similar projects.

The last aspect of the triarchic model, practical intelligence, refers primarily to intelligence that cannot be gained from books or formal learning. Practical intelligence represents a type of street smarts or common sense that is learned from life experiences. Although a number of tests have been devised to measure practical intelligence (Sternberg, Wagner, & Okagaki, 1993; Wagner & Sternberg, 1985), research has not found much evidence that practical intelligence is distinct from g or that it is predictive of success at any particular tasks (Gottfredson, 2003). Practical intelligence may include, at least in part, certain abilities that help people perform well at specific jobs, and these abilities may not always be highly correlated with general intelligence (Sternberg, Wagner, & Okagaki, 1993). On the other hand, these abilities or skills are very specific to particular occupations and thus do not seem to represent the broader idea of intelligence.

Another champion of the idea of multiple intelligences is the psychologist Howard Gardner (1983, 1999). Gardner argued that it would be evolutionarily functional for different people to have different talents and skills, and proposed that there are eight intelligences that can be differentiated from each other (Table 10.1, "Howard Gardner's Eight Specific Intelligences"). Gardner noted that some evidence for multiple intelligences comes from the abilities of *autistic savants*, people who score low on intelligence tests overall but who nevertheless may have exceptional skills in a given domain, such as math, music, art, or in being able to recite statistics in a given sport (Treffert & Wallace, 2004).

Table 10.1 Howard Gardner's Eight Specific Intelligences. Adapted from Gardner, 1999.

[Skip Table]	
Intelligence	**Description**
Linguistic	The ability to speak and write well
Logico-mathematical	The ability to use logic and mathematical skills to solve problems
Spatial	The ability to think and reason about objects in three dimensions
Musical	The ability to perform and enjoy music
Kinesthetic (body)	The ability to move the body in sports, dance, or other physical activities
Interpersonal	The ability to understand and interact effectively with others
Intrapersonal	The ability to have insight into the self
Naturalistic	The ability to recognize, identify, and understand animals, plants, and other living things



Figure 10.3 Intelligence. Although intelligence is often conceptualized in a general way (as the g factor), there is a variety of specific skills that can be useful for particular tasks.

The idea of multiple intelligences has been influential in the field of education, and teachers have used these ideas to try to teach differently to different students (Figure 10.3, "Intelligence"). For instance, to teach math problems to students who have particularly good kinesthetic intelligence, a teacher might encourage the students to move their bodies or hands according to the numbers. On the other hand, some have argued that these intelligences sometimes seem more like abilities or talents rather than real intelligence. And there is no clear conclusion about how many intelligences there are. Are sense of humour, artistic skills, dramatic skills, and so forth also separate intelligences? Furthermore, and again demonstrating the underlying power of a single intelligence, the many different intelligences are in fact correlated and thus represent, in part, g (Brody, 2003).

Measuring Intelligence: Standardization and the Intelligence Quotient

The goal of most intelligence tests is to measure g, the general intelligence factor. Good intelligence tests are **reliable**, *meaning that they are consistent over time*, and also demonstrate **construct validity**, *meaning that they actually measure intelligence rather than something else*. Because intelligence is such an important individual difference dimension, psychologists have invested substantial effort in creating and improving measures of intelligence, and these tests are now the most accurate of all psychological tests. In fact, the ability to accurately assess intelligence is one of the most important contributions of psychology to everyday public life.

Intelligence changes with age. A three-year-old who could accurately multiply 183 by 39 would certainly be intelligent, but a 25-year-old who could not do so would be seen as unintelligent. Thus

understanding intelligence requires that we know the norms or standards in a given population of people at a given age. The **standardization** of a test involves *giving it to a large number of people at different ages and computing the average score on the test at each age level*.

It is important that intelligence tests be standardized on a regular basis because the overall level of intelligence in a population may change over time. The **Flynn effect** refers to the *observation that scores on intelligence tests worldwide have increased substantially over the past decades* (Flynn, 1999). Although the increase varies somewhat from country to country, the average increase is about three intelligence (IQ) points every 10 years. There are many explanations for the Flynn effect, including better nutrition, increased access to information, and more familiarity with multiple-choice tests (Neisser, 1998). But whether people are actually getting smarter is debatable (Neisser, 1997).

Once the standardization has been accomplished, we have a picture of the average abilities of people at different ages and can calculate a **person's mental age**, which is *the age at which a person is performing intellectually*. If we compare the mental age of a person to the person's chronological age, the result is the **IQ**, *a measure of intelligence that is adjusted for age*. A simple way to calculate IQ is by using the following formula:

IQ = mental age ÷ chronological age × 100.

Thus a 10-year-old child who does as well as the average 10-year-old child has an IQ of 100 (10 ÷ 10 × 100), whereas an eight-year-old child who does as well as the average 10-year-old child would have an IQ of 125 (10 ÷ 8 × 100). Most modern intelligence tests are based the relative position of a person's score among people of the same age, rather than on the basis of this formula, but the idea of an *intelligence ratio* or *quotient* provides a good description of the score's meaning.

A number of scales are based on the IQ. The **Wechsler Adult lntelligence Scale (WAIS)** is *the most widely used intelligence test for adults* (Watkins, Campbell, Nieberding, & Hallmark, 1995). The current version of the WAIS, the WAIS-IV, was standardized on 2,200 people ranging from 16 to 90 years of age. It consists of 15 different tasks, each designed to assess intelligence, including working memory, arithmetic ability, spatial ability, and general knowledge about the world (see Figure 10.4, "Sample Items from the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS)"). The WAIS-IV yields scores on four domains: verbal, perceptual, working memory, and processing speed. The reliability of the test is high (more than 0.95), and it shows substantial construct validity. The WAIS-IV is correlated highly with other IQ tests such as the Stanford-Binet, as well as with criteria of academic and life success, including grades, measures of work performance, and occupational level. It also shows significant correlations with measures of everyday functioning among those with intellectual disabilities.

The Wechsler scale has also been adapted for preschool children in the form of the *Wechsler Primary and Preschool Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI-III)* and for older children and adolescents in the form of the *Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV)*.

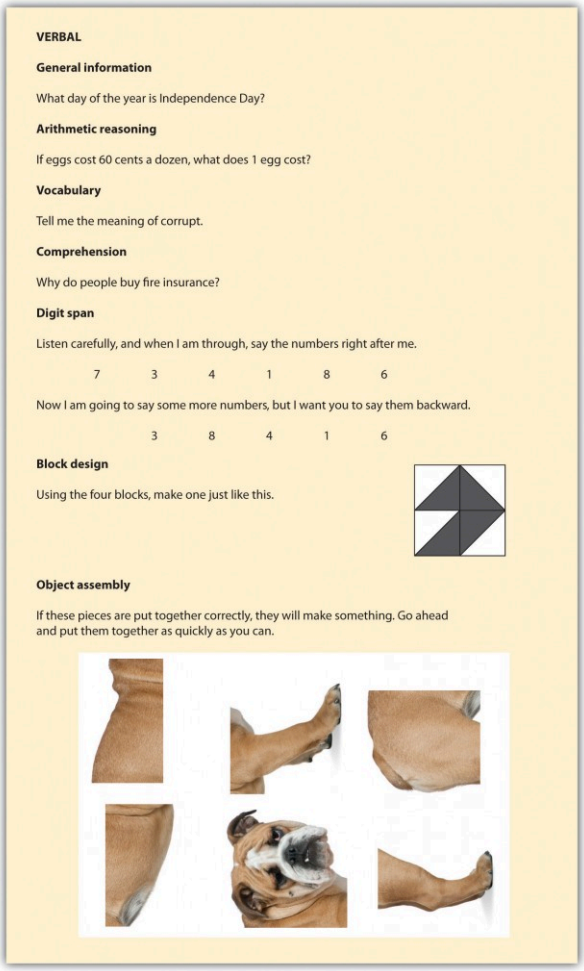


Figure 10.4 Sample Items from the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS). [Long Description]

The intelligence tests that you may be most familiar with are **aptitude tests**, which are *designed to measure one's ability to perform a given task*, such as doing well in undergraduate, graduate, or post-graduate training. Canadian post-secondary institutions request official high school transcripts demonstrating minimum grade admission requirements, while most American colleges and universities require students to take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT). Post-graduate schools in both countries require the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), or the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). These tests are useful for selecting students because they predict success in the programs that they are designed for, particularly in the first year of the program (Kuncel, Hezlett, & Ones, 2010). These aptitude tests also measure, in part, intelligence. Frey and Detterman (2004) found that the SAT correlated highly (between about $r = .7$ and $r = .8$) with standard measures of intelligence.

Intelligence tests are also used by industrial and organizational psychologists in the process of *personnel selection*. **Personnel selection** is *the use of structured tests to select people who are likely to perform well at given jobs* (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). The psychologists begin by conducting a **job analysis** in which they *determine what knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics (KSAPs) are required for a given job*. This is normally accomplished by surveying and/or interviewing current workers and their supervisors. Based on the results of the job analysis, the psychologists choose selection

methods that are most likely to be predictive of job performance. Measures include tests of cognitive and physical ability and job knowledge tests, as well as measures of IQ and personality.

The Biology of Intelligence

The brain processes underlying intelligence are not completely understood, but current research has focused on four potential factors: brain size, sensory ability, speed and efficiency of neural transmission, and working memory capacity.

There is at least some truth to the idea that smarter people have bigger brains. Studies that have measured brain volume using neuroimaging techniques find that larger brain size is correlated with intelligence (McDaniel, 2005), and intelligence has also been found to be correlated with the number of neurons in the brain and with the thickness of the cortex (Haier, 2004; Shaw et al., 2006). It is important to remember that these correlational findings do not mean that having more brain volume causes higher intelligence. It is possible that growing up in a stimulating environment that rewards thinking and learning may lead to greater brain growth (Garlick, 2003), and it is also possible that a third variable, such as better nutrition, causes both brain volume and intelligence.

Another possibility is that the brains of more intelligent people operate faster or more efficiently than the brains of the less intelligent. Some evidence supporting this idea comes from data showing that people who are more intelligent frequently show less brain activity (suggesting that they need to use less capacity) than those with lower intelligence when they work on a task (Haier, Siegel, Tang, & Abel, 1992). And the brains of more intelligent people also seem to run faster than the brains of the less intelligent. Research has found that the speed with which people can perform simple tasks — such as determining which of two lines is longer or pressing, as quickly as possible, one of eight buttons that is lighted — is predictive of intelligence (Deary, Der, & Ford, 2001). Intelligence scores also correlate at about $r = .5$ with measures of working memory (Ackerman, Beier, & Boyle, 2005), and working memory is now used as a measure of intelligence on many tests.

Although intelligence is not located in a specific part of the brain, it is more prevalent in some brain areas than others. Duncan et al. (2000) administered a variety of intelligence tasks and observed the places in the cortex that were most active. Although different tests created different patterns of activation, as you can see in Figure 10.5, “Where Is Intelligence?”, these activated areas were primarily in the outer parts of the cortex, the area of the brain most involved in planning, executive control, and short-term memory.

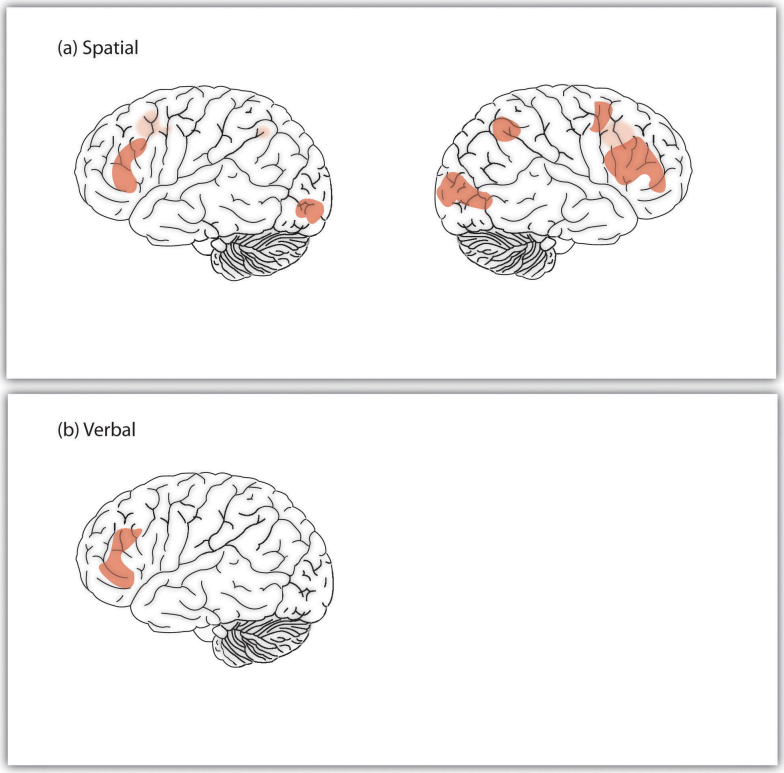


Figure 10.5 Where Is Intelligence? fMRI studies have found that the areas of the brain most related to intelligence are in the outer parts of the cortex.

Is Intelligence Nature or Nurture?

Intelligence has both genetic and environmental causes, and these have been systematically studied through a large number of twin and adoption studies (Neisser et al., 1996; Plomin, 2003). These studies have found that between 40% and 80% of the variability in IQ is due to genetics, meaning that overall, genetics plays a bigger role than environment does in creating IQ differences among individuals (Plomin & Spinath, 2004). The IQs of identical twins correlate very highly (r = .86), much higher than do the scores of fraternal twins who are less genetically similar (r = .60). And the correlations between the IQs of parents and their biological children (r = .42) is significantly greater than the correlation between parents and adopted children (r = .19). The role of genetics gets stronger as children get older. The intelligence of very young children (less than 3 years old) does not predict adult intelligence, but by age 7 it does, and IQ scores remain very stable in adulthood (Deary, Whiteman, Starr, Whalley, & Fox, 2004).

But there is also evidence for the role of nurture, indicating that individuals are not born with fixed, unchangeable levels of intelligence. Twins raised together in the same home have more similar IQs than do twins who are raised in different homes, and fraternal twins have more similar IQs than do nontwin siblings, which is likely due to the fact that they are treated more similarly than nontwin siblings are.

The fact that intelligence becomes more stable as we get older provides evidence that early environmental experiences matter more than later ones. Environmental factors also explain a greater proportion of the variance in intelligence for children from lower-class households than they do for

children from upper-class households (Turkheimer, Haley, Waldron, D'Onofrio, & Gottesman, 2003). This is because most upper-class households tend to provide a safe, nutritious, and supporting environment for children, whereas these factors are more variable in lower-class households.

Social and economic deprivation can adversely affect IQ. Children from households in poverty have lower IQs than do children from households with more resources even when other factors such as education, race, and parenting are controlled (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). Poverty may lead to diets that are undernourishing or lacking in appropriate vitamins, and poor children may also be more likely to be exposed to toxins such as lead in drinking water, dust, or paint chips (Bellinger & Needleman, 2003). Both of these factors can slow brain development and reduce intelligence.

If impoverished environments can harm intelligence, we might wonder whether enriched environments can improve it. Government-funded after-school programs such as Head Start are designed to help children learn. Research has found that attending such programs may increase intelligence for a short time, but these increases rarely last after the programs end (McLoyd, 1998; Perkins & Grotzer, 1997). But other studies suggest that Head Start and similar programs may improve emotional intelligence and reduce the likelihood that children will drop out of school or be held back a grade (Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, & Mann 2001).

Intelligence is improved by education; the number of years a person has spent in school correlates at about $r = .6$ with IQ (Ceci, 1991). In part this correlation may be due to the fact that people with higher IQ scores enjoy taking classes more than people with low IQ scores, and thus they are more likely to stay in school. But education also has a causal effect on IQ. Comparisons between children who are almost exactly the same age but who just do or just do not make a deadline for entering school in a given school year show that those who enter school a year earlier have higher IQ than those who have to wait until the next year to begin school (Baltes & Reinert, 1969; Ceci & Williams, 1997). Children's IQs tend to drop significantly during summer vacations (Huttenlocher, Levine, & Vevea, 1998), a finding that suggests that a longer school year, as is used in Europe and East Asia, is beneficial.

It is important to remember that the relative roles of nature and nurture can never be completely separated. A child who has higher than average intelligence will be treated differently than a child who has lower than average intelligence, and these differences in behaviours will likely amplify initial differences. This means that modest genetic differences can be multiplied into big differences over time.

Psychology in Everyday Life: Emotional Intelligence

Although most psychologists have considered intelligence a cognitive ability, people also use their emotions to help them solve problems and relate effectively to others. **Emotional intelligence** refers to *the ability to accurately identify, assess, and understand emotions, as well as to effectively control one's own emotions* (Feldman-Barrett & Salovey, 2002; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000).

The idea of emotional intelligence is seen in Howard Gardner's **interpersonal intelligence** (*the capacity to understand the emotions, intentions, motivations, and desires of other people*) and **intrapersonal intelligence** (*the capacity to understand oneself, including one's emotions*). Public interest in, and research on, emotional intellgence became widely prevalent following the publication of Daniel Goleman's best-selling book, *Working with emotional intelligence* (1998).

There are a variety of measures of emotional intelligence (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008; Petrides &

Furnham, 2000). One popular measure, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (http://www.emotionaliq.org), includes items about the ability to understand, experience, and manage emotions, such as these:

- What mood(s) might be helpful to feel when meeting in-laws for the very first time?
- Tom felt anxious and became a bit stressed when he thought about all the work he needed to do. When his supervisor brought him an additional project, he felt ____ (fill in the blank).
- Contempt most closely combines which two emotions?

    1. anger and fear
    2. fear and surprise
    3. disgust and anger
    4. surprise and disgust

- Debbie just came back from vacation. She was feeling peaceful and content. How well would each of the following actions help her preserve her good mood?

    - Action 1: She started to make a list of things at home that she needed to do.
    - Action 2: She began thinking about where and when she would go on her next vacation.
    - Action 3: She decided it was best to ignore the feeling since it wouldn't last anyway.

One problem with emotional intelligence tests is that they often do not show a great deal of reliability or construct validity (Føllesdal & Hagtvet, 2009). Although it has been found that people with higher emotional intelligence are also healthier (Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010), findings are mixed about whether emotional intelligence predicts life success — for instance, job performance (Harms & Credé, 2010). Furthermore, other researchers have questioned the construct validity of the measures, arguing that emotional intelligence really measures knowledge about what emotions are, but not necessarily how to use those emotions (Brody, 2004), and that emotional intelligence is actually a personality trait, a part of g, or a skill that can be applied in some specific work situations — for instance, academic and work situations (Landy, 2005).

Although measures of the ability to understand, experience, and manage emotions may not predict effective behaviours, another important aspect of emotional intelligence — *emotion regulation* — does. **Emotion regulation** refers to *the ability to control and productively use one's emotions*. Research has found that people who are better able to override their impulses to seek immediate gratification and who are less impulsive also have higher cognitive and social intelligence. They have better test scores, are rated by their friends as more socially adept, and cope with frustration and stress better than those with less skill at emotion regulation (Ayduk et al., 2000; Eigsti et al., 2006; Mischel & Ayduk, 2004).

Because emotional intelligence seems so important, many school systems have designed programs to teach it to their students. However, the effectiveness of these programs has not been rigorously tested, and we do not yet know whether emotional intelligence can be taught, or if learning it would improve the quality of people's lives (Mayer & Cobb, 2000).

Key Takeaways

- Intelligence is the ability to think, to learn from experience, to solve problems, and to adapt to new situations. Intelligence is important because it has an impact on many human behaviours.
- Psychologists believe that there is a construct, known as general intelligence (g), that accounts for the overall differences in intelligence among people.
- There is also evidence for specific intelligences (s), which are measures of specific skills in narrow domains, including creativity and practical intelligence.
- The intelligence quotient (IQ) is a measure of intelligence that is adjusted for age. The Wechsler Adult lntelligence Scale (WAIS) is the most widely used IQ test for adults.
- Brain volume, speed of neural transmission, and working memory capacity are related to IQ.
- Between 40% and 80% of the variability in IQ is due to genetics, meaning that overall genetics plays a bigger role than environment does in creating IQ differences among individuals.
- Intelligence is improved by education and may be hindered by environmental factors such as poverty.
- Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify, assess, manage, and control one's emotions. People who are better able to regulate their behaviours and emotions are also more successful in their personal and social encounters.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Consider your own IQ. Are you smarter than the average person? What specific intelligences do you think you excel in?
2. Did your parents try to improve your intelligence? Do you think their efforts were successful?
3. Consider the meaning of the Flynn effect. Do you think people are really getting smarter?
4. Give some examples of how emotional intelligence (or the lack of it) influences your everyday life and the lives of other people you know.

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Figure 10.4: Adapted from Thorndike & Hagen (1997).

Figure 10.5: Adapted from Duncan, et al. (2000).

Long Descirption

Figure 10.4 long description:

1. What day of the year is Independence Day?
2. If eggs cost 60 cents a dozen, what does 1 egg cost?
3. Tell me the meaning of "corrupt."
4. Why do people buy fire insurance?
5. Say the following numbers after me: 7 3 4 1 8 6
6. Say the following numbers backwards: 3 8 4 1 6

The last two questions involve making pictures out of blocks. [Return to Figure 10.4]

10.2 The Social, Cultural, and Political Aspects of Intelligence

Learning Objectives

1. Explain how very high and very low intelligence is defined and what it means to have them.
2. Consider and comment on the meaning of biological and environmental explanations for gender and racial differences in IQ.
3. Define stereotype threat and explain how it might influence scores on intelligence tests.

Intelligence is defined by the culture in which it exists. Most people in Western cultures tend to agree with the idea that intelligence is an important personality variable that should be admired in those who have it. But people from Eastern cultures tend to place less emphasis on individual intelligence and are more likely to view intelligence as reflecting wisdom and the desire to improve the society as a whole rather than only themselves (Baral & Das, 2004; Sternberg, 2007). In some cultures it is seen as unfair and prejudicial to argue, even at a scholarly conference, that men and women might have different abilities in domains such as math and science and that these differences may be caused by context, environment, culture, and genetics. In short, although psychological tests accurately measure intelligence, a culture interprets the meanings of those tests and determines how people with differing levels of intelligence are treated.

Extremes of Intelligence: Intellectual Disabilities and Giftedness

The results of studies assessing the measurement of intelligence show that IQ is distributed in the population in the form of a **normal distribution (or bell curve)**, which is *the pattern of scores usually observed in a variable that clusters around its average*. In a normal distribution, the bulk of the scores fall toward the middle, with many fewer scores falling at the extremes. The normal distribution of intelligence (Figure 10.6, “Distribution of IQ Scores in the General Population”) shows that on IQ tests, as well as on most other measures, the majority of people cluster around the average (in this case, where IQ = 100), and fewer are either very smart or very dull. Because the standard deviation of an IQ test is about 15, this means that about 2% of people score above an IQ of 130 (often considered the threshold for *giftedness*), and about the same percentage score below an IQ of 70 (often being considered the threshold for an intellectual disability, formerly known as mental retardation).

Although Figure 10.6, “Distribution of IQ Scores in the General Population” presents a single distribution, the actual IQ distribution varies by sex such that the distribution for men is more spread out than is the distribution for women. These sex differences mean that about 20% more men than women fall in the extreme (very smart or very dull) ends of the distribution (Johnson, Carothers, & Deary, 2009). Boys are about five times more likely to be diagnosed with the reading disability dyslexia than girls are (Halpern, 1992) and are also more likely to be classified as mentally disabled. But boys are also about 20% more highly represented in the upper end of the IQ distribution.

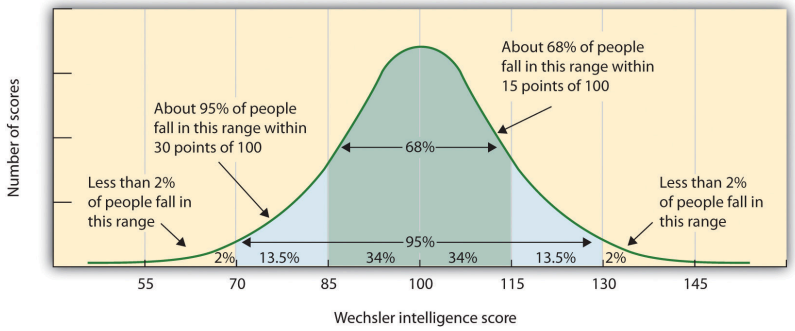


Figure 10.6 Distribution of IQ Scores in the General Population. The normal distribution of IQ scores in the general population shows that most people have about average intelligence, while very few have extremely high or extremely low intelligence.

Extremely Low Intelligence

One end of the distribution of intelligence scores is defined by people with very low IQ. **An intellectual disability** is *a generalized disorder ascribed to people who have an IQ below 70, who have experienced deficits since childhood, and who have trouble with basic life skills, such as dressing and feeding themselves and communicating with others* (Switzky & Greenspan, 2006). About 1% of the Canadian population, most of them males, fulfill the criteria for intellectual disability, but some children who are diagnosed as mentally disabled lose the classification as they get older and better learn to function in society. A particular vulnerability of people with low IQ is that they may be taken advantage of by others, and this is an important aspect of the definition of intellectual disability (Greenspan, Loughlin, & Black, 2001). Intellectual disabilities are divided into four categories: mild, moderate, severe, and profound. Severe and profound intellectual disabilities are usually caused by genetic mutations or accidents during birth, whereas mild forms have both genetic and environmental influences.

One cause of intellectual disability is **Down syndrome**, *a chromosomal disorder leading to intellectual disabilities caused by the presence of all or part of an extra 21st chromosome*. The incidence of Down syndrome is estimated at one per 800 to 1,000 births, although its prevalence rises sharply in those born to older mothers (Figure 10.7, “Children with Down Syndrome”). People with Down syndrome typically exhibit a distinctive pattern of physical features, including a flat nose, upwardly slanted eyes, a protruding tongue, and a short neck.



Figure 10.7 Children with Down Syndrome. About one in every 800 to 1,000 children has Down syndrome.

Societal attitudes toward individuals with mental disabilities have changed over the past decades. We no longer use terms such as moron, idiot, retarded, or imbecile to describe these people, although these were

the official psychological terms used to describe degrees of intellectual disabilities in the past. Laws, such as the Canadians with Disabilities Act, have made it illegal to discriminate on the basis of mental and physical disability, and there has been a trend to bring people with intellectual disabilities out of institutions and into our workplaces and schools. In 2002, although capital punishment continues to be practised there, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the execution of people with intellectual disabilities is "cruel and unusual punishment," thereby ending the practice of their execution (Atkins v. Virginia, 2002). In Canada, capital punishment was abolished in 1976.

What's in a Name?

In the past, individuals with IQ scores below 70 and significant adaptive and social functioning delays were diagnosed with mental retardation. When this diagnosis was first named, the title held no social stigma. In time, however, the degrading word "retard" sprang from this diagnostic term. "Retard" was frequently used as a taunt, especially among young people, until the words "mentally retarded" and "retard" became an insult. As such, the DSM-5 now labels this diagnosis as "intellectual disability." Earlier in the chapter, we discussed how language affects how we think. Do you think changing language has any impact on how people regard those with developmental disabilities? Does a different name give people more dignity, and if so, how? Does it change the expectations for those with developmental or cognitive disabilities? Why or why not?

Extremely High Intelligence

Having extremely high IQ is clearly less of a problem than having extremely low IQ, but there may also be challenges to being particularly smart. It is often assumed that schoolchildren who are labeled as gifted may have adjustment problems that make it more difficult for them to create social relationships. To study gifted children, Lewis Terman and his colleagues (Terman & Oden, 1959) selected about 1,500 high school students who scored in the top 1% on the Stanford-Binet and similar IQ tests (i.e., who had IQs of about 135 or higher), and tracked them for more than seven decades (the children became known as the "termites" and are still being studied today). This study found, first, that these students were not unhealthy or poorly adjusted but rather were above average in physical health and were taller and heavier than individuals in the general population. The students also had above average social relationships—for instance, being less likely to divorce than the average person (Seagoe, 1975).

Terman's study also found that many of these students went on to achieve high levels of education and entered prestigious professions, including medicine, law, and science. Of the sample, 7% earned doctoral degrees, 4% earned medical degrees, and 6% earned law degrees. These numbers are all considerably higher than what would have been expected from a more general population. Another study of young adolescents who had even higher IQs found that these students ended up attending graduate school at a rate more than 50 times higher than that in the general population (Lubinski & Benbow, 2006).

As you might expect based on our discussion of intelligence, children who are gifted have higher scores on general intelligence (g). But there are also different types of giftedness. Some children are particularly good at math or science, some at automobile repair or carpentry, some at music or art, some at sports

or leadership, and so on. There is a lively debate among scholars about whether it is appropriate or beneficial to label some children as gifted and talented in school and to provide them with accelerated special classes and other programs that are not available to everyone. Although doing so may help the gifted kids (Colangelo & Assouline, 2009), it also may isolate them from their peers and make such provisions unavailable to those who are not classified as gifted.

Sex Differences in Intelligence

As discussed in the introduction to Chapter 10, "Intelligence and Language," Lawrence Summers's claim about the reasons why women might be underrepresented in the hard sciences was based in part on the assumption that environment, such as the presence of gender discrimination or social norms, was important but also in part on the possibility that women may be less genetically capable of performing some tasks than are men. These claims, and the responses they provoked, provide another example of how cultural interpretations of the meanings of IQ can create disagreements and even guide public policy.

Assumptions about sex differences in intelligence are increasingly challenged in the research. In Canada, recent statistics show that women outnumber men in university degrees earned. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released its *Education at a Glance 2013* report where Canada ranked first among 34 OECD countries with adults who had attained a tertiary (post-secondary) education — 51% of 25- to 64-year-olds in 2011 (OECD, 2013). The report found women in Canada had significantly higher tertiary attainment rates compared with men (56% versus 46%), with a 16 percentage-point gap between the genders among younger adults.

There are also observed sex differences on some particular types of tasks. Women tend to do better than men on some verbal tasks, including spelling, writing, and pronouncing words (Halpern et al., 2007), and they have better emotional intelligence in the sense that they are better at detecting and recognizing the emotions of others (McClure, 2000). On average, men do better than women on tasks requiring spatial ability, such as the mental rotation tasks shown in Figure 10.8 Spatial Rotation (Voyer, Voyer, & Bryden, 1995). Boys tend to do better than girls on both geography and geometry tasks (Vogel, 1996).

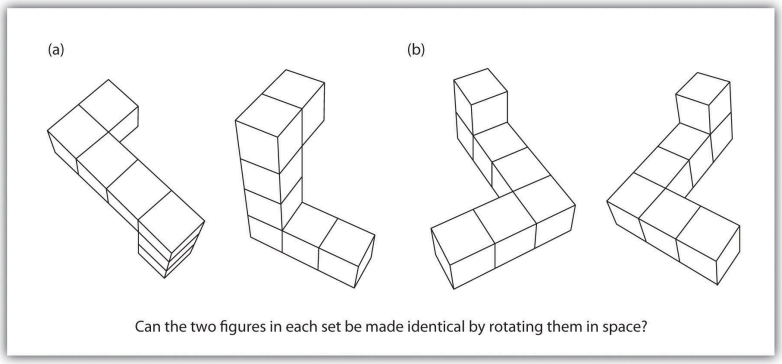


Figure 10.8 Spatial Rotation. Men outperform women on measures of spatial rotation, such as this task requires, but women are better at recognizing the emotions of others.

Although these differences are real, and can be important, keep in mind that like virtually all sex-group differences, the average difference between men and women is small compared with the average

differences within each sex (Lynn & Irwing, 2004). There are many women who are better than the average man on spatial tasks, and many men who score higher than the average women in terms of emotional intelligence. Sex differences in intelligence allow us to make statements only about average differences and do not say much about any individual person.

Although society may not want to hear it, differences between men and women may be in part genetically determined, perhaps by differences in brain lateralization or by hormones (Kimura & Hampson, 1994; Voyer, Voyer, & Bryden, 1995). But nurture is also likely important (Newcombe & Huttenlocher, 2006). As infants, boys and girls show no or few differences in spatial or counting abilities, suggesting that the differences occur at least in part as a result of socialization (Spelke, 2005). Furthermore, the number of women entering the hard sciences has been increasing steadily over the past years, again suggesting that some of the differences may have been due to gender discrimination and societal expectations about the appropriate roles and skills of women.

Racial Differences in Intelligence

Although their bell curves overlap considerably, there are also differences in which members of different racial and ethnic groups cluster along the IQ line. Lynn's 2006 work on racial differences in intelligence organizes the data by nine global regions, surveying 620 published studies from around the world, with a total of 813,778 tested individuals. Lynn's meta-analysis lists the average IQ scores of East Asians (105), Europeans (99), Inuit (91), Southeast Asians and Amerindians each (87), Pacific Islanders (85), Middle Easterners (including South Asians and North Africans) (84), East and West Africans (67), Australian Aborigines (62), and Bushmen and Pygmies (54). Lynn and co-author Tatu Vanhanen (from the University of Helsinki) argue that differences in national income correlate with, and can be at least partially attributed to, differences in average national IQ (2002).

The observed average differences in intelligence between groups has at times led to malicious and misguided attempts to try to correct for them through discriminatory treatment of people from different races, ethnicities, and nationalities (Lewontin, Rose, & Kamin, 1984). One of the most egregious was the spread of **eugenics**, *the proposal that one could improve the human species by encouraging or permitting reproduction of only those people with genetic characteristics judged desirable*.

Eugenics became popular in Canada and the United States in the early 20th century and was supported by many prominent psychologists, including Sir Francis Galton. Dozens of universities offered courses in eugenics, and the topic was presented in most high school and university biology texts (Selden, 1999). Belief in the policies of eugenics led the Canadian legislatures in Alberta and British Columbia as well as the U.S. Congress to pass laws designed to restrict immigration from other countries supposedly marked by low intelligence, particularly those in eastern and southern Europe. Two of Canada's provinces and more than one-half of the U.S. states passed laws requiring the sterilization of low-IQ individuals. In Canada, approximately 5,000 were affected. Between 1928 and 1972, mostly Aboriginals, women, and "mental defectives" underwent forced sterilizations. Fortunately, the practice of sterilization was abandoned in Canada between the 1940s and the 1960s, although sterilization laws remained on the books in some American states until the 1970s.

One explanation for race differences in IQ is that intelligence tests are biased against some groups and in favour of others. By **bias**, what psychologists mean is that *a test predicts outcomes — such as grades or occupational success — better for one group than it does for another*. If IQ is a better predictor of school

grade point average for Whites than it is for Asians, for instance, then the test would be biased against Asians, even though the average IQ scores for Asians might be higher. But IQ tests do not seem to be racially biased because the observed correlations between IQ tests and both academic and occupational achievement are about equal across races (Brody, 1992).

Another way that tests might be biased is if questions are framed such that they are easier for people from one culture to understand than for people from other cultures. For example, even a very smart person will not do well on a test if he or she is not fluent in the language in which the test is administered, or does not understand the meaning of the questions being asked. But modern intelligence tests are designed to be culturally neutral, and group differences are found even on tests that only ask about spatial intelligence. Although some researchers still are concerned about the possibility that intelligence tests are culturally biased, it is probably not the case that the tests are creating all of the observed group differences (Suzuki & Valencia, 1997).

Research Focus: Stereotype Threat

Although intelligence tests may not be culturally biased, the situation in which one takes a test may be. One environmental factor that may affect how individuals perform and achieve is their expectations about their ability at a task. In some cases these beliefs may be positive, and they have the effect of making us feel more confident and thus better able to perform tasks. For instance, research has found that because Asian students are aware of the cultural stereotype that "Asians are good at math," reminding them of this fact before they take a difficult math test can improve their performance on the test (Walton & Cohen, 2003).

On the other hand, sometimes these beliefs are negative, and they create negative self-fulfilling prophecies such that we perform more poorly just because of our knowledge about the stereotypes. In 1995 Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson tested the hypothesis that the differences in performance on IQ tests between Blacks and Whites might be due to the activation of negative stereotypes (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Because Black students are aware of the stereotype that Blacks are intellectually inferior to Whites, this stereotype might create a negative expectation, which might interfere with their performance on intellectual tests through fear of confirming that stereotype.

In support of this hypothesis, the experiments revealed that Black university students performed worse (in comparison to their prior test scores) on standardized test questions when this task was described to them as being diagnostic of their verbal ability (and thus when the stereotype was relevant), but that their performance was not influenced when the same questions were described as an exercise in problem solving. And in another study, the researchers found that when Black students were asked to indicate their race before they took a math test (again activating the stereotype), they performed more poorly than they had on prior exams, whereas White students were not affected by first indicating their race.

Researchers concluded that thinking about negative stereotypes that are relevant to a task that one is performing creates **stereotype threat** — *performance decrements that are caused by the knowledge of cultural stereotypes*. That is, they argued that the negative impact of race on standardized tests may be caused, at least in part, by the performance situation itself.

Research has found that stereotype threat effects can help explain a wide variety of performance decrements among those who are targeted by negative stereotypes. When stereotypes are activated, children with low socioeconomic status perform more poorly in math than do those with high socioeconomic status, and psychology students perform more poorly than do natural science students (Brown, Croizet, Bohner, Fournet, & Payne, 2003; Croizet & Claire, 1998). Even groups who typically enjoy advantaged social status can be made to experience stereotype threat. White men perform more poorly on a math test when they are told that their performance will be compared with that of Asian men (Aronson, Lustina, Good, Keough, & Steele,

1999), and Whites perform more poorly than Blacks on a sport-related task when it is described to them as measuring their natural athletic ability (Stone, 2002; Stone, Lynch, Sjomeling, & Darley, 1999).

Research has found that stereotype threat is caused by both cognitive and emotional factors (Schmader, Johns, & Forbes, 2008). On the cognitive side, individuals who are experiencing stereotype threat show an increased vigilance toward the environment as well as increased attempts to suppress stereotypic thoughts. Engaging in these behaviours takes cognitive capacity away from the task. On the affective side, stereotype threat occurs when there is a discrepancy between our positive concept of our own skills and abilities and the negative stereotypes that suggest poor performance. These discrepancies create stress and anxiety, and these emotions make it harder to perform well on the task.

Stereotype threat is not, however, absolute; we can get past it if we try. What is important is to reduce the self doubts that are activated when we consider the negative stereotypes. Manipulations that affirm positive characteristics about the self or one's social group are successful at reducing stereotype threat (Marx & Roman, 2002; McIntyre, Paulson, & Lord, 2003). In fact, just knowing that stereotype threat exists and may influence our performance can help alleviate its negative impact (Johns, Schmader, & Martens, 2005).

In summary, although there is no definitive answer to why IQ bell curves differ across racial and ethnic groups, and most experts believe that environment is important in pushing the bell curves apart, genetics can also be involved. It is important to realize that although IQ is heritable, this does not mean that group differences are caused by genetics. Although some people are naturally taller than others (height is heritable), people who get plenty of nutritious food are taller than people who do not, and this difference is clearly due to environment. This is a reminder that group differences may be created by environmental variables but can also be reduced through appropriate environmental actions such as educational and training programs.

Key Takeaways

- IQ is distributed in the population in the form of a normal distribution (commonly known as a bell curve).
- Intellectual disabilities are a generalized disorder ascribed to people who have an IQ below 70, who have experienced deficits since childhood, and who have trouble with basic life skills, such as dressing and feeding themselves and communicating with others. One cause of an intellectual disability is Down syndrome.
- Extremely intelligent individuals are not unhealthy or poorly adjusted, but rather are above average in physical health and taller and heavier than individuals in the general population.
- Men and women have almost identical intelligence, but men have more variability in their IQ scores than women do.
- On average, men do better than women on tasks requiring spatial ability, whereas women do better on verbal tasks and score higher on emotional intelligence.
- Although their bell curves overlap considerably, there are also average group differences for members of different racial and ethnic groups.
- The observed average differences in intelligence between racial and ethnic groups has at times led to malicious attempts to correct for them, such as the eugenics movement in the early part of the 20th century.

- The situation in which one takes a test may create stereotype threat — performance decrements that are caused by the knowledge of cultural stereotypes.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Were Lawrence Summers's ideas about the potential causes of differences between men and women in math and hard sciences careers offensive to you? Why or why not?
2. Do you think that we should give intelligence tests? Why or why not? Does it matter to you whether or not the tests have been standardized and shown to be reliable and valid?
3. Give your ideas about the practice of providing accelerated classes to children listed as "gifted" in high school. What are the potential positive and negative outcomes of doing so? What research evidence has helped you form your opinion?
4. Consider the observed sex and racial differences in intelligence. What implications do you think the differences have for education and career choices?

Text Attributions

- "What's In a Name" was adapted by BCcampus from Chapter 7.5: Measuring Intelligence in *Psychology – 2nd Edition (OpenStax)*, which is licensed under a CC BY 4.0 licence.

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Figure 10.7: "Boy with Down Syndrome" by Vanellus Foto (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Boy_with_Down_Syndrome.JPG) is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en). "My special Daughter with her special smile" by Andreas-photography (http://www.flickr.com/photos/sheepies/4476270857/) is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/).

Figure 10.8: Adapted from Halpern, et al. (2007).

10.3 Communicating with Others: The Development and Use of Language

Learning Objectives

1. Review the components and structure of language.
2. Explain the biological underpinnings of language.
3. Outline the theories of language development.

Human language is the most complex behaviour on the planet and, at least as far as we know, in the universe. Language involves both the ability to comprehend spoken and written words and to create communication in real time when we speak or write. Most languages are oral, generated through speaking. Speaking involves a variety of complex cognitive, social, and biological processes including operation of the vocal cords, and the coordination of breath with movements of the throat, mouth, and tongue.

Other languages are sign languages, in which the communication is expressed by movements of the hands. The most common sign language is American Sign Language (ASL), commonly used in many countries across the world and adapted for use in varying countries. The other main sign language used in Canada is la Langue des Signes Québécoise (LSQ); there is also a regional dialect, Maritimes Sign Language (MSL).

Although language is often used for the transmission of information ("turn right at the next light and then go straight," "Place tab A into slot B"), this is only its most mundane function. Language also allows us to access existing knowledge, to draw conclusions, to set and accomplish goals, and to understand and communicate complex social relationships. Language is fundamental to our ability to think, and without it we would be nowhere near as intelligent as we are.

Language can be conceptualized in terms of sounds, meaning, and the environmental factors that help us understand it. *Phonemes* are the elementary sounds of our language, *morphemes* are the smallest units of meaning in a language, *syntax* is the set of grammatical rules that control how words are put together, and *contextual information* is the elements of communication that are not part of the content of language but that help us understand its meaning.

The Components of Language

A **phoneme** is *the smallest unit of sound that makes a meaningful difference in a language*. The word "bit" has three phonemes, /b/, /i/, and /t/ (in transcription, phonemes are placed between slashes), and the word "pit" also has three: /p/, /i/, and /t/. In spoken languages, phonemes are produced by the positions

and movements of the vocal tract, including our lips, teeth, tongue, vocal cords, and throat, whereas in sign languages phonemes are defined by the shapes and movement of the hands.

There are hundreds of unique phonemes that can be made by human speakers, but most languages only use a small subset of the possibilities. English contains about 45 phonemes, whereas other languages have as few as 15 and others more than 60. The Hawaiian language contains only about a dozen phonemes, including five vowels (a, e, i, o, and u) and seven consonants (h, k, l, m, n, p, and w).

In addition to using a different set of phonemes, because the phoneme is actually a category of sounds that are treated alike within the language, speakers of different languages are able to hear the difference only between some phonemes but not others. This is known as the *categorical perception of speech sounds*. English speakers can differentiate the /r/ phoneme from the /l/ phoneme, and thus "rake" and "lake" are heard as different words. In Japanese, however, /r/ and /l/ are the same phoneme, and thus speakers of that language cannot tell the difference between the word "rake" and the word "lake." Try saying the words "cool" and "keep" out loud. Can you hear the difference between the two /k/ sounds? To English speakers they both sound the same, but to speakers of Arabic these represent two different phonemes (Figure 10.9, "Speech Sounds and Adults").

Infants are born able to understand all phonemes, but they lose their ability to do so as they get older; by 10 months of age a child's ability to recognize phonemes becomes very similar to that of the adult speakers of the native language. Phonemes that were initially differentiated come to be treated as equivalent (Werker & Tees, 2002).

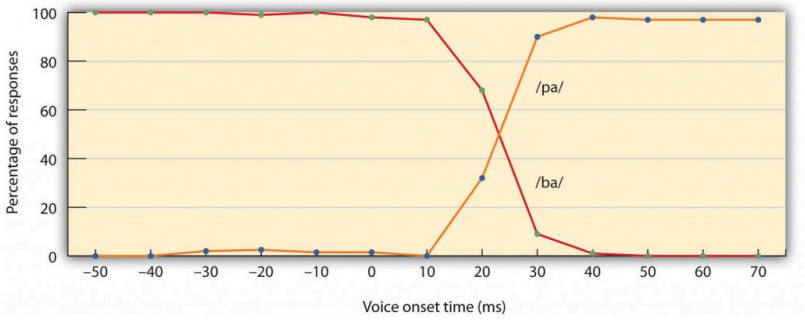


Figure 10.9 Speech Sounds and Adults. When adults hear speech sounds that gradually change from one phoneme to another, they do not hear the continuous change; rather, they hear one sound until they suddenly begin hearing the other. In this case, the change is from /ba/ to /pa/.

Whereas phonemes are the smallest units of sound in language, a **morpheme** is *a string of one or more phonemes that makes up the smallest units of meaning in a language*. Some morphemes, such as one-letter words like "I" and "a," are also phonemes, but most morphemes are made up of combinations of phonemes. Some morphemes are prefixes and suffixes used to modify other words. For example, the syllable "re-" as in "rewrite" or "repay" means "to do again," and the suffix "-est" as in "happiest" or "coolest" means "to the maximum."

Syntax is *the set of rules of a language by which we construct sentences*. Each language has a different syntax. The syntax of the English language requires that each sentence have a noun and a verb, each of which may be modified by adjectives and adverbs. Some syntaxes make use of the order in which words appear, while others do not. In English, "The man bites the dog" is different from "The dog bites

the man." In German, however, only the article endings before the noun matter. "Der Hund beisst den Mann" means "The dog bites the man" but so does "Den Mann beisst der Hund."

Words do not possess fixed meanings but change their interpretation as a function of the context in which they are spoken. We use **contextual information** — *the information surrounding language*—to help us interpret it. Examples of contextual information include the knowledge that we have and that we know that other people have, and nonverbal expressions such as facial expressions, postures, gestures, and tone of voice. Misunderstandings can easily arise if people aren't attentive to contextual information or if some of it is missing, such as it may be in newspaper headlines or in text messages.

Examples in Which Syntax Is Correct but the Interpretation Can Be Ambiguous

- Grandmother of Eight Makes Hole in One
- Milk Drinkers Turn to Powder
- Farmer Bill Dies in House
- Old School Pillars Are Replaced by Alumni
- Two Convicts Evade Noose, Jury Hung
- Include Your Children When Baking Cookies

The Biology and Development of Language

Anyone who has tried to master a second language as an adult knows the difficulty of language learning. And yet children learn languages easily and naturally. Children who are not exposed to language early in their lives will likely never learn one. Case studies, including Victor the "Wild Child," who was abandoned as a baby in France and not discovered until he was 12, and Genie, a child whose parents kept her locked in a closet from 18 months until 13 years of age, are (fortunately) two of the only known examples of these deprived children. Both of these children made some progress in socialization after they were rescued, but neither of them ever developed language (Rymer, 1993). This is also why it is important to determine quickly if a child is deaf and to begin immediately to communicate in sign language. Deaf children who are not exposed to sign language during their early years will likely never learn it (Mayberry, Lock, & Kazmi, 2002).

Research Focus: When Can We Best Learn Language? Testing the Critical Period Hypothesis

For many years psychologists assumed that there was a **critical period** (*a time in which learning can easily occur*) for language learning, lasting between infancy and puberty, and after which language learning was more difficult or impossible (Lenneberg, 1967; Penfield & Roberts, 1959). But later research provided a different interpretation.

An important study by Jacqueline Johnson and Elissa Newport (1989) using Chinese and Korean speakers who had learned English as a second language provided the first insight. The participants were all adults who had immigrated to the United States between three and 39 years of age and who were tested on their English skills by being asked to detect grammatical errors in sentences. Johnson and Newport found that the

participants who had begun learning English before they were seven years old learned it as well as native English speakers but that the ability to learn English dropped off gradually for the participants who had started later. Newport and Johnson also found a correlation between the age of acquisition and the variance in the ultimate learning of the language. While early learners were almost all successful in acquiring their language to a high degree of proficiency, later learners showed much greater individual variation.

Johnson and Newport's finding that children who immigrated before they were seven years old learned English fluently seemed consistent with the idea of a critical period in language learning. But their finding of a gradual decrease in proficiency for those who immigrated between eight and 39 years of age was not — rather, it suggested that there might not be a single critical period of language learning that ended at puberty, as early theorists had expected, but that language learning at later ages is simply better when it occurs earlier. This idea was reinforced in research by Hakuta, Bialystok, and Wiley (2003), who examined census records of language learning in millions of Chinese and Spanish immigrants. The census form asks respondents to describe their own English ability using one of five categories: not at all, not well, well, very well, and speak only English. The results of this research dealt another blow to the idea of the critical period, because it showed that regardless of what year was used as a cutoff point for the end of the critical period, there was no evidence for any discontinuity in language-learning potential. Rather, the results (Figure 10.10, "English Proficiency in Native Chinese Speakers") showed that the degree of success in second-language acquisition declined steadily throughout the respondent's life span. The difficulty of learning language as one gets older is probably due to the fact that, with age, the brain loses its **plasticity** — that is, *its ability to develop new neural connections*.

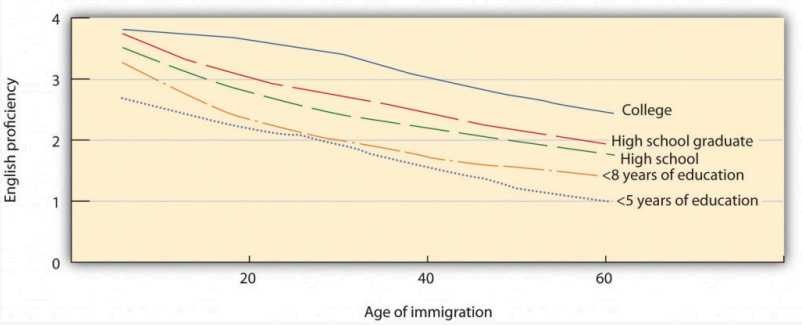


Figure 10.10 English Proficiency in Native Chinese Speakers. Hakuta, Bialystok, and Wiley (2003) found no evidence for critical periods in language learning. Regardless of level of education, self-reported second-language skills decreased consistently across age of immigration.

For the 90% of people who are right-handed, language is stored and controlled by the left cerebral cortex, although for some left-handers this pattern is reversed. These differences can easily be seen in the results of neuroimaging studies that show that listening to and producing language creates greater activity in the left hemisphere than in the right. **Broca's area**, *an area in front of the left hemisphere near the motor cortex*, is responsible for language production (Figure 10.11, "Drawing of Brain Showing Broca's and Wernicke's Areas"). This area was first localized in the 1860s by the French physician Paul Broca, who studied patients with lesions to various parts of the brain. **Wernicke's area**, *an area of the brain next to the auditory cortex*, is responsible for language comprehension.

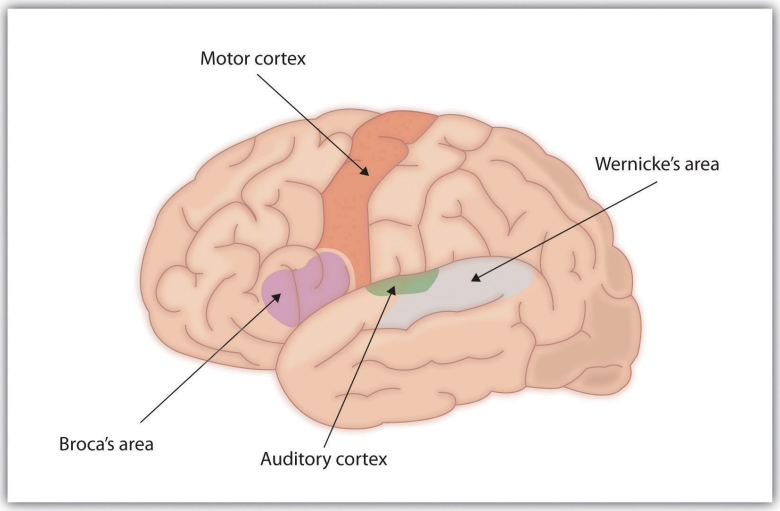


Figure 10.11 Drawing of Brain Showing Broca's and Wernicke's Areas.

Evidence for the importance of Broca's and Wernicke's areas in language is seen in patients who experience **aphasia**, *a condition in which language functions are severely impaired*. People with Broca's aphasia have difficulty producing speech, whereas people with damage to Wernicke's area can produce speech, but what they say makes no sense and they have trouble understanding language.

Learning Language

Language learning begins even before birth, because the fetus can hear muffled versions of speaking from outside the womb. Moon, Cooper, and Fifer (1993) found that infants only two days old sucked harder on a pacifier when they heard their mothers' native language being spoken than when they heard a foreign language, even when strangers were speaking the languages. Babies are also aware of the patterns of their native language, showing surprise when they hear speech that has a different patterns of phonemes than those they are used to (Saffran, Aslin, & Newport, 2004).

During the first year or so after birth, and long before they speak their first words, infants are already learning language. One aspect of this learning is practice in producing speech. By the time they are six to eight weeks old, babies start making vowel sounds (ooohh, aaahh, goo) as well as a variety of cries and squeals to help them practice.

At about seven months, infants begin **babbling**, engaging in *intentional vocalizations that lack specific meaning*. Children babble as practice in creating specific sounds, and by the time they are one year old, the babbling uses primarily the sounds of the language that they are learning (de Boysson-Bardies, Sagart, & Durand, 1984). These vocalizations have a conversational tone that sounds meaningful even though it isn't. Babbling also helps children understand the social, communicative function of language (Figure 10.12, "Practising Language"). Children who are exposed to sign language babble in sign by making hand movements that represent real language (Petitto & Marentette, 1991).



Figure 10.12 Practising Language. Babies often engage in vocal exchanges to help them practise language.

At the same time that infants are practising their speaking skills by babbling, they are also learning to better understand sounds and eventually the words of language. One of the first words that children understand is their own name, usually by about six months, followed by commonly used words like "bottle," "mama," and "doggie" by 10 to 12 months (Mandel, Jusczyk, & Pisoni, 1995).

The infant usually produces his or her first words at about one year of age. It is at this point that the child first understands that words are more than sounds — they refer to particular objects and ideas. By the time children are two years old, they have a vocabulary of several hundred words, and by kindergarten their vocabularies have increased to several thousand words. By Grade 5, most children know about 50,000 words and by the time they are in university, about 200,000.

The early utterances of children contain many errors, for instance, confusing /b/ and /d/, or /c/ and /z/. And the words that children create are often simplified, in part because they are not yet able to make the more complex sounds of the real language (Dobrich & Scarborough, 1992). Children may say "keekee" for kitty, "nana" for banana, and "vesketti" for spaghetti in part because it is easier. Often these early words are accompanied by gestures that may also be easier to produce than the words themselves. Children's pronunciations become increasingly accurate between one and three years, but some problems may persist until school age.

Most of a child's first words are nouns, and early sentences may include only the noun. "Ma" may mean "more milk please" and "da" may mean "look, there's Fido." Eventually the length of the utterances increases to two words ("mo ma" or "da bark"), and these primitive sentences begin to follow the appropriate syntax of the native language.

Because language involves the active categorization of sounds and words into higher level units, children make some mistakes in interpreting what words mean and how to use them. In particular, they often make **overextensions** of concepts, *which means they use a given word in a broader context than appropriate*. A child might at first call all adult men "daddy" or all animals "doggie."

Children also use contextual information, particularly the cues that parents provide, to help them learn language. Infants are frequently more attuned to the tone of voice of the person speaking than to the content of the words themselves, and are aware of the target of speech. Werker, Pegg, and McLeod (1994) found that infants listened longer to a woman who was speaking to a baby than to a woman who was speaking to another adult.

Children learn that people are usually referring to things that they are looking at when they are speaking (Baldwin, 1993), and that that the speaker's emotional expressions are related to the content of their speech. Children also use their knowledge of syntax to help them figure out what words mean. If a child hears an adult point to a strange object and say, "this is a dirb," they will infer that a "dirb" is a thing, but if they hear them say, "this is a one of those dirb things" they will infer that it refers to the colour or other characteristic of the object. And if they hear the word "dirbing," they will infer that "dirbing" is something that we do (Waxman, 1990).

How Children Learn Language: Theories of Language Acquisition

Psychological theories of language learning differ in terms of the importance they place on nature versus nurture. Yet it is clear that both matter. Children are not born knowing language; they learn to speak by hearing what happens around them. On the other hand, human brains, unlike those of any other animal, are prewired in a way that leads them, almost effortlessly, to learn language.

Perhaps the most straightforward explanation of language development is that it occurs through principles of learning, including association, reinforcement, and the observation of others (Skinner, 1965). There must be at least some truth to the idea that language is learned, because children learn the language that they hear spoken around them rather than some other language. Also supporting this idea is the gradual improvement of language skills with time. It seems that children modify their language through imitation, reinforcement, and shaping, as would be predicted by learning theories.

But language cannot be entirely learned. For one, children learn words too fast for them to be learned through reinforcement. Between the ages of 18 months and five years, children learn up to 10 new words every day (Anglin, 1993). More importantly, language is more *generative* than it is imitative. **Generativity** refers to *the fact that speakers of a language can compose sentences to represent new ideas that they have never before been exposed to*. Language is not a predefined set of ideas and sentences that we choose when we need them, but rather a system of rules and procedures that allows us to create an infinite number of statements, thoughts, and ideas, including those that have never previously occurred. When a child says that she "swimmed" in the pool, for instance, she is showing generativity. No adult speaker of English would ever say "swimmed," yet it is easily generated from the normal system of producing language.

Other evidence that refutes the idea that all language is learned through experience comes from the observation that children may learn languages better than they ever hear them. Deaf children whose parents do not speak ASL very well nevertheless are able to learn it perfectly on their own, and may even make up their own language if they need to (Goldin-Meadow & Mylander, 1998). A group of deaf children in a school in Nicaragua, whose teachers could not sign, invented a way to communicate through made-up signs (Senghas, Senghas, & Pyers, 2005). The development of this new Nicaraguan Sign Language has continued and changed as new generations of students have come to the school and

started using the language. Although the original system was not a real language, it is becoming closer and closer every year, showing the development of a new language in modern times.

The linguist Noam Chomsky is a believer in the nature approach to language, arguing that human brains contain a *language acquisition device* that includes a *universal grammar* that underlies all human language (Chomsky, 1965, 1972). According to this approach, each of the many languages spoken around the world (there are between 6,000 and 8,000) is an individual example of the same underlying set of procedures that are hardwired into human brains. Chomsky's account proposes that children are born with a knowledge of general rules of syntax that determine how sentences are constructed.

Chomsky differentiates between the **deep structure of an idea** — *how the idea is represented in the fundamental universal grammar that is common to all languages*, and the **surface structure of the idea** — *how it is expressed in any one language*. Once we hear or express a thought in surface structure, we generally forget exactly how it happened. At the end of a lecture, you will remember a lot of the deep structure (i.e., the ideas expressed by the instructor), but you cannot reproduce the surface structure (the exact words that the instructor used to communicate the ideas).

Although there is general agreement among psychologists that babies are genetically programmed to learn language, there is still debate about Chomsky's idea that there is a universal grammar that can account for all language learning. Evans and Levinson (2009) surveyed the world's languages and found that none of the presumed underlying features of the language acquisition device were entirely universal. In their search they found languages that did not have noun or verb phrases, that did not have tenses (e.g., past, present, future), and even some that did not have nouns or verbs at all, even though a basic assumption of a universal grammar is that all languages should share these features.

Bilingualism and Cognitive Development

Bilingualism (*the ability to speak two languages*) is becoming more and more frequent in the modern world. Nearly one-half of the world's population, including 17% of Canadian citizens, grows up bilingual.

In Canada, education is under provincial jurisdiction; however, the federal government has been a strong supporter of establishing Canada as a bilingual country and has helped pioneer the French immersion programs in the public education systems throughout the country. In contrast, many U.S. states have passed laws outlawing bilingual education in schools based on the idea that students will have a stronger identity with the school, the culture, and the government if they speak only English, and in part based on the idea that speaking two languages may interfere with cognitive development.

A variety of minority language immersion programs are now offered across the country depending on need and interest. In British Columbia, for instance, the city of Vancouver established a new bilingual Mandarin Chinese-English immersion program in 2002 at the elementary school level in order accommodate Vancouver's both historic and present strong ties to the Chinese-speaking world. Similar programs have been developed for both Hindi and Punjabi to serve the large South Asian cultural community in the city of Surrey. By default, most schools in British Columbia teach in English, with French immersion options available. In both English and French schools, one can study and

take government exams in Japanese, Punjabi, Mandarin Chinese, French, Spanish, and German at the secondary level.

Some early psychological research showed that, when compared with monolingual children, bilingual children performed more slowly when processing language, and their verbal scores were lower. But these tests were frequently given in English, even when this was not the child's first language, and the children tested were often of lower socioeconomic status than the monolingual children (Andrews, 1982).

More current research that has controlled for these factors has found that, although bilingual children may, in some cases, learn language somewhat slower than do monolingual children (Oller & Pearson, 2002), bilingual and monolingual children do not significantly differ in the final depth of language learning, nor do they generally confuse the two languages (Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997). In fact, participants who speak two languages have been found to have better cognitive functioning, cognitive flexibility, and analytic skills in comparison to monolinguals (Bialystok, 2009). Research (Figure 10.13, "Gray Matter in Bilinguals") has also found that learning a second language produces changes in the area of the brain in the left hemisphere that is involved in language, such that this area is denser and contains more neurons (Mechelli et al., 2004). Furthermore, the increased density is stronger in those individuals who are most proficient in their second language and who learned the second language earlier. Thus, rather than slowing language development, learning a second language seems to increase cognitive abilities.

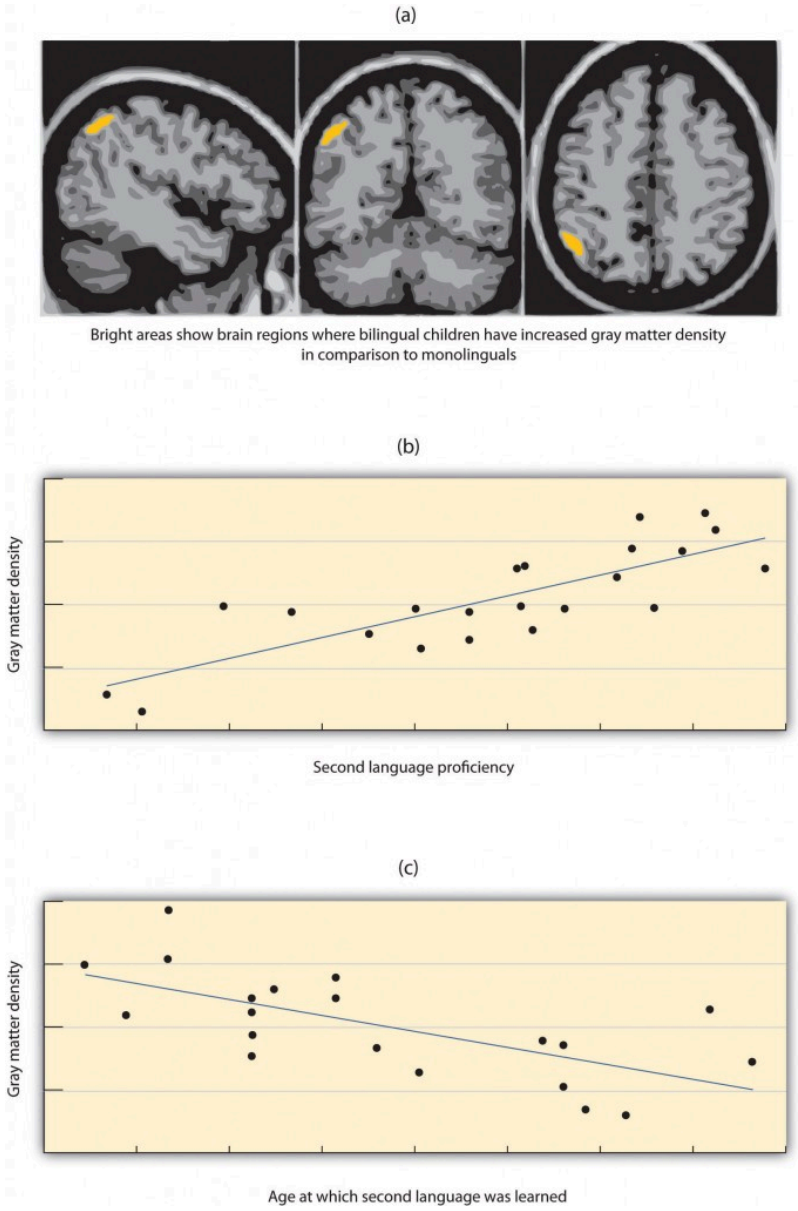


Figure 10.13 Gray Matter in Bilinguals. Andrea Mechelli and her colleagues (2004) found that children who were bilingual had increased gray matter density (i.e., more neurons) in cortical areas related to language in comparison to monolinguals (panel a), that gray matter density correlated positively with second language proficiency (panel b) and that gray matter density correlated negatively with the age at which the second language was learned (panel c).

Can Animals Learn Language?

Nonhuman animals have a wide variety of systems of communication. Some species communicate using scents; others use visual displays, such as baring the teeth, puffing up the fur, or flapping the wings; and still others use vocal sounds. Male songbirds, such as canaries and finches, sing songs to attract mates and to protect territory, and chimpanzees use a combination of facial expressions, sounds, and actions, such as slapping the ground, to convey aggression (de Waal, 1989). Honeybees use a waggle dance to

direct other bees to the location of food sources (von Frisch, 1956). The language of vervet monkeys is relatively advanced in the sense that they use specific sounds to communicate specific meanings. Vervets make different calls to signify that they have seen either a leopard, a snake, or a hawk (Seyfarth & Cheney, 1997).

Despite their wide abilities to communicate, efforts to teach animals to use language have had only limited success. One of the early efforts was made by Catherine and Keith Hayes, who raised a chimpanzee named Viki in their home along with their own children. But Viki learned little and could never speak (Hayes & Hayes, 1952). Researchers speculated that Viki's difficulties might have been in part because she could not create the words in her vocal cords, and so subsequent attempts were made to teach primates to speak using sign language or boards on which they can point to symbols.

Allen and Beatrix Gardner worked for many years to teach a chimpanzee named Washoe to sign using ASL. Washoe, who lived to be 42 years old, could label up to 250 different objects and make simple requests and comments, such as "please tickle" and "me sorry" (Fouts, 1997). Washoe's adopted daughter Loulis, who was never exposed to human signers, learned more than 70 signs simply by watching her mother sign.

The most proficient nonhuman language speaker is Kanzi, a bonobo who lives at the Language Learning Center at Georgia State University (Savage-Rumbaugh & Lewin, 1994). As you can see in "Video Clip: Language Recognition in Bonobos," Kanzi has a propensity for language that is in many ways similar to humans. He learned faster when he was younger than when he got older, he learns by observation, and he can use symbols to comment on social interactions, rather than simply for food treats. Kanzi can also create elementary syntax and understand relatively complex commands. Kanzi can make tools and can even play the video game Pac-Man.

The bonobo Kanzi is the most proficient known nonhuman language speaker.

Watch: "Kanzi and Novel Sentences" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Dhc2zePJFE



And yet even Kanzi does not have a true language in the same way that humans do. Human babies learn words faster and faster as they get older, but Kanzi does not. Each new word he learns is almost as difficult as the one before. Kanzi usually requires many trials to learn a new sign, whereas human babies can speak words after only one exposure. Kanzi's language is focused primarily on food and pleasure and only rarely on social relationships. Although he can combine words, he generates few new phrases and cannot master syntactic rules beyond the level of about a two-year-old human child (Greenfield & Savage-Rumbaugh, 1991).

In sum, although many animals communicate, none of them has a true language. With some exceptions, the information that can be communicated in nonhuman species is limited primarily to displays of liking or disliking, and related to basic motivations of aggression and mating. Humans also use this more primitive type of communication, in the form of *nonverbal behaviours* such as eye contact, touch, hand signs, and interpersonal distance, to communicate their like or dislike for others, but they (unlike animals) also supplant this more primitive communication with language. Although other animal

brains share similarities to ours, only the human brain is complex enough to create language. What is perhaps most remarkable is that although language never appears in nonhumans, language is universal in humans. All humans, unless they have a profound brain abnormality or are completely isolated from other humans, learn language.

Language and Perception

To this point in the chapter we have considered intelligence and language as if they are separate concepts. But what if language influences our thinking? *The idea that language and its structures influence and limit human thought* is called **linguistic relativity**.

The most frequently cited example of this possibility was proposed by Benjamin Whorf (1897-1941), a linguist who was particularly interested in Aboriginal languages. Whorf argued that the Inuit people of Canada had many words for snow, whereas English speakers have only one, and that this difference influenced how the different cultures perceived snow. Whorf argued that the Inuit perceived and categorized snow in finer details than English speakers possibly could, because the English language constrained perception.

Although the idea of linguistic relativism seemed reasonable, research has suggested that language has less influence on thinking than might be expected. For one, in terms of perceptions of snow, although it is true that the Inuit do make more distinctions among types of snow than English speakers do, the latter also make some distinctions (think powder, slush, whiteout, and so forth). And it is also possible that thinking about snow may influence language, rather than the other way around.

In a more direct test of the possibility that language influences thinking, Eleanor Rosch (1973) compared people from the Dani culture of New Guinea, who have only two terms for colour (dark and bright), with English speakers who use many more terms. Rosch hypothesized that if language constrains perception and categorization, then the Dani should have a harder time distinguishing colours than English speakers would. But her research found that when the Dani were asked to categorize colours using new categories, they did so in almost the same way that English speakers did. Similar results were found by Frank, Everett, Fedorenko, and Gibson (2008), who showed that the Amazonian tribe known as the Pirahã, who have no linguistic method for expressing exact quantities (not even the number one), were nevertheless able to perform matches with large numbers without problem.

Although these data led researchers to conclude that the language we use to describe colour and number does not influence our underlying understanding of the underlying sensation, another more recent study has questioned this assumption. Roberson, Davies, and Davidoff (2000) conducted another study with Dani participants and found that, at least for some colours, the names that they used to describe colours did influence their perceptions of the colours. Other researchers continue to test the possibility that our language influences our perceptions, and perhaps even our thoughts (Levinson, 1998), and yet the evidence for this possibility is, as of now, mixed.

Key Takeaways

- Language involves both the ability to comprehend spoken and written words and to speak and

write. Some languages are sign languages, in which the communication is expressed by movements of the hands.

- Phonemes are the elementary sounds of our language, morphemes are the smallest units of meaningful language, syntax is the grammatical rules that control how words are put together, and contextual information is the elements of communication that help us understand its meaning.
- Recent research suggests that there is not a single critical period of language learning, but that language learning is simply better when it occurs earlier.
- Broca's area is responsible for language production. Wernicke's area is responsible for language comprehension.
- Language learning begins even before birth. An infant usually produces his or her first words at about one year of age.
- One explanation of language development is that it occurs through principles of learning, including association, reinforcement, and the observation of others.
- Noam Chomsky argues that human brains contain a language acquisition module that includes a universal grammar that underlies all human language. Chomsky differentiates between the deep structure and the surface structure of an idea.
- Although other animals communicate and may be able to express ideas, only the human brain is complex enough to create real language.
- Our language may have some influence on our thinking, but it does not affect our underlying understanding of concepts.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. What languages do you speak? Did you ever try to learn a new one? What problems did you have when you did this? Would you consider trying to learn a new language?
2. Some animals, such as Kanzi, display at least some language. Do you think that this means that they are intelligent?

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Figure 10.9: Adapted from Wood, 1976.

Figure 10.10: Adapted from Hakuta, Bialystok, & Wiley, 2003.

Figure 10.12: "on the phone to mama" by Lars Plougmann (http://www.flickr.com/photos/criminalintent/4310323032/) is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/deed.en_CA)

Figure 10.13: Adapted from Mechelli, et al., 2004.

10.4 Chapter Summary

Intelligence — the ability to think, to learn from experience, to solve problems, and to adapt to new situations — is more strongly related than any other individual difference variable to successful educational, occupational, economic, and social outcomes.

The French psychologist Alfred Binet and his colleague Henri Simon developed the first intelligence test in the early 1900s. Charles Spearman called the construct that the different abilities and skills measured on intelligence tests have in common the general intelligence factor, or simply "g."

There is also evidence for specific intelligences (s), measures of specific skills in narrow domains. Robert Sternberg has proposed a triarchic (three-part) theory of intelligence, and Howard Gardner has proposed that there are eight different specific intelligences.

Good intelligence tests both are reliable and have construct validity. Intelligence tests are the most accurate of all psychological tests. IQ tests are standardized, which allows calculation of mental age and the intelligence quotient (IQ),

The Wechsler Adult lntelligence Scale (WAIS) is the most widely used intelligence test for adults. Other intelligence tests include aptitude tests such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), and structured tests used for personnel selection.

People with higher IQs have somewhat larger brains, which operate more efficiently and faster than the brains of the less intelligent. Although intelligence is not located in a specific part of the brain, it is more prevalent in some brain areas than others.

Intelligence has both genetic and environmental causes, and between 40% and 80% of the variability in IQ is heritable. Social and economic deprivation, including poverty, can adversely affect IQ, and intelligence is improved by education.

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify, assess, manage, and control one's emotions. However, tests of emotional intelligence are often unreliable, and emotional intelligence may be a part of a skill that can be applied in some specific work situations.

About 3% of the population score above an IQ of 130 (the threshold for giftedness), and about the same percentage score below an IQ of 70 (the threshold for intellectual disability). Males are about 20% more common in these extremes than are women.

Women and men show overall equal intelligence, but there are sex differences on some types of tasks. There are also differences in which members of different racial and ethnic groups cluster along the IQ line. The causes of these differences are not completely known. These differences have at times led to malicious, misguided, and discriminatory attempts to try to correct for them, such as eugenics.

Language involves both the ability to comprehend spoken and written words and to create communication in real time when we speak or write. Language can be conceptualized in terms of sounds

(phonemes), meaning (morphemes and syntax), and the environmental factors that help us understand it (contextual information).

Language is best learned during the critical period between three and seven years of age.

Broca's area, an area of the brain in front of the left hemisphere near the motor cortex, is responsible for language production, and Wernicke's area, an area of the brain next to the auditory cortex, is responsible for language comprehension.

Children learn language quickly and naturally, progressing through stages of babbling, first words, first sentences, and then a rapid increase in vocabulary. Children often make overextensions of concepts.

Some theories of language learning are based on principles of learning. Noam Chomsky argues that human brains contain a language acquisition device that includes a universal grammar that underlies all human language and that allows generativity. Chomsky differentiates between the deep structure and the surface structure of an idea.

Bilingualism is becoming more and more frequent in the modern world. Bilingual children may show more cognitive function and flexibility than monolingual children do.

Nonhuman animals have a wide variety of systems of communication. But efforts to teach animals to use human language have had only limited success. Although many animals communicate, none of them has a true language.

Chapter 11. Emotions and Motivations

11. Emotions and Motivations

Grace under Pressure

On June 27, 2014, 13-year-old Gavin England saved his grandfather from drowning when their prawning boat took on water and sank off the Saanich Peninsula on Vancouver Island (CTV, 2014). Gavin's grandfather Vern was not a strong swimmer, and though both were wearing life jackets, they would not have survived for long in the cold Pacific ocean waters 300 meters from shore.

Gavin recounted the event, explaining how he suffered sharp cuts to his bare feet when climbing the embankment where he had dragged his grandfather. He attributed his ability to overcome the pain of the cuts to adrenalin. Upon finding an old truck with keys in the ignition, and despite the high emotions he was experiencing, he then had the wherewithal to learn to drive on the spot and make it up a three-kilometer hill to get help. Gavin explained that his knowledge of driving a dirt bike served him well: "I knew that clutch in meant drive." Vern described the young boy as "tenacious" and calm throughout the event. He was giving his grandfather words of encouragement as he pulled him to shore.

Stories such as Gavin's are rare and unpredictable. We hope we will act with the same clear-headed tenacity in emergency situations, but the heroic response is not assured. Gavin's ability to abate panic, and recognize and regulate his emotions was central to his actions in this emergency situation.

The topic of this chapter is **affect**, defined as *the experience of feeling or emotion*. Affect is an essential part of the study of psychology because it plays such an important role in everyday life. As we will see, affect guides behaviour, helps us make decisions, and has a major impact on our mental and physical health.

The two fundamental components of affect are *emotions* and *motivation*. Both of these words have the same underlying Latin root, meaning "to move." In contrast to cognitive processes that are calm, collected, and frequently rational, emotions and motivations involve **arousal**, or *our experiences of the bodily responses created by the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system (ANS)*. Because they involve arousal, emotions and motivations are "hot" — they "charge," "drive," or "move" our behaviour.

When we experience emotions or strong motivations, we *feel* the experiences. When we become aroused, the sympathetic nervous system provides us with energy to respond to our environment. The liver puts extra sugar into the bloodstream, the heart pumps more blood, our pupils dilate to help us see better, respiration increases, and we begin to perspire to cool the body. The stress hormones *epinephrine* and *norepinephrine* are released. We experience these responses as arousal.

American pilot Captain"Sully" Sullenberger (Figure 11.1, "Captain Sullenberger and His Plane on the Hudson River") was 915 metres up in the air when the sudden loss of power in his airplane put his life, as well as the lives of 150 passengers and crew members, in his hands. Both of the engines on flight 1539 had shut down, and his options for a safe landing were limited.

Sully kept flying the plane and alerted the control tower to the situation: “This is Cactus 1539…hit birds. We lost thrust in both engines. We’re turning back toward La Guardia.”

When the tower gave him the compass setting and runway for a possible landing, Sullenberger’s extensive experience allowed him to give a calm response: “I’m not sure if we can make any runway…Anything in New Jersey?”

Captain Sullenberger was not just any pilot in a crisis, but a former U.S. Air Force fighter pilot with 40 years of flight experience. He had served both as a flight instructor and the safety chairman for the Airline Pilots Association. Training had quickened his mental processes in assessing the threat, allowing him to maintain what tower operators later called an “eerie calm.” He knew the capabilities of his plane.

When the tower suggested a runway in New Jersey, Sullenberger calmly replied: “We’re unable. We may end up in the Hudson.”

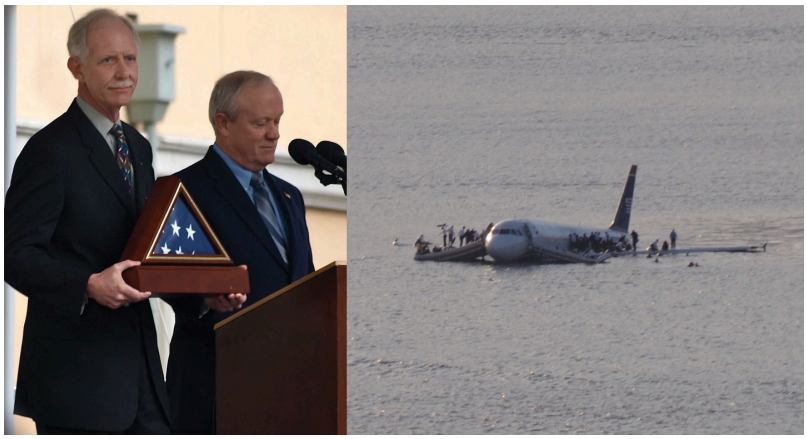


Figure 11.1 Captain Sullenberger and His Plane on the Hudson River. Imagine that you are on a plane that you know is going to crash. What emotions would you experience, and how would you respond to them? Would the rush of fear cause you to panic, or could you control your emotions like Captain Sullenberger did, as he calmly calculated the heading, position, thrust, and elevation of the plane, and then landed it on the Hudson River?

The last communication from Captain Sullenberger to the tower advised of the eventual outcome: “We’re going to be in the Hudson.”

He calmly set the plane down on the water. Passengers reported that the landing was like landing on a rough runway. The crew kept the passengers calm as women, children, and then the rest of the passengers were evacuated onto the rescue boats that had quickly arrived. Captain Sullenberger then calmly walked the aisle of the plane to be sure that everyone was out before joining the 150 other rescued survivors (Levin, 2009; National Transportation Safety Board, 2009).

Some called it “grace under pressure,” and others called it the “miracle on the Hudson.” But psychologists see it as the ultimate in *emotion regulation* — the ability to control and productively use one’s emotions.

An **emotion** is *a mental and physiological feeling state that directs our attention and guides our behaviour*. Whether it is the thrill of a roller-coaster ride that elicits an unexpected scream, the flush of embarrassment that follows a public mistake, or the horror of a potential plane crash that creates an exceptionally brilliant response in a pilot, emotions move our actions. Emotions normally serve an adaptive role: We care for infants because of the love we feel for them, we avoid making a left turn onto a crowded highway because we fear that a speeding truck may hit us, and we are particularly nice to Mandy because we are feeling guilty that we did not go to her party. But emotions may also be destructive, such as when a frustrating experience leads us to lash out at others who do not deserve it.

The Surrey School District in British Columbia has incorporated "emotional regulation" into the curriculum (Wells, 2013). In six schools, educators are piloting a program that helps teachers look for what may be stressing children, making them unable to pay attention, lethargic, hyperactive, or out of control. The children may be impacted by too much noise in the classroom, too little sleep, or too much junk food in their lunch. The teachers help the children recognize what they need to do to make themselves calm and productive in class. The program ultimately places the motivation for behavioural control within the hands of the children.

Motivations are closely related to emotions. A **motivation** is *a driving force that initiates and directs behaviour*. Some motivations are biological, such as the motivation for food, water, and sex. But there are a variety of other personal and social motivations that can influence behaviour, including the motivations for social approval and acceptance, the motivation to achieve, and the motivation to take, or to avoid taking, risks (Morsella, Bargh, & Gollwitzer, 2009). In each case we follow our motivations because they are rewarding. As predicted by basic theories of operant learning, motivations lead us to engage in particular behaviours because doing so makes us feel good.

Motivations are often considered in psychology in terms of *drives*, which are internal states that are activated when the physiological characteristics of the body are out of balance, and *goals*, which are desired end states that we strive to attain. Motivation can thus be conceptualized as a series of behavioural responses that lead us to attempt to reduce drives and to attain goals by comparing our current state with a desired end state (Lawrence, Carver, & Scheier, 2002). Like a thermostat on an air conditioner, the body tries to maintain *homeostasis*, the natural state of the body's systems, with goals, drives, and arousal in balance. When a drive or goal is aroused—for instance, when we are hungry—the thermostat turns on and we start to behave in a way that attempts to reduce the drive or meet the goal (in this case to seek food). As the body works toward the desired end state, the thermostat continues to check whether or not the end state has been reached. Eventually, the need or goal is satisfied (we eat), and the relevant behaviours are turned off. The body's thermostat continues to check for homeostasis and is always ready to react to future needs.

In addition to more basic motivations such as hunger, a variety of other personal and social motivations can also be conceptualized in terms of drives or goals. When the goal of studying for an exam is hindered because we take a day off from our schoolwork, we may work harder on our studying on the next day to move us toward our goal. When we are dieting, we may be more likely to have a big binge on a day when the scale says that we have met our prior day's goals. And when we are lonely, the motivation to be around other people is aroused and we try to socialize. In many, if not most cases, our emotions and motivations operate out of our conscious awareness to guide our behaviour (Freud, 1922; Hassin, Bargh, & Zimerman, 2009; Williams, Bargh, Nocera, & Gray, 2009).

We begin this chapter by considering the role of affect on behaviour, discussing the most important psychological theories of emotions. Then we will consider how emotions influence our mental and physical health. We will discuss how the experience of long-term *stress* causes illness, and then turn to research on *positive thinking* and what has been learned about the beneficial health effects of more positive emotions. Finally, we will review some of the most important human motivations, including the behaviours of eating and sex. The importance of this chapter is not only in helping you gain an understanding the principles of affect but also in helping you discover the important roles that affect plays in our everyday lives, and particularly in our mental and physical health. The study of the interface between affect and physical health — that principle that "everything that is physiological is also psychological" — is a key focus of the branch of psychology known as *health psychology*. The importance of this topic has made health psychology one of the fastest growing fields in psychology.

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Figure 11.1: Sully Sullenberger by Ingrid Taylar (http://www.flickr.com/photos/taylar/435061088) used under CC BY 2.0 license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/); Plane crash into Hudson River

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11.1 The Experience of Emotion

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the biological experience of emotion.
2. Summarize the psychological theories of emotion.
3. Give examples of the ways that emotion is communicated.

The most fundamental emotions, known as the basic emotions, are those of *anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise*. The basic emotions have a long history in human evolution, and they have developed in large part to help us make rapid judgments about stimuli and to quickly guide appropriate behaviour (LeDoux, 2000). The basic emotions are determined in large part by one of the oldest parts of our brain, the limbic system, including the amygdala, the hypothalamus, and the thalamus. Because they are primarily evolutionarily determined, the basic emotions are experienced and displayed in much the same way across cultures (Ekman, 1992; Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002; Fridland, Ekman, & Oster, 1987), and people are quite accurate at judging the facial expressions of people from different cultures. View "Video Clip: The Basic Emotions," to see a demonstration of the basic emotions.

Watch: "Recognize Basic Emotions" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haW6E7qsW2c

Not all of our emotions come from the old parts of our brain; we also interpret our experiences to create a more complex array of emotional experiences. For instance, the amygdala may sense fear when it senses that the body is falling, but that fear may be interpreted completely differently (perhaps even as excitement) when we are falling on a roller-coaster ride than when we are falling from the sky in an airplane that has lost power. The *cognitive interpretations that accompany emotions* — known as **cognitive appraisal** — allow us to experience a much larger and more complex set of *secondary emotions*, as shown in Figure 11.2, "The Secondary Emotions." Although they are in large part cognitive, our experiences of the secondary emotions are determined in part by arousal (on the vertical axis of Figure 11.2, "The Secondary Emotions") and in part by their *valence* — that is, whether they are pleasant or unpleasant feelings (on the horizontal axis of Figure 11.2, "The Secondary Emotions"),

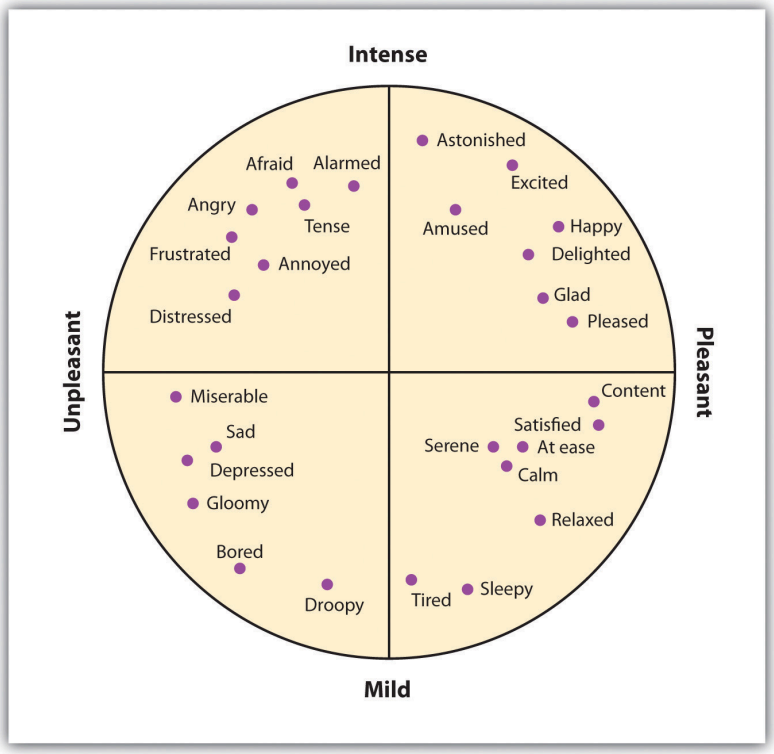


Figure 11.2 The Secondary Emotions. The secondary emotions are those that have a major cognitive component. They are determined by both their level of arousal (mild to intense) and their valence (pleasant to unpleasant). [Long Description]

When you succeed in reaching an important goal, you might spend some time enjoying your secondary emotions, perhaps the experience of joy, satisfaction, and contentment. But when your close friend wins a prize that you thought you had deserved, you might also experience a variety of secondary emotions (in this case, the negative ones) — for instance, feeling angry, sad, resentful, and ashamed. You might mull over the event for weeks or even months, experiencing these negative emotions each time you think about it (Martin & Tesser, 2006).

The distinction between the primary and the secondary emotions is paralleled by two brain pathways: a fast pathway and a slow pathway (Damasio, 2000; LeDoux, 2000; Ochsner, Bunge, Gross, & Gabrieli, 2002). The thalamus acts as the major gatekeeper in this process (Figure 11.3, “Slow and Fast Emotional Pathways”). Our response to the basic emotion of fear, for instance, is primarily determined by the fast pathway through the limbic system. When a car pulls out in front of us on the highway, the thalamus activates and sends an immediate message to the amygdala. We quickly move our foot to the brake pedal. Secondary emotions are more determined by the slow pathway through the frontal lobes in the cortex. When we stew in jealousy over the loss of a partner to a rival or recollect our win in the big tennis match, the process is more complex. Information moves from the thalamus to the frontal lobes for cognitive analysis and integration, and then from there to the amygdala. We experience the arousal of emotion, but it is accompanied by a more complex cognitive appraisal, producing more refined emotions and behavioural responses.

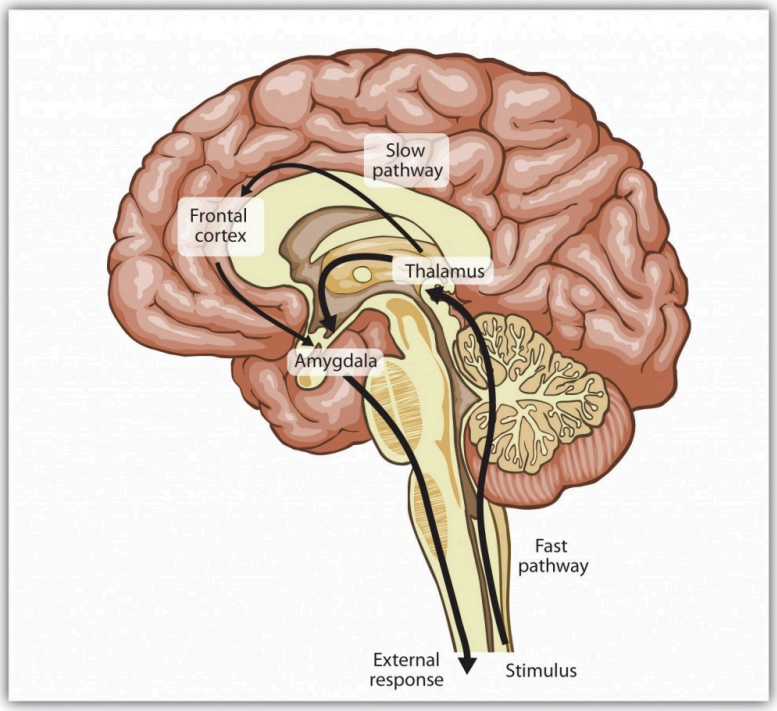


Figure 11.3 Slow and Fast Emotional Pathways. There are two emotional pathways in the brain (one slow and one fast), both of which are controlled by the thalamus.

Although emotions might seem to you to be more frivolous or less important in comparison to our more rational cognitive processes, both emotions and cognitions can help us make effective decisions. In some cases we take action after rationally processing the costs and benefits of different choices, but in other cases we rely on our emotions. Emotions become particularly important in guiding decisions when the alternatives between many complex and conflicting alternatives present us with a high degree of uncertainty and ambiguity, making a complete cognitive analysis difficult. In these cases we often rely on our emotions to make decisions, and these decisions may in many cases be more accurate than those produced by cognitive processing (Damasio, 1994; Dijksterhuis, Bos, Nordgren, & van Baaren, 2006; Nordgren & Dijksterhuis, 2009; Wilson & Schooler, 1991).

The Cannon-Bard and James-Lange Theories of Emotion

Recall for a moment a situation in which you have experienced an intense emotional response. Perhaps you woke up in the middle of the night in a panic because you heard a noise that made you think that someone had broken into your house or apartment. Or maybe you were calmly cruising down a street in your neighbourhood when another car suddenly pulled out in front of you, forcing you to slam on your brakes to avoid an accident. I'm sure that you remember that your emotional reaction was in large part physical. Perhaps you remember being flushed, your heart pounding, feeling sick to your stomach, or having trouble breathing. You were experiencing the physiological part of emotion — arousal — and I'm sure you have had similar feelings in other situations, perhaps when you were in love, angry, embarrassed, frustrated, or very sad.

If you think back to a strong emotional experience, you might wonder about the order of the events that

occurred. Certainly you experienced arousal, but did the arousal come before, after, or along with the experience of the emotion? Psychologists have proposed three different theories of emotion, which differ in terms of the hypothesized role of arousal in emotion (Figure 11.4, "Three Theories of Emotion").

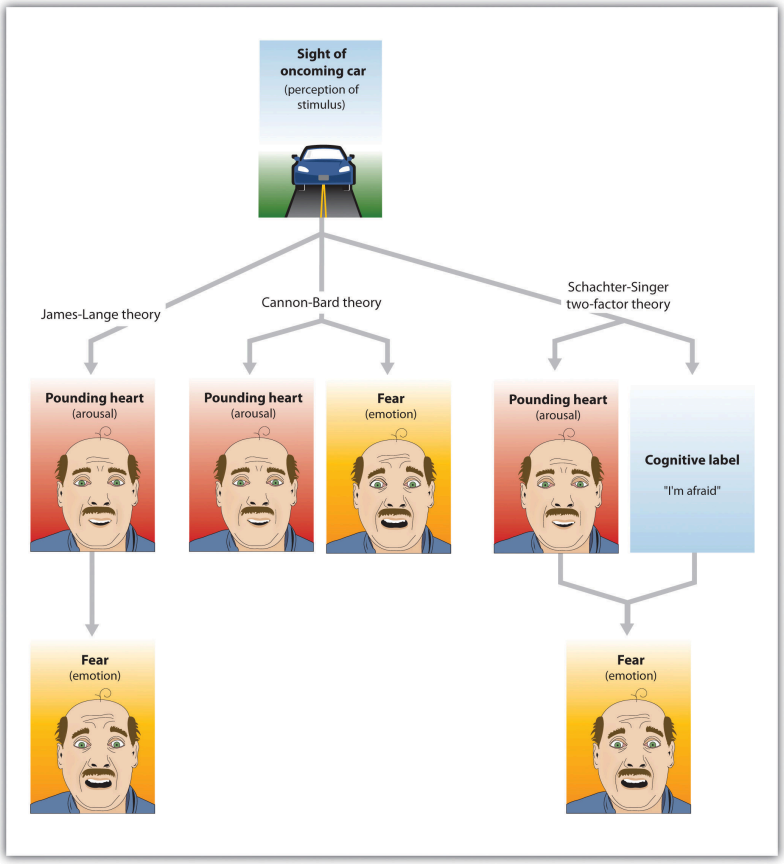


Figure 11.4 Three Theories of Emotion. The Cannon-Bard theory proposes that emotions and arousal occur at the same time. The James-Lange theory proposes the emotion is the result of arousal. Schachter and Singer's two-factor model proposes that arousal and cognition combine to create emotion.

If your experiences are like mine, as you reflected on the arousal that you have experienced in strong emotional situations, you probably thought something like, "I was afraid and my heart started beating like crazy." At least some psychologists agree with this interpretation. According to the theory of emotion proposed by Walter Cannon and Philip Bard, the experience of the emotion (in this case, "I'm afraid") occurs alongside the experience of the arousal ("my heart is beating fast"). According to the **Cannon-Bard theory of emotion**, *the experience of an emotion is accompanied by physiological arousal*. Thus, according to this model of emotion, as we become aware of danger, our heart rate also increases.

Although the idea that the experience of an emotion occurs alongside the accompanying arousal seems intuitive to our everyday experiences, the psychologists William James and Carl Lange had another idea about the role of arousal. According to the **James-Lange theory of emotion**, *our experience of an emotion is the result of the arousal that we experience*. This approach proposes that the arousal and the emotion are not independent, but rather that the emotion depends on the arousal. The fear does not occur along with the racing heart but occurs *because of* the racing heart. As William James put it, "We

feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble" (James, 1884, p. 190). A fundamental aspect of the James-Lange theory is that different patterns of arousal may create different emotional experiences.

There is research evidence to support each of these theories. The operation of the fast emotional pathway (Figure 11.4, "Slow and Fast Emotional Pathways") supports the idea that arousal and emotions occur together. The emotional circuits in the limbic system are activated when an emotional stimulus is experienced, and these circuits quickly create corresponding physical reactions (LeDoux, 2000). The process happens so quickly that it may feel to us as if emotion is simultaneous with our physical arousal.

On the other hand, and as predicted by the James-Lange theory, our experiences of emotion are weaker without arousal. Patients who have spinal injuries that reduce their experience of arousal also report decreases in emotional responses (Hohmann, 1966). There is also at least some support for the idea that different emotions are produced by different patterns of arousal. People who view fearful faces show more amygdala activation than those who watch angry or joyful faces (Whalen et al., 2001; Witvliet & Vrana, 1995), we experience a red face and flushing when we are embarrassed but not when we experience other emotions (Leary, Britt, Cutlip, & Templeton, 1992), and different hormones are released when we experience compassion than when we experience other emotions (Oatley, Keltner, & Jenkins, 2006).

The Two-Factor Theory of Emotion

Whereas the James-Lange theory proposes that each emotion has a different pattern of arousal, the *two-factor theory* of emotion takes the opposite approach, arguing that the arousal that we experience is basically the same in every emotion, and that all emotions (including the basic emotions) are differentiated only by our cognitive appraisal of the source of the arousal. The **two-factor theory of emotion** asserts that *the experience of emotion is determined by the intensity of the arousal we are experiencing, but that the cognitive appraisal of the situation determines what the emotion will be*. Because both arousal and appraisal are necessary, we can say that emotions have two factors: an arousal factor and a cognitive factor (Schachter & Singer, 1962):

emotion = arousal + cognition

In some cases it may be difficult for a person who is experiencing a high level of arousal to accurately determine which emotion he or she is experiencing. That is, the person may be certain that he or she is feeling arousal, but the meaning of the arousal (the cognitive factor) may be less clear. Some romantic relationships, for instance, have a very high level of arousal, and the partners alternatively experience extreme highs and lows in the relationship. One day they are madly in love with each other and the next they are in a huge fight. In situations that are accompanied by high arousal, people may be unsure what emotion they are experiencing. In the high arousal relationship, for instance, the partners may be uncertain whether the emotion they are feeling is love, hate, or both at the same time. *The tendency for people to incorrectly label the source of the arousal that they are experiencing* is known as the **misattribution of arousal**.



Figure 11.5 Capilano Suspension Bridge. Arousal caused by the height of this bridge was misattributed as attraction by the men who were interviewed by an attractive woman as they crossed it.

In one interesting field study by Dutton and Aron (1974), an attractive young woman approached individual young men as they crossed a wobbly, long suspension walkway hanging more than 200 feet above a river in British Columbia (Figure 11.5, "Capilano Suspension Bridge"). The woman asked each man to help her fill out a class questionnaire. When he had finished, she wrote her name and phone number on a piece of paper, and invited him to call if he wanted to hear more about the project. More than half of the men who had been interviewed on the bridge later called the woman. In contrast, men approached by the same woman on a low, solid bridge, or who were interviewed on the suspension bridge by men, called significantly less frequently. The idea of misattribution of arousal can explain this result — the men were feeling arousal from the height of the bridge, but they misattributed it as romantic or sexual attraction to the woman, making them more likely to call her.

Research Focus: Misattributing Arousal

If you think a bit about your own experiences of different emotions, and if you consider the equation that suggests that emotions are represented by both arousal and cognition, you might start to wonder how much was determined by each. That is, do we know what emotion we are experiencing by monitoring our feelings (arousal) or by monitoring our thoughts (cognition)? The bridge study you just read about might begin to provide you with an answer: The men seemed to be more influenced by their perceptions of how they should be feeling (their cognition) rather than by how they actually were feeling (their arousal).

Stanley Schachter and Jerome Singer (1962) directly tested this prediction of the two-factor theory of emotion in a well-known experiment. Schachter and Singer believed that the cognitive part of the emotion was critical — in fact, they believed that the arousal that we experience could be interpreted as any emotion, provided we had the right label for it. Thus they hypothesized that if an individual is experiencing arousal for which there is no immediate explanation, that individual will "label" this state in terms of the cognitions that are created in his or her environment. On the other hand, they argued that people who already have a clear

label for their arousal would have no need to search for a relevant label, and therefore should not experience an emotion.

In the research, male participants were told that they would be participating in a study on the effects of a new drug, called suproxin, on vision. On the basis of this cover story, the men were injected with a shot of the neurotransmitter epinephrine, a drug that normally creates feelings of tremors, flushing, and accelerated breathing in people. The idea was to give all the participants the experience of arousal.

Then, according to random assignment to conditions, the men were told that the drug would make them feel certain ways. The men in the *epinephrine informed* condition were told the truth about the effects of the drug — that they would likely experience tremors, their hands would start to shake, their hearts would start to pound, and their faces might get warm and flushed. The participants in the *epinephrine-uninformed* condition, however, were told something untrue — that their feet would feel numb, they would have an itching sensation over parts of their body, and they might get a slight headache. The idea was to make some of the men think that the arousal they were experiencing was caused by the drug (the *informed condition*), whereas others would be unsure where the arousal came from (the *uninformed condition*).

Then the men were left alone with a confederate who they thought had received the same injection. While they were waiting for the experiment (which was supposedly about vision) to begin, the confederate behaved in a wild and crazy manner (Schachter and Singer called it a “euphoric” manner). He wadded up spitballs, flew paper airplanes, and played with a hula-hoop. He kept trying to get the participant to join in with his games. Then right before the vision experiment was to begin, the participants were asked to indicate their current emotional states on a number of scales. One of the emotions they were asked about was euphoria.

If you are following the story, you will realize what was expected: The men who had a label for their arousal (the *informed* group) would not be experiencing much emotion because they already had a label available for their arousal. The men in the *misinformed* group, on the other hand, were expected to be unsure about the source of the arousal. They needed to find an explanation for their arousal, and the confederate provided one. As you can see in Figure 11.6 ,”Results from Schachter and Singer, 1962″ (left side), this is just what they found. The participants in the misinformed condition were more likely to experience euphoria (as measured by their behavioural responses with the confederate) than were those in the informed condition.

Then Schachter and Singer conducted another part of the study, using new participants. Everything was exactly the same except for the behaviour of the confederate. Rather than being euphoric, he acted angry. He complained about having to complete the questionnaire he had been asked to do, indicating that the questions were stupid and too personal. He ended up tearing up the questionnaire that he was working on, yelling, “I don’t have to tell them that!” Then he grabbed his books and stormed out of the room.

What do you think happened in this condition? The answer is the same thing: the misinformed participants experienced more anger (again as measured by the participant’s behaviours during the waiting period) than did the informed participants. (Figure 11.6, “Results from Schachter and Singer, 1962”, right side). The idea is that because cognitions are such strong determinants of emotional states, the same state of physiological arousal could be labelled in many different ways, depending entirely on the label provided by the social situation. As Schachter and Singer put it: “Given a state of physiological arousal for which an individual has no immediate explanation, he will ‘label’ this state and describe his feelings in terms of the cognitions available to him” (Schachter & Singer, 1962, p. 381).

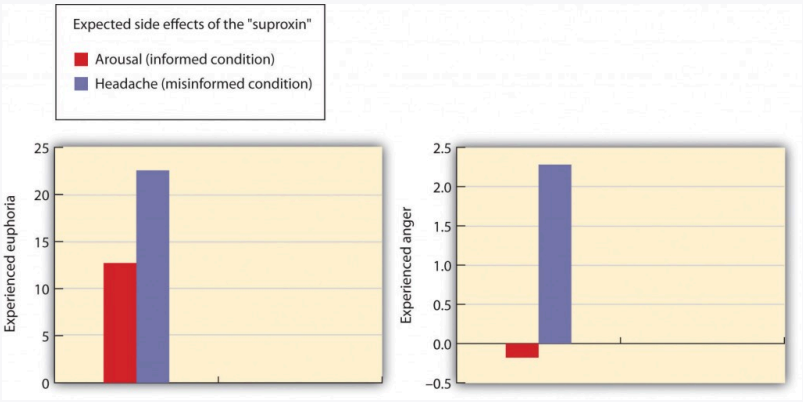


Figure 11.6 Results from Schachter and Singer, 1962. Results of the study by Schachter and Singer (1962) support the two-factor theory of emotion. The participants who did not have a clear label for their arousal took on the emotion of the confederate.

Because it assumes that arousal is constant across emotions, the two-factor theory also predicts that emotions may transfer or spill over from one highly arousing event to another. My university basketball team recently won a basketball championship, but after the final victory some students rioted in the streets near the campus, lighting fires and burning cars. This seems to be a very strange reaction to such a positive outcome for the university and the students, but it can be explained through the spillover of the arousal caused by happiness to destructive behaviours. The principle of **excitation transfer** refers to *the phenomenon that occurs when people who are already experiencing arousal from one event tend to also experience unrelated emotions more strongly*.

In sum, each of the three theories of emotion has something to support it. In terms of Cannon-Bard, emotions and arousal generally are subjectively experienced together, and the spread is very fast. In support of the James-Lange theory, there is at least some evidence that arousal is necessary for the experience of emotion, and that the patterns of arousal are different for different emotions. And in line with the two-factor model, there is also evidence that we may interpret the same patterns of arousal differently in different situations.

Communicating Emotion

In addition to experiencing emotions internally, we also express our emotions to others, and we learn about the emotions of others by observing them. This communication process has evolved over time and is highly adaptive. One way that we perceive the emotions of others is through their **nonverbal communication**, that is, *communication, primarily of liking or disliking, that does not involve words* (Ambady & Weisbuch, 2010; Andersen, 2007). Nonverbal communication includes our tone of voice, gait, posture, touch, and facial expressions, and we can often accurately detect the emotions that other people are experiencing through these channels. Table 11.1, “Some Common Nonverbal Communicators,” shows some of the important nonverbal behaviours that we use to express emotion and some other information (particularly liking or disliking, and dominance or submission).

Table 11.1 Some Common Nonverbal Communicators.

[Skip Table]		
Nonverbal cue	**Description**	**Examples**
Proxemics	Rules about the appropriate use of personal space	Standing nearer to someone can express liking or dominance.
Body appearance	Expressions based on alterations to our body	Body building, breast augmentation, weight loss, piercings, and tattoos are often used to appear more attractive to others.
Body positioning and movement	Expressions based on how our body appears	A more "open" body position can denote liking; a faster walking speed can communicate dominance.
Gestures	Behaviours and signs made with our hands or faces	The peace sign communicates liking; the "finger" communicates disrespect.
Facial expressions	The variety of emotions that we express, or attempt to hide, through our face	Smiling or frowning and staring or avoiding looking at the other can express liking or disliking, as well as dominance or submission.
Paralanguage	Clues to identity or emotions contained in our voices	Pronunciation, accents, and dialect can be used to communicate identity and liking.

Just as there is no universal spoken language, there is no universal nonverbal language. For instance, in Canada we express disrespect by showing the middle finger (the finger or the bird). But in Britain, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand, the V sign (made with back of the hand facing the recipient) serves a similar purpose. In countries where Spanish, Portuguese, or French are spoken, a gesture in which a fist is raised and the arm is slapped on the bicep is equivalent to the finger, and in Russia, Indonesia, Turkey, and China a sign in which the hand and fingers are curled and the thumb is thrust between the middle and index fingers is used for the same purpose.

The most important communicator of emotion is the face. The face contains 43 different muscles that allow it to make more than 10,000 unique configurations and to express a wide variety of emotions. For example, happiness is expressed by smiles, which are created by two of the major muscles surrounding the mouth and the eyes, and anger is created by lowered brows and firmly pressed lips.

In addition to helping us express our emotions, the face also helps us feel emotion. The **facial feedback hypothesis** proposes that *the movement of our facial muscles can trigger corresponding emotions*. Fritz Strack and his colleagues (1988) asked their research participants to hold a pen in their teeth (mimicking the facial action of a smile) or between their lips (similar to a frown), and then had them rate the funniness of a cartoon. They found that the cartoons were rated as more amusing when the pen was held in the smiling position — the subjective experience of emotion was intensified by the action of the facial muscles.

These results, and others like them, show that our behaviours, including our facial expressions, both influence and are influenced by our affect. We may smile because we are happy, but we are also happy

because we are smiling. And we may stand up straight because we are proud, but we are proud because we are standing up straight (Stepper & Strack, 1993).

Key Takeaways

- Emotions are the normally adaptive mental and physiological feeling states that direct our attention and guide our behaviour.
- Emotional states are accompanied by arousal, our experiences of the bodily responses created by the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system.
- Motivations are forces that guide behaviour. They can be biological, such as hunger and thirst; personal, such as the motivation for achievement; or social, such as the motivation for acceptance and belonging.
- The most fundamental emotions, known as the basic emotions, are those of anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise.
- Cognitive appraisal also allows us to experience a variety of secondary emotions.
- According to the Cannon-Bard theory of emotion, the experience of an emotion is accompanied by physiological arousal.
- According to the James-Lange theory of emotion, our experience of an emotion is the result of the arousal that we experience.
- According to the two-factor theory of emotion, the experience of emotion is determined by the intensity of the arousal we are experiencing, and the cognitive appraisal of the situation determines what the emotion will be.
- When people incorrectly label the source of the arousal that they are experiencing, we say that they have misattributed their arousal.
- We express our emotions to others through nonverbal behaviours, and we learn about the emotions of others by observing them.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Consider the three theories of emotion that we have discussed and provide an example of a situation in which a person might experience each of the three proposed patterns of arousal and emotion.
2. Describe a time when you used nonverbal behaviours to express your emotions or to detect the emotions of others. What specific nonverbal techniques did you use to communicate?

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Image Attributions

Figure 11.2: Adapted from Russell, 1980.
Figure 11.5: Capilano suspension bridge by Goobiebilly (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Capilano_suspension_bridge_-g.jpg) used under CC-BY 2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en).

Figure 11.6: Adapted from Schachter & Singer, 1962.

Long Descriptions

Figure 11.2 long description: The Secondary Emotions

Level of Arousal	Unpleasant	Pleasant
Mild	• Miserable • Sad • Depressed • Gloomy • Bored • Droopy	• Content • Satisfied • At ease • Serene • Calm • Relaxed • Sleepy • Tired
Intense	• Alarmed • Afraid • Angry • Intense • Annoyed • Frustrated • Distressed	• Astonished • Excited • Amused • Happy • Delighted • Glad Pleased

[Return to Figure 11.2]

11.2 Stress: The Unseen Killer

Learning Objectives

1. Define stress and review the body's physiological responses to it.
2. Summarize the negative health consequences of prolonged stress.
3. Explain the differences in how people respond to stress.
4. Review the methods that are successful in coping with stress.

Emotions matter because they influence our behaviour. And there is no emotional experience that has a more powerful influence on us than *stress*. **Stress** refers to the *physiological responses that occur when an organism fails to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats* (Selye, 1956). Extreme negative events, such as being the victim of a terrorist attack, a natural disaster, or a violent crime, may produce an extreme form of stress known as **post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**, *a medical syndrome that includes symptoms of anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares, and social withdrawal*. PTSD is frequently experienced by victims or witnesses of violence or abuse, natural disasters, major accidents, or war.

When it is extreme or prolonged, stress can create substantial health problems. A study out of the University of British Columbia found that emergency personnel such as doctors, nurses, paramedics, and firefighters experience post-traumatic stress at twice the rate of the average population. In Canada, it is estimated that up to 10% of war zone veterans — including war service veterans and peacekeeping forces — will experience post-traumatic stress disorder (CMHA, 2014). People in New York City who lived nearer to the site of the 9/11 terrorist attacks reported experiencing more stress in the year following it than those who lived farther away (Pulcino et al., 2003). But stress is not unique to the experience of extremely traumatic events. It can also occur, and have a variety of negative outcomes, in our everyday lives.

The Negative Effects of Stress

The physiologist Hans Selye (1907-1982) studied stress by examining how rats responded to being exposed to stressors such as extreme cold, infection, shock, or excessive exercise (Selye, 1936, 1974, 1982). Selye found that regardless of the source of the stress, the rats experienced the same series of physiological changes as they suffered the prolonged stress. Selye created the term **general adaptation syndrome** to refer to *the three distinct phases of physiological change that occur in response to long-term stress: alarm, resistance, and exhaustion* (Figure 11.7, "General Adaptation Syndrome").

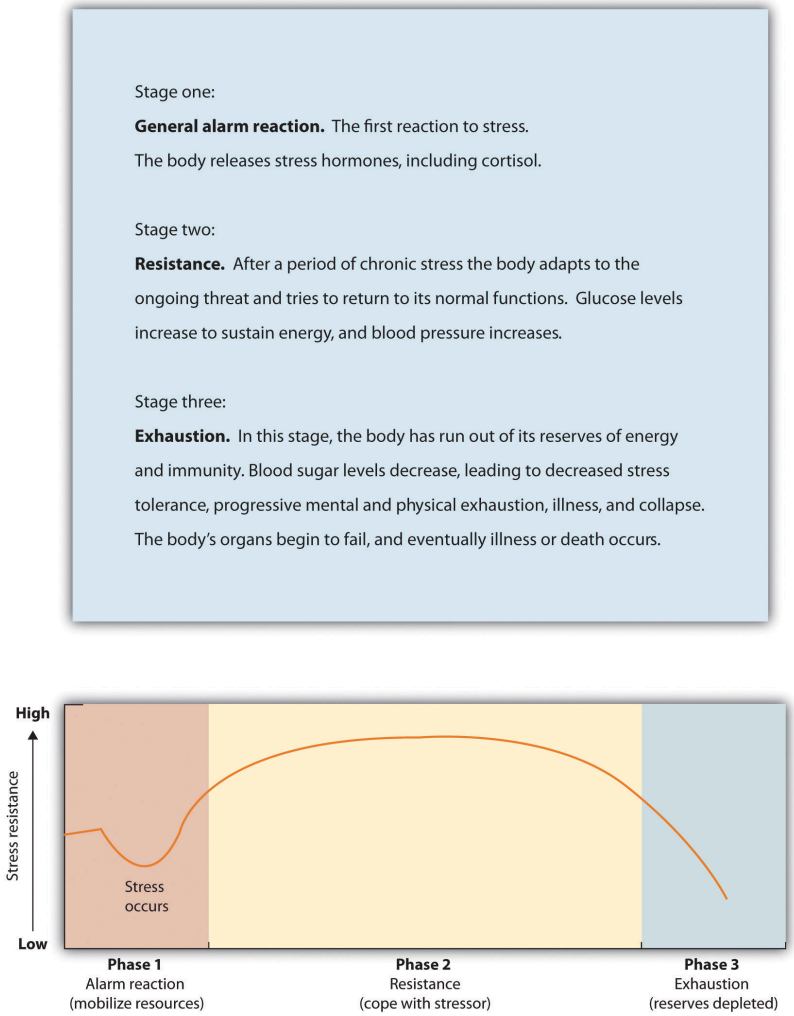


Figure 11.7 General Adaptation Syndrome. Hans Selye's research on the general adaptation syndrome documented the stages of prolonged exposure to stress. [Long Description]

The experience of stress creates both an increase in general arousal in the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system (ANS), as well as another, even more complex, system of physiological changes through the *HPA axis*. The **HPA axis** is *a physiological response to stress involving interactions among the (H) hypothalamus, the (P) pituitary, and the (A) adrenal glands* (Figure 11.8, "HPA Axis"). The HPA response begins when the hypothalamus secretes releasing hormones that direct the pituitary gland to release the hormone ACTH. ACTH then directs the adrenal glands to secrete more hormones, including epinephrine, norepinephrine, and *cortisol, a stress hormone that releases sugars into the blood, helping preparing the body to respond to threat* (Rodrigues, LeDoux, & Sapolsky, 2009).

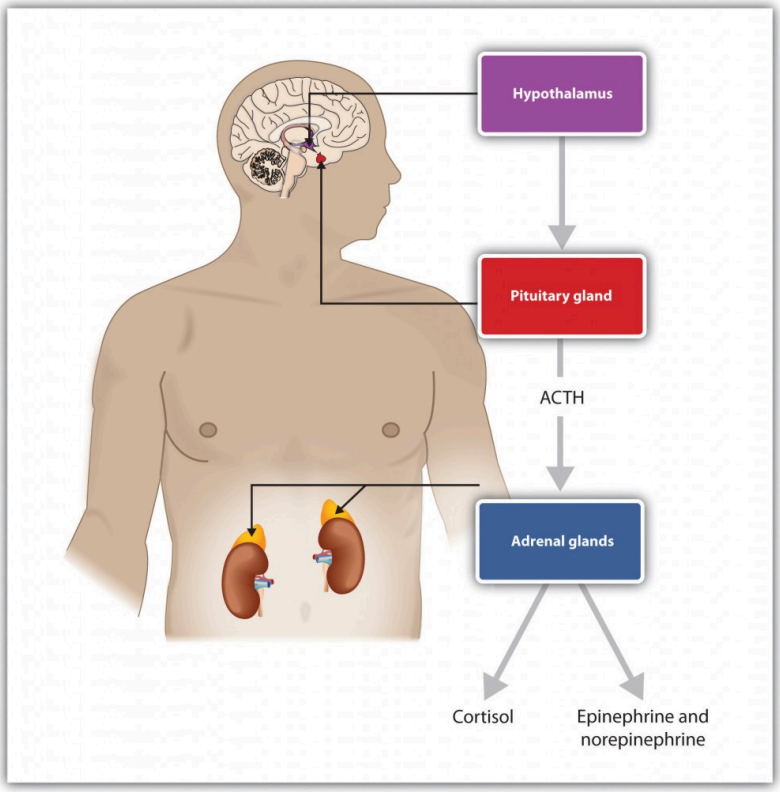


Figure 11.8 HPA Axis. Stress activates the HPA axis. The result is the secretion of epinephrine, norepinephrine, and cortisol.

The initial arousal that accompanies stress is normally quite adaptive because it helps us respond to potentially dangerous events. The experience of prolonged stress, however, has a direct negative influence on our physical health, because at the same time that stress increases activity in the sympathetic division of the ANS, it also suppresses activity in the parasympathetic division of the ANS. When stress is long term, the HPA axis remains active and the adrenals continue to produce cortisol. This increased cortisol production exhausts the stress mechanism, leading to fatigue and depression.

The HPA reactions to persistent stress lead to a weakening of the immune system, making us more susceptible to a variety of health problems including colds and other diseases (Cohen & Herbert, 1996; Faulkner & Smith, 2009; Miller, Chen, & Cole, 2009; Uchino, Smith, Holt-Lunstad, Campo, & Reblin, 2007). Stress also damages our DNA, making us less likely to be able to repair wounds and respond to the genetic mutations that cause disease (Epel et al., 2006). As a result, wounds heal more slowly when we are under stress, and we are more likely to get cancer (Kiecolt-Glaser, McGuire, Robles, & Glaser, 2002; Wells, 2006).

Chronic stress is also a major contributor to heart disease. Although heart disease is caused in part by genetic factors, as well as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and cigarette smoking, it is also caused by stress (Krantz & McCeney, 2002). Long-term stress creates two opposite effects on the coronary system. Stress increases cardiac output (i.e., the heart pumps more blood) at the same time that it reduces the ability of the blood vessels to conduct blood through the arteries, as the increase in levels of cortisol leads to a buildup of plaque on artery walls (Dekker et al., 2008). The combination of increased blood flow and arterial constriction leads to increased blood pressure (hypertension), which can damage the heart muscle, leading to heart attack and death.

Stressors in Our Everyday Lives

The stressors for Selye's rats included electric shock and exposure to cold. Although these are probably not on your top-10 list of most common stressors, the stress that you experience in your everyday life can also be taxing. Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe (1967) developed a measure of some everyday life events that might lead to stress, and you can assess your own likely stress level by completing the measure in Table 11.2, "The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale." You might want to pay particular attention to this score, because it can predict the likelihood that you will get sick. Rahe and colleagues examined the medical records of over 5,000 patients to determine whether stressful events might cause illnesses. Patients were asked to tally a list of 43 life events based on a relative score. A positive correlation of 0.118 was found between their life events and their illnesses resulting in the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) (Rahe, Mahan, Arthur, & Gunderson, 1970). Rahe and colleagues (2000) went on to update and revalidate the scale. Reliability testing, using Cronbach alpha correlations, was performed utilizing a sample of 1,772 individuals. The SRRS is commonly used today.

Table 11.2 The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale.

[Skip Table]	
Life event	**Score**
Death of spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation from mate	65
Detention in jail, other institution	63
Death of a close family member	63
Major personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Fired from work	47
Marital reconciliation	45
Retirement	45
Major change in the health or behaviour of a family member	44
Pregnancy	40
Sexual difficulties	39
Gaining a new family member (e.g., through birth, adoption, oldster moving)	39
Major business readjustment (e.g., merger, reorganization, bankruptcy)	39
Major change in financial status	38
Death of close friend	37
Change to different line of work	36
Major change in the number of arguments with spouse	35
Taking out a mortgage or loan for a major purchase	31
Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
Major change in responsibilities at work	29
Son or daughter leaving home (e.g., marriage, attending university)	29
Trouble with in-laws	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Spouse beginning or ceasing to work outside the home	26
Beginning or ceasing formal schooling	26

[Skip Table]	
Life event	**Score**
Major change in living conditions	25
Revision of personal habits (dress, manners, associations, etc.)	24
Trouble with boss	23
Major change in working hours or conditions	20
Change in residence	20
Change to a new school	20
Major change in usual type and/or amount of recreation	19
Major change in church activities (a lot more or less than usual)	19
Major change in social activities (clubs, dancing, movies, visiting)	18
Taking out a mortgage or loan for a lesser purchase (e.g., for a car, television, freezer)	17
Major change in sleeping habits	16
Major change in the number of family get-togethers	15
Major change in eating habits	15
Vacation	13
Christmas season	12
Minor violations of the law (e.g., traffic tickets)	11
Total	_____

You can calculate your score on this scale by adding the total points across each of the events that you have experienced over the past year. Then use Table 11.3, “Interpretation of Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale” to determine your likelihood of getting ill.

Table 11.3 Interpretation of Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale.

[Skip Table]	
Number of life-change units	**Chance of developing a stress-related illness (%)**
Less than 150	30
150–299	50
More than 300	80

Although some of the items on the Holmes and Rahe scale are more major, you can see that even minor stressors add to the total score. *Our everyday interactions with the environment that are essentially*

negative, known as **daily hassles**, can also create stress as well as poorer health outcomes (Hutchinson & Williams, 2007). Events that may seem rather trivial altogether, such as misplacing our keys, having to reboot our computer because it has frozen, being late for an assignment, or getting cut off by another car in rush-hour traffic, can produce stress (Fiksenbaum, Greenglass, & Eaton, 2006). Glaser (1985) found that medical students who were tested during, rather than several weeks before, their school examination periods showed lower immune system functioning. Other research has found that even more minor stressors, such as having to do math problems during an experimental session, can compromise the immune system (Cacioppo et al., 1998).

Responses to Stress

Not all people experience and respond to stress in the same way, and these differences can be important. The cardiologists Meyer Friedman and R. H. Rosenman (1974) were among the first to study the link between stress and heart disease. In their research they noticed that even though the partners in married couples often had similar lifestyles, diet, and exercise patterns, the husbands nevertheless generally had more heart disease than the wives did. As they tried to explain the difference, they focused on the personality characteristics of the partners, finding that the husbands were more likely than the wives to respond to stressors with negative emotions and hostility.

Recent research has shown that the strongest predictor of a physiological stress response from daily hassles is the amount of negative emotion that they evoke. People who experience strong negative emotions as a result of everyday hassles, and who respond to stress with hostility, experience more negative health outcomes than do those who react in a less negative way (McIntyre, Korn, & Matsuo, 2008; Suls & Bunde, 2005). Williams and his colleagues (2001) found that people who scored high on measures of anger were three times more likely to suffer from heart attacks in comparison to those who scored lower on anger.

On average, men are more likely than women are to respond to stress by activating the **fight-or-flight response**, which is *an emotional and behavioural reaction to stress that increases the readiness for action*. The arousal that men experience when they are stressed leads them to either go on the attack, in an aggressive or revenging way, or else retreat as quickly as they can to safety from the stressor. The fight-or-flight response allows men to control the source of the stress if they think they can do so, or if that is not possible, it allows them to save face by leaving the situation. The fight-or-flight response is triggered in men by the activation of the HPA axis.

Women, on the other hand, are less likely to take a fight-or-flight response to stress. Rather, they are more likely to take a *tend-and-befriend response* (Taylor et al., 2000). The **tend-and-befriend response** is *a behavioural reaction to stress that involves activities designed to create social networks that provide protection from threats*. This approach is also self-protective because it allows the individual to talk to others about her concerns, as well as to exchange resources, such as child care. The tend-and-befriend response is triggered in women by the release of the hormone *oxytocin*, which promotes affiliation. Overall, the tend-and-befriend response is healthier than the flight-or-flight response because it does not produce the elevated levels of arousal related to the HPA, including the negative results that accompany increased levels of cortisol. This may help explain why women, on average, have less heart disease and live longer than men.

Managing Stress

No matter how healthy and happy we are in our everyday lives, there are going to be times when we experience stress. But we do not need to throw up our hands in despair when things go wrong; rather, we can use our personal and social resources to help us.

Perhaps the most common approach to dealing with negative affect is to attempt to suppress, avoid, or deny it. You probably know people who seem to be stressed, depressed, or anxious, but they cannot or will not see it in themselves. Perhaps you tried to talk to them about it, to get them to open up to you, but were rebuffed. They seem to act as if there is no problem at all, simply moving on with life without admitting or even trying to deal with the negative feelings. Or perhaps you have even taken a similar approach yourself. Have you ever had an important test to study for or an important job interview coming up, and rather than planning and preparing for it, you simply tried to put it out of your mind entirely?

Research has found that ignoring stress is not a good approach for coping with it. For one, ignoring our problems does not make them go away. If we experience so much stress that we get sick, these events will be detrimental to our life even if we do not or cannot admit that they are occurring. Suppressing our negative emotions is also not a very good option, at least in the long run, because it tends to fail (Gross & Levenson, 1997). For one, if we know that we have that big exam coming up, we have to focus on the exam itself to suppress it. We can't really suppress or deny our thoughts, because we actually have to recall and face the event to make the attempt to not think about it. Doing so takes effort, and we get tired when we try to do it. Furthermore, we may continually worry that our attempts to suppress will fail. Suppressing our emotions might work out for a short while, but when we run out of energy the negative emotions may shoot back up into consciousness, causing us to reexperience the negative feelings that we had been trying to avoid.

Daniel Wegner and his colleagues (Wegner, Schneider, Carter, & White, 1987) directly tested whether people would be able to effectively suppress a simple thought. He asked them to *not* think about a white bear for five minutes but to ring a bell in case they did. (Try it yourself; can you do it?) However, participants were unable to suppress the thought as instructed. The white bear kept popping into mind, even when the participants were instructed to avoid thinking about it. You might have had this experience when you were dieting or trying to study rather than party; the chocolate bar in the kitchen cabinet and the fun time you were missing at the party kept popping into mind, disrupting you.

Suppressing our negative thoughts does not work, and there is evidence that the opposite is true: when we are faced with troubles, it is healthy to let out the negative thoughts and feelings by expressing them, either to ourselves or to others. James Pennebaker and his colleagues (Pennebaker, Colder, & Sharp, 1990; Watson & Pennebaker, 1989) have conducted many correlational and experimental studies that demonstrate the advantages to our mental and physical health of opening up versus suppressing our feelings. This research team has found that simply talking about or writing about our emotions or our reactions to negative events provides substantial health benefits. For instance, Pennebaker and Beall (1986) randomly assigned students to write about either the most traumatic and stressful event of their lives or trivial topics. Although the students who wrote about the traumas had higher blood pressure and more negative moods immediately after they wrote their essays, they were also less likely to visit the student health centre for illnesses during the following six months. Other research studied individuals whose spouses had died in the previous year, finding that the more they talked about the death with

others, the less likely they were to become ill during the subsequent year. Daily writing about one's emotional states has also been found to increase immune system functioning (Petrie, Fontanilla, Thomas, Booth, & Pennebaker, 2004).

Opening up probably helps in various ways. For one, expressing our problems to others allows us to gain information, and possibly support, from them (remember the *tend-and-befriend response* that is so effectively used to reduce stress by women). Writing or thinking about one's experiences also seems to help people make sense of these events and may give them a feeling of control over their lives (Pennebaker & Stone, 2004).

It is easier to respond to stress if we can interpret it in more positive ways. Kelsey et al. (1999) found that some people interpret stress as a challenge (something that they feel that they can, with effort, deal with), whereas others see the same stress as a threat (something that is negative and to be feared). People who viewed stress as a challenge had fewer physiological stress responses than those who viewed it as a threat — they were able to frame and react to stress in more positive ways.

Emotion Regulation

Emotional responses such as the stress reaction are useful in warning us about potential danger and in mobilizing our response to it, so it is a good thing that we have them. However, we also need to learn how to control our emotions, to prevent them from letting our behaviour get out of control. *The ability to successfully control our emotions* is known as **emotion regulation**.

Emotion regulation has some important positive outcomes. Consider, for instance, research by Walter Mischel and his colleagues. In their studies, they had four- and five-year-old children sit at a table in front of a yummy snack, such as a chocolate chip cookie or a marshmallow. The children were told that they could eat the snack right away if they wanted. However, they were also told that if they could wait for just a couple of minutes, they'd be able to have two snacks — both the one in front of them and another just like it. However, if they ate the one that was in front of them before the time was up, they would not get a second.

Mischel found that some children were able to override the impulse to seek immediate gratification to obtain a greater reward at a later time. Other children, of course, were not; they just ate the first snack right away. Furthermore, the inability to delay gratification seemed to occur in a spontaneous and emotional manner, without much thought. The children who could not resist simply grabbed the cookie because it looked so yummy, without being able to stop themselves (Metcalfe & Mischel, 1999; Strack & Deutsch, 2007).

The ability to regulate our emotions has important consequences later in life. When Mischel followed up on the children in his original study, he found that those who had been able to self-regulate grew up to have some highly positive characteristics: They got better university admission test scores, were rated by their friends as more socially adept, and were found to cope with frustration and stress better than those children who could not resist the tempting cookie at a young age. Thus effective self-regulation can be recognized as an important key to success in life (Ayduk et al., 2000; Eigsti et al., 2006; Mischel & Ayduk, 2004).

Emotion regulation is influenced by body chemicals, particularly the neurotransmitter *serotonin*.

Preferences for small, immediate rewards over large but later rewards have been linked to low levels of serotonin in animals (Bizot, Le Bihan, Peuch, Hamon, & Thiebot, 1999; Liu, Wilkinson, & Robbins, 2004), and low levels of serotonin are tied to violence and impulsiveness in human suicides (Asberg, Traskman, & Thoren, 1976).

Research Focus: Emotion Regulation Takes Effort

Emotion regulation is particularly difficult when we are tired, depressed, or anxious, and it is under these conditions that we more easily let our emotions get the best of us (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). If you are tired and worried about an upcoming exam, you may find yourself getting angry and taking it out on your roommate, even though she really hasn't done anything to deserve it and you don't really want to be angry at her. It is no secret that we are more likely fail at our diets when we are under a lot of stress, or at night when we are tired.

Muraven, Tice, and Baumeister (1998) conducted a study to demonstrate that emotion regulation — that is, either increasing or decreasing our emotional responses — takes work. They speculated that self-control was like a muscle; it just gets tired when it is used too much. In their experiment they asked participants to watch a short movie about environmental disasters involving radioactive waste and their negative effects on wildlife. The scenes included sick and dying animals and were very upsetting. According to random assignment to condition, one group (the *increase emotional response* condition) was told to really get into the movie and to express their emotions, one group was to hold back and decrease their emotional responses (the *decrease emotional response* condition), and the third (*control*) group received no emotional regulation instructions.

Both before and after the movie, the experimenter asked the participants to engage in a measure of physical strength by squeezing as hard as they could on a handgrip exerciser, a device used for strengthening hand muscles. The experimenter put a piece of paper in the grip and timed how long the participants could hold the grip together before the paper fell out. Figure 11.9, "Research Results," shows the results of this study. It seems that emotion regulation does indeed take effort, because the participants who had been asked to control their emotions showed significantly less ability to squeeze the handgrip after the movie than they had showed before it, whereas the control group showed virtually no decrease. The emotion regulation during the movie seems to have consumed resources, leaving the participants with less capacity to perform the handgrip task.

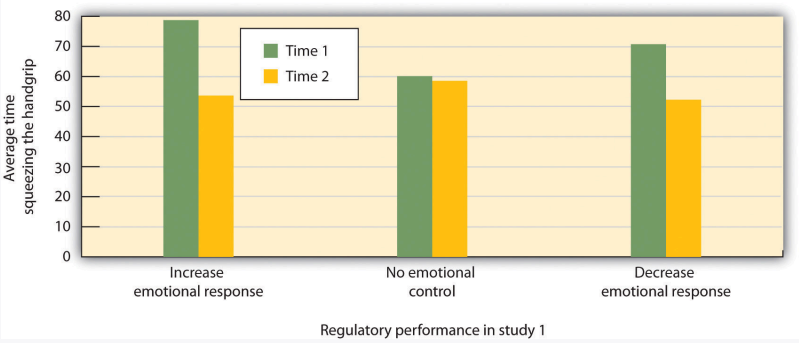


Figure 11.9 Research Results. Participants who were instructed to regulate their emotions, either by increasing or decreasing their emotional responses to a move, had less energy left over to squeeze a handgrip in comparison to those who did not regulate their emotions. Adapted from Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998.

In other studies, people who had to resist the temptation to eat chocolates and cookies, who made important decisions, or who were forced to conform to others all performed more poorly on subsequent tasks that took energy, including giving up on tasks earlier and failing to resist temptation (Vohs & Heatherton, 2000).

Can we improve our emotion regulation? It turns out that training in self-regulation — just like physical training — can help. Students who practised doing difficult tasks, such as exercising, avoiding swearing, or maintaining good posture, were later found to perform better in laboratory tests of emotion regulation such as maintaining a diet or completing a puzzle (Baumeister, Gailliot, DeWall, & Oaten, 2006; Baumeister, Schmeichel, & Vohs, 2007; Oaten & Cheng, 2006).

Key Takeaways

- Stress refers to the physiological responses that occur when an organism fails to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats.
- The general adaptation syndrome refers to the three distinct phases of physiological change that occur in response to long-term stress: alarm, resistance, and exhaustion.
- Stress is normally adaptive because it helps us respond to potentially dangerous events by activating the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system. But the experience of prolonged stress has a direct negative influence on our physical health.
- Chronic stress is a major contributor to heart disease. It also decreases our ability to fight off colds and infections.
- Stressors can occur as a result of both major and minor everyday events.
- Men tend to respond to stress with the fight-or-flight response, whereas women are more likely to take a tend-and-befriend response.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Consider a time when you experienced stress and how you responded to it. Do you now have a better understanding of the dangers of stress? How will you change your coping mechanisms based on what you have learned?
2. Are you good at emotion regulation? Can you think of a time when your emotions got the better of you? How might you make better use of your emotions?

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Long Description

Figure 11.7 long description: Stages of Stress as identified by Hans Selye. Stage 1: General alarm reaction. The first reaction to stress. The body releases stress hormones, including cortisol. Stage 2: Resistance. After a period of chronic stress the body adapts to the ongoing threat and tries to return to normal functions. Glucose levels increase to sustain energy, and blood pressure increases. Stage 3: Exhaustion. In this stage, the body has run out of its reserves of energy and immunity. Blood sugar levels decrease, leading to decreased stress tolerance, progressive mental and physical exhaustion, illness, and collapse. The body's organs begin to fail, and eventually illness or death occurs. [Return to Figure 11.7]

11.3 Positive Emotions: The Power of Happiness

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the important role of positive emotions and happiness in responding to stress.
2. Understand the factors that increase, and do not increase, happiness.

Although stress is an emotional response that can kill us, our emotions can also help us cope with and protect ourselves from it. The stress of the Monday through Friday grind can be offset by the fun that we can have on the weekend, and the concerns that we have about our upcoming chemistry exam can be offset by a positive attitude toward school, life, and other people. Put simply, the best antidote for stress is a happy one: think positively, have fun, and enjoy the company of others.

You have probably heard about the power of positive thinking — the idea that thinking positively helps people meet their goals and keeps them healthy, happy, and able to effectively cope with the negative events that occur to them. It turns out that positive thinking really works. People who think positively about their future, who believe that they can control their outcomes, and who are willing to open up and share with others are healthier people (Seligman, & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The power of positive thinking comes in different forms, but they are all helpful. Some researchers have focused on **optimism**, *a general tendency to expect positive outcomes*, finding that optimists are happier and have less stress (Carver & Scheier, 2009). Others have focused on **self-efficacy**, *the belief in our ability to carry out actions that produce desired outcomes*. People with high self-efficacy respond to environmental and other threats in an active, constructive way — by getting information, talking to friends, and attempting to face and reduce the difficulties they are experiencing. These people too are better able to ward off their stresses in comparison to people with less self-efficacy (Thompson, 2009).

Self-efficacy helps in part because it leads us to perceive that we can control the potential stressors that may affect us. Workers who have control over their work environment (e.g., by being able to move furniture and control distractions) experience less stress, as do patients in nursing homes who are able to choose their everyday activities (Rodin, 1986). Glass, Reim, and Singer (1971) found that participants who believed that they could stop a loud noise experienced less stress than those who did not think that they could, even though the people who had the option never actually used it. The ability to control our outcomes may help explain why animals and people who have higher status live longer (Sapolsky, 2005).

Suzanne Kobasa and her colleagues (Kobasa, Maddi, & Kahn, 1982) have argued that the tendency to be less affected by life's stressors can be characterized as an individual difference measure that has a relationship to both optimism and self-efficacy known as *hardiness*. Hardy individuals are those who are more positive overall about potentially stressful life events, who take more direct action to understand

the causes of negative events, and who attempt to learn from them what may be of value for the future. Hardy individuals use effective coping strategies, and they take better care of themselves.

Taken together, these various coping skills, including optimism, self-efficacy, and hardiness, have been shown to have a wide variety of positive effects on our health. Optimists make faster recoveries from illnesses and surgeries (Carver et al., 2005). People with high self-efficacy have been found to be better able to quit smoking and lose weight and are more likely to exercise regularly (Cohen & Pressman, 2006). And hardy individuals seem to cope better with stress and other negative life events (Dolbier, Smith, & Steinhardt, 2007). The positive effects of positive thinking are particularly important when stress is high. Baker (2007) found that in periods of low stress, positive thinking made little difference in responses to stress, but that during stressful periods optimists were less likely to smoke on a day-to-day basis and to respond to stress in more productive ways, such as by exercising.

It is possible to learn to think more positively, and doing so can be beneficial. Antoni and colleagues (2001) found that pessimistic cancer patients who were given training in optimism reported more optimistic outlooks after the training and were less fatigued after their treatments. And Maddi, Kahn, and Maddi (1998) found that a hardiness training program that included focusing on ways to effectively cope with stress was effective in increasing satisfaction and decreasing self-reported stress.

The benefits of taking positive approaches to stress can last a lifetime. Christopher Peterson and his colleagues (Peterson, Seligman, Yurko, Martin, & Friedman, 1998) found that the level of optimism reported by people who had first been interviewed when they were in university during the years between 1936 and 1940 predicted their health over the next 50 years. Students who had a more positive outlook on life in university were less likely to have died up to 50 years later of all causes, and they were particularly likely to have experienced fewer accidental and violent deaths, in comparison to students who were less optimistic. Similar findings were found for older adults. After controlling for loneliness, marital status, economic status, and other correlates of health, Levy and Myers found that older adults with positive attitudes and higher self-efficacy had better health and lived on average almost eight years longer than their more negative peers (Levy & Myers, 2005; Levy, Slade, & Kasl, 2002). And Diener, Nickerson, Lucas, and Sandvik (2002) found that people who had cheerier dispositions earlier in life had higher income levels and less unemployment when they were assessed 19 years later.

Finding Happiness through Our Connections with Others

Happiness is determined in part by genetic factors, such that some people are naturally happier than others (Braungart, Plomin, DeFries, & Fulker, 1992; Lykken, 2000), but also in part by the situations that we create for ourselves. Psychologists have studied hundreds of variables that influence happiness, but there is one that is by far the most important. People who report that they *have positive social relationships with others* — the **perception of social support** — also report being happier than those who report having less social support (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Diener, Tamir, & Scollon, 2006). Married people report being happier than unmarried people (Pew, 2006), and people who are connected with and accepted by others suffer less depression, higher self-esteem, and less social anxiety and jealousy than those who feel more isolated and rejected (Leary, 1990).

Social support also helps us better cope with stressors. Koopman, Hermanson, Diamond, Angell, and Spiegel (1998) found that women who reported higher social support experienced less depression when adjusting to a diagnosis of cancer, and Ashton and colleagues (2005) found a similar buffering effect of

social support for AIDS patients. People with social support are less depressed overall, recover faster from negative events, and are less likely to commit suicide (Au, Lau, & Lee, 2009; Bertera, 2007; Compton, Thompson, & Kaslow, 2005; Skärsäter, Langius, Ågren, Häagström, & Dencker, 2005).

Social support buffers us against stress in several ways. For one, *having people we can trust and rely on helps us directly* by allowing us to share favours when we need them. These are the **direct effects** of social support. But *having people around us also makes us feel good about ourselves*. These are the **appreciation effects** of social support. Gençöz and Özlale (2004) found that students with more friends felt less stress and reported that their friends helped them, but they also reported that having friends made them feel better about themselves. Again, you can see that the tend-and-befriend response, so often used by women, is an important and effective way to reduce stress.

What Makes Us Happy?

One difficulty that people face when trying to improve their happiness is that they may not always know what will make them happy. As one example, many of us think that if we just had more money we would be happier. While it is true that we do need money to afford food and adequate shelter for ourselves and our families, after this minimum level of wealth is reached, more money does not generally buy more happiness (Easterlin, 2005). For instance, as you can see in Figure 11.10, “Income and Happiness,” even though income and material success has improved dramatically in many countries over the past decades, happiness has not. Despite tremendous economic growth in France, Japan, and Canada between 1946 and 1990, there was no increase in reports of well-being by the citizens of these countries. People today have about three times the buying power they had in the 1950s, and yet overall happiness has not increased. The problem seems to be that we never seem to have enough money to make us really happy. Csikszentmihalyi (1999) reported that people who earned $30,000 per year felt that they would be happier if they made $50,000 per year, but that people who earned $100,000 per year said that they would need $250,000 per year to make them happy.

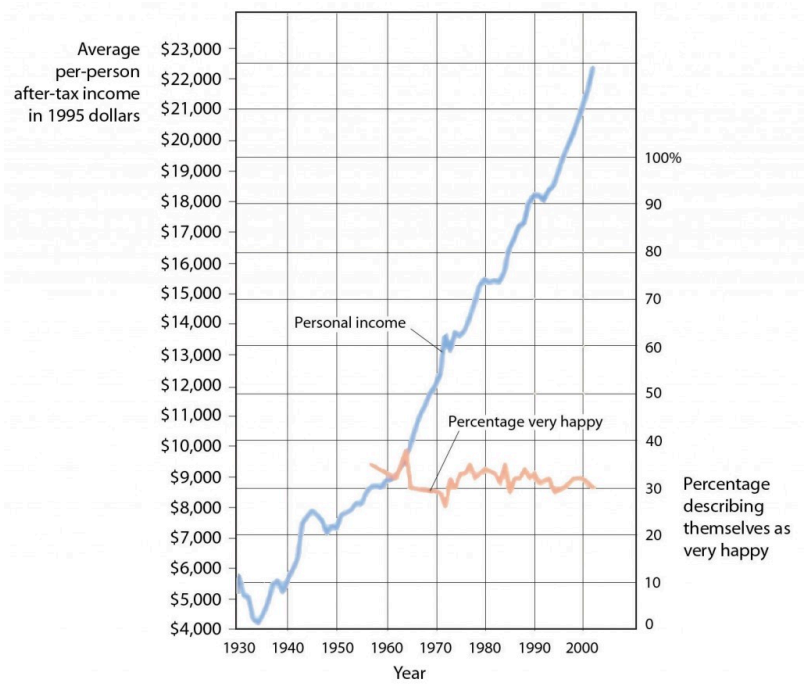


Figure 11.10 Income and Happiness. Although personal income keeps rising, happiness does not.

These findings might lead us to conclude that we don't always know what does or what might make us happy, and this seems to be at least partially true. For instance, Jean Twenge and her colleagues (Twenge, Campbell & Foster, 2003) have found in several studies that although people with children frequently claim that having children makes them happy, couples who do not have children actually report being happier than those who do.

Psychologists have found that people's ability to predict their future emotional states is not very accurate (Wilson & Gilbert, 2005). For one, people overestimate their emotional reactions to events. Although people think that positive and negative events that might occur to them will make a huge difference in their lives, and although these changes do make at least some difference in life satisfaction, they tend to be less influential than we think they are going to be. Positive events tend to make us feel good, but their effects wear off pretty quickly, and the same is true for negative events. For instance, Brickman, Coates, and Janoff-Bulman (1978) interviewed people who had won more than $50,000 in a lottery and found that they were not happier than they had been in the past, and were also not happier than a control group of similar people who had not won the lottery. On the other hand, the researchers found that individuals who were paralyzed as a result of accidents were not as unhappy as might be expected.

How can this possibly be? There are several reasons. For one, people are resilient; they bring their coping skills to play when negative events occur, and this makes them feel better. Secondly, most people do not continually experience very positive, or very negative, affect over a long period of time, but rather adapt to their current circumstances. Just as we enjoy the second chocolate bar we eat less than we enjoy the first, as we experience more and more positive outcomes in our daily lives we habituate to them and our life satisfaction returns to a more moderate level (Small, Zatorre, Dagher, Evans, & Jones-Gotman, 2001).

Another reason that we may mispredict our happiness is that our social comparisons change when

our own status changes as a result of new events. People who are wealthy compare themselves to other wealthy people, people who are poor tend to compare with other poor people, and people who are ill tend to compare with other ill people. When our comparisons change, our happiness levels are correspondingly influenced. And when people are asked to predict their future emotions, they may focus only on the positive or negative event they are asked about, and forget about all the other things that won't change. Wilson, Wheatley, Meyers, Gilbert, and Axsom (2000) found that when people were asked to focus on all the more regular things that they will still be doing in the future (working, going to church, socializing with family and friends, and so forth), their predictions about how something really good or bad would influence them were less extreme.

If pleasure is fleeting, at least misery shares some of the same quality. We might think we cannot be happy if something terrible, such as the loss of a partner or child, were to happen to us, but after a period of adjustment most people find that happiness levels return to prior levels (Bonnano et al., 2002). Health concerns tend to put a damper on our feeling of well-being, and those with a serious disability or illness show slightly lowered mood levels. But even when health is compromised, levels of misery are lower than most people expect (Lucas, 2007; Riis et al., 2005). For instance, although disabled individuals have more concern about health, safety, and acceptance in the community, they still experience overall positive happiness levels (Marinić & Brkljačić, 2008). Taken together, it has been estimated that our wealth, health, and life circumstances account for only 15% to 20% of life satisfaction scores (Argyle, 1999). Clearly the main ingredient in happiness lies beyond, or perhaps beneath, external factors.

Key Takeaways

- Positive thinking can be beneficial to our health.
- Optimism, self-efficacy, and hardiness all relate to positive health outcomes.
- Happiness is determined in part by genetic factors, but also by the experience of social support.
- People may not always know what will make them happy.
- Material wealth plays only a small role in determining happiness.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Are you a happy person? Can you think of ways to increase your positive emotions?
2. Do you know what will make you happy? Do you believe that material wealth is not as important as you might have thought it would be?

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Image Attributions

Figure 11.10: Layard, 2005.

11.4 Two Fundamental Human Motivations: Eating and Mating

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the biological and social responses that underlie eating behaviour.
2. Understand the psychological and physiological responses that underlie sexual behaviour.

Eating: Healthy Choices Make Healthy Lives

Along with the need to drink fresh water, which humans can normally attain in all except the most extreme situations, the need for food is the most fundamental and important human need. More than one in 10 Canadian households contain people who live without enough nourishing food, and this lack of proper nourishment has profound effects on their abilities to lead productive lives (Yarema, 2013). When people are extremely hungry, their motivation to attain food completely changes their behaviour. Hungry people become listless and apathetic to save energy and then become completely obsessed with food. Ancel Keys and his colleagues (Keys, Brožek, Henschel, Mickelsen, & Taylor, 1950) found that volunteers who were placed on severely reduced-calorie diets lost all interest in sex and social activities, becoming preoccupied with food.

Like most interesting psychological phenomena, the simple behaviour of eating has both biological and social determinants (Figure 11.11, “Biological, Psychological, and Social-Cultural Contributors to Eating”). Biologically, hunger is controlled by the interactions among complex pathways in the nervous system and a variety of hormonal and chemical systems in the brain and body. The stomach is of course important. We feel more hungry when our stomach is empty than when it is full. But we can also feel hunger even without input from the stomach. Two areas of the hypothalamus are known to be particularly important in eating. The lateral part of the hypothalamus responds primarily to cues to start eating, whereas the ventromedial part of the hypothalamus primarily responds to cues to stop eating. If the lateral part of the hypothalamus is damaged, the animal will not eat even if food is present, whereas if the ventromedial part of the hypothalamus is damaged, the animal will eat until it is obese (Wolf & Miller, 1964).

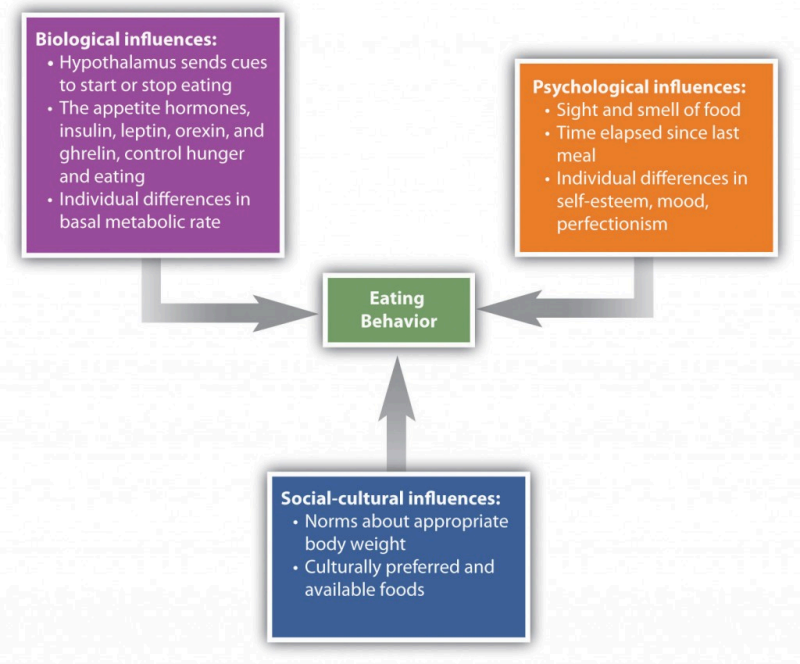


Figure 11.11 Biological, Psychological, and Social-Cultural Contributors to Eating. [Long Description]

Hunger is also determined by hormone levels (Figure 11.12, "Eating Is Influenced by the Appetite Hormones"). **Glucose** is *the main sugar that the body uses for energy, and the brain monitors blood glucose levels to determine hunger*. Glucose levels in the bloodstream are regulated by **insulin**, *a hormone secreted by the pancreas gland*. When insulin is low, glucose is not taken up by body cells, and the body begins to use fat as an energy source. Eating and appetite are also influenced by other hormones, including *orexin*, *ghrelin*, and *leptin* (Brennan & Mantzoros, 2006; Nakazato et al., 2001).

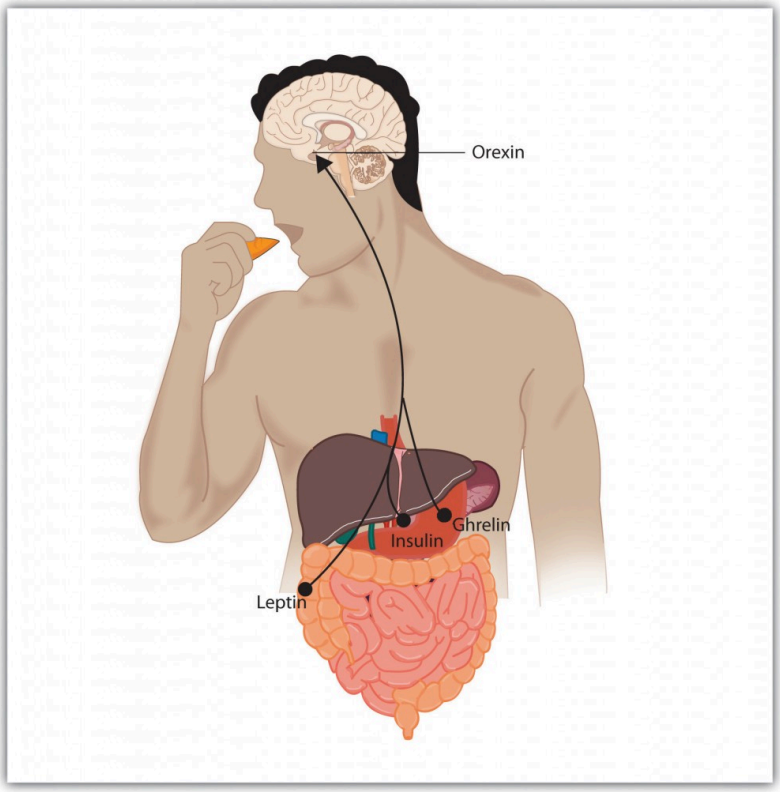


Figure 11.12 Eating Is Influenced by the Appetite Hormones. Insulin, secreted by the pancreas, controls blood glucose; leptin, secreted by fat cells, monitors energy levels; orexin, secreted by the hypothalamus, triggers hunger; ghrelin, secreted by an empty stomach, increases food intake.

Normally the interaction of the various systems that determine hunger creates a balance or *homeostasis* in which we eat when we are hungry and stop eating when we feel full. But homeostasis varies among people; some people simply weigh more than others, and there is little they can do to change their fundamental weight. Weight is determined in large part by the **basal metabolic rate**, *the amount of energy expended while at rest*. Each person's basal metabolic rate is different, due to his or her unique physical makeup and physical behaviour. A naturally occurring low metabolic rate, which is determined entirely by genetics, makes weight management a very difficult undertaking for many people.

How we eat is also influenced by our environment. When researchers rigged clocks to move faster, people got hungrier and ate more, as if they thought they must be hungry again because so much time had passed since they last ate (Schachter, 1968). And if we forget that we have already eaten, we are likely to eat again even if we are not actually hungry (Rozin, Dow, Moscovitch, & Rajaram, 1998).

Cultural norms about appropriate weights also influence eating behaviours. Current norms for women in Western societies are based on a very thin body ideal, emphasized by television and movie actresses, models, and even children's dolls, such as the ever-popular Barbie. These norms for excessive thinness are very difficult for most women to attain: Barbie's measurements, if translated to human proportions, would be about 91 cm-46 cm-84 cm at bust-waist-hips, measurements that are attained by less than one

in 100,000 women (Norton, Olds, Olive, & Dank, 1996). Many women idealize being thin and yet are unable to reach the standard that they prefer.

Eating Disorders

In some cases, the desire to be thin can lead to eating disorders, which are estimated to affect about 1% of people, 90% of them women (Hoek & van Hoeken, 2003; Palmer, 2008; Patrick, 2002). **Anorexia nervosa** is *an eating disorder characterized by extremely low body weight, distorted body image, and an obsessive fear of gaining weight*. Anorexia begins with a severe weight loss diet and develops into a preoccupation with food and dieting.

Bulimia nervosa is *an eating disorder characterized by binge eating followed by purging*. Bulimia nervosa begins after the dieter has broken a diet and gorged. Bulimia involves repeated episodes of overeating, followed by vomiting, laxative use, fasting, or excessive exercise. It is most common in women in their late teens or early 20s, and it is often accompanied by depression and anxiety, particularly around the time of the binging. The cycle in which the person eats to feel better, but then after eating becomes concerned about weight gain and purges, repeats itself over and over again, often with major psychological and physical results.

Eating disorders are in part heritable (Klump, Burt, McGue, & Iacono, 2007), and it is not impossible that at least some have been selected through their evolutionary significance in coping with food shortages (Guisinger, 2008). Eating disorders are also related to psychological causes, including low self-esteem, perfectionism, and the perception that one's body weight is too high (Vohs et al., 2001), as well as to cultural norms about body weight and eating (Crandall, 1988). Because eating disorders can create profound negative health outcomes, including death, people who suffer from them should seek treatment. This treatment is often quite effective.

Obesity

Although some people eat too little, eating too much is also a major problem. **Obesity** is *a medical condition in which so much excess body fat has accumulated in the body that it begins to have an adverse impact on health*. In addition to causing people to be stereotyped and treated less positively by others (Crandall, Merman, & Hebl, 2009), uncontrolled obesity leads to health problems including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, sleep apnea, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, and some types of cancer (Gustafson, Rothenberg, Blennow, Steen, & Skoog, 2003). Obesity also reduces life expectancy (Haslam & James, 2005).

Obesity is determined by calculating the **body mass index (BMI)**, *a measurement that compares one's weight and height*. People are defined as overweight when their BMI is greater than 25 kg/m^2 and as obese when it is greater than 30 kg/m^2. If you know your height and weight, you can calculate your BMI (https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm)

Obesity is a leading cause of death worldwide. Its prevalence is rapidly increasing, and it is one of the most serious public health problems of the 21st century. Although obesity is caused in part by genetics, it is increased by overeating and a lack of physical activity (James, 2008; Nestle & Jacobson, 2000).

There are really only two approaches to controlling weight: eat less and exercise more. Dieting is

difficult for anyone, but it is particularly difficult for people with slow basal metabolic rates who must cope with severe hunger to lose weight. Although most weight loss can be maintained for about a year, very few people are able to maintain substantial weight loss through dieting alone for more than three years (Miller, 1999). Substantial weight loss of more than 50 pounds is typically seen only when weight loss surgery has been performed (Douketis, Macie, Thabane, & Williamson, 2005). Weight loss surgery reduces stomach volume or bowel length, leading to earlier satiation and reduced ability to absorb nutrients from food.

Although dieting alone does not produce a great deal of weight loss over time, its effects are substantially improved when it is accompanied by more physical activity. People who exercise regularly, and particularly those who combine exercise with dieting, are less likely to be obese (Borer, 2008). Exercise not only improves our waistline but also makes us healthier overall. Exercise increases cardiovascular capacity, lowers blood pressure, and helps improve diabetes, joint flexibility, and muscle strength (American Heart Association, 1998). Exercise also slows the cognitive impairments that are associated with aging (Kramer, Erickson, & Colcombe, 2006).

Because the costs of exercise are immediate but the benefits are long-term, it may be difficult for people who do not exercise to get started. It is important to make a regular schedule, to work exercise into one's daily activities, and to view exercise not as a cost but as an opportunity to improve oneself (Schomer & Drake, 2001). Exercising is more fun when it is done in groups, so team exercise is recommended (Kirchhoff, Elliott, Schlichting, & Chin, 2008).

A recent report found that only about one-half of North Americans perform the 30 minutes of exercise five times a week that the World Health Organization (2010) suggests as the minimum healthy amount. As for the other half of North Americans, they most likely are listening to the guidelines, but they are unable to stick to the regimen. Almost half of the people who start an exercise regimen give it up by the six-month mark (American Heart Association, 1998; Colley, Garriguet, Janssen, Craig, Clarke, & Tremblay, 2011).

Statistics Canada (2010) also reports just 7% of young people between the ages of five and 17 meet the daily recommended amount of physical activity. New international and proposed Canadian guidelines recommend adults accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity a week to obtain substantial health benefits. The guidelines also suggest five- to 17-year-olds should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily. Statistics Canada says the guidelines for adults were achieved by 17% of men and 14% of women, while the youth guidelines were met by just 9% of boys and 4% of girls. This is a problem, given that exercise has long-term benefits only if it is continued.

Sex: The Most Important Human Behaviour

Perhaps the most important aspect of human experience is the process of reproduction. Without it, none of us would be here. Successful reproduction in humans involves the coordination of a wide variety of behaviours, including courtship, sex, household arrangements, parenting, and child care.

The Experience of Sex

The sexual drive, with its reward of intense pleasure in orgasm, is highly motivating. The biology of the sexual response was studied in detail by Masters and Johnson (1966), who monitored or filmed more than 700 men and women while they masturbated or had intercourse. Masters and Johnson found that the **sexual response cycle**—*the biological sexual response in humans*—was very similar in men and women, and consisted of four stages:

1. **Excitement**. The genital areas become engorged with blood. Women's breasts and nipples may enlarge and the vagina expands and secretes lubricant.
2. **Plateau**. Breathing, pulse, and blood pressure increase as orgasm feels imminent. The penis becomes fully enlarged. Vaginal secretions continue and the clitoris may retract.
3. **Orgasm**. Muscular contractions occur throughout the body, but particularly in the genitals. The spasmodic ejaculations of sperm are similar to the spasmodic contractions of vaginal walls, and the experience of orgasm is similar for men and women. The woman's orgasm helps position the uterus to draw sperm inward (Thornhill & Gangestad, 1995).
4. **Resolution**. After orgasm the body gradually returns to its prearoused state. After one orgasm, men typically experience a **refractory period**, in which they are *incapable of reaching another orgasm for several minutes, hours, or even longer*. Women may achieve several orgasms before entering the resolution stage.

The sexual response cycle and sexual desire are regulated by the sex hormones *estrogen* in women and *testosterone* in both women and in men. Although the hormones are secreted by the ovaries and testes, it is the hypothalamus and the pituitary glands that control the process. Estrogen levels in women vary across the menstrual cycle, peaking during ovulation (Pillsworth, Haselton, & Buss, 2004). Women are more interested in having sex during ovulation but can experience high levels of sexual arousal throughout the menstrual cycle.

In men, testosterone is essential to maintain sexual desire and to sustain an erection, and testosterone injections can increase sexual interest and performance (Aversa et al., 2000; Jockenhövel et al., 2009). Testosterone is also important in the female sex cycle. Women who are experiencing menopause may develop a loss of interest in sex, but this interest may be rekindled through estrogen and testosterone replacement treatments (Meston & Frohlich, 2000).

Although their biological determinants and experiences of sex are similar, men and women differ substantially in their overall interest in sex, the frequency of their sexual activities, and the mates they are most interested in. Men show a more consistent interest in sex, whereas the sexual desires of women are more likely to vary over time (Baumeister, 2000). Men fantasize about sex more often than women, and their fantasies are more physical and less intimate (Leitenberg & Henning, 1995). Men are also more willing to have casual sex than are women, and their standards for sex partners is lower (Petersen & Hyde, 2010; Saad, Eba, & Sejean, 2009).

Gender differences in sexual interest probably occur in part as a result of the evolutionary predispositions of men and women, and this interpretation is bolstered by the finding that gender differences in sexual interest are observed cross-culturally (Buss, 1989). Evolutionarily, women should be more selective than men in their choices of sex partners because they must invest more time in bearing and nurturing their

children than men do (most men do help out, of course, but women simply do more [Buss & Kenrick, 1998]). Because they do not need to invest a lot of time in child rearing, men may be evolutionarily predisposed to be more willing and desiring of having sex with many different partners and may be less selective in their choice of mates. Women, on the other hand, because they must invest substantial effort in raising each child, should be more selective.

The Many Varieties of Sexual Behaviour

Sex researchers have found that sexual behaviour varies widely, not only between men and women but within each sex (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948/1998; Kinsey, 1953/1998). About a quarter of women report having a low sexual desire, and about 1% of people report feeling no sexual attraction whatsoever (Bogaert, 2004; Feldhaus-Dahir, 2009; West et al., 2008). There are also people who experience hyperactive sexual drives. For about 3% to 6% of the population (mainly men), the sex drive is so strong that it dominates life experience and may lead to *hyperactive sexual desire disorder* (Kingston & Firestone, 2008).

There is also variety in **sexual orientation**, which is *the direction of our sexual desire toward people of the opposite sex, people of the same sex, or people of both sexes*. The vast majority of human beings have a heterosexual orientation — their sexual desire is focused toward members of the opposite sex. A smaller minority is primarily homosexual (i.e., they have sexual desire for members of their own sex). Between 3% and 4% of men are gay, and between 1% and 2% of women are lesbian. Another 1% of the population reports being bisexual (having desires for both sexes). The love and sexual lives of homosexuals are little different from those of heterosexuals, except where their behaviours are constrained by cultural norms and local laws. As with heterosexuals, some gays and lesbians are celibate, some are promiscuous, but most are in committed, long-term relationships (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994).

Although homosexuality has been practiced as long as records of human behaviour have been kept, and occurs in many animals at least as frequently as it does in humans, cultures nevertheless vary substantially in their attitudes toward it. In Western societies such as the Canada, the United States, and Europe, attitudes are becoming progressively more tolerant of homosexuality, but it remains unacceptable in many other parts of the world. The Canadian Psychological Association issued a policy statement in February 1982 endorsing the principle that there be no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation for (a) recruitment; (b) hiring; (c) salary; (d) promotion rate; (e) fringe benefits; or (f) assignment of duties. The American Psychiatric Association no longer considers homosexuality to be a mental illness, although it did so until 1973. Because prejudice against gays and lesbians can lead to experiences of ostracism, depression, and even suicide (Kulkin, Chauvin, & Percle, 2000), these improved attitudes can benefit the everyday lives of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals.

Whether sexual orientation is driven more by nature or by nurture has received a great deal of research attention, and research has found that sexual orientation is primarily biological (Mustanski, Chivers, & Bailey, 2002). Areas of the hypothalamus are different in homosexual men, as well as in animals with homosexual tendencies, than they are in heterosexual members of the species, and these differences are in directions such that gay men are more similar to women than straight men are (Gladue, 1994; Lasco, Jordan, Edgar, Petito, & Byrne, 2002; Rahman & Wilson, 2003). Twin studies also support the idea that there is a genetic component to sexual orientation. Among male identical twins, 52% of those with a gay brother also reported homosexuality, whereas the rate in fraternal twins was just 22% (Bailey et al.,

1999; Pillard & Bailey, 1998). There is also evidence that sexual orientation is influenced by exposure and responses to sex hormones (Hershberger & Segal, 2004; Williams & Pepitone, 2000).

Psychology in Everyday Life: Regulating Emotions to Improve Our Health

Although smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, using recreational drugs, engaging in unsafe sex, and eating too much may produce enjoyable positive emotions in the short term, they are some of the leading causes of negative health outcomes and even death in the long term (Mokdad, Marks, Stroup, & Gerberding, 2004). To avoid these negative outcomes, we must use our cognitive resources to plan, guide, and restrain our behaviours. And we (like Gavin England) can also use our emotion regulation skills to help us do better.

Even in an age where the addictive and detrimental health effects of cigarette smoking are well understood, more than 60% of children try smoking before they are 18 years old, and more than half who have smoked have tried and failed to quit (Fryar, Merino, Hirsch, & Porter, 2009). Although smoking is depicted in movies as sexy and alluring, it is highly addictive and probably the most dangerous thing we can do to our body. Poor diet and physical inactivity combine to make up the second greatest threat to our health. But we can improve our diet by eating more natural and less processed food, and by monitoring our food intake. And we can start and maintain an exercise program. Exercise keeps us happier, improves fitness, and leads to better health and lower mortality (Fogelholm, 2010; Galper, Trivedi, Barlow, Dunn, & Kampert, 2006; Hassmén, Koivula, & Uutela, 2000). And exercise also has a variety of positive influences on our cognitive processes, including academic performance (Hillman, Erickson, & Kramer, 2008).

Alcohol abuse, and particularly binge drinking (i.e., having five or more drinks in one sitting), is often the norm among high school and university students, but it has severe negative health consequences. Bingeing leads to deaths from car crashes, drowning, falls, gunshots, and alcohol poisoning (Valencia-Martín, Galán, & Rodríguez-Artalejo, 2008). Binge-drinking students are also more likely to be involved in other risky behaviours, such as smoking, drug use, dating violence, or attempted suicide (Miller, Naimi, Brewer, & Jones, 2007). Binge drinking may also damage neural pathways in the brain (McQueeny et al., 2009) and lead to lifelong alcohol abuse and dependency (Kim et al., 2008). Illicit drug use has also been increasing and is linked to the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C (Monteiro, 2001).

Some teens abstain from sex entirely, particularly those who are very religious, but most experiment with it. In Canada, 30% of 15- to 17-year-olds and 68% of 18- to 19-year-olds reported that they had had intercourse (Rotermann, 2012). In sum, while less than half of Canadian teens report having intercourse before age 18, more than two-thirds do so before age 20. When these data are added to data from previous cycles of the Canadian Community Health Survey we can see that the percentages of Canadian young people in the 15- to 17- and 18- to 19-year-old age groups who reported ever having sexual intercourse remained remarkably stable from 1996/1997 to 2009/2010. Although sex is fun, it can also kill us if we are not careful. Sexual activity can lead to guilt about having engaged in the act itself, and may also lead to unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV infection. Alcohol consumption also leads to risky sexual behaviour. Sex partners who have been drinking are less likely to practice safe sex, and they have an increased risk of STIs, including HIV infection (Hutton, McCaul, Santora, & Erbelding 2008; Raj et al., 2009).

It takes some work to improve and maintain our health and happiness, and our desire for the positive emotional experiences that come from engaging in dangerous behaviours can get in the way of this work. But being aware of the dangers, working to control our emotions, and using our resources to engage in healthy behaviours and avoid unhealthy ones are the best things we can do for ourselves.

Key Takeaways

- Biologically, hunger is controlled by the interactions among complex pathways in the nervous system and a variety of hormonal and chemical systems in the brain and body.
- How we eat is also influenced by our environment, including social norms about appropriate body size.
- Homeostasis varies among people and is determined by the basal metabolic rate. Low metabolic rates, which are determined entirely by genetics, make weight management a very difficult undertaking for many people.
- Eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa, affect about 1% of people (90% women).
- Obesity is a medical condition in which so much excess body fat has accumulated in the body that it begins to have an adverse impact on health. Uncontrolled obesity leads to health problems including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, sleep apnea, arthritis, and some types of cancer.
- The two approaches to controlling weight are to eat less and exercise more.
- Sex drive is regulated by the sex hormones estrogen in women and testosterone in both women and men.
- Although their biological determinants and experiences of sex are similar, men and women differ substantially in their overall interest in sex, the frequency of their sexual activities, and the mates they are most interested in.
- Sexual behaviour varies widely, not only between men and women but also within each sex.
- There is also variety in sexual orientation: toward people of the opposite sex, people of the same sex, or people of both sexes. The determinants of sexual orientation are primarily biological.
- We can outwit stress, obesity, and other health risks through appropriate healthy action.

Exercise and Critical Thinking

1. Consider your own eating and sex patterns. Are they healthy or unhealthy? What can you do to improve them?

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Long Descriptions

Figure 11.11 long description: Biological, Psychological, and Social-Cultural Contributors to Eating Behaviour

Biological influences:	**Psychological influences:**	**Social-cultural influences:**
• hypothalamus sends cues to start or stop eating • the appetite hormones, insulim, leptin, orexin, and ghrelin, control hunger and eating • individual differences in basal metabolic rate	• sight and smell of food • time elapsed since last meal • individual differences in self-esteem, mood, perfectionism	• norms about appropriate body weight • culturally preferred and available foods

[Return to Figure 11.11]

11.5 Chapter Summary

Affect guides behaviour, helps us make decisions, and has a major impact on our mental and physical health. Affect is guided by arousal — our experiences of the bodily responses created by the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system.

Emotions are the mental and physiological feeling states that direct our attention and guide our behaviour. The most fundamental emotions, known as the basic emotions, are those of anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise. A variety of secondary emotions are determined by the process of cognitive appraisal. The distinction between the primary and the secondary emotions is paralleled by two brain pathways: a fast pathway and a slow pathway.

There are three primary theories of emotion, each supported by research evidence. The Cannon-Bard theory of emotion proposes that the experience of an emotion is accompanied by physiological arousal. The James-Lange theory of emotion proposes that our experience of an emotion is the result of the arousal that we experience. The two-factor theory of emotion asserts that the experience of emotion is determined by the intensity of the arousal we are experiencing, but that the cognitive appraisal of the situation determines what the emotion will be. When people incorrectly label the source of the arousal that they are experiencing, we say that they have misattributed their arousal.

We communicate and perceive emotion in part through nonverbal communication and through facial expressions. The facial feedback hypothesis proposes that we also experience emotion in part through our own facial expressions.

Stress refers to the physiological responses that occur when an organism fails to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats. When it is extreme or prolonged, stress can create substantial health problems.

The general adaptation syndrome describes the three phases of physiological change that occur in response to long-term stress: alarm, resistance, and exhaustion. Stress creates a long-term negative effect on the body by activating the HPA axis, which produces the stress hormone cortisol. The HPA reactions to persistent stress lead to a weakening of the immune system. Chronic stress is also a major contributor to heart disease.

The stress that we experience in our everyday lives, including daily hassles, can be taxing. People who experience strong negative emotions as a result of these hassles exhibit more negative stress responses those who react in a less negative way.

On average, men are more likely than women are to respond to stress by activating the fight-or-flight response, whereas women are more likely to respond using the tend-and-befriend response.

Attempting to ignore or suppress our stressors is not effective, in part because it is difficult to do. It is healthier to let out the negative thoughts and feelings by expressing them, either to ourselves or to others.

It is easier to respond to stress if we can interpret it in more positive ways — for instance, as a challenge rather than a threat.

The ability to successfully control our emotions is known as emotion regulation. Regulating emotions takes effort, but the ability to do so can have important positive health outcomes.

The best antidote for stress is to think positively, have fun, and enjoy the company of others. People who express optimism, self-efficacy, and hardiness cope better with stress and experience better health overall. Happiness is determined in part by genetic factors such that some people are naturally happier than others, but it is also facilitated by social support — our positive social relationships with others.

People often do not know what will make them happy. After a minimum level of wealth is reached, more money does not generally buy more happiness. Although people think that positive and negative events will make a huge difference in their lives, and although these changes do make at least some difference in life satisfaction, they tend to be less influential than we think they are going to be.

A motivation is a driving force that initiates and directs behaviour. Motivations are often considered in psychology in terms of drives and goals, with the goal of maintaining homeostasis.

Eating is a primary motivation determined by hormonal and social factors. Cultural norms about appropriate weights influence eating behaviours. The desire to be thin can lead to eating disorders including anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa.

Uncontrolled obesity leads to health problems including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, sleep apnea, arthritis, Alzheimer’s disease, and some types of cancer. It is a leading preventable cause of death worldwide. The two approaches to controlling weight are eating less and exercising more.

Sex is a fundamental motivation that involves the coordination of a wide variety of behaviours, including courtship, sex, household arrangements, parenting, and child care. The sexual response cycle is similar in men and women. The sex hormone testosterone is particularly important for sex drive, in both men and women.

Sexual behaviour varies widely, not only between men and women but within each sex.

The vast majority of human beings have a heterosexual orientation, but a smaller minority are primarily homosexual or bisexual. The love and sexual lives of homosexuals and bisexuals are little different from those of heterosexuals, except where their behaviours are constrained by cultural norms and local laws.

Chapter 12. Personality

12. Personality

Identical Twins Reunited after 35 Years

Paula Bernstein and Elyse Schein were identical twins who were adopted into separate families immediately after their births in 1968. It was only at the age of 35 that the twins were reunited and discovered how similar they were to each other.

Paula Bernstein grew up in a happy home in suburban New York. She loved her adopted parents and older brother and even wrote an article titled "Why I Don't Want to Find My Birth Mother." Elyse's childhood, also a happy one, was followed by university and then film school abroad.

In 2003, 35 years after she was adopted, Elyse, acting on a whim, inquired about her biological family at the adoption agency. The response came back: "You were born on October 9, 1968, at 12:51 p.m., the younger of twin girls. You've got a twin sister Paula, and she's looking for you."

"Oh my God, I'm a *twin*! Can you believe this? Is this really happening?" Elyse cried.

Elyse dialed Paula's phone number: "It's almost like I'm hearing my own voice in a recorder back at me," she said.

"It's funny because I feel like in a way I was talking to an old, close friend I never knew I had…we had an immediate intimacy, and yet, we didn't know each other at all," Paula said.

The two women met for the first time at a café for lunch and talked until the late evening.

"We had 35 years to catch up on," said Paula. "How do you start asking somebody, 'What have you been up to since we shared a womb together?' Where do you start?"

With each new detail revealed, the twins learned about their remarkable similarities. They'd both gone to graduate school in film. They both loved to write, and they had both edited their high school yearbooks. They have similar taste in music.

"I think, you know, when we met it was undeniable that we were twins. Looking at this person, you are able to gaze into your own eyes and see yourself from the outside. This identical individual has the exact same DNA and is essentially your clone. We don't have to imagine," Paula said.

Now they finally feel like sisters.

"But it's perhaps even closer than sisters," Elyse said, "because we're also twins."

The twins, who both now live in Brooklyn, combined their writing skills to write a book called *Identical Strangers* about their childhoods and their experience of discovering an identical twin in their mid-30s (Spilius, 2007; Kuntzman, 2007).

You can learn more about the experiences of Paula Bernstein and Elyse Schein by viewing this video:

Watch: "Elyse and Paula" [YouTube]

One of the most fundamental tendencies of human beings is to size up other people. We say that Bill is fun, that Marian is adventurous, or that Frank is dishonest. When we make these statements, we mean that we believe that these people have stable individual characteristics — their *personalities*.

Personality is defined as *an individual's consistent patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaving* (John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008).

The tendency to perceive personality is a fundamental part of human nature, and a most adaptive one. If we can draw accurate generalizations about what other people are normally like, we can predict how they will behave in the future, and this can help us determine how they are likely to respond in different situations. Understanding personality can also help us better understand psychological disorders and the negative behavioural outcomes they may produce. In short, personality matters because it guides behaviour.

In this chapter we will consider the wide variety of personality traits found in human beings. We'll consider how and when personality influences our behaviour, and how well we perceive the personalities of others. We will also consider how psychologists measure personality, and the extent to which personality is caused by nature versus nurture. The fundamental goal of personality psychologists is to understand what makes people different from each other (the study of individual differences), but they also find that people who share genes (as do Paula Bernstein and Elyse Schein) have a remarkable similarity in personality.

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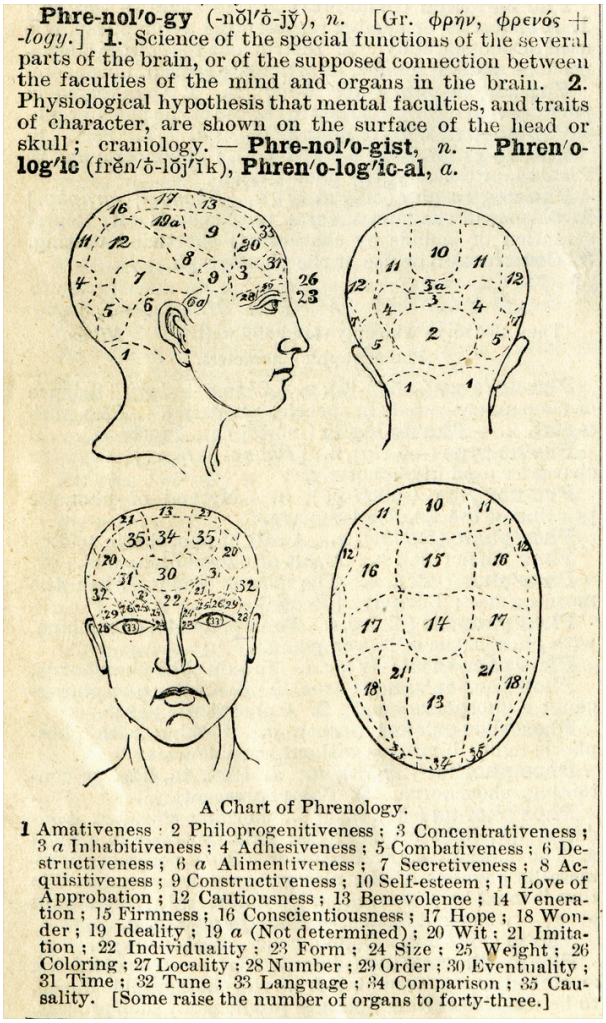
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12.1 Personality and Behaviour: Approaches and Measurement

Learning Objectives

1. Outline and critique the early approaches to assessing personality.
2. Define and review the strengths and limitations of the trait approach to personality.
3. Summarize the measures that have been used to assess psychological disorders.

Early theories assumed that personality was expressed in people's physical appearance. One early approach, developed by the German physician Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828) and known as **phrenology**, was *based on the idea that we could measure personality by assessing the patterns of bumps on people's skulls* (Figure 12.1, "Phrenology"). In the Victorian age, phrenology was taken seriously and many people promoted its use as a source of psychological insight and self-knowledge. Machines were even developed for helping people analyze skulls (Simpson, 2005). However, because careful scientific research did not validate the predictions of the theory, phrenology has now been discredited in contemporary psychology.



Phre-nol′o-gy (-nŏl′ŏ-jў), *n.* [Gr. φρήν, φρενός + *-logy.*] **1.** Science of the special functions of the several parts of the brain, or of the supposed connection between the faculties of the mind and organs in the brain. **2.** Physiological hypothesis that mental faculties, and traits of character, are shown on the surface of the head or skull; craniology. — **Phre-nol′o-gist**, *n.* — **Phren′o-log′ic** (frĕn′ŏ-lŏj′ĭk), **Phren′o-log′ic-al**, *a.*

A Chart of Phrenology.

1 Amativeness · 2 Philoprogenitiveness ; 3 Concentrativeness ; 3 *a* Inhabitiveness ; 4 Adhesiveness ; 5 Combativeness ; 6 Destructiveness ; 6 *a* Alimentiveness ; 7 Secretiveness ; 8 Acquisitiveness ; 9 Constructiveness ; 10 Self-esteem ; 11 Love of Approbation ; 12 Cautiousness ; 13 Benevolence ; 14 Veneration ; 15 Firmness ; 16 Conscientiousness ; 17 Hope ; 18 Wonder ; 19 Ideality ; 19 *a* (Not determined) ; 20 Wit ; 21 Imitation ; 22 Individuality ; 23 Form ; 24 Size ; 25 Weight ; 26 Coloring ; 27 Locality ; 28 Number ; 29 Order ; 30 Eventuality ; 31 Time ; 32 Tune ; 33 Language ; 34 Comparison ; 35 Causality. [Some raise the number of organs to forty-three.]

Figure 12.1 Phrenology. This definition of phrenology with a chart of the skull appeared in Webster's Academic Dictionary, circa 1895. [Long Description]

Another approach, known as **somatology**, championed by the psychologist William Herbert Sheldon (1898-1977), was *based on the idea that we could determine personality from people's body types* (Figure 12.2, "Sheldon's Body Types"). Sheldon (1940) argued that people with more body fat and a rounder physique (endomorphs) were more likely to be assertive and bold, whereas thinner people (ectomorphs) were more likely to be introverted and intellectual. As with phrenology, scientific research did not validate the predictions of the theory, and somatology has now been discredited in contemporary psychology.

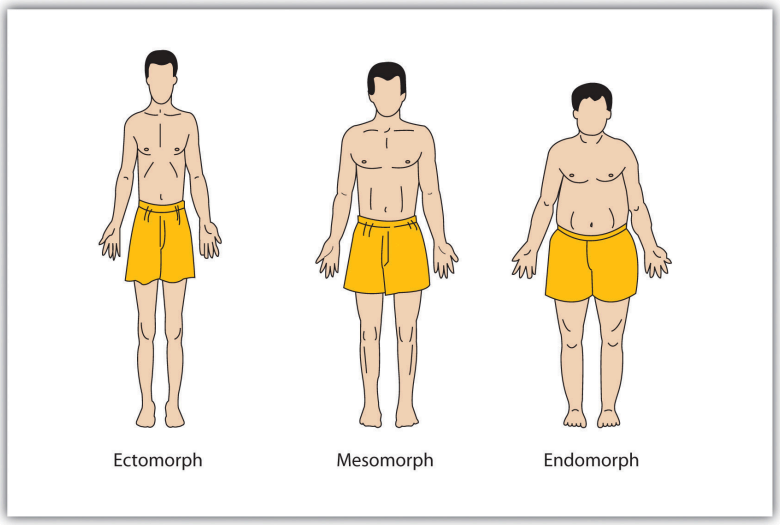


Figure 12.2 Sheldon's Body Types. William Sheldon erroneously believed that people with different body types had different personalities.

Another approach to detecting personality is known as **physiognomy**, or *the idea that it is possible to assess personality from facial characteristics*. In contrast to phrenology and somatology, for which no research support has been found, contemporary research has found that people are able to detect some aspects of a person's character — for instance, whether they are gay or straight and whether they are liberal or conservative — at above-chance levels by looking only at his or her face (Rule & Ambady, 2010; Rule, Ambady, Adams, & Macrae, 2008; Rule, Ambady, & Hallett, 2009).

Despite these results, the ability to detect personality from faces is not guaranteed. Olivola and Todorov (2010) recently studied the ability of thousands of people to guess the personality characteristics of hundreds of thousands of faces on the website *What's My Image?* (http://www.whatsmyimage.com). In contrast to the predictions of physiognomy, the researchers found that these people would have made more accurate judgments about the strangers if they had just guessed, using their expectations about what people in general are like, rather than trying to use the particular facial features of individuals to help them. It seems then that the predictions of physiognomy may also, in the end, find little empirical support.

Personality as Traits

Personalities are characterized in terms of **traits**, which are *relatively enduring characteristics that influence our behaviour across many situations*. Personality traits such as introversion, friendliness, conscientiousness, honesty, and helpfulness are important because they help explain consistencies in behaviour.

The most popular way of measuring traits is by administering personality tests on which people self-report about their own characteristics. Psychologists have investigated hundreds of traits using the self-report approach, and this research has found many personality traits that have important implications for behaviour. You can see some examples of the personality dimensions that have been studied by

psychologists and their implications for behaviour in Table 12.1, “Some Personality Traits That Predict Behaviour,”.

Table 12.1 Some Personality Traits That Predict Behaviour. [1]

[Skip Table]		
Trait	**Description**	**Examples of behaviours exhibited by people who have the trait**
Authoritarianism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford, 1950)	A cluster of traits including conventionalism, superstition, toughness, and exaggerated concerns with sexuality	Authoritarians are more likely to be prejudiced, to conform to leaders, and to display rigid behaviours.
Individualism-collectivism (Triandis, 1989)	Individualism is the tendency to focus on oneself and one’s personal goals; collectivism is the tendency to focus on one’s relations with others.	Individualists prefer to engage in behaviours that make them stand out from others, whereas collectivists prefer to engage in behaviours that emphasize their similarity to others.
Internal versus external locus of control (Rotter, 1966)	In comparison to those with an external locus of control, people with an internal locus of control are more likely to believe that life events are due largely to their own efforts and personal characteristics.	People with higher internal locus of control are happier, less depressed, and healthier in comparison to those with an external locus of control.
Need for achievement (McClelland, 1958)	The desire to make significant accomplishments by mastering skills or meeting high standards	Those high in need for achievement select tasks that are not too difficult to be sure they will succeed in them.
Need for cognition (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982)	The extent to which people engage in and enjoy effortful cognitive activities	People high in the need for cognition pay more attention to arguments in ads.
Regulatory focus (Shah, Higgins, & Friedman, 1998)	Refers to differences in the motivations that energize behaviour, varying from a promotion orientation (seeking out new opportunities) to a prevention orientation (avoiding negative outcomes)	People with a promotion orientation are more motivated by goals of gaining money, whereas those with prevention orientation are more concerned about losing money.
Self-consciousness (Fenigstein, Sheier, & Buss, 1975)	The tendency to introspect and examine one’s inner self and feelings	People high in self-consciousness spend more time preparing their hair and makeup before they leave the house.
Self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965)	High self-esteem means having a positive attitude toward oneself and one’s capabilities.	High self-esteem is associated with a variety of positive psychological and health outcomes.
Sensation seeking (Zuckerman, 2007)	The motivation to engage in extreme and risky behaviours	Sensation seekers are more likely to engage in risky behaviours such as extreme and risky sports, substance abuse, unsafe sex, and crime.

Example of a Trait Measure

You can try completing a self-report measure of personality (a short form of the Five-Factor Personality Test) here. There are 120 questions and it should take you about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. You will receive feedback about your personality after you have finished the test.

Take the personality tests: http://www.personalitytest.net/ipip/ipipneo300.html

As with intelligence tests, the utility of self-report measures of personality depends on their *reliability* and *construct validity*. Some popular measures of personality are not useful because they are unreliable or invalid. Perhaps you have heard of a personality test known as the *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)*. If so, you are not alone, because the MBTI is the most widely administered personality test in the world, given millions of times a year to employees in thousands of companies. The **MBTI** categorizes people into one of four categories on each of four dimensions: *introversion* versus *extraversion*, *sensing* versus *intuiting*, *thinking* versus *feeling*, and *judging* versus *perceiving*.

Although completing the MBTI can be useful for helping people think about individual differences in personality, and for breaking the ice at meetings, the measure itself is not psychologically useful because it is not reliable or valid. People's classifications change over time, and scores on the MBTI do not relate to other measures of personality or to behaviour (Hunsley, Lee, & Wood, 2003). Measures such as the MBTI remind us that it is important to scientifically and empirically test the effectiveness of personality tests by assessing their stability over time and their ability to predict behaviour.

One of the challenges of the trait approach to personality is that there are so many of them; there are at least 18,000 English words that can be used to describe people (Allport & Odbert, 1936). Thus a major goal of psychologists is to take this vast number of descriptors (many of which are very similar to each other) and determine the underlying important or core traits among them (John, Angleitner, & Ostendorf, 1988).

The trait approach to personality was pioneered by early psychologists, including Gordon Allport (1897-1967), Raymond Cattell (1905-1998), and Hans Eysenck (1916-1997). Each of these psychologists believed in the idea of the trait as the stable unit of personality, and each attempted to provide a list or taxonomy of the most important trait dimensions. Their approach was to provide people with a self-report measure and then to use statistical analyses to look for the underlying factors or clusters of traits, according to the frequency and the co-occurrence of traits in the respondents.

Allport (1937) began his work by reducing the 18,000 traits to a set of about 4,500 traitlike words that he organized into three levels according to their importance. He called them **cardinal traits** (*the most important traits*), **central traits** (*the basic and most useful traits*), and **secondary trait**s (*the less obvious and less consistent ones*). Cattell (1990) used a statistical procedure known as **factor analysis** to *analyze the correlations among traits and identify the most important ones*. On the basis of his research he identified what he referred to as **source** (*more important*) and **surface** (*less important*) traits, and he developed a measure that assessed 16 dimensions of traits based on personality adjectives taken from everyday language.

Hans Eysenck was particularly interested in the biological and genetic origins of personality and made

an important contribution to understanding the nature of a fundamental personality trait: *extraversion* versus *introversion* (Eysenck, 1998). Eysenck proposed that people who are **extraverted** (i.e., *who enjoy socializing with others)* have lower levels of naturally occurring arousal than do **introverts** (*who are less likely to enjoy being with others*). Eysenck argued that extraverts have a greater desire to socialize with others to increase their arousal level, which is naturally too low, whereas introverts, who have naturally high arousal, do not desire to engage in social activities because they are overly stimulating.

The fundamental work on trait dimensions conducted by Allport, Cattell, Eysenck, and many others has led to contemporary trait models, the most important and well validated of which is the **Five-Factor (Big Five) Model of Personality**. According to this model, *there are five fundamental underlying trait dimensions that are stable across time, cross-culturally shared, and explain a substantial proportion of behaviour* (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1982). As you can see in Table 12.2, "The Five Factors of the Five-Factor Model of Personality," the five dimensions (sometimes known as the **Big Five**) are *openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness,* and *neuroticism.* (You can remember them using the watery acronyms OCEAN or CANOE.)

Table 12.2 The Five Factors of the Five-Factor Model of Personality.

[Skip Table]			
Dimension	**Sample items**	**Description**	**Examples of behaviours predicted by the trait**
Openness to experience	"I have a vivid imagination"; "I have a rich vocabulary"; "I have excellent ideas."	A general appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, imagination, curiosity, and variety of experience	Individuals who are highly open to experience tend to have distinctive and unconventional decorations in their home. They are also likely to have books on a wide variety of topics, a diverse music collection, and works of art on display.
Conscientiousness	"I am always prepared"; "I am exacting in my work"; "I follow a schedule."	A tendency to show self-discipline, act dutifully, and aim for achievement	Individuals who are conscientious have a preference for planned rather than spontaneous behaviour.
Extraversion	"I am the life of the party"; "I feel comfortable around people"; "I talk to a lot of different people at parties."	The tendency to experience positive emotions and to seek out stimulation and the company of others	Extraverts enjoy being with people. In groups they like to talk, assert themselves, and draw attention to themselves.
Agreeableness	"I am interested in people"; "I feel others' emotions"; "I make people feel at ease."	A tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic toward others; reflects individual differences in general concern for social harmony	Agreeable individuals value getting along with others. They are generally considerate, friendly, generous, helpful, and willing to compromise their interests with those of others.
Neuroticism	"I am not usually relaxed"; "I get upset easily"; "I am easily disturbed"	The tendency to experience negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, or depression; sometimes called "emotional instability"	Those who score high in neuroticism are more likely to interpret ordinary situations as threatening and minor frustrations as hopelessly difficult. They may have trouble thinking clearly, making decisions, and coping effectively with stress.

A large body of research evidence has supported the five-factor model. The Big Five dimensions seem to be cross-cultural, because the same five factors have been identified in participants in China, Japan, Italy, Hungary, Turkey, and many other countries (Triandis & Suh, 2002). The Big Five dimensions also accurately predict behaviour. For instance, a pattern of high conscientiousness, low neuroticism, and high agreeableness predicts successful job performance (Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991). Scores on the Big Five dimensions also predict the performance of leaders; ratings of openness to experience are correlated positively with ratings of leadership success, whereas ratings of agreeableness are correlated negatively with success (Rubenzer, Faschingbauer, & Ones, 2000). The Big Five factors are also

increasingly being used to help researchers understand the dimensions of psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression (Oldham, 2010; Saulsman & Page, 2004).

An advantage of the five-factor approach is that it is parsimonious. Rather than studying hundreds of traits, researchers can focus on only five underlying dimensions. The Big Five may also capture other dimensions that have been of interest to psychologists. For instance, the trait dimension of *need for achievement* relates to the Big Five variable of conscientiousness, and *self-esteem* relates to low neuroticism. On the other hand, the Big Five factors do not seem to capture all the important dimensions of personality. For instance, the Big Five do not capture moral behaviour, although this variable is important in many theories of personality. And there is evidence that the Big Five factors are not exactly the same across all cultures (Cheung & Leung, 1998).

Situational Influences on Personality

One challenge to the trait approach to personality is that traits may not be as stable as we think they are. When we say that Malik is friendly, we mean that Malik is friendly today and will be friendly tomorrow and even next week. And we mean that Malik is friendlier than average in all situations. But what if Malik were found to behave in a friendly way with his family members but to be unfriendly with his fellow classmates? This would clash with the idea that traits are stable across time and situation.

The psychologist Walter Mischel (1968) reviewed the existing literature on traits and found that there was only a relatively low correlation (about $r = .30$) between the traits that a person expressed in one situation and those that they expressed in other situations. In one relevant study, Hartshorne, May, Maller, and Shuttleworth (1928) examined the correlations among various behavioural indicators of honesty in children. They also enticed children to behave either honestly or dishonestly in different situations: for instance, by making it easy or difficult for them to steal and cheat. The correlations among children's behaviour was low, generally less than $r = .30$, showing that children who steal in one situation are not always the same children who steal in a different situation. And similar low correlations were found in adults on other measures, including dependency, friendliness, and conscientiousness (Bem & Allen, 1974).

Psychologists have proposed two possibilities for these low correlations. One possibility is that the natural tendency for people to see traits in others leads us to believe that people have stable personalities when they really do not. In short, perhaps traits are more in the heads of the people who are doing the judging than they are in the behaviours of the people being observed. The fact that people tend to use human personality traits, such as the Big Five, to judge animals in the same way that they use these traits to judge humans is consistent with this idea (Gosling, 2001). And this idea also fits with research showing that people use their knowledge representation (schemas) about people to help them interpret the world around them and that these schemas colour their judgments of the personalities of others (Fiske & Taylor, 2007).

Research has also shown that people tend to see more traits in other people than they do in themselves. You might be able to get a feeling for this by taking the following short quiz. First, think about a person you know — your mom, your roommate, or a classmate — and choose which of the three responses on each of the four lines best describes him or her. Then answer the questions again, but this time about yourself.

1.	Energetic	Relaxed	Depends on the situation
2.	Skeptical	Trusting	Depends on the situation
3.	Quiet	Talkative	Depends on the situation
4.	Intense	Calm	Depends on the situation

Richard Nisbett and his colleagues (Nisbett, Caputo, Legant, & Marecek, 1973) had university students complete this same task for themselves, for their best friend, for their father, and for the American newscaster Walter Cronkite (who was at the time well known). As you can see in Figure 12.3, "We Tend to Overestimate the Traits of Others," the participants chose one of the two trait terms more often for other people than they did for themselves, and chose "depends on the situation" more frequently for themselves than they did for the other people. These results also suggest that people may perceive more consistent traits in others than they should.

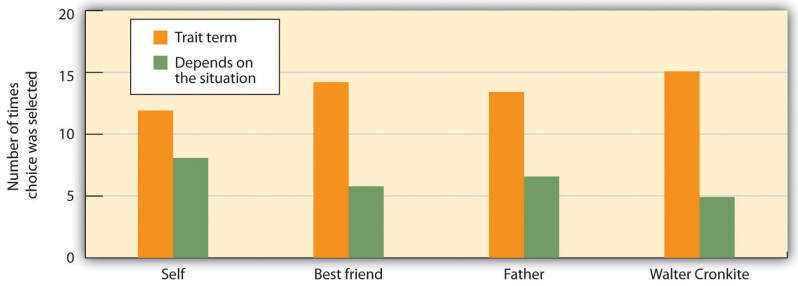


Figure 12.3 We Tend to Overestimate the Traits of Others. Researchers found that participants checked off a trait term (such as "energetic" or "talkative") rather than "depends on the situation" less often when asked to describe themselves than when asked to describe others.
[Long Description]

The human tendency to perceive traits is so strong that it is very easy to convince people that trait descriptions of themselves are accurate. Imagine that you had completed a personality test and the psychologist administering the measure gave you this description of your personality:

> You have a great need for other people to like and admire you. You have a tendency to be critical of yourself. You have a great deal of unused capacity, which you have not turned to your advantage. While you have some personality weaknesses, you are generally able to compensate for them. Disciplined and self-controlled outside, you tend to be worrisome and insecure inside. At times you have serious doubts as to whether you have made the right decision or done the right thing.

I would imagine that you might find that it described you. You probably do criticize yourself at least sometimes, and you probably do sometimes worry about things. The problem is that you would most likely have found some truth in a personality description that was the opposite. Could this description fit you too?

> You frequently stand up for your own opinions even if it means that others may judge you negatively. You have a tendency to find the positives in your own behaviour. You work to the fullest extent of your capabilities. You have few personality weaknesses, but some may show up under stress. You sometimes confide in others that you are concerned or worried, but inside you maintain

discipline and self-control. You generally believe that you have made the right decision and done the right thing.

The Barnum effect refers to *the observation that people tend to believe in descriptions of their personality that supposedly are descriptive of them but could in fact describe almost anyone*. The Barnum effect helps us understand why many people believe in astrology, horoscopes, fortune-telling, palm reading, tarot card reading, and even some personality tests (Figure 12.4, "Horoscope and Palm Reading"). People are likely to accept descriptions of their personality if they think that they have been written for them, even though they cannot distinguish their own tarot card or horoscope readings from those of others at better than chance levels (Hines, 2003). Again, people seem to believe in traits more than they should.



Figure 12.4 Horoscope and Palm Reading. The popularity of tarot card reading, crystal ball reading, horoscopes, palm reading, and other techniques shows the human propensity to believe in traits.

A second way that psychologists responded to Mischel's 1968 findings on traits was by searching even more carefully for the existence of traits. One insight was that the relationship between a trait and a behaviour is less than perfect because people can express their traits in different ways (Mischel & Shoda, 2008). People high in extraversion, for instance, may become teachers, sales people, actors, or even criminals. Although the behaviours are very different, they nevertheless all fit with the meaning of the underlying trait.

Psychologists also found that, because people do behave differently in different situations, personality will only predict behaviour when the behaviours are aggregated or averaged across different situations. We might not be able to use the personality trait of openness to experience to determine what Paul will do on Friday night, but we can use it to predict what he will do over the next year in a variety of situations. When many measurements of behaviour are combined, there is much clearer evidence for the stability of traits and for the effects of traits on behaviour (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000; Srivastava, John, Gosling, & Potter, 2003).

Taken together, these findings make a very important point about personality, which is that it not only comes from inside us but is also shaped by the situations that we are exposed to. Personality is derived from our interactions with and observations of others, from our interpretations of those interactions and observations, and from our choices of which social situations we prefer to enter or avoid (Bandura, 1986). In fact, behaviourists such as B. F. Skinner explain personality entirely in terms of the environmental influences that the person has experienced. Because we are profoundly influenced by the situations that we are exposed to, our behaviour does change from situation to situation, making

personality less stable than we might expect. And yet personality does matter — we can, in many cases, use personality measures to predict behaviour across situations.

The MMPI and Projective Tests

One of the most important measures of personality (which is used primarily to assess deviations from a normal or average personality) is the Minnesota **Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)**, *a test used around the world to identify personality and psychological disorders* (Tellegen et al., 2003). The MMPI was developed by creating a list of more than 1,000 true-false questions and choosing those that best differentiated patients with different psychological disorders from other people. The current version (the MMPI-2) has more than 500 questions, and the items can be combined into a large number of different subscales. Some of the most important of these are shown in Table 12.3, "Some of the Major Subscales of the MMPI," but there are also scales that represent family problems, work attitudes, and many other dimensions. The MMPI also has questions that are designed to detect the tendency of the respondents to lie, fake, or simply not answer the questions.

Table 12.3 Some of the Major Subscales of the MMPI.

[Skip Table]

Abbreviation	Description	What is measured	No. of items
Hs	Hypochondriasis	Concern with bodily symptoms	32
D	Depression	Depressive symptoms	57
Hy	Hysteria	Awareness of problems and vulnerabilities	60
Pd	Psychopathic deviate	Conflict, struggle, anger, respect for society's rules	50
MF	Masculinity/ femininity	Stereotypical masculine or feminine interests/ behaviours	56
Pa	Paranoia	Level of trust, suspiciousness, sensitivity	40
Pt	Psychasthenia	Worry, anxiety, tension, doubts, obsessiveness	48
Sc	Schizophrenia	Odd thinking and social alienation	78
Ma	Hypomania	Level of excitability	46
Si	Social introversion	People orientation	69

To interpret the results, the clinician looks at the pattern of responses across the different subscales and makes a diagnosis about the potential psychological problems facing the patient. Although clinicians prefer to interpret the patterns themselves, a variety of research has demonstrated that computers can often interpret the results as well as clinicians can (Garb, 1998; Karon, 2000). Extensive research has found that the MMPI-2 can accurately predict which of many different psychological disorders a person suffers from (Graham, 2006).

One potential problem with a measure like the MMPI is that it asks people to consciously report on

their inner experiences. But much of our personality is determined by unconscious processes of which we are only vaguely or not at all aware. **Projective measures** are *measures of personality in which unstructured stimuli, such as inkblots, drawings of social situations, or incomplete sentences, are shown to participants, who are asked to freely list what comes to mind as they think about the stimuli*. Experts then score the responses for clues to personality. The proposed advantage of these tests is that they are more indirect — they allow the respondent to freely express whatever comes to mind, including perhaps the contents of their unconscious experiences.

One commonly used projective test is the *Rorschach Inkblot Test*, developed by the Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach (1884-1922). **The Rorschach Inkblot Test** is *a projective measure of personality in which the respondent indicates his or her thoughts about a series of 10 symmetrical inkblots* (Figure 12.5, "Rorschach Inkblots"). The Rorschach is administered millions of times every year. The participants are asked to respond to the inkblots, and their responses are systematically scored in terms of what, where, and why they saw what they saw. For example, people who focus on the details of the inkblots may have obsessive-compulsive tendencies, whereas those who talk about sex or aggression may have sexual or aggressive problems.

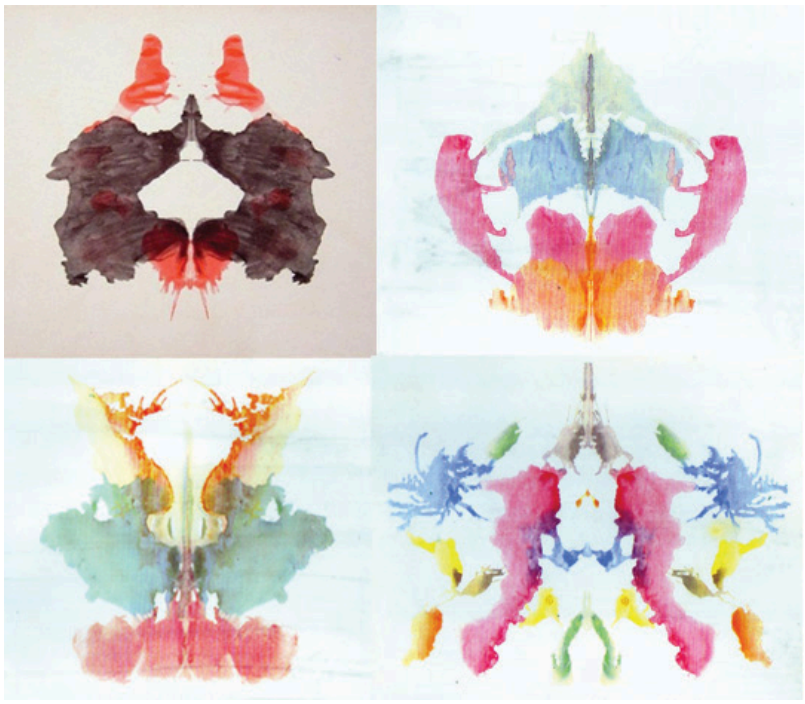


Figure 12.5 Rorschach Inkblots. The Rorschach Inkblot Test is a projective test designed to assess psychological disorders.

Another frequently administered projective test is the *Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)*, developed by the psychologist Henry Murray (1893-1988). The **Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)** is *a projective measure of personality in which the respondent is asked to create stories about sketches of ambiguous situations, most of them of people, either alone or with others*. The sketches are shown to individuals, who are asked to tell a story about what is happening in the picture. The TAT assumes that people may be unwilling or unable to admit their true feelings when asked directly but that these feelings will show up in the stories about the pictures. Trained coders read the stories and use them to develop a personality profile of the respondent.

Other popular projective tests include those that ask the respondent to draw pictures, such as the Draw-A-Person Test (Machover, 1949), and free association tests in which the respondent quickly responds with the first word that comes to mind when the examiner says a test word. Another approach is the use of **anatomically correct dolls** that *feature representations of the male and female genitals*. Investigators allow children to play with the dolls and then try to determine on the basis of the play if the children may have been sexually abused.

The advantage of projective tests is that they are less direct, allowing people to avoid using their defence mechanisms and therefore show their true personality. The idea is that when people view ambiguous stimuli they will describe them according to the aspects of personality that are most important to them, and therefore bypass some of the limitations of more conscious responding.

Despite their widespread use, however, the empirical evidence supporting the use of projective tests is mixed (Karon, 2000; Wood, Nezworski, Lilienfeld, & Garb, 2003). The reliability of the measures is low because people often produce very different responses on different occasions. The construct validity of the measures is also suspect because there are very few consistent associations between Rorschach scores or TAT scores and most personality traits. The projective tests often fail to distinguish between people with psychological disorders and those without, or to correlate with other measures of personality or with behaviour.

In sum, projective tests are more useful as icebreakers to get to know a person better, to make the person feel comfortable, and to get some ideas about topics that may be of importance to that person than for accurately diagnosing personality.

Psychology in Everyday Life: Leaders and Leadership

One trait that has been studied in thousands of studies is **leadership**, *the ability to direct or inspire others to achieve goals*. *Trait theories of leadership* are theories based on the idea that some people are simply "natural leaders" because they possess personality characteristics that make them effective (Zaccaro, 2007). Consider Elizabeth May, the leader of the Green Party of Canada, shown in Figure 12.6, "Varieties of Leaders." What characteristics do you think she possessed that allowed her to function as the sole member of her party in Parliament when she was first elected?



Figure 12.6 Varieties of Leaders. Which personality traits do you think characterize good leaders? [Long Description]

Research has found that being intelligent is an important characteristic of leaders, as long as the leader communicates to others in a way that is easily understood by his or her followers (Simonton, 1994, 1995). Other research has found that people with good social skills, such as the ability to accurately perceive the needs and goals of the group members and communicate with others, also tend to make good leaders (Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983).Because so many characteristics seem to be related to leader skills, some researchers have attempted to account for leadership not in terms of individual traits, but rather in terms of a package of traits that successful leaders seem to have. Some have considered this in terms of charisma (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995; Sternberg, 2002). **Charismatic leaders** are *leaders who are enthusiastic, committed, and self-confident; who tend to talk about the importance of group goals at a broad level; and who make personal sacrifices for the group*. Charismatic leaders express views that support and validate existing group norms but that also contain a vision of what the group could or should be. Charismatic leaders use their referent power to motivate, uplift, and inspire others. And research has found a positive relationship between a leader's charisma and effective leadership performance (Simonton, 1988).Another trait-based approach to leadership is based on the idea that leaders take either *transactional* or *transformational* leadership styles with their subordinates (Bass, 1999; Pieterse, Van Knippenberg, Schippers, & Stam, 2010). *Transactional* leaders are the more regular leaders, who work with their subordinates to help them understand what is required of them and to get the job done. **Transformational leaders**, on the other hand, are *more like charismatic leaders — they have a vision of where the group is going, and attempt to stimulate and inspire their workers to move beyond their present status and create a new and better future*.Despite the fact that there appear to be at least some personality traits that relate to leadership ability, the most important approaches to understanding leadership take into consideration both the personality characteristics of the leader as well as the situation in which the leader is operating. In some cases the situation itself is important.

For instance, during the Calgary flooding of 2013, Mayor Naheed Nenshi enhanced his popularity further with his ability to support and unify the community, and ensure that the Calgary Stampede went ahead as planned despite severe damage to the fair grounds and arenas.In still other cases, different types of leaders may perform differently in different situations. Leaders whose personalities lead them to be more focused on fostering harmonious social relationships among the members of the group, for instance, are particularly effective in situations in which the group is already functioning well, and yet it is important to keep the group members engaged in the task and committed to the group outcomes. Leaders who are more task-oriented and directive, on the other hand, are more effective when the group is not functioning well and needs a firm hand to guide it (Ayman, Chemers, & Fiedler, 1995).

Key Takeaways

- Personality is an individual's consistent patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaving.
- Personality is driven in large part by underlying individual motivations, where motivation refers to a need or desire that directs behaviour.
- Early theories assumed that personality was expressed in people's physical appearance. One of these approaches, known as physiognomy, has been validated by current research.
- Personalities are characterized in terms of traits — relatively enduring characteristics that influence our behaviour across many situations.
- The most important and well-validated theory about the traits of normal personality is the Five-Factor Model of Personality.
- There is often only a low correlation between the specific traits that a person expresses in one situation and those that he or she expresses in other situations. This is in part because people tend to see more traits in other people than they do in themselves. Personality predicts behaviour better when the behaviours are aggregated or averaged across different situations.
- The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) is the most important measure of psychological disorders.
- Projective measures are measures of personality in which unstructured stimuli, such as inkblots, drawings of social situations, or incomplete sentences are shown to participants, who are asked to freely list what comes to mind as they think about the stimuli. Despite their widespread use, however, the empirical evidence supporting the use of projective tests is mixed.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Consider your own personality and those of people you know. What traits do you enjoy in other people, and what traits do you dislike?
2. Consider some of the people who have had an important influence on you. What were the personality characteristics of these people that made them so influential?

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Image Attributions

Figure 12.1: 1895 Dictionary Phrenolog by Webster's Academic Dictionary (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:1895-Dictionary-Phrenolog.png) is in public domain.

Figure 12.3: Adapted from Nisbett, Caputo, Legant, & Marecek, 1973.

Figure 12.4: "Astro signs" by Tavmjong is licensed under the CC BY 3.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en). "Erica's palm reading" by Matthew Romack is licensed under CC BY 2.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en_CA).

Figure 12.5: "Rorschach blot 02" by Hermann Rorschach is in the public domain. "Rorschach blot 08"

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Figure 12.6: Elizabeth May (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EMay2010.JPG); Queen Mother with Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:QueenMotherandWLMK.jpg) is in public domain; Hayley Wickenheiser (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hayley_Wickenheiser_cropped.jpg) used under CC BY 2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en); Barack Obama signs Parliament of Canada guestbook by Pete Souza (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Barack_Obama_signs_Parliament_of_Canada_guestbook_2-19-09.JPG) is in public domain.

Long Descriptions

Figure 12.1 long description: Phrenology. 1. Science of the special functions of the several parts of the brain, or of the supposed connection between the faculties of the mind and organs of the brain. 2. Physiological hypothesis that mental faculties, and traits of character, are shown on the surface of the head or skull; craniology. [Return to Figure 12.1]

Figure 12.3 long description:We Tend to Overestimate the Traits of others

	Number of time a trait term was selected	**Number of times “Depends on the situation” was seleced**
Self	12	8
Best friend	14	6
Father	13	7
Walter Cronkite	15	5

[Return to Figure 12.3]

Figure 12.6 long description: Top Left: Leader of the Green Party of Canada – Elizabeth May; Top Middle: Queen Mother with Prime Minister William Lyon MacKenzie King; Top Right: Hayley Wikenheiser, Captain of Canadian Women’s National Hockey team; Bottom: Prime Minister Stephen Harper and President Barack Obama signing Canadian Parliamentary guestbook. [Return to Figure 12.6]

Notes

1. Sources: Adorno, 1950; Cacioppo, 1982; Fenigstein, 1975; McClelland, 1958; Rosenberg, 1965; Rotter, 1966; Shah, 1998; Triandis, 1989; Zuckerman, 2007.

12.2 The Origins of Personality

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the strengths and limitations of the psychodynamic approach to explaining personality.
2. Summarize the accomplishments of the neo-Freudians.
3. Identify the major contributions of the humanistic approach to understanding personality.

Although measures such as the Big Five and the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) are able to effectively assess personality, they do not say much about where personality comes from. In this section we will consider two major theories of the origin of personality: *psychodynamic* and *humanistic* approaches.

Psychodynamic Theories of Personality: The Role of the Unconscious

One of the most important psychological approaches to understanding personality is based on the theorizing of the Austrian physician and psychologist Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), who founded what today is known as the **psychodynamic approach,** *an approach to understanding human behaviour that focuses on the role of unconscious thoughts, feelings, and memories*. Many people know about Freud because his work has had a huge impact on our everyday thinking about psychology, and the psychodynamic approach is one of the most important approaches to psychological therapy (Roudinesco, 2003; Taylor, 2009). Freud is probably the best known of all psychologists, in part because of his impressive observation and analyses of personality (there are 24 volumes of his writings). As is true of all theories, many of Freud's ingenious ideas have turned out to be at least partially incorrect, and yet other aspects of his theories are still influencing psychology.

Freud was influenced by the work of the French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893), who had been interviewing patients (almost all women) who were experiencing what was at the time known as *hysteria*. Although it is no longer used to describe a psychological disorder, **hysteria** at the time *referred to a set of personality and physical symptoms that included chronic pain, fainting, seizures, and paralysis*.

Charcot could find no biological reason for the symptoms. For instance, some women experienced a loss of feeling in their hands and yet not in their arms, and this seemed impossible given that the nerves in the arms are the same as those in the hands. Charcot was experimenting with the use of hypnosis, and he and Freud found that under hypnosis many of the hysterical patients reported having experienced a traumatic sexual experience, such as sexual abuse, as children (Dolnick, 1998).

Freud and Charcot also found that during hypnosis the remembering of the trauma was often accompanied by an *outpouring of emotion*, known as **catharsis**, and that following the catharsis the

patient's symptoms were frequently reduced in severity. These observations led Freud and Charcot to conclude that these disorders were caused by psychological rather than physiological factors.

Freud used the observations that he and Charcot had made to develop his theory regarding the sources of personality and behaviour, and his insights are central to the fundamental themes of psychology. In terms of free will, Freud did not believe that we were able to control our own behaviours. Rather, he believed that all behaviours are predetermined by motivations that lie outside our awareness, in the unconscious. These forces show themselves in our dreams, in neurotic symptoms such as obsessions, while we are under hypnosis, and in Freudian "slips of the tongue" in which people reveal their unconscious desires in language. Freud argued that we rarely understand why we do what we do, although we can make up explanations for our behaviours after the fact. For Freud the mind was like an iceberg, with the many motivations of the unconscious being much larger, but also out of sight, in comparison to the consciousness of which we are aware (Figure 12.7, "Mind as Iceberg").

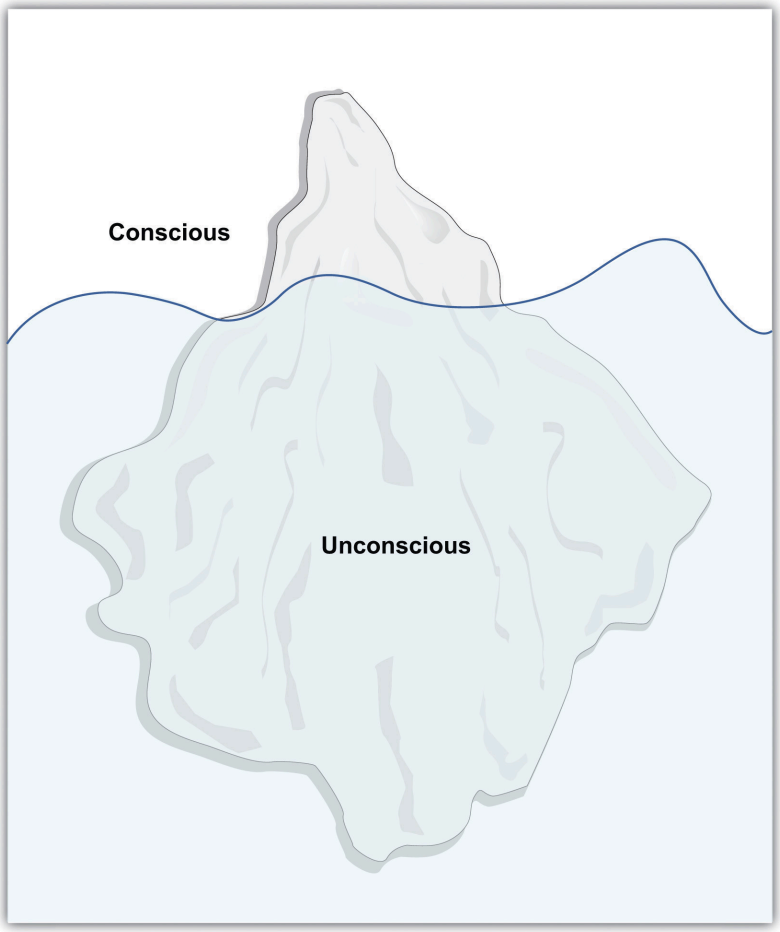


Figure 12.7 Mind as Iceberg. In Sigmund Freud's conceptualization of personality, the most important motivations are unconscious, just as the major part of an iceberg is under water.

Id, Ego, and Superego

Freud proposed that the mind is divided into three components: *id*, *ego*, and *superego*, and that the interactions and conflicts among the components create personality (Freud, 1923/1949). According to

Freudian theory, the **id** is *the component of personality that forms the basis of our most primitive impulses*. The id is entirely unconscious, and it drives our most important motivations, including the sexual drive (*libido*) and the aggressive or destructive drive (*Thanatos*). According to Freud, the id is driven by the **pleasure principle** — *the desire for immediate gratification of our sexual and aggressive urges.* The id is why we smoke cigarettes, drink alcohol, view pornography, tell mean jokes about people, and engage in other fun or harmful behaviours, often at the cost of doing more productive activities.

In stark contrast to the id, the superego represents *our sense of morality and oughts*. The superego tell us all the things that we shouldn't do, or the duties and obligations of society. The superego strives for perfection, and when we fail to live up to its demands we feel guilty.

In contrast to the id, which is about the pleasure principle, the function of the *ego* is based on the **reality principle** — *the idea that we must delay gratification of our basic motivations until the appropriate time with the appropriate outlet.* The **ego** is *the largely conscious controller or decision-maker of personality*. The ego serves as the intermediary between the desires of the id and the constraints of society contained in the superego (Figure 12.8, "Ego, Id, and Superego in Interaction"). We may wish to scream, yell, or hit, and yet our ego normally tells us to wait, reflect, and choose a more appropriate response.

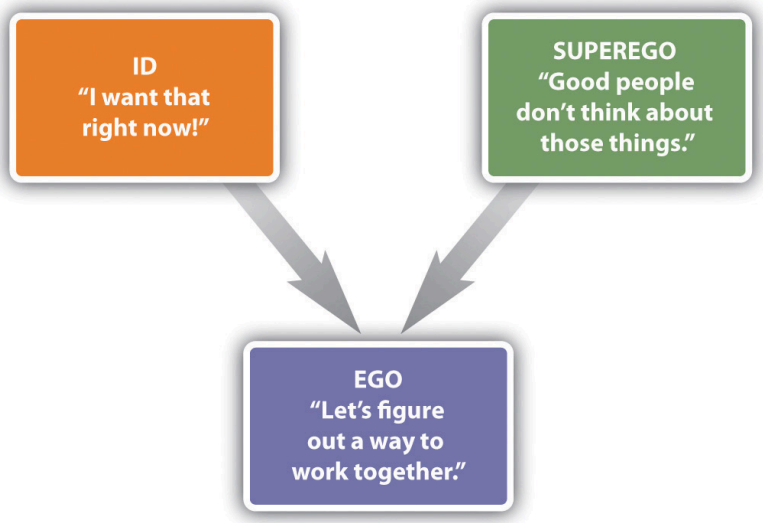


Figure 12.8 Ego, Id, and Superego in Interaction.

Freud believed that psychological disorders, and particularly the experience of anxiety, occur when there is conflict or imbalance among the motivations of the id, ego, and superego. When the ego finds that the id is pressing too hard for immediate pleasure, it attempts to correct for this problem, often through the use of **defence mechanisms** — *unconscious psychological strategies used to cope with anxiety and maintain a positive self-image*. Freud believed that the defence mechanisms were essential for effective coping with everyday life, but that any of them could be overused (Table 12.4, "The Major Freudian Defence Mechanisms").

Table 12.4 The Major Freudian Defence Mechanisms.

[Skip Table]		
Defence mechanism	**Definition**	**Possible behavioural example**
Displacement	Diverting threatening impulses away from the source of the anxiety and toward a more acceptable source	A student who is angry at her professor for a low grade lashes out at her roommate, who is a safer target of her anger.
Projection	Disguising threatening impulses by attributing them to others	A man with powerful unconscious sexual desires for women claims that women use him as a sex object.
Rationalization	Generating self-justifying explanations for our negative behaviours	A drama student convinces herself that getting the part in the play wasn't that important after all.
Reaction formation	Making unacceptable motivations appear as their exact opposite	Jane is sexually attracted to friend Jake, but she claims in public that she intensely dislikes him.
Regression	Retreating to an earlier, more childlike, and safer stage of development	A university student who is worried about an important test begins to suck on his finger.
Repression (or denial)	Pushing anxiety-arousing thoughts into the unconscious	A person who witnesses his parents having sex is later unable to remember anything about the event.
Sublimation	Channeling unacceptable sexual or aggressive desires into acceptable activities	A person participates in sports to sublimate aggressive drives. A person creates music or art to sublimate sexual drives.

The most controversial, and least scientifically valid, part of Freudian theory is its explanations of personality development. Freud argued that personality is developed through a series of *psychosexual stages*, each focusing on pleasure from a different part of the body (Table 12.5, "Freud's Stages of Psychosexual Development"). Freud believed that sexuality begins in infancy, and that the appropriate resolution of each stage has implications for later personality development.

Table 12.5 Freud's Stages of Psychosexual Development.

[Skip Table]		
Stage	**Approximate ages**	**Description**
Oral	Birth to 18 months	Pleasure comes from the mouth in the form of sucking, biting, and chewing.
Anal	18 months to 3 years	Pleasure comes from bowel and bladder elimination and the constraints of toilet training.
Phallic	3 years to 6 years	Pleasure comes from the genitals, and the conflict is with sexual desires for the opposite-sex parent.
Latency	6 years to puberty	Sexual feelings are less important.
Genital	Puberty and older	If prior stages have been properly reached, mature sexual orientation develops.

In the first of Freud's proposed stages of psychosexual development, which begins at birth and lasts until about 18 months of age, the focus is on the mouth. During this **oral stage**, *the infant obtains sexual pleasure by sucking and drinking*. Infants who receive either too little or too much gratification become *fixated* or locked in the oral stage, and are likely to regress to these points of fixation under stress, even as adults. According to Freud, a child who receives too little oral gratification (e.g., who was underfed or neglected) will become *orally dependent* as an adult and be likely to manipulate others to fulfill his or her needs rather than becoming independent. On the other hand, the child who was overfed or overly gratified will resist growing up and try to return to the prior state of dependency by acting helpless, demanding satisfaction from others, and acting in a needy way.

The **anal stage**, *lasting from about 18 months to three years of age*, is when children first experience psychological conflict. *During this stage children desire to experience pleasure through bowel movements*, but they are also being toilet trained to delay this gratification. Freud believed that if this toilet training was either too harsh or too lenient, children would become fixated in the anal stage and become likely to regress to this stage under stress as adults. If the child received too little anal gratification (i.e., if the parents had been very harsh about toilet training), the adult personality will be **anal retentive** — *stingy, with a compulsive seeking of order and tidiness*. On the other hand, if the parents had been too lenient, the **anal expulsive** *personality results, characterized by a lack of self-control and a tendency toward messiness and carelessness*.

The **phallic stage**, which *lasts from age three to age six is when the penis (for boys) and clitoris (for girls) become the primary erogenous zone for sexual pleasure*. During this stage, Freud believed that children develop a powerful but unconscious attraction for the opposite-sex parent, as well as a desire to eliminate the same-sex parent as a rival. Freud based *his theory of sexual development in boys* (**the Oedipus complex**) on the Greek mythological character Oedipus, who unknowingly killed his father and married his mother, and then put his own eyes out when he learned what he had done. Freud argued that boys will normally eventually abandon their love of the mother, and instead identify with the father, also taking on the father's personality characteristics, but that boys who do not successfully resolve the Oedipus complex will experience psychological problems later in life. Although it was not as important

in Freud's theorizing, *in girls the phallic stage is often termed* the **Electra complex**, after the Greek character who avenged her father's murder by killing her mother. Freud believed that girls frequently experienced **penis envy**, the *sense of deprivation supposedly experienced by girls because they do not have a penis*.

The **latency stage** is a period of relative calm that lasts from about *six years to 12 years*. During this time, Freud believed that *sexual impulses were repressed*, leading boys and girls to have little or no interest in members of the opposite sex.

The fifth and last stage, the **genital stage**, begins about *12 years of age and lasts into adulthood*. According to Freud, *sexual impulses return during this time frame*, and if development has proceeded normally to this point, the child is able to move into the development of mature romantic relationships. But if earlier problems have not been appropriately resolved, difficulties with establishing intimate love attachments are likely.

Freud's Followers: The Neo-Freudians

Freudian theory was so popular that it led to a number of followers, including many of Freud's own students, who developed, modified, and expanded his theories. Taken together, these approaches are known as neo-Freudian theories. **The neo-Freudian theories** *are theories based on Freudian principles that emphasize the role of the unconscious and early experience in shaping personality but place less evidence on sexuality as the primary motivating force in personality and are more optimistic concerning the prospects for personality growth and change in personality in adults*.

Alfred Adler (1870-1937) was a follower of Freud's who developed his own interpretation of Freudian theory. Adler proposed that the primary motivation in human personality was not sex or aggression, but rather the striving for superiority. According to Adler, we desire to be better than others and we accomplish this goal by creating a unique and valuable life. We may attempt to satisfy our need for superiority through our school or professional accomplishments, or by our enjoyment of music, athletics, or other activities that seem important to us.

Adler believed that psychological disorders begin in early childhood. He argued that children who are either overly nurtured or overly neglected by their parents are later likely to develop an **inferiority complex** — *a psychological state in which people feel that they are not living up to expectations, leading them to have low self-esteem, with a tendency to try to overcompensate for the negative feelings*. People with an inferiority complex often attempt to demonstrate their superiority to others at all costs, even if it means humiliating, dominating, or alienating them. According to Adler, most psychological disorders result from misguided attempts to compensate for the inferiority complex in order meet the goal of superiority.

Carl Jung (1875-1961) was another student of Freud's who developed his own theories about personality. Jung agreed with Freud about the power of the unconscious but felt that Freud overemphasized the importance of sexuality. Jung argued that in addition to the personal unconscious, there was also a **collective unconscious**, or *a collection of shared ancestral memories*. Jung believed that the collective unconscious contains a variety of **archetypes**, or *cross-culturally universal symbols*, which explain the similarities among people in their emotional reactions to many stimuli. Important archetypes include the mother, the goddess, the hero, and the mandala or circle, which Jung believed symbolized a desire

for wholeness or unity. For Jung, the underlying motivation that guides successful personality is **self-realization**, or *learning about and developing the self to the fullest possible extent*.

Karen Horney (the last syllable of her last name rhymes with "eye"; 1855-1952) was a German physician who applied Freudian theories to create a personality theory that she thought was more balanced between men and women. Horney believed that parts of Freudian theory, and particularly the ideas of the Oedipus complex and penis envy, were biased against women. Horney argued that women's sense of inferiority was not due to their lack of a penis but rather to their dependency on men, an approach that the culture made it difficult for them to break from. For Horney, the underlying motivation that guides personality development is the desire for *security*, the ability to develop appropriate and supportive relationships with others.

Another important neo-Freudian was Erich Fromm (1900-1980). Fromm's focus was on the negative impact of technology, arguing that the increases in its use have led people to feel increasingly isolated from others. Fromm believed that the independence that technology brings us also creates the need to "escape from freedom," that is, to become closer to others.

Research Focus: How the Fear of Death Causes Aggressive Behaviour

Fromm believed that the primary human motivation was to escape the fear of death, and contemporary research has shown how our concerns about dying can influence our behaviour. In this research, people have been made to confront their death by writing about it or otherwise being reminded of it, and effects on their behaviour are then observed. In one relevant study, McGregor and colleagues (1998) demonstrated that people who are provoked may be particularly aggressive after they have been reminded of the possibility of their own death. The participants in the study had been selected, on the basis of prior reporting, to have either politically liberal or politically conservative views. When they arrived at the lab they were asked to write a short paragraph describing their opinion of politics in the United States. In addition, half of the participants (the *mortality salient condition*) were asked to "briefly describe the emotions that the thought of your own death arouses in you" and to "jot down as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you as you physically die, and once you are physically dead." Participants in the *exam control condition* also thought about a negative event, but not one associated with a fear of death. They were instructed to "please briefly describe the emotions that the thought of your next important exam arouses in you" and to "jot down as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you as you physically take your next exam, and once you are physically taking your next exam."

Then the participants read the essay that had supposedly just been written by another person. (The other person did not exist, but the participants didn't know this until the end of the experiment.) The essay that they read had been prepared by the experimenters to be very negative toward politically liberal views or to be very negative toward politically conservative views. Thus one-half of the participants were provoked by the other person by reading a statement that strongly conflicted with their own political beliefs, whereas the other half read an essay in which the other person's views supported their own (liberal or conservative) beliefs.

At this point the participants moved on to what they thought was a completely separate study in which they were to be tasting and giving their impression of some foods. Furthermore, they were told that it was necessary for the participants in the research to administer the food samples to each other. At this point, the participants found out that the food they were going to be sampling was spicy hot sauce and that they were going to be administering the sauce to the very person whose essay they had just read. In addition, the participants read some information about the other person that indicated that he very much disliked eating spicy food. Participants were given a taste of the hot sauce (it was really hot!) and then instructed to place a

quantity of it into a cup for the other person to sample. Furthermore, they were told that the other person would have to eat all the sauce.

As you can see in Figure 12.9, "Aggression as a Function of Mortality Salience and Provocation," McGregor and colleagues found that the participants who had not been reminded of their own death, even if they had been insulted by the partner, did not retaliate by giving him a lot of hot sauce to eat. On the other hand, the participants who were both provoked by the other person and who had also been reminded of their own death administered significantly more hot sauce than did the participants in the other three conditions. McGregor and colleagues (1998) argued that thinking about one's own death creates a strong concern with maintaining one's one cherished worldviews (in this case our political beliefs). When we are concerned about dying we become more motivated to defend these important beliefs from the challenges made by others, in this case by aggressing through the hot sauce.

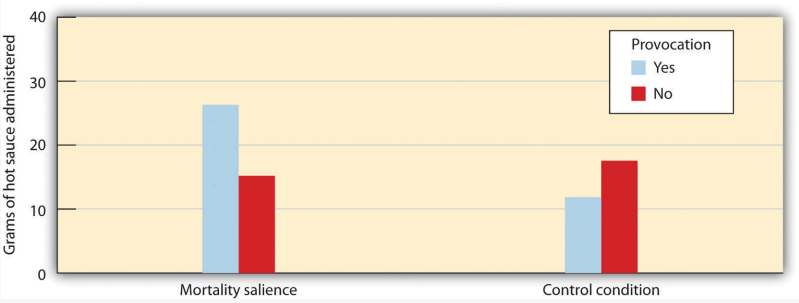


Figure 12.9 Aggression as a Function of Mortality Salience and Provocation. Participants who had been provoked by a stranger who disagreed with them on important opinions, and who had also been reminded of their own death, administered significantly more unpleasant hot sauce to the partner than did the participants in the other three conditions. [Long Description]

Strengths and Limitations of Freudian and Neo-Freudian Approaches

Freud has probably exerted a greater impact on the public's understanding of personality than any other thinker, and he has also in large part defined the field of psychology. Although Freudian psychologists no longer talk about oral, anal, or genital fixations, they do continue to believe that our childhood experiences and unconscious motivations shape our personalities and our attachments with others, and they still make use of psychodynamic concepts when they conduct psychological therapy.

Nevertheless, Freud's theories, as well as those of the neo-Freudians, have in many cases failed to pass the test of empiricism, and as a result they are less influential now than they have been in the past (Crews, 1998). The problems are, first, that it has proved to be difficult to rigorously test Freudian theory because the predictions that it makes (particularly those regarding defence mechanisms) are often vague and unfalsifiable and, second, that the aspects of the theory that can be tested often have not received much empirical support.

As examples, although Freud claimed that children exposed to overly harsh toilet training would become fixated in the anal stage and thus be prone to excessive neatness, stinginess, and stubbornness in adulthood, research has found few reliable associations between toilet training practices and adult personality (Fisher & Greenberg, 1996). And since the time of Freud, the need to repress sexual desires would seem to have become much less necessary as societies have tolerated a wider variety of sexual

practices. And yet the psychological disorders that Freud thought we caused by this repression have not decreased.

There is also little scientific support for most of the Freudian defence mechanisms. For example, studies have failed to yield evidence for the existence of repression. People who are exposed to traumatic experiences in war have been found to remember their traumas only too well (Kihlstrom, 1997). Although we may attempt to push information that is anxiety-arousing into our unconscious, this often has the ironic effect of making us think about the information even more strongly than if we hadn't tried to repress it (Newman, Duff, & Baumeister, 1997). It is true that children remember little of their childhood experiences, but this seems to be true of both negative as well as positive experiences, is true for animals as well, and probably is better explained in terms of the brain's inability to form long-term memories than in terms of repression. On the other hand, Freud's important idea that expressing or talking through one's difficulties can be psychologically helpful has been supported in current research (Baddeley & Pennebaker, 2009) and has become a mainstay of psychological therapy.

A particular problem for testing Freudian theories is that almost anything that conflicts with a prediction based in Freudian theory can be explained away in terms of the use of a defence mechanism. A man who expresses a lot of anger toward his father may be seen via Freudian theory to be experiencing the Oedipus complex, which includes conflict with the father. But a man who expresses no anger at all toward the father also may be seen as experiencing the Oedipus complex by repressing the anger. Because Freud hypothesized that either was possible, but did not specify when repression would or would not occur, the theory is difficult to falsify.

In terms of the important role of the unconscious, Freud seems to have been at least in part correct. More and more research demonstrates that a large part of everyday behaviour is driven by processes that are outside our conscious awareness (Kihlstrom, 1987). And yet, although our unconscious motivations influence every aspect of our learning and behaviour, Freud probably overestimated the extent to which these unconscious motivations are primarily sexual and aggressive.

Taken together, it is fair to say that Freudian theory, like most psychological theories, was not entirely correct and that it has had to be modified over time as the results of new studies have become available. But the fundamental ideas about personality that Freud proposed, as well as the use of talk therapy as an essential component of therapy, are nevertheless still a major part of psychology and are used by clinical psychologists every day.

Focusing on the Self: Humanism and Self-Actualization

Psychoanalytic models of personality were complemented during the 1950s and 1960s by the **theories of humanistic psychologists,** *an approach to psychology that embraces the notions of self-esteem, self-actualization, and free will*. In contrast to the proponents of psychoanalysis, humanists embraced the notion of free will. Arguing that people are free to choose their own lives and make their own decisions, humanistic psychologists focused on the underlying motivations that they believed drove personality, focusing on the nature of the **self-concept**, *the set of beliefs about who we are*, and self-esteem, *our positive feelings about the self.*

One of the most important humanists, Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), *conceptualized personality in terms of a pyramid-shaped* **hierarchy of motives,** also called the **hierarchy of needs,** (Figure 12.10

"Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs"). At the base of the pyramid are the lowest-level motivations, including hunger and thirst, and safety and belongingness. Maslow argued that only when people are able to meet the lower-level needs are they able to move on to achieve the higher-level needs of self-esteem, and eventually **self-actualization**, which is *the motivation to develop our innate potential to the fullest possible extent*.

Maslow studied how successful people, including Albert Einstein, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., Helen Keller, and Mahatma Gandhi, had been able to lead such successful and productive lives. Maslow (1970) believed that self-actualized people are creative, spontaneous, and loving of themselves and others. They tend to have a few deep friendships rather than many superficial ones, and are generally private. He felt that these individuals do not need to conform to the opinions of others because they are very confident and thus free to express unpopular opinions. Self-actualized people are also likely to have **peak experiences**, or *transcendent moments of tranquility accompanied by a strong sense of connection with others*.

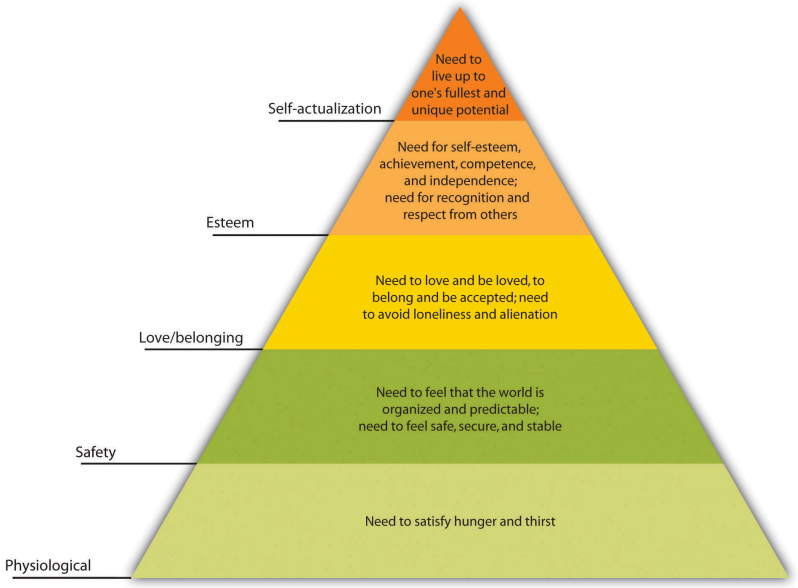


Figure 12.10 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Abraham Maslow conceptualized personality in terms of a hierarchy of needs. The highest of these motivations is self-actualization. [Long Description]

Perhaps the best-known humanistic theorist is Carl Rogers (1902-1987). Rogers was positive about human nature, viewing people as primarily moral and helpful to others, and believed that we can achieve our full potential for emotional fulfilment if the self-concept is characterized by **unconditional positive regard** — *a set of behaviours including being genuine, open to experience, transparent, able to listen to others, and self-disclosing and empathic*. When we treat ourselves or others with unconditional positive regard, we express understanding and support, even while we may acknowledge failings. Unconditional positive regard allows us to admit our fears and failures, to drop our pretenses, and yet at the same time to feel completely accepted for what we are. The principle of unconditional positive regard has become a foundation of psychological therapy; therapists who use it in their practice are more effective than those who do not (Prochaska & Norcross, 2007; Yalom, 1995).

Although there are critiques of the humanistic psychologists (e.g., that Maslow focused on historically productive rather than destructive personalities in his research and thus drew overly optimistic

conclusions about the capacity of people to do good), the ideas of humanism are so powerful and optimistic that they have continued to influence both everyday experiences and psychology. Today the *positive psychology movement* argues for many of these ideas, and research has documented the extent to which thinking positively and openly has important positive consequences for our relationships, our life satisfaction, and our psychological and physical health (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Research Focus: Self-Discrepancies, Anxiety, and Depression

Tory Higgins and his colleagues (Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman, 1986; Strauman & Higgins, 1988) have studied how different aspects of the self-concept relate to personality characteristics. These researchers focused on the types of emotional distress that we might experience as a result of how we are currently evaluating our self-concept. Higgins proposes that the emotions we experience are determined both by our perceptions of how well our own behaviours meet up to the standards and goals we have provided ourselves (our *internal standards*) and by our perceptions of how others think about us (our *external standards*). Furthermore, Higgins argues that different types of *self-discrepancies* lead to different types of negative emotions.

In one of Higgins's experiments (Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman, 1986), participants were first asked to describe themselves using a self-report measure. The participants listed 10 thoughts that they thought described the kind of person they actually are; this is the *actual self-concept*. Then, participants also listed 10 thoughts that they thought described the *type of person they would ideally like to be* (the **ideal self-concept**) as well as 10 thoughts describing the *way that someone else — for instance, a parent — thinks they ought to be* (the **ought self-concept**).

Higgins then divided his participants into two groups. Those with *low self-concept discrepancies* were those who listed similar traits on all three lists. Their ideal, ought, and actual self-concepts were all pretty similar and so they were not considered to be vulnerable to threats to their self-concept. The other half of the participants, those with *high self-concept discrepancies*, were those for whom the traits listed on the ideal and ought lists were very different from those listed on the actual self list. These participants were expected to be vulnerable to threats to the self-concept.

Then, at a later research session, Higgins first asked people to express their current emotions, including those related to sadness and anxiety. After obtaining this baseline measure, Higgins activated either ideal or ought discrepancies for the participants. Participants in the *ideal self-discrepancy priming* condition were asked to think about and discuss their own and their parents' hopes and goals for them. Participants in the *ought self-priming condition* listed their own and their parents' beliefs concerning their duty and obligations. Then all participants again indicated their current emotions.

As you can see in Figure 12.11, "Research Results," for low self-concept discrepancy participants, thinking about their ideal or ought selves did not much change their emotions. For high self-concept discrepancy participants, however, priming the ideal self-concept increased their sadness and dejection, whereas priming the ought self-concept increased their anxiety and agitation. These results are consistent with the idea that discrepancies between the ideal and the actual self lead us to experience sadness, dissatisfaction, and other depression-related emotions, whereas discrepancies between the actual and ought self are more likely to lead to fear, worry, tension, and other anxiety-related emotions.

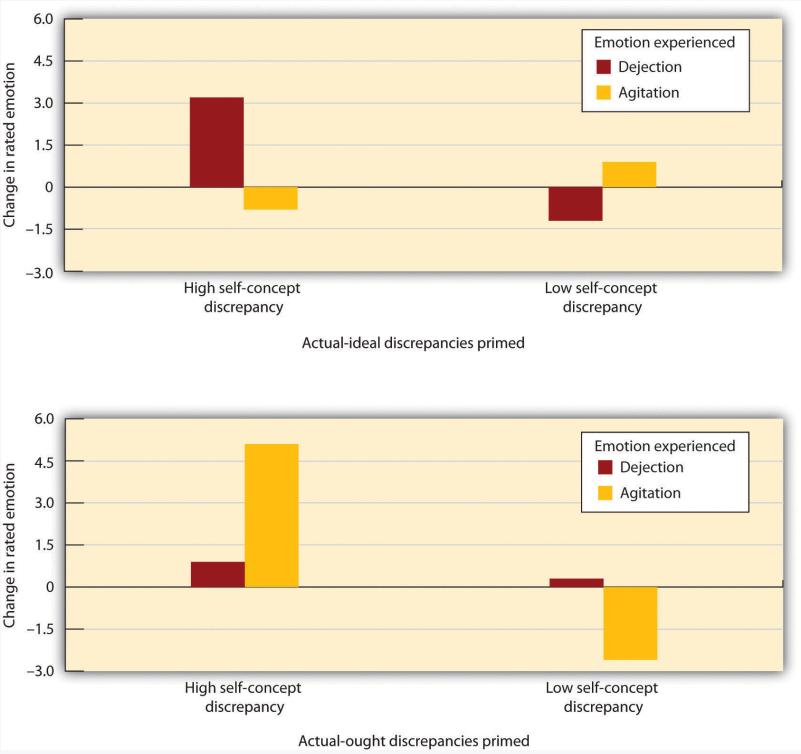


Figure 12.11 Research Results. Higgins and his colleagues documented the impact of self-concept discrepancies on emotion. For participants with low self-concept discrepancies (right bars), seeing words that related to the self had little influence on emotions. For those with high self-concept discrepancies (left bars), priming the ideal self increased dejection whereas priming the ought self increased agitation. [Long Description]

One of the critical aspects of Higgins's approach is that, as is our personality, our feelings are influenced both by our own behaviour and by our expectations of how other people view us. This makes it clear that even though you might not care that much about achieving in school, your failure to do well may still produce negative emotions because you realize that your parents do think it is important.

Key Takeaways

- One of the most important psychological approaches to understanding personality is based on the psychodynamic approach to personality developed by Sigmund Freud.
- For Freud the mind was like an iceberg, with the many motivations of the unconscious being much larger, but also out of sight, in comparison to the consciousness of which we are aware.
- Freud proposed that the mind is divided into three components: id, ego, and superego, and that the interactions and conflicts among the components create personality.
- Freud proposed that we use defence mechanisms to cope with anxiety and maintain a positive self-image.
- Freud argued that personality is developed through a series of psychosexual stages, each focusing on pleasure from a different part of the body.

- The neo-Freudian theorists, including Adler, Jung, Horney, and Fromm, emphasized the role of the unconscious and early experience in shaping personality, but placed less evidence on sexuality as the primary motivating force in personality.
- Psychoanalytic and behavioural models of personality were complemented during the 1950s and 1960s by the theories of humanistic psychologists, including Maslow and Rogers.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Based on your understanding of psychodynamic theories, how would you analyze your own personality? Are there aspects of the theory that might help you explain your own strengths and weaknesses?
2. Based on your understanding of humanistic theories, how would you try to change your behaviour to better meet the underlying motivations of security, acceptance, and self-realization?
3. Consider your own self-concept discrepancies. Do you have an actual-ideal or actual-ought discrepancy? Which one is more important for you, and why?

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Image Attributions

Figure 12.9: Adapted from McGregor, et al., 1998.

Figure 12.11: Adapted from Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman, 1986.

Long Description

Figure 12.9 long description: Aggression as a Function of Mortality Salience and Provocation

Provocation	Morality Salience	Control condition
No	15 grams of hot sauce	17 grams of hot sauce
Yes	26 grams of hot sauce	11 grams of hot sauce

[Return to Figure 12.9]

Figure 12.10 long description: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, from bottom to top.

Physiological (Base)	Need to satisfy hunger and thirst.
Safety	Need to feel that the world is organized and predictable; need to feel safe, secure, and stable.
Love/belonging	Need to love and be loved, to belong and be accepted; need to avoid loneliness and alienation.
Esteem	Need for self-esteem, achievement, competence, and independence; need for recognition and respect from others.
Self-actualization (Top)	Need to live up to one's fullest and unique potential.

[Return to Figure 12.10]

Figure 12.11 long description: Research results. Actual-ideal discrepancies primed.

	Change in rated emotion	
	Dejection	**Agitation**
High self-concept discrepancy	3.1	0.8
Low self-concept discrepancy	negative 1.3	0.9

Figure 12.11 long description continued: Research results. Actual-ought discrepancies primed.

	Change in rated emotion	
	Dejection	**Agitation**
High self-concept discrepancy	0.8	4.9
Low self-concept discrepancy	0.3	negative 2.4

[Return to Figure 12.11]

12.3 Is Personality More Nature or More Nurture? Behavioural and Molecular Genetics

Learning Objectives

1. Explain how genes transmit personality from one generation to the next.
2. Outline the methods of behavioural genetics studies and the conclusions that we can draw from them about the determinants of personality.
3. Explain how molecular genetics research helps us understand the role of genetics in personality.

One question that is exceedingly important for the study of personality concerns the extent to which it is the result of nature or nurture. If nature is more important, then our personalities will form early in our lives and will be difficult to change later. If nurture is more important, however, then our experiences are likely to be particularly important, and we may be able to flexibly alter our personalities over time. In this section we will see that the personality traits of humans and animals are determined in large part by their genetic makeup, and thus it is no surprise that identical twins Paula Bernstein and Elyse Schein turned out to be very similar even though they had been raised separately. But we will also see that genetics does not determine everything.

In the nucleus of each cell in your body are 23 pairs of *chromosomes*. One of each pair comes from your father, and the other comes from your mother. The **chromosomes** *are made up of strands of the molecule DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), and the DNA* is grouped into segments known as *genes*. A **gene** is *the basic biological unit that transmits characteristics from one generation to the next*. Human cells have about 25,000 genes.

The genes of different members of the same species are almost identical. The DNA in your genes, for instance, is about 99.9% the same as the DNA in my genes and in the DNA of every other human being. These common genetic structures lead members of the same species to be born with a variety of behaviours that come naturally to them and that define the characteristics of the species. These abilities and characteristics are known as **instincts** — *complex inborn patterns of behaviours that help ensure survival and reproduction* (Tinbergen, 1951). Different animals have different instincts. Birds naturally build nests, dogs are naturally loyal to their human caretakers, and humans instinctively learn to walk and to speak and understand language.

But the strength of different traits and behaviours also varies within species. Rabbits are naturally fearful, but some are more fearful than others; some dogs are more loyal than others to their caretakers; and some humans learn to speak and write better than others do. These differences are determined in part by the small amount (in humans, the 0.1%) of the differences in genes among the members of the species.

Personality is not determined by any single gene, but rather by the actions of many genes working

together. There is no "IQ gene" that determines intelligence and there is no "good marriage-partner gene" that makes a person a particularly good marriage bet. Furthermore, even working together, genes are not so powerful that they can control or create our personality. Some genes tend to increase a given characteristic and others work to decrease that same characteristic — the complex relationship among the various genes, as well as a variety of random factors, produces the final outcome. Furthermore, genetic factors always work with environmental factors to create personality. Having a given pattern of genes doesn't necessarily mean that a particular trait will develop, because some traits might occur only in some environments. For example, a person may have a genetic variant that is known to increase his or her risk for developing emphysema from smoking. But if that person never smokes, then emphysema most likely will not develop.

Studying Personality Using Behavioural Genetics

Perhaps the most direct way to study the role of genetics in personality is to selectively breed animals for the trait of interest. In this approach the scientist chooses the animals that most strongly express the personality characteristics of interest and breeds these animals with each other. If the selective breeding creates offspring with even stronger traits, then we can assume that the trait has genetic origins. In this manner, scientists have studied the role of genetics in how worms respond to stimuli, how fish develop courtship rituals, how rats differ in play, and how pigs differ in their responses to stress.

Although selective breeding studies can be informative, they are clearly not useful for studying humans. For this psychologists rely on **behavioural genetics** — *a variety of research techniques that scientists use to learn about the genetic and environmental influences on human behaviour by comparing the traits of biologically and nonbiologically related family members* (Baker, 2004). Behavioural genetics is based on the results of *family studies*, *twin studies*, and *adoptive studies*.

A **family study** *starts with one person who has a trait of interest — for instance, a developmental disorder such as autism — and examines the individual's family tree to determine the extent to which other members of the family also have the trait*. The presence of the trait in first-degree relatives (parents, siblings, and children) is compared with the prevalence of the trait in second-degree relatives (aunts, uncles, grandchildren, grandparents, and nephews or nieces) and in more distant family members. The scientists then analyze the patterns of the trait in the family members to see the extent to which it is shared by closer and more distant relatives.

Although family studies can reveal whether a trait runs in a family, it cannot explain why. In a **twin study**, *researchers study the personality characteristics of twins*. Twin studies rely on the fact that identical (or monozygotic) twins have essentially the same set of genes, while fraternal (or dizygotic) twins have, on average, a half-identical set. The idea is that if the twins are raised in the same household, then the twins will be influenced by their environments to an equal degree, and this influence will be pretty much equal for identical and fraternal twins. In other words, if environmental factors are the same, then the only factor that can make identical twins more similar than fraternal twins is their greater genetic similarity.

In a twin study, the data from many pairs of twins are collected and the rates of similarity for identical and fraternal pairs are compared. A correlation coefficient is calculated that assesses the extent to which the trait for one twin is associated with the trait in the other twin. Twin studies divide the influence of nature and nurture into three parts:

- **Heritability** (i.e., genetic influence) is indicated when the correlation coefficient for identical twins exceeds that for fraternal twins, indicating that shared DNA is an important determinant of personality.
- **Shared environment** determinants are indicated when the correlation coefficients for identical and fraternal twins are greater than zero and also very similar. These correlations indicate that both twins are having experiences in the family that make them alike.
- **Nonshared environment** is indicated when identical twins do not have similar traits. These influences refer to experiences that are not accounted for either by heritability or by shared environmental factors. Nonshared environmental factors are the experiences that make individuals within the same family *less* alike. If a parent treats one child more affectionately than another, and as a consequence this child ends up with higher self-esteem, the parenting in this case is a nonshared environmental factor.

In the typical twin study, all three sources of influence are operating simultaneously, and it is possible to determine the relative importance of each type.

An **adoption study** *compares biologically related people, including twins, who have been reared either separately or apart*. Evidence for genetic influence on a trait is found when children who have been adopted show traits that are more similar to those of their biological parents than to those of their adoptive parents. Evidence for environmental influence is found when the adoptee is more like his or her adoptive parents than the biological parents.

The results of family, twin, and adoption studies are combined to get a better idea of the influence of genetics and environment on traits of interest. Table 12.6, “Data from Twin and Adoption Studies on the Heritability of Various Characteristics,” presents data on the correlations and heritability estimates for a variety of traits based on the results of behavioural genetics studies (Bouchard, Lykken, McGue, Segal, & Tellegen, 1990).

Table 12.6 Data from Twin and Adoption Studies on the Heritability of Various Characteristics. [1]

[Skip Table]							
	Correlation between children raised together		**Correlation between children raised apart**		**Estimated percent of total due to**		
	Identical twins	**Fraternal twins**	**Identical twins**	**Fraternal twins**	**Heritability (%)**	**Shared environment (%)**	**Nonshared environment (%)**
Age of puberty					45	5	50
Aggression	0.43	0.14	0.46	0.06			
Alzheimer disease	0.54	0.16					
Fingerprint patterns	0.96	0.47	0.96	0.47	100	0	0
General cognitive ability					56	0	44
Likelihood of divorce	0.52	0.22					
Sexual orientation	0.52	0.22			18–39	0–17	61–66
Big Five dimensions					40–50		
This table presents some of the observed correlations and heritability estimates for various characteristics.							

If you look in the second column of Table 12.6 , “Data from Twin and Adoption Studies on the Heritability of Various Characteristics,” you will see the observed correlations for the traits between identical twins who have been raised together in the same house by the same parents. This column represents the pure effects of genetics, in the sense that environmental differences have been controlled to be a small as possible. You can see that these correlations are higher for some traits than for others. Fingerprint patterns are very highly determined by our genetics (r = .96), whereas the Big Five trait dimensions have a heritability of 40% to 50%.

You can also see from the table that, overall, there is more influence of nature than of parents. Identical twins, even when they are raised in separate households by different parents (column 4), turn out to be quite similar in personality, and are more similar than fraternal twins who are raised in separate households (column 5). These results show that genetics has a strong influence on personality, and helps explain why Elyse and Paula were so similar when they finally met.

Despite the overall role of genetics, you can see in Table 12.6, “Data from Twin and Adoption Studies on the Heritability of Various Characteristics,” that the correlations between identical twins (column 2)

and heritability estimates for most traits (column 6) are substantially less than 1.00, showing that the environment also plays an important role in personality (Turkheimer & Waldron, 2000). For instance, for sexual orientation the estimates of heritability vary from 18% to 39% of the total across studies, suggesting that 61% to 82% of the total influence is due to environment.

You might at first think that parents would have a strong influence on the personalities of their children, but this would be incorrect. As you can see by looking in column 7 of Table 12.6," research finds that the influence of shared environment (i.e., the effects of parents or other caretakers) plays little or no role in adult personality (Harris, 2006). Shared environment does influence the personality and behaviour of young children, but this influence decreases rapidly as the child grows older. By the time we reach adulthood, the impact of shared environment on our personalities is weak at best (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000). What this means is that although parents must provide a nourishing and stimulating environment for children, no matter how hard they try they are not likely to be able to turn their children into geniuses or into professional athletes, nor will they be able to turn them into criminals.

If parents are not providing the environmental influences on the child, then what is? The last column in Table 12.6," the influence of nonshared environment, represents whatever is "left over" after removing the effects of genetics and parents. You can see that these factors — the largely unknown things that happen to us that make us different from other people — often have the largest influence on personality.

Studying Personality Using Molecular Genetics

In addition to the use of behavioural genetics, our understanding of the role of biology in personality recently has been dramatically increased through the use of **molecular genetics**, which is *the study of which genes are associated with which personality traits* (Goldsmith et al., 2003; Strachan & Read, 1999). These advances have occurred as a result of new knowledge about the structure of human DNA made possible through the Human Genome Project and related work that has identified the genes in the human body (Human Genome Project, 2010). Molecular genetics researchers have also developed new techniques that allow them to find the locations of genes within chromosomes and to identify the effects those genes have when activated or deactivated.



Figure 12.12 Laboratory Mice. These "knockout" mice are participating in studies in which some of their genes have been deactivated to determine the influence of the genes on behaviour.

One approach that can be used in animals, usually in laboratory mice, is the *knockout study* (as shown in Figure 12.12, "Laboratory Mice"). In this approach the researchers use specialized techniques to remove or modify the influence of a gene in a line of *knockout* mice (Crusio, Goldowitz, Holmes, & Wolfer, 2009). The researchers harvest embryonic stem cells from mouse embryos and then modify the DNA of the cells. *The DNA is created so that the action of certain genes will be eliminated* or **knocked out**. The cells are then injected into the embryos of other mice that are implanted into the uteruses of living female mice. When these animals are born, they are studied to see whether their behaviour differs from a control group of normal animals. Research has found that removing or changing genes in mice can affect their anxiety, aggression, learning, and socialization patterns.

In humans, a molecular genetics study normally begins with the collection of a DNA sample from the participants in the study, usually by taking some cells from the inner surface of the cheek. In the lab, the DNA is extracted from the sampled cells and is combined with a solution containing a marker for the particular genes of interest as well as a fluorescent dye. If the gene is present in the DNA of the individual, then the solution will bind to that gene and activate the dye. The more the gene is expressed, the stronger the reaction.

In one common approach, DNA is collected from people who have a particular personality characteristic and also from people who do not. The DNA of the two groups is compared to see which genes differ between them. These studies are now able to compare thousands of genes at the same time. Research using molecular genetics has found genes associated with a variety of personality traits including novelty-seeking (Ekelund, Lichtermann, Järvelin, & Peltonen, 1999), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (Waldman & Gizer, 2006), and smoking behaviour (Thorgeirsson et al., 2008).

Reviewing the Literature: Is Our Genetics Our Destiny?

Over the past two decades scientists have made substantial progress in understanding the important role

of genetics in behaviour. Behavioural genetics studies have found that, for most traits, genetics is more important than parental influence. And molecular genetics studies have begun to pinpoint the particular genes that are causing these differences. The results of these studies might lead you to believe that your destiny is determined by your genes, but this would be a mistaken assumption.

For one, the results of all research must be interpreted carefully. Over time we will learn even more about the role of genetics, and our conclusions about its influence will likely change. Current research in the area of behavioural genetics is often criticized for making assumptions about how researchers categorize identical and fraternal twins, about whether twins are in fact treated in the same way by their parents, about whether twins are representative of children more generally, and about many other issues. Although these critiques may not change the overall conclusions, it must be kept in mind that these findings are relatively new and will certainly be updated with time (Plomin, 2000).

Furthermore, it is important to reiterate that although genetics is important, and although we are learning more every day about its role in many personality variables, genetics does not determine everything. In fact, the major influence on personality is nonshared environmental influences, which include all the things that occur to us that make us unique individuals. These differences include variability in brain structure, nutrition, education, upbringing, and even interactions among the genes themselves.

The genetic differences that exist at birth may be either amplified or diminished over time through environmental factors. The brains and bodies of identical twins are not exactly the same, and they become even more different as they grow up. As a result, even genetically identical twins have distinct personalities, resulting in large part from environmental effects.

Because these nonshared environmental differences are nonsystematic and largely accidental or random, it will be difficult to ever determine exactly what will happen to a child as he or she grows up. Although we do inherit our genes, we do not inherit personality in any fixed sense. The effect of our genes on our behaviour is entirely dependent on the context of our life as it unfolds day to day. Based on your genes, no one can say what kind of human being you will turn out to be or what you will do in life.

Key Takeaways

- Genes are the basic biological units that transmit characteristics from one generation to the next.
- Personality is not determined by any single gene, but rather by the actions of many genes working together.
- Behavioural genetics refers to a variety of research techniques that scientists use to learn about the genetic and environmental influences on human behaviour.
- Behavioural genetics is based on the results of family studies, twin studies, and adoptive studies.
- Overall, genetics has more influence than parents do on shaping our personality.
- Molecular genetics is the study of which genes are associated with which personality traits.
- The largely unknown environmental influences, known as the nonshared environmental effects, have the largest impact on personality. Because these differences are nonsystematic and largely accidental or random, we do not inherit our personality in any fixed sense.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Think about the twins you know. Do they seem to be very similar to each other, or does it seem that their differences outweigh their similarities?
2. Describe the implications of the effects of genetics on personality, overall. What does it mean to say that genetics "determines" or "does not determine" our personality?

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Image Attributions

Figure 12.12: "Laboratory mice" by Aaron Logan is licensed under CC BY 1.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/1.0/deed.en).

Notes

1. Sources: Långström, et al, 2010; Loehlin, 1992; McGue & Lykken, 1992; Plomin et al, 1997; Tellegen et al, 1988.

12.4 Chapter Summary

Personality is defined as an individual's consistent patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaving. Early theories of personality, including phrenology and somatology, are now discredited, but there is at least some research evidence for physiognomy — the idea that it is possible to assess personality from facial characteristics.

Personalities are characterized in terms of traits, which are relatively enduring characteristics that influence our behaviour across many situations. Psychologists have investigated hundreds of traits using the self-report approach.

The utility of self-report measures of personality depends on their reliability and construct validity. Some popular measures of personality, such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), do not have reliability or construct validity and therefore are not useful measures of personality.

The trait approach to personality was pioneered by early psychologists, including Allport, Cattell, and Eysenck, and their research helped produce the Five-Factor (Big Five) Model of Personality. The Big Five dimensions are cross-culturally valid and accurately predict behaviour. The Big Five factors are also increasingly being used to help researchers understand the dimensions of psychological disorders.

A difficulty of the trait approach to personality is that there is often only a low correlation between the traits that a person expresses in one situation and those that he or she expresses in other situations. However, psychologists have also found that personality predicts behaviour better when the behaviours are averaged across different situations.

People may believe in the existence of traits because they use their schemas to judge other people, leading them to believe that traits are more stable than they really are. An example is the Barnum effect — the observation that people tend to believe in descriptions of their personality that supposedly are descriptive of them but could in fact describe almost anyone.

An important personality test is the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) used to detect personality and psychological disorders. Another approach to measuring personality is to use projective measures, such as the Rorschach Inkblot Test and the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). The advantage of projective tests is that they are less direct, but empirical evidence supporting their reliability and construct validity is mixed.

There are behaviourist, social-cognitive, psychodynamic, and humanist theories of personality.

The psychodynamic approach to understanding personality, begun by Sigmund Freud, is based on the idea that all behaviours are predetermined by motivations that lie outside our awareness, in the unconscious. Freud proposed that the mind is divided into three components: id, ego, and superego, and that the interactions and conflicts among the components create personality. Freud also believed that psychological disorders, and particularly the experience of anxiety, occur when there is conflict or

imbalance among the motivations of the id, ego, and superego and that people use defence mechanisms to cope with this anxiety.

Freud argued that personality is developed through a series of psychosexual stages, each focusing on pleasure from a different part of the body, and that the appropriate resolution of each stage has implications for later personality development.

Freud has probably exerted a greater impact on the public's understanding of personality than any other thinker, but his theories have in many cases failed to pass the test of empiricism.

Freudian theory led to a number of followers known as the neo-Freudians, including Adler, Jung, Horney, and Fromm.

Humanistic theories of personality focus on the underlying motivations that they believe drive personality, focusing on the nature of the self-concept and the development of self-esteem. The idea of unconditional positive regard championed by Carl Rogers has led in part to the positive psychology movement, and it is a basis for almost all contemporary psychological therapy.

Personality traits of humans and animals are determined in large part by their genetic makeup. Personality is not determined by any single gene, but rather by the actions of many genes working together.

The role of nature and nurture in personality is studied by means of behavioural genetics studies including family studies, twin studies, and adoption studies. These studies partition variability in personality into the influence of genetics (known as heritability), shared environment, and nonshared environment. Although these studies find that many personality traits are highly heritable, genetics does not determine everything. The major influence on personality is nonshared environmental influences.

In addition to the use of behavioural genetics, our understanding of the role of biology in personality recently has been dramatically increased through the use of molecular genetics, the study of which genes are associated with which personality traits in animals and humans.

Chapter 13. Defining Psychological Disorders

13. Defining Psychological Disorders

When Minor Body Imperfections Lead to Suicide

"I think we probably noticed in his early teens that he became very conscious about aspects of his appearance…he began to brood over it quite a lot," said Maria, as she called in to the talk radio program to describe her son Robert.

Maria described how Robert had begun to worry about his weight. A friend had commented that he had a "fat" stomach, and Robert began to cut down on eating. Then he began to worry that he wasn't growing enough and devised an elaborate series of stretching techniques to help him get taller.

Robert scrutinized his face and body in the mirror for hours, finding a variety of imagined defects. He believed that his nose was crooked, and he was particularly concerned about a lump that he saw on it: "A small lump," said his mother. "I should say it wasn't very significant, but it was significant to him."

Robert insisted that all his misery stemmed from this lump on his nose, that everybody noticed it. In his sophomore year of high school, he had cosmetic surgery to remove it.

Around this time, Robert had his first panic attack and began to worry that everybody could notice him sweating and blushing in public. He asked his parents for a $10,000 loan, which he said was for overseas study. He used the money for a procedure designed to reduce sweating and blushing. Then, dissatisfied with the results, he had the procedure reversed.

Robert was diagnosed with *body dysmorphic disorder*. His mother told the radio host, "At the time we were really happy because we thought that finally we actually knew what we were trying to fight and to be quite honest, I must admit I thought well it sounds pretty trivial.…things seemed to go quite well and he got a new girlfriend and he was getting excellent marks in his clinical work in hospital and he promised us that he wasn't going to have any more surgery."

However, a lighthearted comment from a friend about a noticeable vein in his forehead prompted a relapse. Robert had surgery to tie off the vein. When that didn't solve all his problems as he had hoped, he attempted to have the procedure reversed but learned that it would require complicated microsurgery. He then used injections on himself to try opening the vein again, but he could never completely reverse the first surgery.

Robert committed suicide shortly afterward, in 2001 (Mitchell, 2002).

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13.1 Psychological Disorder: What Makes a Behaviour Abnormal?

Learning Objectives

1. Define "psychological disorder" and summarize the general causes of disorder.
2. Explain why it is so difficult to define disorder, and how the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*) is used to make diagnoses.
3. Describe the stigma of psychological disorders and their impact on those who suffer from them.

The focus of this chapter and the next is, to many people, the heart of psychology. This emphasis on **abnormal psychology** — *the application of psychological science to understanding and treating mental disorders* — is appropriate, as more psychologists are involved in the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorder than in any other endeavour, and these are probably the most important tasks psychologists face. In 2012, approximately 2.8 million people, or 10.1% of Canadians aged 15 and older, reported symptoms consistent with at least one of six mental or substance use disorders in the past 12 months (Pearson, Janz, & Ali, 2013). At least a half billion people are affected worldwide. The six disorders measured by the Canadian Mental Health Survey were major depressive episode, bipolar disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and abuse of or dependence on alcohol, cannabis, or other drugs. The impact of mental illness is particularly strong on people who are poorer, of lower socioeconomic class, and from disadvantaged ethnic groups.

People with psychological disorders are also stigmatized by the people around them, resulting in shame and embarrassment, as well as prejudice and discrimination against them. Thus the understanding and treatment of psychological disorder has broad implications for the everyday life of many people. Table 13.1, "Prevalence Rates for Psychological Disorders in Canada, 2012," shows the **prevalence**, *the frequency of occurrence of a given condition in a population at a given time*, of some of the major psychological disorders in Canada.

	Lifetime	12-month
	percent	
Mental or substance disorders	**33.1**	**10.1**
Substance use disorder	21.6	4.4
Alcohol abuse or dependence	18.1	3.2
Cannabis abuse or dependence	6.8	1.3
Other drug abuse or dependence (excluding Cannabis)	4	0.7
Mood disorder	12.6	5.4
Major Depressive Episode	11.3	4.7
Bipolar Disorder	2.6	1.5
Generalized Anxiety Disorder	8.7	2.6

Table 13.1. Prevalence Rates for Psychological Disorders in Canada, 2012, adapted by J. Walinga from Statistics Canada 2013. [Long Description]

In this chapter our focus is on the disorders themselves. We will review the major psychological disorders and consider their causes and their impact on the people who suffer from them. Then in

Chapter 14, "Treating Psychological Disorders," we will turn to consider the treatment of these disorders through psychotherapy and drug therapy.

Defining Disorder

A psychological disorder is *an ongoing dysfunctional pattern of thought, emotion, and behaviour that causes significant distress, and that is considered deviant in that person's culture or society* (Butcher, Mineka, & Hooley, 2007). Psychological disorders have much in common with other medical disorders. They are out of the patient's control, they may in some cases be treated by drugs, and their treatment is often covered by medical insurance. Like medical problems, psychological disorders have both biological (nature) as well as environmental (nurture) influences. These causal influences are reflected in the bio-psycho-social model of illness (Engel, 1977).

The **bio-psycho-social model of illness** is *a way of understanding disorder that assumes that disorder is caused by biological, psychological, and social factors* (Figure 13.1, "The Bio-Psycho-Social Model"). The *biological component* of the bio-psycho-social model refers to the influences on disorder that come from the functioning of the individual's body. Particularly important are genetic characteristics that make some people more vulnerable to a disorder than others and the influence of neurotransmitters. The *psychological component* of the bio-psycho-social model refers to the influences that come from the individual, such as patterns of negative thinking and stress responses. The **social component** of the bio-psycho-social model refers to *the influences on disorder due to social and cultural factors such as socioeconomic status, homelessness, abuse, and discrimination*.

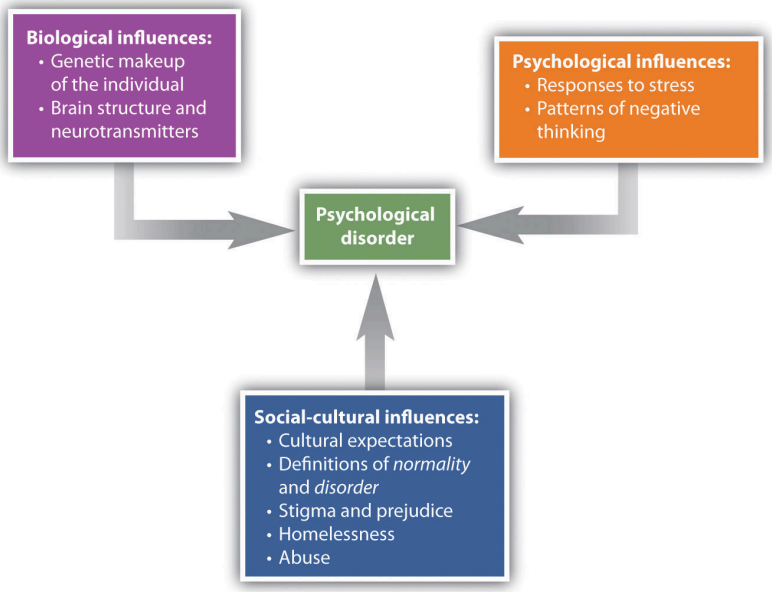


Figure 13.1 The Bio-Psycho-Social Model. The bio-psycho-social model of disorder proposes that disorders are caused by biological, psychological, and social-cultural factors.

To consider one example, the psychological disorder of schizophrenia has a biological cause because it is known that there are patterns of genes that make a person vulnerable to the disorder (Gejman, Sanders, & Duan, 2010). But whether or not the person with a biological vulnerability experiences the disorder depends in large part on psychological factors such as how the individual responds to the stress

he or she experiences, as well as social factors such as whether or not the person is exposed to stressful environments in adolescence and whether or not the person has support from people who care about him or her (Sawa & Snyder, 2002; Walker, Kestler, Bollini, & Hochman, 2004). Similarly, mood and anxiety disorders are caused in part by genetic factors such as hormones and neurotransmitters, in part by the individual's particular thought patterns, and in part by the ways that other people in the social environment treat the person with the disorder. We will use the bio-psycho-social model as a framework for considering the causes and treatments of disorder.

Although they share many characteristics with them, psychological disorders are nevertheless different from medical conditions in important ways. For one, diagnosis of psychological disorders can be more difficult. Although a medical doctor can see cancer in the lungs using an MRI scan or see blocked arteries in the heart using cardiac catheterization, there is no corresponding test for psychological disorder. Current research is beginning to provide more evidence about the role of brain structures in psychological disorder, but for now the brains of people with severe mental disturbances often look identical to those of people without such disturbances.

Because there are no clear biological diagnoses, psychological disorders are instead diagnosed on the basis of clinical observations of the behaviours that the individual engages in. These observations find that emotional states and behaviours operate on a continuum, ranging from more normal and accepted to more deviant, abnormal, and unaccepted. The behaviours that are associated with disorder are in many cases the same behaviours that we engage in during our normal everyday life. Washing one's hands is a normal healthy activity, but it can be overdone by those with an *obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)*. It is not unusual to worry about and try to improve one's body image. The dancer in Figure 13.2, "How Thin Is Too Thin?" needs to be thin for her career, but when does her dieting turn into a psychological disorder? Psychologists believe this happens when the behaviour becomes distressing and dysfunctional to the person. Robert's struggle with his personal appearance, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, was clearly unusual, unhealthy, and distressing to him.



Figure 13.2 How Thin Is Too Thin?

Whether a given behaviour is considered a psychological disorder is determined not only by whether a behaviour is unusual (e.g., whether it is mild anxiety versus extreme anxiety) but also by whether a behaviour is **maladaptive** — *that is, the extent to which it causes distress (e.g., pain and suffering) and dysfunction (impairment in one or more important areas of functioning) to the individual* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). An intense fear of spiders, for example, would not be considered a psychological disorder unless it has a significant negative impact on the sufferer's life, for instance by causing him or her to be unable to step outside the house. The focus on distress and dysfunction means that behaviours that are simply unusual (such as some political, religious, or sexual practices) are not classified as disorders.

Put your psychology hat on for a moment and consider the behaviours of the people listed in Table 13.2, "Diagnosing Disorder." For each, indicate whether you think the behaviour is or is not a psychological disorder. If you're not sure, what other information would you need to know to be more certain of your diagnosis?

Table 13.2 Diagnosing Disorder.

[Skip Table]			
Yes	**No**	**Need more information**	**Description**
			Jackie frequently talks to herself while she is working out her math homework. Her roommate sometimes hears her and wonders if she is okay.
			Charlie believes that the noises made by cars and planes going by outside his house have secret meanings. He is convinced that he was involved in the start of a nuclear war and that the only way for him to survive is to find the answer to a difficult riddle.
			Harriet gets very depressed during the winter months when the light is low. She sometimes stays in her pajamas for the whole weekend, eating chocolate and watching TV.
			Frank seems to be afraid of a lot of things. He worries about driving on the highway and about severe weather that may come through his neighbourhood. But mostly he fears mice, checking under his bed frequently to see if any are present.
			A worshiper speaking in "tongues" at an Evangelical church views himself as "filled" with the Holy Spirit and is considered blessed with the gift to speak the "language of angels."

A trained clinical psychologist would have checked off "need more information" for each of the examples in Table 13.2, "Diagnosing Disorder," because although the behaviours may seem unusual, there is no clear evidence that they are distressing or dysfunctional for the person. Talking to ourselves out loud is unusual and can be a symptom of schizophrenia, but just because we do it once in a while does not mean that there is anything wrong with us. It is natural to be depressed, particularly in the long winter nights, but how severe should this depression be, and how long should it last? If the negative feelings last for an extended time and begin to lead the person to miss work or classes, then they may become symptoms of a mood disorder. It is normal to worry about things, but when does worry turn into a debilitating anxiety disorder? And what about thoughts that seem to be irrational, such as being able to speak the language of angels? Are they indicators of a severe psychological disorder, or part of a normal religious experience? Again, the answer lies in the extent to which they are (or are not) interfering with the individual's functioning in society.

Another difficulty in diagnosing psychological disorders is that they frequently occur together. For instance, people diagnosed with anxiety disorders also often have mood disorders (Hunt, Slade, & Andrews, 2004), and people diagnosed with one personality disorder frequently suffer from other personality disorders as well. **Comorbidity** *occurs when people who suffer from one disorder also suffer at the same time from other disorders*. Because many psychological disorders are comorbid, most severe mental disorders are concentrated in a small group of people (about 6% of the population) who have more than three of them (Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005).

Psychology in Everyday Life: Combating the Stigma of Abnormal Behaviour

Every culture and society has its own views on what constitutes abnormal behaviour and what causes it

(Brothwell, 1981). The Old Testament Book of Samuel tells us that as a consequence of his sins, God sent King Saul an evil spirit to torment him (1 Samuel 16:14). Ancient Hindu tradition attributed psychological disorder to sorcery and witchcraft. During the Middle Ages it was believed that mental illness occurred when the body was infected by evil spirits, particularly the devil. Remedies included whipping, bloodletting, purges, and trepanation (cutting a hole in the skull, Figure 13.3) to release the demons.

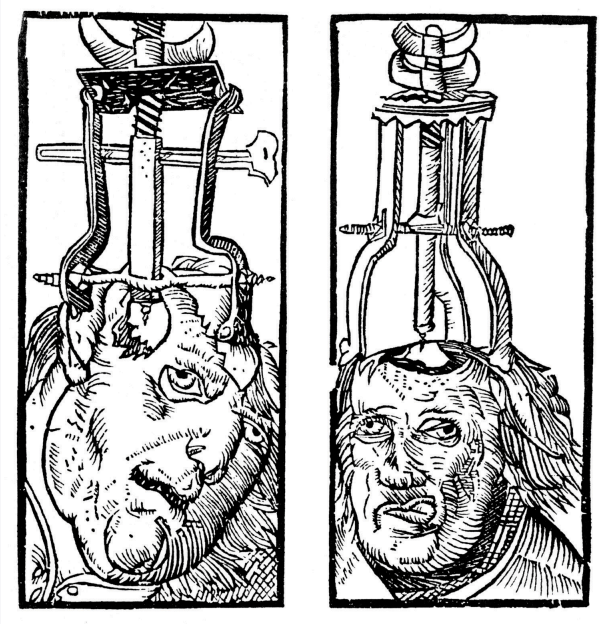


Figure 13.3 Trepanation. Trepanation (drilling holes in the skull) has been used since prehistoric times in attempts to cure epilepsy, schizophrenia, and other psychological disorders.

Until the 18th century, the most common treatment for the mentally ill was to incarcerate them in asylums or "madhouses." During the 18th century, however, some reformers began to oppose this brutal treatment of the mentally ill, arguing that mental illness was a medical problem that had nothing to do with evil spirits or demons. In France, one of the key reformers was Philippe Pinel (1745-1826), who believed that mental illness was caused by a combination of physical and psychological stressors, exacerbated by inhumane conditions. Pinel advocated the introduction of exercise, fresh air, and daylight for the inmates, as well as treating them gently and talking with them.

Reformers such as Phillipe Pinel (1745-1826), Dorothea Dix (1802-1887), Richard M. Bucke (1837-1902), Charles K. Clarke (1857-1924), Clifford W. Beers (1876-1943), and Clarence M. Hincks (1885-1964) were instrumental in creating mental hospitals that treated patients humanely and attempted to cure them if possible (Figure 13.5). These reformers saw mental illness as an underlying psychological disorder, which was diagnosed according to its symptoms and which could be cured through treatment.

Dr Richard Bucke was appointed superintendent of the Asylum for the Insane in Hamilton in 1876 and a year later of the asylum in London, Ontario. He believed mental illness was a failure of the human biological adaptive process. In his attempts to reform the crude treatment of mentally ill patients

he abandoned the practice of pacifying the inmates with alcohol or restraining them, and inaugurated regular cultural and sports events for patients.

Dr Charles Clarke was an assistant superintendent at the Hamilton asylum in the early 1880s, and later superintendent of the asylum at Kingston, Ontario. By 1887 he had changed the asylum from a jail to a hospital and was instructing nurses and attendants in the care of the mentally ill. By 1893 he was advocating that the term “asylum” be dropped and that special hospitals be constructed for the mentally ill.

Dr Clarence Hincks, born in St Mary’s, Ontario, was interested in mental health partly due to his own experiences with severe depression. In 1918, with Beers’s help, he organized the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene, which later became the Canadian Mental Health Association.

Dix was a Massachusetts schoolteacher who wrote, lectured, and informed the public and legislators about the deplorable conditions in mental institutions like those shown in Figure 13.4. She was successful in influencing a number of state legislatures either to establish or improve their mental institutions, and because of her efforts a mental hospital was built in St. John’s, Newfoundland, in 1885. She also lobbied the Nova Scotia legislature and oversaw the building of a hospital for mental patients in that province.

Phillipe Pinel was a French physician who became intensely interested in mental health in the 1770s. He took a psychological approach as opposed to the prominent biological approach that was the custom and introduced new forms of treatments that involved close contact with and careful observation of patients. Pinel visited each patient up to several times a day, engaging them in lengthy conversations, and took careful notes in an effort to assemble a detailed case history and a natural history of the patient’s illness. At the time, his therapy was quite contrary to the usual practices of bleeding, purging, or blistering.

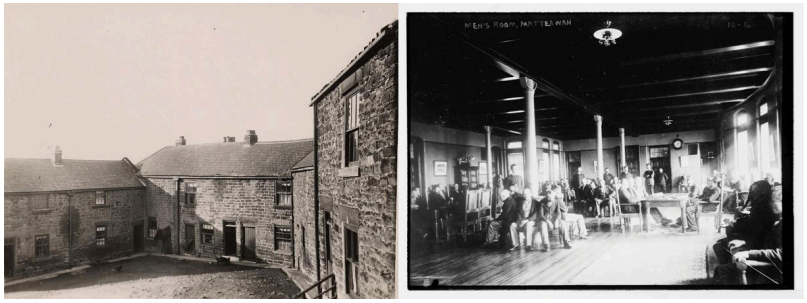


Figure 13.4 Asylums for People with Mental Disorders. Until the early 1900s people with mental disorders were often imprisoned in asylums such as these.

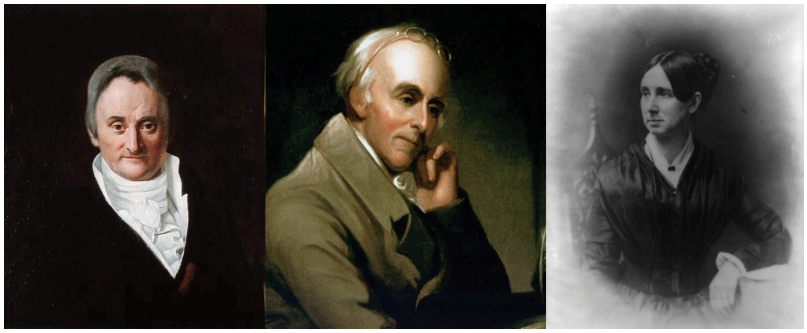


Figure 13.5 Portraits of Philippe Pine, Benjamin Rush, and Dorothea Dix. Reformers such as Philippe Pinel, Benjamin Rush, and Dorothea Dix fought the often brutal treatment of the mentally ill and were instrumental in changing perceptions and treatment of them.

Despite the progress made since the 1800s in public attitudes about those who suffer from psychological disorders, people, including police, coworkers, and even friends and family members, still stigmatize people with psychological disorders. A **stigma** refers to *a disgrace or defect that indicates that person belongs to a culturally devalued social group*. In some cases the stigma of mental illness is accompanied by the use of disrespectful and dehumanizing labels, including names such as crazy, nuts, mental, schizo, and retard.

The stigma of mental disorder affects people while they are ill, while they are healing, and even after they have healed (Schefer, 2003). On a community level, stigma can affect the kinds of services social service agencies give to people with mental illness, and the treatment provided to them and their families by schools, workplaces, places of worship, and health-care providers. Stigma about mental illness also leads to employment discrimination, despite the fact that with appropriate support, even people with severe psychological disorders are able to hold a job (Boardman, Grove, Perkins, & Shepherd, 2003; Leff & Warner, 2006; Ozawa & Yaeda, 2007; Pulido, Diaz, & Ramirez, 2004).

The mass media has a significant influence on society's attitude toward mental illness (Francis, Pirkis, Dunt, & Blood, 2001). While media portrayal of mental illness is often sympathetic, negative stereotypes still remain in newspapers, magazines, film, and television. (See the following video for an example.)

Television advertisements may perpetuate negative stereotypes about the mentally ill. For example, in 2010 Burger King ran an ad called "The King's Gone Crazy," in which the company's mascot runs around an office complex carrying out acts of violence and wreaking havoc.

Watch: "Burger King: The King's Gone Crazy" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYA7AnVwejo

The most significant problem of the stigmatization of those with psychological disorder is that it slows their recovery. People with mental problems internalize societal attitudes about mental illness, often becoming so embarrassed or ashamed that they conceal their difficulties and fail to seek treatment. Stigma leads to lowered self-esteem, increased isolation, and hopelessness, and it may negatively influence the individual's family and professional life (Hayward & Bright, 1997).

Despite all of these challenges, however, many people overcome psychological disorders and go on to lead productive lives. It is up to all of us who are informed about the causes of psychological disorder and the impact of these conditions on people to understand, first, that mental illness is not a "fault" any more than is cancer. People do not choose to have a mental illness. Second, we must all work to help overcome the stigma associated with disorder. Organizations such as the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) help by working to reduce the negative impact of stigma through education, community action, and individual support.

Diagnosing Disorder: The *DSM*

Psychologists have developed criteria that help them determine whether behaviour should be considered a psychological disorder and which of the many disorders particular behaviours indicate. These criteria are laid out in a 1,000-page manual known as the **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)**, *a document that provides a common language and standard criteria for the classification of mental disorders* (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The *DSM* is used by therapists, researchers, drug companies, health insurance companies, and policymakers in Canada and the United States to determine what services are appropriately provided for treating patients with given symptoms.

The first edition of the *DSM* was published in 1952 on the basis of census data and psychiatric hospital statistics. Since then, the *DSM* has been revised five times. The last major revision was the fourth edition (*DSM-IV*), published in 1994, and an update of that document was produced in 2000 (*DSM-IV-TR*). The fifth edition (*DSM-5*) is the most recent edition and was published in 2013. The Medical Council of Canada transitioned to the *DSM-5* recently (MCC, 2013). The *DSM-IV-TR* was designed in conjunction with the World Health Organization's 10th version of the *International Classification of Diseases* (*ICD-10*), which is used as a guide for mental disorders in Europe and other parts of the world.

The *DSM* does not attempt to specify the exact symptoms that are required for a diagnosis. Rather, the *DSM* uses categories, and patients whose symptoms are similar to the description of the category are said to have that disorder. The *DSM* frequently uses qualifiers to indicate different levels of severity within a category. For instance, an intellectual disability can be classified as mild, moderate, severe, or profound.

Each revision of the *DSM* takes into consideration new knowledge as well as changes in cultural norms about disorder. Homosexuality, for example, was listed as a mental disorder in the *DSM* until 1973, when it was removed in response to advocacy by politically active gay rights groups and changing social norms. The current version of the *DSM* lists about 400 disorders.

Although the *DSM* has been criticized regarding the nature of its categorization system (and it is frequently revised to attempt to address these criticisms), for the fact that it tends to classify more behaviours as disorders with every revision (even "academic problems" are now listed as a potential psychological disorder), and for the fact that it is primarily focused on Western illness, it is nevertheless a comprehensive, practical, and necessary tool that provides a common language to describe disorder. Most insurance companies will not pay for therapy unless the patient has a *DSM* diagnosis. The *DSM* approach allows a systematic assessment of the patient, taking into account the mental disorder in question, the patient's medical condition, psychological and cultural factors, and the way the patient functions in everyday life.

Diagnosis or Overdiagnosis? ADHD, Autistic Disorder, and Asperger's Disorder

Two common critiques of the *DSM* are that the categorization system leaves quite a bit of ambiguity in diagnosis and that it covers such a wide variety of behaviours. Let's take a closer look at three common disorders — *attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)*, *autistic disorder*, and *Asperger's disorder* — that have recently raised controversy because they are being diagnosed significantly more frequently than they were in the past.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Zack, aged seven years, has always had trouble settling down. He is easily bored and distracted. In school, he cannot stay in his seat for very long and he frequently does not follow instructions. He is constantly fidgeting or staring into space. Zack has poor social skills and may overreact when someone accidentally bumps into him or uses one of his toys. At home, he chatters constantly and rarely settles down to do a quiet activity, such as reading a book.

Symptoms such as Zack's are common among seven-year-olds, and particularly among boys. But what do the symptoms mean? Does Zack simply have a lot of energy and a short attention span? Boys mature more slowly than girls at this age, and perhaps Zack will catch up in the next few years. One possibility is for the parents and teachers to work with Zack to help him be more attentive, to put up with the behaviour, and to wait it out.

But many parents, often on the advice of the child's teacher, take their children to a psychologist for diagnosis. If Zack were taken for testing today, it is very likely that he would be diagnosed with a psychological disorder known as **attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**. **ADHD** is *a developmental behaviour disorder characterized by problems with focus, difficulty maintaining attention, and inability to concentrate, in which symptoms start before seven years of age* (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2014). Although it is usually first diagnosed in childhood, ADHD can remain problematic in adults, and up to 7% of university students are diagnosed with it (Weyandt & DuPaul, 2006). In adults the symptoms of ADHD include forgetfulness, difficulty paying attention to details, procrastination, disorganized work habits, and not listening to others. ADHD is about 70% more likely to occur in males than in females (Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005), and is often comorbid with other behavioural and conduct disorders.

The diagnosis of ADHD has quadrupled over the past 20 years, and it is now diagnosed in about one out of every 37 Canadian children. It is the most common psychological disorder among children in the world (Olfson, Gameroff, Marcus, & Jensen, 2003). ADHD is also being diagnosed much more frequently in adolescents and adults (Barkley, 1998). You might wonder what this all means. Are the increases in the diagnosis of ADHD because today's children and adolescents are actually more distracted and hyperactive than their parents were, due to a greater awareness of ADHD among teachers and parents, or due to psychologists and psychiatrists' tendency to overdiagnose the problem? Perhaps drug companies are also involved, because ADHD is often treated with prescription medications, including stimulants such as Ritalin.

Although skeptics argue that ADHD is overdiagnosed and is a handy excuse for behavioural problems, most psychologists believe that ADHD is a real disorder that is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Twin studies have found that ADHD is heritable (National Institute of

Mental Health, 2010), and neuroimaging studies have found that people with ADHD may have structural differences in areas of the brain that influence self-control and attention (Seidman, Valera, & Makris, 2005). Other studies have also pointed to environmental factors, such as a mother's smoking and drinking alcohol during pregnancy and the consumption of lead and food additives by those who are affected (Braun, Kahn, Froehlich, Auinger, & Lanphear, 2006; Linnet et al., 2003; McCann et al., 2007). Social factors, such as family stress and poverty, also contribute to ADHD (Burt, Krueger, McGue, & Iacono, 2001).

Autistic Disorder and Asperger's Disorder

Jared's kindergarten teacher has voiced her concern to Jared's parents about his difficulties with interacting with other children and his delay in developing normal language. Jared is able to maintain eye contact and enjoys mixing with other children, but he cannot communicate with them very well. He often responds to questions or comments with long-winded speeches about trucks or some other topic that interests him, and he seems to lack awareness of other children's wishes and needs.

Jared's concerned parents took him to a multidisciplinary child development centre for consultation. Here he was tested by a pediatric neurologist, a psychologist, and a child psychiatrist.

The pediatric neurologist found that Jared's hearing was normal, and there were no signs of any neurological disorder. He diagnosed Jared with a *pervasive developmental disorder*, because while his comprehension and expressive language was poor, he was still able to carry out nonverbal tasks, such as drawing a picture or doing a puzzle.

Based on her observation of Jared's difficulty interacting with his peers, and the fact that he did not respond warmly to his parents, the psychologist diagnosed Jared with **autistic disorder (autism)**, *a disorder of neural development characterized by impaired social interaction and communication and by restricted and repetitive behaviour, and in which symptoms begin before seven years of age*. The psychologist believed that the autism diagnosis was correct because, like other children with autism, Jared, has a poorly developed ability to see the world from the perspective of others, engages in unusual behaviours such as talking about trucks for hours, and responds to stimuli, such as the sound of a car or an airplane, in unusual ways.

The child psychiatrist believed that Jared's language problems and social skills were not severe enough to warrant a diagnosis of autistic disorder and instead proposed a diagnosis of **Asperger's disorder**, *a developmental disorder that affects a child's ability to socialize and communicate effectively with others and in which symptoms begin before seven years of age*. The symptoms of Asperger's are almost identical to that of autism (with the exception of a delay in language development), and the child psychiatrist simply saw these problems as less extreme.

Imagine how Jared's parents must have felt at this point. Clearly there is something wrong with their child, but even the experts cannot agree on exactly what the problem is. Diagnosing problems such as Jared's is difficult, yet the number of children like him is increasing dramatically. Disorders related to autism and Asperger's disorder now affect 0.68% of Canadian children (Statistics Canada, 2003). The milder forms of autism, and particularly Asperger's, have accounted for most of this increase in diagnosis.

Although for many years autism was thought to be primarily a socially determined disorder, in which parents who were cold, distant, and rejecting created the problem, current research suggests that biological factors are most important. The heritability of autism has been estimated to be as high as 90% (Freitag, 2007). Scientists speculate that autism is caused by an unknown genetically determined brain abnormality that occurs early in development. It is likely that several different brain sites are affected (Moldin, 2003), and the search for these areas is being conducted in many scientific laboratories.

But does Jared have autism or Asperger's? The problem is that diagnosis is not exact (remember the idea of categories), and the experts themselves are often unsure how to classify behaviour. Furthermore, the appropriate classifications change with time and new knowledge. Under the *DSM-5*, released on May 18, 2013, Asperger's Syndrome is now subsumed under the category of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Key Takeaways

- More psychologists are involved in the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorder than in any other endeavour, and those tasks are probably the most important psychologists face.
- The impact on people with a psychological disorder comes both from the disease itself and from the stigma associated with disorder.
- A psychological disorder is an ongoing dysfunctional pattern of thought, emotion, and behaviour that causes significant distress and that is considered deviant in that person's culture or society.
- According to the bio-psycho-social model, psychological disorders have biological, psychological, and social causes.
- It is difficult to diagnose psychological disorders, although the *DSM* provides guidelines that are based on a category system. The *DSM* is frequently revised, taking into consideration new knowledge as well as changes in cultural norms about disorder.
- There is controversy about the diagnosis of disorders such as ADHD, autistic disorder, and Asperger's disorder.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Do you or your friends hold stereotypes about the mentally ill? Can you think of or find clips from any films or other popular media that portray mental illness positively or negatively? Is it more or less acceptable to stereotype the mentally ill than to stereotype other social groups?
2. Consider the diagnosis of ADHD, autism, and Asperger's disorder from the biological, personal, and social-cultural perspectives. Do you think that these disorders are overdiagnosed? How might clinicians determine if ADHD is dysfunctional or distressing to the individual?

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Image Attributions

Figure 13.1: "beautiful-dancer-by-aisha-mitchell" by Gerard Van der Leun is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/deed.en_CA).

Figure 13.3: Engraving of a trepanation by Peter Treveris (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peter_Treveris_-_ engraving_of_Trepanation_for_Handywarke_of_surgeri_1525.png) is in public domain.

Figure 13.4: Sheriff Hill Lunatic Asylum by U.S. Library of Congress, (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sheriff_Hill_Lunatic_Asylum.jpg) is in the public domain.

Figure 13.5: Philippe Pinel portrait by Anna Mérimée (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Philippe_Pinel_%281745_-_1826%29.jpg) is in the public domain. Benjamin Rush Painting by Charles Wilson Peale (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Benjamin_Rush_Painting_by_Peale.jpg) is in the public domain. Dix Dorothea portrait by U.S. Library of Congress, (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dix-Dorothea-LOC.jpg) is in the public domain.

Long Descriptions

Table 13.1 long description: Prevalence rates for psychological disorders in Canada, 2012.

Disorder		Lifetime	12-month
Substance use disorder	Alcohol abuse or dependence	18.1%	3.2%
	Cannabis abuse or dependence	6.8%	1.3%
	Other drug abuse or dependence (excluding Cannabis)	4%	0.7%
Total substance use disorders		**21.6%**	**4.4%**
Mood Disorder	Major Depressive Episode	11.3%	4.7%
	Bipolar disorder	2.6%	1.5%
	Generalized anxiety disorder	8.7%	2.6%
Total mood disorders		**12.6%**	**5.4%**
Total Mental/Substance disorders		**33.1%**	**10.1%**

[Return to Table 13.1]

13.2 Anxiety and Dissociative Disorders: Fearing the World Around Us

Learning Objectives

1. Outline and describe the different types of anxiety disorders.
2. Outline and describe the different types of dissociative disorders.
3. Explain the biological and environmental causes of anxiety and dissociative disorders.

Anxiety, *the nervousness or agitation that we sometimes experience, often about something that is going to happen*, is a natural part of life. We all feel anxious at times, maybe when we think about our upcoming visit to the dentist or the presentation we have to give to our class next week. Anxiety is an important and useful human emotion; it is associated with the activation of the sympathetic nervous system and the physiological and behavioural responses that help protect us from danger. But too much anxiety can be debilitating, and every year millions of people suffer from **anxiety disorders**, which are *psychological disturbances marked by irrational fears, often of everyday objects and situations* (Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005).

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Consider the following, in which Chase describes her feelings of a persistent and exaggerated sense of anxiety, even when there is little or nothing in her life to provoke it:

> For a few months now I've had a really bad feeling inside of me. The best way to describe it is like a really bad feeling of negative inevitability, like something really bad is impending, but I don't know what. It's like I'm on trial for murder or I'm just waiting to be sent down for something. I have it all of the time but it gets worse in waves that come from nowhere with no apparent triggers. I used to get it before going out for nights out with friends, and it kinda stopped me from doing it as I'd rather not go out and stress about the feeling, but now I have it all the time so it doesn't really make a difference anymore (Chase, 2010).

Chase is probably suffering from a **generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)**, *a psychological disorder diagnosed in situations in which a person has been excessively worrying about money, health, work, family life, or relationships* for at least six months, even though he or she knows that the concerns are exaggerated, and when the anxiety causes significant distress and dysfunction.

In addition to their feelings of anxiety, people who suffer from GAD may also experience a variety of physical symptoms, including irritability, sleep troubles, difficulty concentrating, muscle aches, trembling, perspiration, and hot flashes. The sufferer cannot deal with what is causing the anxiety, nor

avoid it, because there is no clear cause for anxiety. In fact, the sufferer frequently knows, at least cognitively, that there is really nothing to worry about.

About 3% of the general population suffer from GAD, and about two-thirds are women (Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005; Robins & Regier, 1991). Generalized anxiety disorder is most likely to develop between the ages of seven and 40 years, but its influence may in some cases lessen with age (Rubio & Lopez-Ibor, 2007).

Panic Disorder

> When I was about 30 I had my first panic attack. I was driving home, my three little girls were in their car seats in the back, and all of a sudden I couldn't breathe, I broke out into a sweat, and my heart began racing and literally beating against my ribs! I thought I was going to die. I pulled off the road and put my head on the wheel. I remember songs playing on the CD for about 15 minutes and my kids' voices singing along. I was sure I'd never see them again. And then, it passed. I slowly got back on the road and drove home. I had no idea what it was (Ceejay, 2006).

Ceejay is experiencing **panic disorder**, *a psychological disorder characterized by sudden attacks of anxiety and terror that have led to significant behavioural changes in the person's life*. Symptoms of a panic attack include shortness of breath, heart palpitations, trembling, dizziness, choking sensations, nausea, and an intense feeling of dread or impending doom. Panic attacks can often be mistaken for heart attacks or other serious physical illnesses, and they may lead the person experiencing them to go to a hospital emergency room. Panic attacks may last as little as one or as much as 20 minutes, but they often peak and subside within about 10 minutes.

Sufferers are often anxious because they fear that they will have another attack. They focus their attention on the thoughts and images of their fears, becoming excessively sensitive to cues that signal the possibility of threat (MacLeod, Rutherford, Campbell, Ebsworthy, & Holker, 2002). They may also become unsure of the source of their arousal, misattributing it to situations that are not actually the cause. As a result, they may begin to avoid places where attacks have occurred in the past, such as driving, using an elevator, or being in public places. In Canada, 12-month and lifetime prevalence rates for panic attacks are 1.6% and 3.7%, respectively (Health Canada, 2006).

Phobias

A **phobia** (from the Greek word *phobos*, which means fear) is *a specific fear of a certain object, situation, or activity*. The fear experience can range from a sense of unease to a full-blown panic attack. Most people learn to live with their phobias, but for others the fear can be so debilitating that they go to extremes to avoid the fearful situation. A sufferer of arachnophobia (fear of spiders), for example, may refuse to enter a room until it has been checked thoroughly for spiders, or may refuse to vacation in the countryside because spiders may be there. Phobias are characterized by their specificity and their irrationality. A person with acrophobia (a fear of height) could fearlessly sail around the world on a sailboat with no concerns yet refuse to go out onto the balcony on the fifth floor of a building.

A common phobia is **social phobia**, *extreme shyness around people or discomfort in social situations*. Social phobia may be specific to a certain event, such as speaking in public or using a public restroom, or

it can be a more generalized anxiety toward almost all people outside of close family and friends. People with social phobia will often experience physical symptoms in public, such as sweating profusely, blushing, stuttering, nausea, and dizziness. They are convinced that everybody around them notices these symptoms as they are occurring. Women are somewhat more likely than men to suffer from social phobia.

The most incapacitating phobia is **agoraphobia**, defined as *anxiety about being in places or situations from which escape might be difficult or embarrassing, or in which help may not be available* (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Typical places that provoke the panic attacks are parking lots; crowded streets or shops; and bridges, tunnels, or expressways. People (mostly women) who suffer from agoraphobia may have great difficulty leaving their homes and interacting with other people.

Phobias are one of the most common anxiety disorders, are among the most common psychiatric illnesses, and are about twice as prevalent in women as in men (Fredrikson, Annas, Fischer, & Wik, 1996; Kessler, Meron-Ruscio, Shear, & Wittchen, 2009). In most cases phobias first appear in childhood and adolescence, and usually persist into adulthood. Table 13.3, "The Most Common Phobias," presents a list of the common phobias that are diagnosed by psychologists.

Table 13.3 The Most Common Phobias.

Name	Description
Acrophobia	Fear of heights
Agoraphobia	Fear of situations in which escape is difficult
Arachnophobia	Fear of spiders
Astraphobia	Fear of thunder and lightning
Claustrophobia	Fear of closed-in spaces
Cynophobia	Fear of dogs
Mysophobia	Fear of germs or dirt
Ophidiophobia	Fear of snakes
Pteromerhanophobia	Fear of flying
Social phobia	Fear of social situations
Trypanophobia	Fear of injections
Zoophobia	Fear of small animals

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorders

Although he is best known his perfect shots on the field, the British soccer star David Beckham (Figure 13.6, "David Beckham") also suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). As he describes it, "I have got this obsessive-compulsive disorder where I have to have everything in a straight line or everything has to be in pairs. I'll put my Pepsi cans in the fridge and if there's one too many then I'll put

it in another cupboard somewhere. I've got that problem. I'll go into a hotel room. Before I can relax, I have to move all the leaflets and all the books and put them in a drawer. Everything has to be perfect" (Dolan, 2006).

David Beckham's experience with obsessive behaviour is not unusual. We all get a little obsessive at times. We may continuously replay a favorite song in our heads, worry about getting the right outfit for an upcoming party, or find ourselves analyzing a series of numbers that seem to have a certain pattern. And our everyday compulsions can be useful. Going back inside the house once more to be sure that we really did turn off the sink faucet or checking the mirror a couple of times to be sure that our hair is combed are not necessarily bad ideas.

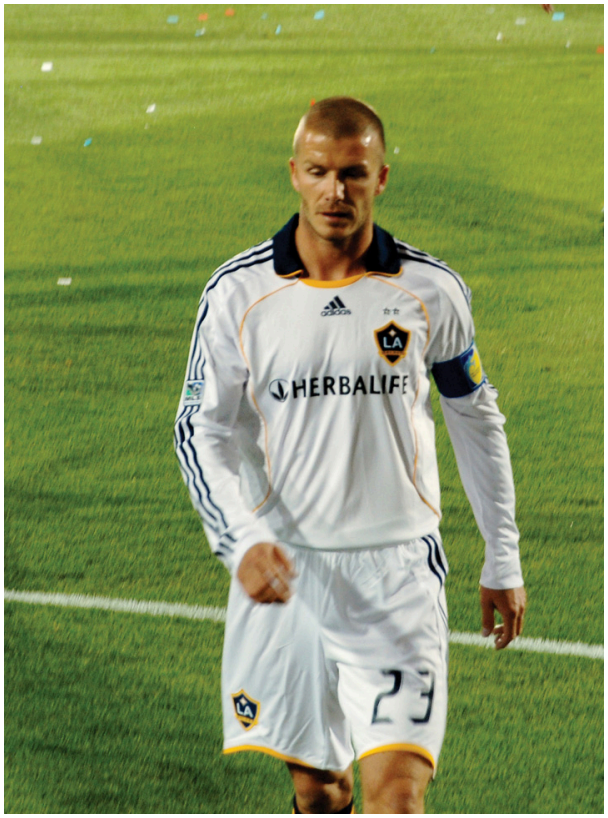


Figure 13.6 David Beckham. Source:

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is *a psychological disorder that is diagnosed when an individual continuously experiences distressing or frightening thoughts, and engages in* **obsessions** *(repetitive thoughts) or* **compulsions** *(repetitive behaviours) in an attempt to calm these thoughts*. OCD is diagnosed when the obsessive thoughts are so disturbing and the compulsive behaviours are so time consuming that they cause distress and significant dysfunction in a person's everyday life. Washing your hands once or even twice to make sure that they are clean is normal; washing them 20 times is not. Keeping your fridge neat is a good idea; spending hours a day on it is not. The sufferers know that these rituals are senseless, but they cannot bring themselves to stop them, in part because the relief that they feel after they perform them acts as a reinforcer, making the behaviour more likely to occur again.

Sufferers of OCD may avoid certain places that trigger the obsessive thoughts, or use alcohol or drugs to try to calm themselves down. OCD has a low prevalence rate (about 1% of the population in a given year) in relation to other anxiety disorders, and usually develops in adolescence or early adulthood

(Horwath & Weissman, 2000; Samuels & Nestadt, 1997). The course of OCD varies from person to person. Symptoms can come and go, decrease, or worsen over time.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

People who have survived a terrible ordeal, such as combat, torture, sexual assault, imprisonment, abuse, natural disasters, or the death of someone close to them may develop *post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)*. The anxiety may begin months or even years after the event. People with **PTSD** experience *high levels of anxiety* along with *reexperiencing* the trauma (flashbacks), and a strong desire to *avoid any reminders of the event*. They may lose interest in things they used to enjoy; startle easily; have difficulty feeling affection; and may experience terror, rage, depression, or insomnia. The symptoms may be felt especially when approaching the area where the event took place or when the anniversary of that event is near.

PTSD has affected approximately 8% of the population (Kessler, Berglund, Jin, Demler, & Walters, 2005). PTSD is a frequent outcome of childhood or adult*sexual abuse*, a disorder that has its own*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental DisordersDSM* diagnosis. Women are more likely to develop PTSD than men (Davidson, 2000).

Romeo Dallaire, seen in Figure 13.7 “Roméo Dallaire,” who served as Canadian Lieutenant General and Force Commander of UNAMIR, the ill-fated United Nations peacekeeping force for Rwanda in 1993 and 1994, attempted to stop the genocide that was being waged by Hutu extremists against Tutsis and Hutu moderates. Dallaire has worked to bring understanding of post-traumatic stress disorder to the general public. He was a visiting lecturer at several Canadian and American universities and a Fellow of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He has also pursued research on conflict resolution and the use of child soldiers and written several articles and chapters in publications on conflict resolution, humanitarian assistance, and human rights. Recently he wrote a book about the use of child soldiers, *They Fight Like Soldiers, They Die Like Children*.



Figure 13.7 Roméo Dallaire.

Risk factors for PTSD include the degree of the trauma's severity, the lack of family and community support, and additional life stressors (Brewin, Andrews, & Valentine, 2000). Many people with PTSD also suffer from another mental disorder, particularly depression, other anxiety disorders, and substance abuse (Brady, Back, & Coffey, 2004).

Dissociative Disorders: Losing the Self to Avoid Anxiety

In 1985, Michelle Philpots of England suffered a head injury in a motorcycle accident. Five years later, she reinjured her head in a serious car accident. These injuries did enough cumulative damage to Philpots's brain that she eventually started having seizures and was diagnosed with epilepsy. By 1994, she was suffering from anterograde amnesia and had completely lost the ability to create new memories, as all of her memories are wiped clean after she goes to sleep. Upon waking, she believes that it is still 1994. Even though Philpots was in a relationship with her husband long before she suffered amnesia, they did not actually get married until 1997. As a result, Philpots's husband has to show her their wedding pictures every morning in order to remind her that they're married. A popular movie, *50 First Dates,* is loosely based on Philpots's story.

People who experience anxiety are haunted by their memories and experiences, and although they desperately wish to get past them, they normally cannot. In some cases, however, such as with Michelle Philpots, people who become overwhelmed by stress experience an altered state of consciousness in which they become detached from the reality of what is happening to them. A **dissociative disorder** is *a condition that involves disruptions or breakdowns of memory, awareness, and identity*. The dissociation is used as a defence against the trauma.

Dissociative Amnesia and Fugue

Dissociative amnesia is *a psychological disorder that involves extensive, but selective, memory loss, but in which there is no physiological explanation for the forgetting* (van der Hart & Nijenhuis, 2009). The amnesia is normally brought on by a trauma — a situation that causes such painful anxiety that the individual "forgets" in order to escape. These kinds of trauma include disasters, accidents, physical abuse, rape, and other forms of severe stress (Cloninger & Dokucu, 2008). Although the personality of people who experience dissociative amnesia remains fundamentally unchanged — and they recall how to carry out daily tasks such as reading, writing, and problem solving — they tend to forget things about their personal lives — for instance, their name, age, and occupation — and may fail to recognize family and friends (van der Hart & Nijenhuis, 2009).

A related disorder, **dissociative fugue**, is *a psychological disorder in which an individual loses complete memory of his or her identity and may even assume a new one, often far from home*. The individual with dissociative fugue experiences all the symptoms of dissociative amnesia but also leaves the situation entirely. The fugue state may last for just a matter of hours or may continue for months. Recovery from the fugue state tends to be rapid, but when people recover they commonly have no memory of the stressful event that triggered the fugue or of events that occurred during their fugue state (Cardeña & Gleaves, 2007).

Dissociative Identity Disorder

You may remember the story of Sybil (a pseudonym for Shirley Ardell Mason, who was born in 1923), a person who, over a period of 40 years, claimed to possess 16 distinct personalities (Figure 13.8, "Sybil"). Mason was in therapy for many years trying to integrate these personalities into one complete self. A TV movie about Mason's life, starring Sally Field as Sybil, appeared in 1976.



Figure 13.8 Sybil. Shirley Ardell Mason.

Sybil suffered from the most severe of the dissociative disorders, *dissociative identity disorder*. **Dissociative identity disorder** is *a psychological disorder in which two or more distinct and individual personalities exist in the same person, and there is an extreme memory disruption regarding personal information about the other personalities* (van der Hart & Nijenhuis, 2009). Dissociative identity disorder was once known as *multiple personality disorder*, and this label is still sometimes used. This disorder is sometimes mistakenly referred to as schizophrenia.

In some cases of dissociative identity disorder, there can be more than 10 different personalities in one individual. Switches from one personality to another tend to occur suddenly, often triggered by a stressful situation (Gillig, 2009). The **host personality** is the *personality in control of the body most of the time*, and the *alter personalities* tend to differ from each other in terms of age, race, gender, language, manners, and even sexual orientation (Kluft, 1996). A shy, introverted individual may develop a boisterous, extroverted alter personality. Each personality has unique memories and social relationships (Dawson, 1990). Women are more frequently diagnosed with dissociative identity disorder than are men, and when they are diagnosed also tend to have more "personalities" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

The dissociative disorders are relatively rare conditions and are most frequently observed in adolescents and young adults. In part because they are so unusual and difficult to diagnose, clinicians and researchers disagree about the legitimacy of the disorders, and particularly about dissociative identity disorder. Some clinicians argue that the descriptions in the *DSM* accurately reflect the symptoms of these patients, whereas others believe that patients are faking, role-playing, or using the disorder as a way to justify behaviour (Barry-Walsh, 2005; Kihlstrom, 2004; Lilienfeld & Lynn, 2003; Lipsanen et al., 2004). Even the diagnosis of Shirley Ardell Mason (Sybil) is disputed. Some experts claim that Mason was highly hypnotizable and that her therapist unintentionally suggested the existence of her multiple personalities (Miller & Kantrowitz, 1999).

Explaining Anxiety and Dissociation Disorders

Both nature and nurture contribute to the development of anxiety disorders. In terms of our evolutionary experiences, humans have evolved to fear dangerous situations. Those of us who had a healthy fear of the dark, of storms, of high places, of closed spaces, and of spiders and snakes were more likely to survive and have descendants. Our evolutionary experience can account for some modern fears as well. A fear of elevators may be a modern version of our fear of closed spaces, while a fear of flying may be related to a fear of heights.

Also supporting the role of biology, anxiety disorders, including PTSD, are heritable (Hettema, Neale, & Kendler, 2001), and molecular genetics studies have found a variety of genes that are important in the expression of such disorders (Smoller et al., 2008; Thoeringer et al., 2009). Neuroimaging studies have found that anxiety disorders are linked to areas of the brain that are associated with emotion, blood pressure and heart rate, decision making, and action monitoring (Brown & McNiff, 2009; Damsa, Kosel, & Moussally, 2009). People who experience PTSD also have a somewhat smaller hippocampus in comparison with those who do not, and this difference leads them to have a very strong sensitivity to traumatic events (Gilbertson et al., 2002).

Whether the genetic predisposition to anxiety becomes expressed as a disorder depends on environmental factors. People who were abused in childhood are more likely to be anxious than those who had normal childhoods, even with the same genetic disposition to anxiety sensitivity (Stein, Schork, & Gelernter, 2008). And the most severe anxiety and dissociative disorders, such as PTSD, are usually triggered by the experience of a major stressful event. One problem is that modern life creates a lot of anxiety. Although our life expectancy and quality of life have improved over the past 50 years, the same period has also created a sharp increase in anxiety levels (Twenge, 2006). These changes suggest that most anxiety disorders stem from perceived, rather than actual, threats to our well-being.

Anxieties are also learned through classical and operant conditioning. Just as rats that are shocked in their cages develop a chronic anxiety toward their laboratory environment (which has become a conditioned stimulus for fear), rape victims may feel anxiety when passing by the scene of the crime, and victims of PTSD may react to memories or reminders of the stressful event. Classical conditioning may also be accompanied by *stimulus generalization*. A single dog bite can lead to generalized fear of all dogs; a panic attack that follows an embarrassing moment in one place may be generalized to a fear of all public places. People's responses to their anxieties are often reinforced. Behaviours become compulsive because they provide relief from the torment of anxious thoughts. Similarly, leaving or avoiding fear-inducing stimuli leads to feelings of calmness or relief, which reinforces phobic behaviour.

In contrast to the anxiety disorders, the causes of the dissociative orders are less clear, which is part of the reason that there is disagreement about their existence. Unlike most psychological orders, there is little evidence of a genetic predisposition; they seem to be almost entirely environmentally determined. Severe emotional trauma during childhood, such as physical or sexual abuse, coupled with a strong stressor, is typically cited as the underlying cause (Alpher, 1992; Cardeña & Gleaves, 2007). Kihlstrom, Glisky, and Angiulo (1994) suggest that people with personalities that lead them to fantasize and become intensely absorbed in their own personal experiences are more susceptible to developing dissociative disorders under stress. Dissociative disorders can in many cases be successfully treated, usually by psychotherapy (Lilienfeld & Lynn, 2003).

Key Takeaways

- Anxiety is a natural part of life, but too much anxiety can be debilitating. Every year millions of people suffer from anxiety disorders.
- People who suffer from generalized anxiety disorder experience anxiety, as well as a variety of physical symptoms.
- Panic disorder involves the experience of panic attacks, including shortness of breath, heart palpitations, trembling, and dizziness.
- Phobias are specific fears of a certain object, situation, or activity. Phobias are characterized by their specificity and their irrationality.
- A common phobia is social phobia — extreme shyness around people or discomfort in social situations.
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder is diagnosed when a person's repetitive thoughts are so disturbing and his or her compulsive behaviours so time consuming that they cause distress and significant disruption in a person's everyday life.
- People who have survived a terrible ordeal, such as combat, torture, rape, imprisonment, abuse, natural disasters, or the death of someone close to them, may develop PTSD.
- Dissociative disorders, including dissociative amnesia and dissociative fugue, are conditions that involve disruptions or breakdowns of memory, awareness, and identity. The dissociation is used as a defence against the trauma.
- Dissociative identity disorder, in which two or more distinct and individual personalities exist in the same person, is relatively rare and difficult to diagnose.
- Both nature and nurture contribute to the development of anxiety disorders.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Under what situations do you experience anxiety? Are these experiences rational or irrational? Does the anxiety keep you from doing some things that you would like to be able to do?
2. Do you or people you know suffer from phobias? If so, what are the phobias and how do you think the phobias began? Do they seem more genetic or more environmental in origin?

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Image Attributions

Figure 13.6: Photo courtesy of Raj Patel, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Beckham_LA_Galaxy_cropped.jpg

Figure 13.7: Roméo Dallaire by gdcgraphics (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rom%C3%A9oDallaire07TIFF.jpg) used under CC BY 2.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en).

Figure 13.8: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Shirley_Ardell_Mason.jpg.

13.3 Mood Disorders: Emotions as Illness

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize and differentiate the various forms of mood disorders, in particular dysthymia, major depressive disorder, and bipolar disorder.
2. Explain the genetic and environmental factors that increase the likelihood that a person will develop a mood disorder.

The everyday variations in our feelings of happiness and sadness reflect our **mood**, which can be defined as *the positive or negative feelings that are in the background of our everyday experiences*. In most cases we are in a relatively good mood, and this positive mood has some positive consequences — it encourages us to do what needs to be done and to make the most of the situations we are in (Isen, 2003). When we are in a good mood our thought processes open up, and we are more likely to approach others. We are more friendly and helpful to others when we are in a good mood than we are when we are in a bad mood, and we may think more creatively (De Dreu, Baas, & Nijstad, 2008). On the other hand, when we are in a bad mood we are more likely to prefer to be alone rather than interact with others, we focus on the negative things around us, and our creativity suffers.

It is not unusual to feel down or low at times, particularly after a painful event such as the death of someone close to us, a disappointment at work, or an argument with a partner. We often get depressed when we are tired, and many people report being particularly sad during the winter when the days are shorter. **Mood (or affective) disorders** are *psychological disorders in which the person's mood negatively influences his or her physical, perceptual, social, and cognitive processes*. People who suffer from mood disorders tend to experience more intense — and particularly more intense negative — moods. About 5% of the Canadian population suffers from a mood disorder in a given year (Health Canada, 2002).

The most common symptom of mood disorders is negative mood, also known as sadness or *depression (*Figure 13.9, "Depression"). Consider the feelings of this person, who was struggling with depression and was diagnosed with *major depressive disorder*:

> I didn't want to face anyone; I didn't want to talk to anyone. I didn't really want to do anything for myself…I couldn't sit down for a minute really to do anything that took deep concentration…It was like I had big huge weights on my legs and I was trying to swim and just kept sinking. And I'd get a little bit of air, just enough to survive and then I'd go back down again. It was just constantly, constantly just fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting. (National Institute of Mental Health, 2010)



Figure 13.9 Depression.

Mood disorders can occur at any age, and the median age of onset is 32 years (Kessler, Berglund, Demler, Jin, & Walters, 2005). Recurrence of depressive episodes is fairly common and is greatest for those who first experience depression before the age of 15 years. About twice as many women as men suffer from depression (Culbertson, 1997). This gender difference is consistent across many countries and cannot be explained entirely by the fact that women are more likely to seek treatment for their depression. Rates of depression have been increasing, although the reasons for this increase are not known (Kessler et al., 2003).

As you can see in the list below, the experience of depression has a variety of negative effects on our behaviours. In addition to the loss of interest, productivity, and social contact that accompanies depression, the person's sense of hopelessness and sadness may become so severe that he or she considers or even succeeds in committing suicide. In 2009 there were 3,890 suicides in Canada, a rate of 11.5 per 100,000 (Navaneelan, 2012). Almost all the people who commit suicide have a diagnosable psychiatric disorder at the time of their death (Statistics Canada, 2012; Sudak, 2005).

Behaviours Associated with Depression

- Changes in appetite; weight loss or gain
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions
- Fatigue and decreased energy
- Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and pessimism
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Irritability, restlessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex
- Loss of interest in personal appearance
- Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not improve with treatment
- Sleep disorders, either trouble sleeping or excessive sleeping
- Thoughts of suicide or attempts at suicide

Dysthymia and Major Depressive Disorder

The level of depression observed in people with mood disorders varies widely. People who experience depression for many years, to the point that it becomes to seem normal and part of their everyday life, and who feel that they are rarely or never happy, will likely be diagnosed with a mood disorder. If the depression is mild but long-lasting, they will be diagnosed with **dysthymia**, *a condition characterized by mild, but chronic, depressive symptoms that last for at least two years*.

If the depression continues and becomes even more severe, the diagnosis may become that of *major depressive disorder*. **Major depressive disorder (clinical depression)** is *a mental disorder characterized by an all-encompassing low mood accompanied by low self-esteem and loss of interest or pleasure in normally enjoyable activities*. Those who suffer from major depressive disorder feel an intense sadness, despair, and loss of interest in pursuits that once gave them pleasure. These negative feelings profoundly limit the individual's day-to-day functioning and ability to maintain and develop interests in life (Fairchild & Scogin, 2008).

About 4.8% of Canadian adults suffer from a major depressive disorder in any given year. Major depressive disorder occurs about twice as often in women as it does in men (Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005; Kessler et al., 2003). In some cases clinically depressed people lose contact with reality and may receive a diagnosis of *major depressive episode with psychotic features*. In these cases the depression includes delusions and hallucinations.

Bipolar Disorder

Juliana is a 21-year-old single woman. Over the past several years she had been treated by a psychologist for depression, but for the past few months she had been feeling a lot better. Juliana had landed a good job in a law office and found a steady boyfriend. She told her friends and parents that she had been feeling particularly good — her energy level was high and she was confident in herself and her life.

One day Juliana was feeling so good that she impulsively quit her new job and left town with her boyfriend on a road trip. But the trip didn't turn out well because Juliana became impulsive, impatient, and easily angered. Her euphoria continued, and in one of the towns that they visited she left her boyfriend and went to a party with some strangers that she had met. She danced into the early morning and ended up having sex with several of the men.

Eventually Juliana returned home to ask for money, but when her parents found out about her recent behaviour and confronted her, she acted aggressively and abusively to them, so they referred her to a social worker. Juliana was hospitalized, where she was diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

While dysthymia and major depressive disorder are characterized by overwhelming negative moods, **bipolar disorder** is *a psychological disorder characterized by swings in mood from overly "high" to sad and hopeless, and back again, with periods of near-normal mood in between*. Bipolar disorder is diagnosed in cases such as Juliana's, where experiences with depression are followed by a more normal period and then a period of mania or euphoria in which the person feels particularly awake, alive, excited, and involved in everyday activities but is also impulsive, agitated, and distracted. Without treatment, it is likely that Juliana would cycle back into depression and then eventually into mania again, with the likelihood that she would harm herself or others in the process.

Based on his intense bursts of artistic productivity (in one two-month period in 1889 he produced 60 paintings), personal writings, and behaviour (including cutting off his own ear), it is commonly thought that Vincent van Gogh suffered from bipolar disorder. He committed suicide at age 37 (Thomas & Bracken, 2001). His painting, *Starry Night*, is shown in Figure 13.10.



Figure 13.10 Starry Night by Vincent van Gogh.

Bipolar disorder is an often chronic and lifelong condition that may begin in childhood. Although the normal pattern involves swings from high to low, in some cases the person may experience both highs and lows at the same time. Determining whether a person has bipolar disorder is difficult due to the frequent presence of comorbidity with both depression and anxiety disorders. Bipolar disorder is more likely to be diagnosed when it is initially observed at an early age, when the frequency of depressive episodes is high, and when there is a sudden onset of the symptoms (Bowden, 2001).

Explaining Mood Disorders

Mood disorders are known to be at least in part genetic, because they are heritable (Berrettini, 2006; Merikangas et al., 2002). Neurotransmitters also play an important role in mood disorders. Serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine are all known to influence mood (Sher & Mann, 2003), and drugs that influence the actions of these chemicals are often used to treat mood disorders.

The brains of those with mood disorders may in some cases show structural differences from those without them. Videbech and Ravnkilde (2004) found that the hippocampus was smaller in depressed subjects than in normal subjects, and this may be the result of reduced *neurogenesis* (the process of generating new neurons) in depressed people (Warner-Schmidt & Duman, 2006). Antidepressant drugs may alleviate depression in part by increasing neurogenesis (Duman & Monteggia, 2006).

Research Focus: Using Molecular Genetics to Unravel the Causes of Depression

Avshalom Caspi and his colleagues (Caspi et al., 2003) used a longitudinal study to test whether genetic predispositions might lead some people, but not others, to suffer from depression as a result of environmental stress. Their research focused on a particular gene, the 5-HTT gene, which is known to be important in the production and use of the neurotransmitter *serotonin*. The researchers focused on this gene because serotonin

is known to be important in depression, and because selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) have been shown to be effective in treating depression.

People who experience stressful life events, for instance involving threat, loss, humiliation, or defeat, are likely to experience depression. But biological-situational models suggest that a person's sensitivity to stressful events depends on his or her genetic makeup. The researchers therefore expected that people with one type of genetic pattern would show depression following stress to a greater extent than people with a different type of genetic pattern.

The research included a sample of 1,037 adults from Dunedin, New Zealand. Genetic analysis on the basis of DNA samples allowed the researchers to divide the sample into two groups on the basis of the characteristics of their 5-HTT gene. One group had a short version (or *allele*) of the gene, whereas the other group did not have the short allele of the gene.

The participants also completed a measure where they indicated the number and severity of stressful life events that they had experienced over the past five years. The events included employment, financial, housing, health, and relationship stressors. The dependent measure in the study was the level of depression reported by the participant, as assessed using a structured interview test (Robins, Cottler, Bucholtz, & Compton, 1995).

As you can see in Figure 13.11 as the number of stressful experiences the participants reported increased from 0 to 4, depression also significantly increased for the participants with the short version of the gene (top panel). But for the participants who did not have a short allele, increasing stress did not increase depression (bottom panel). Furthermore, for the participants who experienced four stressors over the past five years, 33% of the participants who carried the short version of the gene became depressed, whereas only 17% of participants who did not have the short version did.

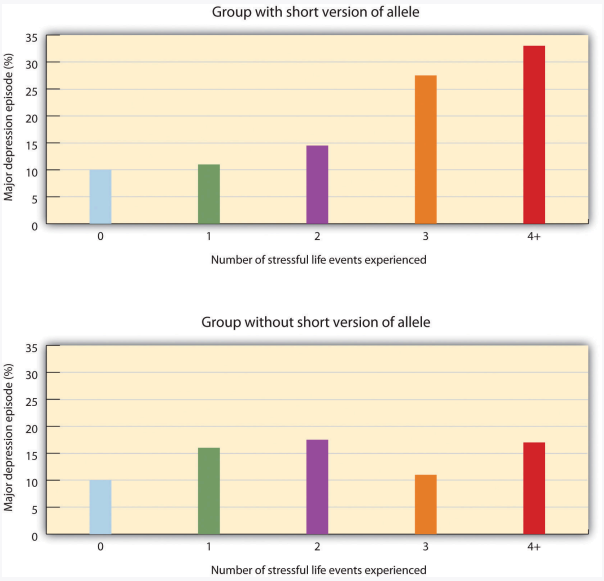


Figure 13.11 Research. [Long Description]

This important study provides an excellent example of how genes and environment work together: an individual's response to environmental stress was influenced by his or her genetic makeup.

But psychological and social determinants are also important in creating mood disorders and depression. In terms of psychological characteristics, mood states are influenced in large part by our cognitions. Negative thoughts about ourselves and our relationships to others create negative moods, and a goal of cognitive therapy for mood disorders is to attempt to change people's cognitions to be more positive.

Negative moods also create negative behaviours toward others, such as acting sad, slouching, and avoiding others, which may lead those others to respond negatively to the person, for instance by isolating that person, which then creates even more depression (Figure 13.12, "Cycle of Depression"). You can see how it might become difficult for people to break out of this "cycle of depression."



Figure 13.12 Cycle of Depression. Negative thoughts cause negative emotions which may cause negative behaviours which may lead to negative responses from others which may cause more negative thoughts.

Weissman et al. (1996) found that rates of depression varied greatly among countries, with the highest rates in European and North American countries and the lowest rates in Asian countries. These differences seem to be due to discrepancies between individual feelings and cultural expectations about what one should feel. People from European and North American cultures report that it is important to experience emotions such as happiness and excitement, whereas the Chinese report that it is more important to be stable and calm. Because North Americans may feel that they are not happy or excited but that they are supposed to be, this may increase their depression (Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006).

Key Takeaways

- Mood is the positive or negative feelings that are in the background of our everyday experiences.
- We all may get depressed in our daily lives, but people who suffer from mood disorders tend to experience more intense — and particularly more intense negative — moods.
- The most common symptom of mood disorders is negative mood.
- If a person experiences mild but long-lasting depression, he or she will be diagnosed with dysthymia. If the depression continues and becomes even more severe, the diagnosis may become that of major depressive disorder.
- Bipolar disorder is characterized by swings in mood from overly "high" to sad and hopeless, and back again, with periods of near-normal mood in between.
- Mood disorders are caused by the interplay among biological, psychological, and social variables.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Give a specific example of the negative cognitions, behaviours, and responses of others that might contribute to a cycle of depression like that shown in Figure 13.12, "Cycle of Depression."
2. Given the discussion about the causes of negative moods and depression, what might people do to try to feel better on days that they are experiencing negative moods?

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Image Attributions

Figure 13.9: "sad looking woman" by Bradley Gordon is licensed under CC BY 2.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en_CA)

Figure 13.11: Adapted from Caspi, A., et al., 2003.

Long Description

Figure 13.11 long description: Genetics and Causes of Depression

Number of stressful life events experienced	Major Depression Episode (%)	
	Group with short version of allele	Group without short version of allele
0	10%	10%
1	11%	16%
2	14%	18%
3	28%	11%
4 or more	33%	18%

[Return to Figure 13.11]

13.4 Schizophrenia: The Edge of Reality and Consciousness

Learning Objectives

1. Categorize and describe the three major symptoms of schizophrenia.
2. Differentiate the five types of schizophrenia and their characteristics.
3. Identify the biological and social factors that increase the likelihood that a person will develop schizophrenia.

The term *schizophrenia*, which in Greek means split mind, was first used to describe a psychological disorder by Eugen Bleuler (1857-1939), a Swiss psychiatrist who was studying patients who had very severe thought disorders. **Schizophrenia** is *a serious psychological disorder marked by delusions, hallucinations, loss of contact with reality, inappropriate affect, disorganized speech, social withdrawal, and deterioration of adaptive behaviour* (Figure 13.13, "Schizophrenia").



Figure 13.13 Schizophrenia. People with schizophrenia may exhibit disorganized behaviour, as this person does.

Schizophrenia is the most chronic and debilitating of all psychological disorders. It affects men and women equally, occurs in similar rates across ethnicities and across cultures, and affects at any one time approximately 350,000 people in Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2012). Onset of schizophrenia is usually between the ages of 16 and 30 and rarely after the age of 45 or in children (Mueser & McGurk, 2004; Nicolson, Lenane, Hamburger, Fernandez, Bedwell, & Rapoport, 2000).

Symptoms of Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is accompanied by a variety of symptoms, but not all patients have all of them (Lindenmayer & Khan, 2006). As you can see in Table 13.4, "Positive, Negative, and Cognitive Symptoms of Schizophrenia," the symptoms are divided into *positive symptoms*, *negative symptoms*, and *cognitive symptoms* (American Psychiatric Association, 2008; National Institute of Mental Health, 2010). Positive symptoms refer to the presence of abnormal behaviours or experiences (such as hallucinations) that are not observed in normal people, whereas negative symptoms (such as lack of affect and an inability to socialize with others) refer to the loss or deterioration of thoughts and behaviours that are typical of normal functioning. Finally, cognitive symptoms are the changes in cognitive processes that accompany schizophrenia (Skrabalo, 2000). Because the patient has lost contact with reality, we say that he or she is experiencing **psychosis**, which is *a psychological condition characterized by a loss of contact with reality*.

Table 13.4 Positive, Negative, and Cognitive Symptoms of Schizophrenia.

[Skip Table]		
Positive symptoms	**Negative symptoms**	**Cognitive symptoms**
Hallucinations	Social withdrawal	Poor executive control
Delusions (of grandeur or persecution)	Flat affect and lack of pleasure in everyday life	Trouble focusing
Derailment	Apathy and loss of motivation	Working memory problems
Grossly disorganized behaviour	Distorted sense of time	Poor problem-solving abilities
Inappropriate affect	Lack of goal-oriented activity	
Movement disorders	Limited speech	
	Poor hygiene and grooming	

People with schizophrenia almost always suffer from **hallucinations** — *imaginary sensations that occur in the absence of a real stimulus or which are gross distortions of a real stimulus*. Auditory hallucinations are the most common and are reported by approximately three-quarters of patients (Nicolson, Mayberg, Pennell, & Nemeroff, 2006). Schizophrenic patients frequently report hearing imaginary voices that curse them, comment on their behaviour, order them to do things, or warn them of danger (National Institute of Mental Health, 2009). Visual hallucinations are less common and frequently involve seeing God or the devil (De Sousa, 2007).

Schizophrenic people also commonly experience **delusions**, which are *false beliefs not commonly shared by others within one's culture, and maintained even though they are obviously out of touch with reality*. People with *delusions of grandeur* believe that they are important, famous, or powerful. They often become convinced that they are someone else, such as the president or God, or that they have some special talent or ability. Some claim to have been assigned to a special covert mission (Buchanan & Carpenter, 2005). People with *delusions of persecution* believe that a person or group seeks to harm

them. They may think that people are able to read their minds and control their thoughts (Maher, 2001). If a person suffers from delusions of persecution, there is a good chance that he or she will become violent, and this violence is typically directed at family members (Buchanan & Carpenter, 2005).

People suffering from schizophrenia also often suffer from the positive symptom of **derailment** — *the shifting from one subject to another, without following any one line of thought to conclusion* — and may exhibit *grossly disorganized behaviour* including inappropriate sexual behaviour, peculiar appearance and dress, unusual agitation (e.g., shouting and swearing), strange body movements, and awkward facial expressions. It is also common for schizophrenia sufferers to experience *inappropriate affect*. For example, a patient may laugh uncontrollably when hearing sad news. Movement disorders typically appear as agitated movements, such as repeating a certain motion again and again, but can in some cases include *catatonia*, a state in which a person does not move and is unresponsive to others (Janno, Holi, Tuisku, & Wahlbeck, 2004; Rosebush & Mazurek, 2010).

Negative symptoms of schizophrenia include social withdrawal, poor hygiene and grooming, poor problem-solving abilities, and a distorted sense of time (Skrabalo, 2000). Patients often suffer from flat affect, which means that they express almost no emotional response (e.g., they speak in a monotone and have a blank facial expression) even though they may report feeling emotions (Kring, 1999). Another negative symptom is the tendency toward incoherent language, such as repeating the speech of others ("echo speech"). Some schizophrenics experience motor disturbances, ranging from complete catatonia and apparent obliviousness to their environment to random and frenzied motor activity during which they become hyperactive and incoherent (Kirkpatrick & Tek, 2005).

Not all schizophrenic patients exhibit negative symptoms, but those who do also tend to have the poorest outcomes (Fenton & McGlashan, 1994). Negative symptoms are predictors of deteriorated functioning in everyday life and often make it impossible for sufferers to work or to care for themselves.

Cognitive symptoms of schizophrenia are typically difficult for outsiders to recognize but make it extremely difficult for the sufferer to lead a normal life. These symptoms include *difficulty comprehending information and using it to make decisions* (the **lack of executive control**), difficulty maintaining focus and attention, and problems with working memory (the ability to use information immediately after it is learned).

Explaining Schizophrenia

There is no single cause of schizophrenia. Rather, a variety of biological and environmental risk factors interact in a complex way to increase the likelihood that someone might develop schizophrenia (Walker, Kestler, Bollini, & Hochman, 2004).

Studies in molecular genetics have not yet identified the particular genes responsible for schizophrenia, but it is evident from research using family, twin, and adoption studies that genetics are important (Walker & Tessner, 2008). As you can see in Figure 13.14 ,"Genetic Disposition to Develop Schizophrenia," the likelihood of developing schizophrenia increases dramatically if a close relative also has the disease.

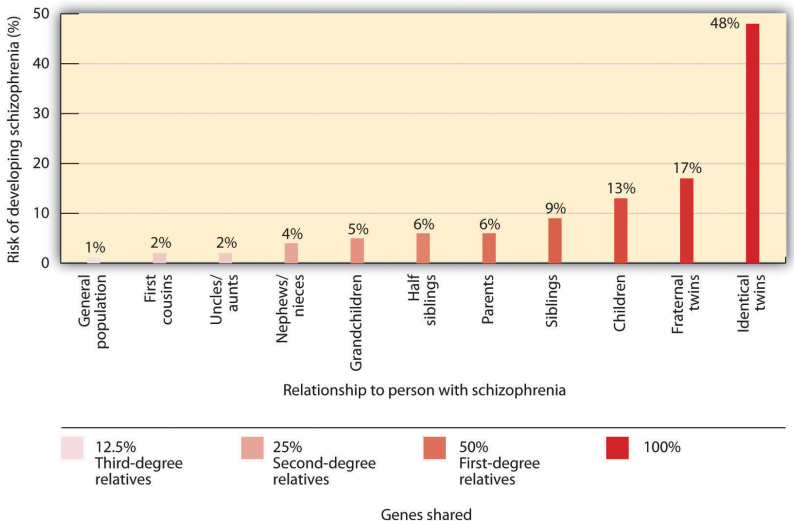


Figure 13.14 Genetic Disposition to Develop Schizophrenia. The risk of developing schizophrenia increases substantially if a person has a relative with the disease. [Long Description]

Neuroimaging studies have found some differences in brain structure between schizophrenic and normal patients. In some people with schizophrenia, the cerebral ventricles (fluid-filled spaces in the brain) are enlarged (Suddath, Christison, Torrey, Casanova, & Weinberger, 1990). People with schizophrenia also frequently show an overall loss of neurons in the cerebral cortex, and some show less activity in the frontal and temporal lobes, which are the areas of the brain involved in language, attention, and memory. This would explain the deterioration of functioning in language and thought processing that is commonly experienced by schizophrenic patients (Galderisi et al., 2008).

Many researchers believe that schizophrenia is caused in part by excess dopamine, and this theory is supported by the fact that most of the drugs useful in treating schizophrenia inhibit dopamine activity in the brain (Javitt & Laruelle, 2006). Levels of serotonin may also play a part (Inayama et al., 1996). But recent evidence suggests that the role of neurotransmitters in schizophrenia is more complicated than was once believed. It also remains unclear whether observed differences in the neurotransmitter systems of people with schizophrenia cause the disease, or if they are the result of the disease itself or its treatment (Csernansky & Grace, 1998).

A genetic predisposition to developing schizophrenia does not always develop into the actual disorder. Even if a person has an identical twin with schizophrenia, that person still has less than a 50% chance of developing it, and over 60% of all schizophrenic people have no first- or second-degree relatives with schizophrenia (Gottesman & Erlenmeyer-Kimling, 2001; Riley & Kendler, 2005). This suggests that there are important environmental causes as well.

One hypothesis is that schizophrenia is caused in part by disruptions to normal brain development in infancy that may be caused by poverty, malnutrition, and disease (Brown et al., 2004; Murray & Bramon, 2005; Susser et al., 1996; Waddington, Lane, Larkin, & O'Callaghan, 1999). Stress also increases the likelihood that a person will develop schizophrenic symptoms; onset and relapse of schizophrenia typically occur during periods of increased stress (Walker, Mittal, & Tessner, 2008). However, it may be that people who develop schizophrenia are more vulnerable to stress than others and not necessarily that

they experience more stress than others (Walker, Mittal, & Tessner, 2008). Many homeless people are likely to be suffering from undiagnosed schizophrenia.

Another social factor that has been found to be important in schizophrenia is the degree to which one or more of the patient's relatives is highly critical or highly emotional in their attitude toward the patient. Hooley and Hiller (1998) found that schizophrenic patients who ended a stay in a hospital and returned to a family with high expressed emotion were three times more likely to relapse than patients who returned to a family with low expressed emotion. It may be that the families with high expressed emotion are a source of stress to the patient.

Key Takeaways

- Schizophrenia is a serious psychological disorder marked by delusions, hallucinations, and loss of contact with reality.
- Schizophrenia is accompanied by a variety of symptoms, but not all patients have all of them.
- Because the schizophrenic patient has lost contact with reality, we say that he or she is experiencing psychosis.
- Positive symptoms of schizophrenia include hallucinations, delusions, derailment, disorganized behaviour, inappropriate affect, and catatonia.
- Negative symptoms of schizophrenia include social withdrawal, poor hygiene and grooming, poor problem-solving abilities, and a distorted sense of time.
- Cognitive symptoms of schizophrenia include difficulty comprehending and using information and problems maintaining focus.
- There is no single cause of schizophrenia. Rather, there are a variety of biological and environmental risk factors that interact in a complex way to increase the likelihood that someone might develop schizophrenia.

Exercise and Critical Thinking

1. How should society deal with people with schizophrenia? Is it better to keep patients in psychiatric facilities against their will, but where they can be observed and supported, or to allow them to live in the community, where they may commit violent crimes against themselves or others? What factors influence your opinion?

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Image Attributions

Figure 13.13: by Max Avdeev, http://www.flickr.com/photos/avdeev/4203380988

Figure 13.14: Adapted from Gottesman, 1991.

Long Descriptions

Figure 13.14 long description: Genetic disposition to develop schizophrenia

Genes shared	Relationship to person with schizophrenia	Risk of developing schizophrenia (%)
Third-degree relatives (12.5%)	First cousins	2%
	Uncles and aunts	2%
Second-degree relatives (25%)	Nephews and nieces	4%
	Grandchildren	5%
First-degree relatives (50%)	Half-siblings	6%
	Parents	6%
100%	Siblings	9%
	Children	13%
	Fraternal twins	17%
	Identical twins	48%

[Return to Figure 13.14]

13.5 Personality Disorders

Learning Objectives

1. Categorize the different types of personality disorders and differentiate antisocial personality disorder from borderline personality disorder.
2. Outline the biological and environmental factors that may contribute to a person developing a personality disorder.

To this point in the chapter we have considered the psychological disorders of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*) categorization system. A **personality disorder** is *a disorder characterized by inflexible patterns of thinking, feeling, or relating to others that cause problems in personal, social, and work situations*. Personality disorders tend to emerge during late childhood or adolescence and usually continue throughout adulthood (Widiger, 2006). The disorders can be problematic for the people who have them, but they are less likely to bring people to a therapist for treatment.

The personality disorders are summarized in Table 13.5, "Descriptions of the Personality Disorders." They are categorized into three types: those characterized by *odd or eccentric behaviour*, those characterized by *dramatic or erratic behaviour*, and those characterized by *anxious or inhibited* behaviour. As you consider the personality types described in Table 13.5, I'm sure you'll think of people that you know who have each of these traits, at least to some degree. Probably you know someone who seems a bit suspicious and paranoid, who feels that other people are always "ganging up on him," and who really do not trust other people very much. Perhaps you know someone who fits the bill of being overly dramatic — the "drama queen" who is always raising a stir and whose emotions seem to turn everything into a big deal. Or you might have a friend who is overly dependent on others and can't seem to get a life of her own.

The personality traits that make up the personality disorders are common — we see them in the people with whom we interact every day — yet they may become problematic when they are rigid, overused, or interfere with everyday behaviour (Lynam & Widiger, 2001). What is perhaps common to all the disorders is the person's inability to accurately understand and be sensitive to the motives and needs of the people around them.

Table 13.5 Descriptions of the Personality Disorders.[1]

[Skip Table]		
Cluster	**Personality disorder**	**Characteristics**
A. Odd/ eccentric	Schizotypal	Peculiar or eccentric manners of speaking or dressing. Strange beliefs. "Magical thinking" such as belief in ESP or telepathy. Difficulty forming relationships. May react oddly in conversation, not respond, or talk to self. Speech elaborate or difficult to follow. (Possibly a mild form of schizophrenia.)
	Paranoid	Distrust in others, suspicion that people have sinister motives. Apt to challenge the loyalties of friends and read hostile intentions into others' actions. Prone to anger and aggressive outbursts but otherwise emotionally cold. Often jealous, guarded, secretive, overly serious.
	Schizoid	Extreme introversion and withdrawal from relationships. Prefers to be alone, little interest in others. Humourless, distant, often absorbed with own thoughts and feelings, a daydreamer. Fearful of closeness, with poor social skills, often seen as a "loner."
B. Dramatic/ erratic	Antisocial	Impoverished moral sense or "conscience." History of deception, crime, legal problems, impulsive and aggressive or violent behaviour. Little emotional empathy or remorse for hurting others. Manipulative, careless, callous. At high risk for substance abuse and alcoholism.
	Borderline	Unstable moods and intense, stormy personal relationships. Frequent mood changes and anger, unpredictable impulses. Self-mutilation or suicidal threats or gestures to get attention or manipulate others. Self-image fluctuation and a tendency to see others as "all good" or "all bad."
	Histrionic	Constant attention seeking. Grandiose language, provocative dress, exaggerated illnesses, all to gain attention. Believes that everyone loves him. Emotional, lively, overly dramatic, enthusiastic, and excessively flirtatious.
	Narcissistic	Inflated sense of self-importance, absorbed by fantasies of self and success. Exaggerates own achievement, assumes others will recognize they are superior. Good first impressions but poor longer-term relationships. Exploitative of others.
C. Anxious/ inhibited	Avoidant	Socially anxious and uncomfortable unless he or she is confident of being liked. In contrast with schizoid person, yearns for social contact. Fears criticism and worries about being embarrassed in front of others. Avoids social situations due to fear of rejection.
	Dependent	Submissive, dependent, requiring excessive approval, reassurance, and advice. Clings to people and fears losing them. Lacking self-confidence. Uncomfortable when alone. May be devastated by end of close relationship or suicidal if breakup is threatened.
	Obsessive-compulsive	Conscientious, orderly, perfectionist. Excessive need to do everything "right." Inflexibly high standards and caution can interfere with his or her productivity. Fear of errors can make this person strict and controlling. Poor expression of emotions. (Not the same as obsessive-compulsive disorder.)

The personality disorders create a bit of a problem for diagnosis. For one, it is frequently difficult for the clinician to accurately diagnose which of the many personality disorders a person has, although the friends and colleagues of the person can generally do a good job of it (Oltmanns & Turkheimer, 2006). And the personality disorders are highly comorbid; if a person has one, it's likely that he or she has others as well. Also, the number of people with personality disorders is estimated to be as high as 15% of the population (Grant et al., 2004), which might make us wonder if these are really disorders in any real sense of the word.

Although they are considered as separate disorders, the personality disorders are essentially milder versions of more severe disorders (Huang et al., 2009). For example, *obsessive-compulsive personality disorder* is a milder version of **obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)**, and *schizoid and schizotypal personality disorders* are characterized by symptoms similar to those of schizophrenia. This overlap in classification causes some confusion, and some theorists have argued that the personality disorders should be eliminated from the *DSM*. But clinicians normally differentiate Axis I and Axis II disorders, and thus the distinction is useful for them (Krueger, 2005; Phillips, Yen, & Gunderson, 2003; Verheul, 2005).

Although it is not possible to consider the characteristics of each of the personality disorders in this book, let's focus on two that have important implications for behaviour. The first, *borderline personality disorder (BPD)*, is important because it is so often associated with suicide, and the second, *antisocial personality disorder (APD)*, because it is the foundation of criminal behaviour. Borderline and antisocial personality disorders are also good examples to consider because they are so clearly differentiated in terms of their focus. BPD (more frequently found in women than men) is known as an *internalizing disorder* because the behaviours that it entails (e.g., suicide and self-mutilation) are mostly directed toward the self. APD (mostly found in men), on the other hand, is a type of *externalizing disorder* in which the problem behaviours (e.g., lying, fighting, vandalism, and other criminal activity) focus primarily on harm to others.

Borderline Personality Disorder

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is *a psychological disorder characterized by a prolonged disturbance of personality accompanied by mood swings, unstable personal relationships, identity problems, threats of self-destructive behaviour, fears of abandonment, and impulsivity*. BPD is widely diagnosed — up to 20% of psychiatric patients are given the diagnosis, and it may occur in up to 2% of the general population (Hyman, 2002). About three-quarters of diagnosed cases of BDP are women.

People with BPD fear being abandoned by others. They often show a clinging dependency on the other person and engage in manipulation to try to maintain the relationship. They become angry if the other person limits the relationship, but also deny that they care about the person. As a defence against fear of abandonment, borderline people are compulsively social. But their behaviours, including their intense anger, demands, and suspiciousness, repel people.

People with BPD often deal with stress by engaging in self-destructive behaviours, for instance by being sexually promiscuous, getting into fights, binge eating and purging, engaging in self-mutilation or drug abuse, and threatening suicide. These behaviours are designed to call forth a "saving" response from the other person. People with BPD are a continuing burden for police, hospitals, and therapists. Borderline individuals also show disturbance in their concepts of identity: they are uncertain about self-image,

gender identity, values, loyalties, and goals. They may have chronic feelings of emptiness or boredom and be unable to tolerate being alone.

BPD has both genetic and environmental roots. In terms of genetics, research has found that those with BPD frequently have neurotransmitter imbalances (Zweig-Frank et al., 2006), and the disorder is heritable (Minzenberg, Poole, & Vinogradov, 2008). In terms of environment, many theories about the causes of BPD focus on a disturbed early relationship between the child and his or her parents. Some theories focus on the development of attachment in early childhood, while others point to parents who fail to provide adequate attention to the child's feelings. Others focus on parental abuse (both sexual and physical) in adolescence, as well as on divorce, alcoholism, and other stressors (Lobbestael & Arntz, 2009). The dangers of BPD are greater when they are associated with childhood sexual abuse, early age of onset, substance abuse, and aggressive behaviours. The problems are amplified when the diagnosis is comorbid (as it often is) with other disorders, such as substance abuse disorder, major depressive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Skodol et al., 2002).

Research Focus: Affective and Cognitive Deficits in BPD

Posner et al. (2003) hypothesized that the difficulty that individuals with BPD have in regulating their lives (e.g., in developing meaningful relationships with other people) may be due to imbalances in the fast and slow emotional pathways in the brain. Specifically, they hypothesized that the fast emotional pathway through the amygdala is too active, and the slow cognitive-emotional pathway through the prefrontal cortex is not active enough in those with BPD.

The participants in their research were 16 patients with BPD and 14 healthy comparison participants. All participants were tested in a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) machine while they performed a task that required them to read emotional and nonemotional words, and then press a button as quickly as possible whenever a word appeared in a normal font and not press the button whenever the word appeared in an italicized font.

The researchers found that while all participants performed the task well, the patients with BPD had more errors than the controls (both in terms of pressing the button when they should not have and not pressing it when they should have). These errors primarily occurred on the negative emotional words.

Figure 13.15 shows the comparison of the level of brain activity in the emotional centres in the amygdala (left panel) and the prefrontal cortex (right panel). In comparison to the controls, the BPD patients showed relatively larger affective responses when they were attempting to quickly respond to the negative emotions, and showed less cognitive activity in the prefrontal cortex in the same conditions. This research suggests that excessive affective reactions and lessened cognitive reactions to emotional stimuli may contribute to the emotional and behavioural volatility of borderline patients.

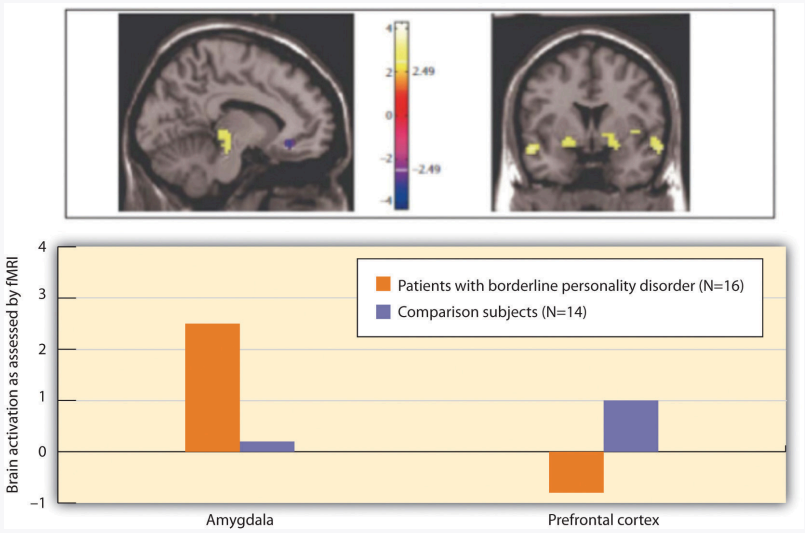


Figure 13.15 BPD Research. Individuals with BPD showed less cognitive and greater emotional brain activity in response to negative emotional words.

Antisocial Personality Disorder (APD)

In contrast to borderline personality disorder, which involves primarily feelings of inadequacy and a fear of abandonment, antisocial personality disorder (APD) is characterized by a disregard of the rights of others, and a tendency to violate those rights without being concerned about doing so. **APD** is *a pervasive pattern of violation of the rights of others that begins in childhood or early adolescence and continues into adulthood*. APD is about three times more likely to be diagnosed in men than in women. To be diagnosed with APD the person must be 18 years of age or older and have a documented history of conduct disorder before the age of 15. People having antisocial personality disorder are sometimes referred to as “sociopaths” or “psychopaths.”

People with APD feel little distress for the pain they cause others. They lie, engage in violence against animals and people, and frequently have drug and alcohol abuse problems. They are egocentric and frequently impulsive, for instance suddenly changing jobs or relationships. People with APD soon end up with a criminal record and often spend time incarcerated. The intensity of antisocial symptoms tends to peak during the 20s and then may decrease over time.

Biological and environmental factors are both implicated in the development of antisocial personality disorder (Rhee & Waldman, 2002). Twin and adoption studies suggest a genetic predisposition (Rhee & Waldman, 2002), and biological abnormalities include low autonomic activity during stress, biochemical imbalances, right hemisphere abnormalities, and reduced gray matter in the frontal lobes (Lyons-Ruth et al., 2007; Raine, Lencz, Bihrle, LaCasse, & Colletti, 2000). Environmental factors include neglectful and abusive parenting styles, such as the use of harsh and inconsistent discipline and inappropriate modelling (Huesmann & Kirwil, 2007).

Key Takeaways

- A personality disorder is a disorder characterized by inflexible patterns of thinking, feeling, or relating to others that causes problems in personal, social, and work situations.
- Personality disorders are categorized into three clusters, characterized by odd or eccentric behaviour, dramatic or erratic behaviour, and anxious or inhibited behaviour.
- Although they are considered as separate disorders, the personality disorders are essentially milder versions of more severe Axis I disorders.
- *Borderline personality disorder* is a prolonged disturbance of personality accompanied by mood swings, unstable personal relationships, and identity problems, and it is often associated with suicide.
- *Antisocial personality disorder* is characterized by a disregard of others' rights and a tendency to violate those rights without being concerned about doing so.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. What characteristics of men and women do you think make them more likely to have APD and BDP, respectively? Do these differences seem to you to be more genetic or more environmental?
2. Do you know people who suffer from antisocial personality disorder? What behaviours do they engage in, and why are these behaviours so harmful to them and others?

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Image Attributions

Figure 13.15: Adapted from Posner et al., 2003.

Notes

1. Adapted from American Psychiatric Association, 2013

13.6 Somatoform, Factitious, and Sexual Disorders

Learning Objectives

1. Differentiate the symptoms of somatoform and factitious disorders.
2. Summarize the sexual disorders and paraphilias.

Although mood, anxiety, and personality disorders represent the most prevalent psychological disorders, there are a variety of other disorders that affect people. This complexity of symptoms and classifications helps make it clear how difficult it is to accurately and consistently diagnose and treat psychological disorders. In this section we will review three other disorders that are of interest to psychologists and that affect millions of people: *somatoform disorder*, *factitious disorder*, and *sexual disorder*.

Somatoform and Factitious Disorders

Somatoform and factitious disorders both occur in cases where psychological disorders are related to the experience or expression of physical symptoms. The important difference between them is that in somatoform disorders the physical symptoms are real, whereas in factitious disorders they are not.

One case in which psychological problems create real physical impairments is in the somatoform disorder known as somatization disorder (also called Briquet's syndrome or Brissaud-Marie syndrome). **Somatization disorder** is *a psychological disorder in which a person experiences numerous long-lasting but seemingly unrelated physical ailments that have no identifiable physical cause*. A person with somatization disorder might complain of joint aches, vomiting, nausea, muscle weakness, and sexual dysfunction. The symptoms that result from a somatoform disorder are real and cause distress to the individual, but they are due entirely to psychological factors. The somatoform disorder is more likely to occur when the person is under stress, and it may disappear naturally over time. Somatoform disorder is more common in women than in men, and usually first appears in adolescents or those in their early 20s.

Another type of somatoform disorder is **conversion disorder**, *a psychological disorder in which patients experience specific neurological symptoms such as numbness, blindness, or paralysis, but where no neurological explanation is observed or possible* (Agaki & House, 2001). The difference between conversion and somatoform disorders is in terms of the location of the physical complaint. In somatoform disorder the malaise is general, whereas in conversion disorder there are one or several specific neurological symptoms.

Conversion disorder gets its name from the idea that the existing psychological disorder is "converted" into the physical symptoms. It was the observation of conversion disorder (then known as *hysteria*) that first led Sigmund Freud to become interested in the psychological aspects of illness in his work with Jean-Martin Charcot. Conversion disorder is not common (a prevalence of less than 1%), but it may

in many cases be undiagnosed. Conversion disorder occurs twice or more frequently in women than in men.

There are two somatoform disorders that involve preoccupations. We have seen an example of one of them, *body dysmorphic disorder*, in the Chapter 13, "Defining Psychological Disorders," opener. Body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) is a psychological disorder accompanied by an imagined or exaggerated defect in body parts or body odour. There are no sex differences in prevalence, but men are most often obsessed with their body build, their genitals, and hair loss, whereas women are more often obsessed with their breasts and body shape. BDD usually begins in adolescence.

Hypochondriasis (hypochondria) is another *psychological disorder that is focused on preoccupation, accompanied by excessive worry about having a serious illness*. The patient often misinterprets normal body symptoms such as coughing, perspiring, headaches, or a rapid heartbeat as signs of serious illness, and the patient's concerns remain even after he or she has been medically evaluated and assured that the health concerns are unfounded. Many people with hypochondriasis focus on a particular symptom such as stomach problems or heart palpitations.

Two other psychological disorders relate to the experience of physical problems that are not real. Patients with factitious disorder fake physical symptoms in large part because they enjoy the attention and treatment that they receive in the hospital. They may lie about symptoms, alter diagnostic tests such as urine samples to mimic disease, or even injure themselves to bring on more symptoms. In the more severe form of factitious disorder known as **Münchausen syndrome**, *the patient has a lifelong pattern of a series of successive hospitalizations for faked symptoms*.

Factitious disorder is distinguished from another related disorder known as **malingering**, which also *involves fabricating the symptoms of mental or physical disorders, but where the motivation for doing so is to gain financial reward; to avoid school, work, or military service; to obtain drugs; or to avoid prosecution*.

The somatoform disorders are almost always comorbid with other psychological disorders, including anxiety and depression and dissociative states (Smith et al., 2005). People with BDD, for instance, are often unable to leave their house, are severely depressed or anxious, and may also suffer from other personality disorders.

Somatoform and factitious disorders are problematic not only for the patient; they also have societal costs. People with these disorders frequently follow through with potentially dangerous medical tests and are at risk for drug addiction from the drugs they are given and for injury from the complications of the operations they submit to (Bass, Peveler, & House, 2001; Looper & Kirmayer, 2002). In addition, people with these disorders may take up hospital space that is needed for people who are really ill. To help combat these costs, emergency room and hospital workers use a variety of tests for detecting these disorders.

Sexual Disorders

Sexual disorders refer to a variety of problems revolving around performing or enjoying sex. These include disorders related to *sexual function*, *gender identity*, and *sexual preference*.

Disorders of Sexual Function

Sexual dysfunction is a *psychological disorder that occurs when the physical sexual response cycle is inadequate for reproduction or for sexual enjoyment*. There are a variety of potential problems (Table 13.6, "Sexual Dysfunctions as Described in the *DSM* "), and their nature varies for men and women (Figure 13.16, "Prevalence of Sexual Dysfunction in Men and Women"). Sexual disorders affect up to 43% of women and 31% of men (Laumann, Paik, & Rosen, 1999). Sexual disorders are often difficult to diagnose because in many cases the dysfunction occurs at the partner level (one or both of the partners are disappointed with the sexual experience) rather than at the individual level.

Table 13.6 Sexual Dysfunctions as Described in the *DSM*.[1]

[Skip Table]	
Disorder	**Description**
Hypoactive sexual desire disorder	Persistently or recurrently deficient (or absent) sexual fantasies and desire for sexual activity
Sexual aversion disorder	Persistent or recurrent extreme aversion to, and avoidance of, all (or almost all) genital sexual contact with a sexual partner
Female sexual arousal disorder	Persistent or recurrent inability to attain, or to maintain until completion of the sexual activity, an adequate lubrication-swelling response of sexual excitement
Male erectile disorder	Persistent or recurrent inability to attain or maintain an adequate erection until completion of the sexual activity
Female orgasmic disorder	Persistent or recurrent delay in, or absence of, orgasm following a normal sexual excitement phase
Male orgasmic disorder	Persistent or recurrent delay in, or absence of, orgasm following a normal sexual excitement phase during sexual activity
Premature ejaculation	Persistent or recurrent ejaculation with minimal sexual stimulation before, on, or shortly after penetration and before the person wishes it
Dyspareunia	Recurrent or persistent genital pain associated with sexual intercourse in either a male or a female
Vaginismus	Recurrent or persistent involuntary spasm of the musculature of the outer third of the vagina that interferes with sexual intercourse

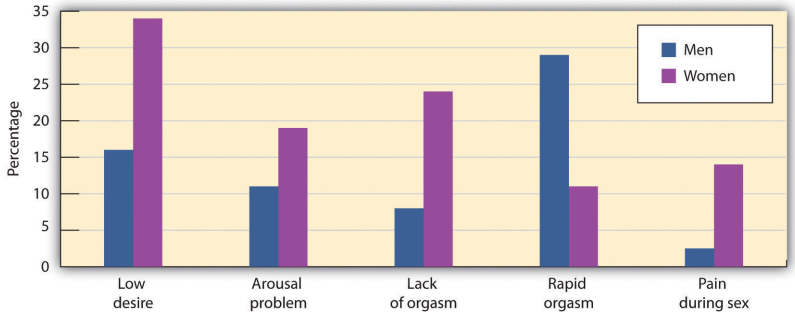


Figure 13.16 Prevalence of Sexual Dysfunction in Men and Women. This chart shows the percentage of respondents who reported each type of sexual difficulty over the previous 12 months. [Long Description]

Hypoactive sexual desire disorder, one of the most common sexual dysfunctions, refers to a *persistently low or nonexistent sexual desire*. How low sexual desire is defined, however, is problematic because it depends on the person's sex and age, on cultural norms, as well as on the relative desires of the individual and the partner. Again, the importance of dysfunction and distress is critical. If neither partner is much interested in sex, for instance, the lack of interest may not cause a problem. Hypoactive sexual desire disorder is often comorbid with other psychological disorders, including mood disorders and problems with sexual arousal or sexual pain (Donahey & Carroll, 1993).

Sexual aversion disorder refers to an *avoidance of sexual behaviour caused by disgust or aversion to genital contact*. The aversion may be a phobic reaction to an early sexual experience or sexual abuse, a misattribution of negative emotions to sex that are actually caused by something else, or a reaction to a sexual problem such as erectile dysfunction (Kingsberg & Janata, 2003).

Female sexual arousal disorder refers to *persistent difficulties becoming sexually aroused or sufficiently lubricated in response to sexual stimulation in women*. The disorder may be comorbid with hypoactive sexual desire or orgasmic disorder, or mood or anxiety disorders.

Male erectile disorder (sometimes referred to as impotence) refers to *persistent and dysfunctional difficulty in achieving or maintaining an erection sufficient to complete sexual activity*. Prevalence rates vary by age, from about 6% of university-aged males to 35% of men in their 70s. About half the men aged 40 to 70 report having problems getting or maintaining an erection "now and then."

Most erectile dysfunction occurs as a result of physiological factors, including illness, and the use of medications, alcohol, or other recreational drugs. Erectile dysfunction is also related to anxiety, low self-esteem, and general problems in the particular relationship. Assessment for physiological causes of erectile dysfunction is made using a test in which a device is attached to the man's penis before he goes to sleep. During the night the man may have an erection, and if he does the device records its occurrence. If the man has erections while sleeping, this provides assurance that the problem is not physiological.

One of the most common sexual dysfunctions in men is *premature ejaculation*. It is not possible to exactly specify what defines premature, but if the man ejaculates before or immediately upon insertion of the penis into the vagina, most clinicians will identify the response as premature. Most men diagnosed with **premature ejaculation** *ejaculate within one minute after insertion* (Waldinger, 2003). Premature ejaculation is one of the most prevalent sexual disorders and causes much anxiety in many men.

Female orgasmic disorder refers to *the inability to obtain orgasm in women*. The woman enjoys sex and foreplay and shows normal signs of sexual arousal but cannot reach the peak experience of orgasm. *Male orgasmic disorder* includes a delayed ejaculation (very rare) or (more commonly) premature ejaculation.

Finally, **dyspareunia** and **vaginismus** refer to *sexual pain disorders that create pain and involuntary spasms, respectively, in women, and thus make it painful to have sex*. In most cases these problems are biological and can be treated with hormones, creams, or surgery.

Sexual dysfunctions have a variety of causes. In some cases the primary problem is biological, and the disorder may be treated with medication. Other causes include a repressive upbringing in which the parents have taught the person that sex is dirty or sinful, or the experience of sexual abuse (Beitchman, Zucker, Hood, & DaCosta, 1992). In some cases the sex problem may be due to the fact that the person has a different sexual orientation than he or she is engaging in. Other problems include poor communication between the partners, a lack of sexual skills, and (particularly for men) performance anxiety.

It is important to remember that most sexual disorders are temporary — they are experienced for a period of time, in certain situations or with certain partners, and then (without, or if necessary with, the help of therapy) go away. It is also important to remember that there are a wide variety of sex acts that are enjoyable. Couples with happy sex lives work together to find ways that work best for their own styles. Sexual problems often develop when the partners do not communicate well with each other, and are reduced when they do.

Gender Identity Disorder

Gender identity refers to the *identification with a sex*. Most children develop an appropriate attachment to their own sex. In some cases, however, children or adolescents — sometimes even those as young as three or four years old — believe that they have been trapped in a body of the wrong sex. **Gender identity disorder** (GID, or transsexualism) is diagnosed *when the individual displays a repeated and strong desire to be the other sex, a persistent discomfort with one's sex, and a belief that one was born the wrong sex, accompanied by significant dysfunction and distress*. GID usually appears in adolescence or adulthood and may intensify over time (Bower, 2001). Since many cultures strongly disapprove of cross-gender behaviour, it often results in significant problems for affected persons and those in close relationships with them.

Gender identity disorder is rare, occurring only in about one in every 12,000 males and one in every 30,000 females (Olsson & Möller, 2003). The causes of GID are as of yet unknown, although they seem to be related in part to the amount of testosterone and other hormones in the uterus (Kraemer, Noll, Delsignore, Milos, Schnyder, & Hepp, 2009).

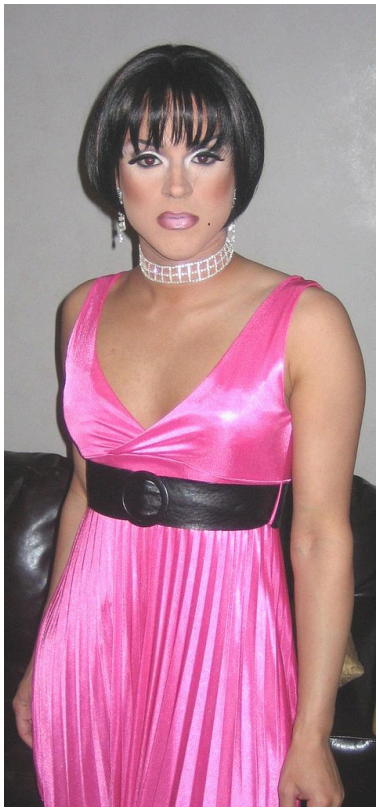


Figure 13.17 Transsexuality.

The classification of GID as a mental disorder has been challenged because people who suffer from GID do not regard their own cross-gender feelings and behaviours as a disorder and do not feel that they are distressed or dysfunctional (Figure 13.17, "Transsexuality"). People suffering from GID often argue that a "normal" gender identity may not necessarily involve an identification with one's own biological sex. GID represents another example, then, of how culture defines disorder; the 2013 *DSM* has changed the categorizations used in this domain.

Paraphilias

A third class of sexual disorders relates to sexual practices and interest. In some cases sexual interest is so unusual that it is known as a **paraphilia** — *a sexual deviation where sexual arousal is obtained from a consistent pattern of inappropriate responses to objects or people, and in which the behaviours associated with the feelings are distressing and dysfunctional*. Paraphilias may sometimes be only fantasies, and in other cases may result in actual sexual behaviour (Table 13.7, "Some Paraphilias").

Table 13.7 Some Paraphilias.

Paraphilia	Behaviour or fantasy that creates arousal
Bestiality	Sex with animals
Exhibitionism	Exposing genitals to an unsuspecting person
Fetishism	Nonliving or unusual objects or clothing of the opposite sex
Frotteurism	Rubbing up against unsuspecting persons
Masochism	Being beaten, humiliated, bound, or otherwise made to suffer
Pedophilia	Sexual activity with a prepubescent child
Sadism	Witnessing suffering of another person
Voyeurism	Observing an unsuspecting person who is naked, disrobing, or engaged in intimate behaviour

People with paraphilias are usually rejected by society but for two different reasons. In some cases, such as *voyeurism* and *pedophilia*, the behaviour is unacceptable (and illegal) because it involves a lack of consent on the part of the recipient of the sexual advance. But other paraphilias are rejected simply because they are unusual, even though they are consensual and do not cause distress or dysfunction to the partners. *Sexual sadism* and *sexual masochism*, for instance, are usually practiced consensually, and thus may not be harmful to the partners or to society. A recent survey found that individuals who engage in sadism and masochism are as psychologically healthy as those who do not (Connolly, 2006). Again, as cultural norms about the appropriateness of behaviours change, the new revision of the *DSM* (2013), changed its classification system of these behaviours.

Key Takeaways

- Somatoform disorders, including body dysmorphic disorder and hypochondriasis, occur when people become excessively and inaccurately preoccupied with the potential that they have an illness or stigma.
- Patients with factitious disorder fake physical symptoms in large part because they enjoy the attention and treatment that they receive in the hospital. In the more severe form of factitious disorder known as Münchhausen syndrome, the patient has a lifelong pattern with a series of successive hospitalizations for faked symptoms.
- Sexual dysfunction is a psychological disorder that occurs when the physical sexual response cycle is inadequate for reproduction or for sexual enjoyment. The types of problems experienced are different for men and women. Many sexual dysfunctions are only temporary or can be treated with therapy or medication.
- Gender identity disorder (GID, also called transsexualism) is a rare disorder that is diagnosed when the individual displays a repeated and strong desire to be the other sex, a persistent discomfort with one's sex, and a belief that one was born the wrong sex, accompanied by significant dysfunction and distress.
- The classification of GID as a mental disorder has been challenged because people who suffer

from it do not regard their own cross-gender feelings and behaviours as a disorder and do not feel that they are distressed or dysfunctional.

- A paraphilia is a sexual deviation where sexual arousal is obtained from a consistent pattern of inappropriate responses to objects or people, and in which the behaviours associated with the feelings are distressing and dysfunctional. Some paraphilias are illegal because they involve a lack of consent on the part of the recipient of the sexual advance, but other paraphilias are simply unusual, even though they may not cause distress or dysfunction.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Consider the biological, personal, and social-cultural aspects of gender identity disorder. Do you think that this disorder is really a "disorder," or is it simply defined by social-cultural norms and beliefs?
2. Consider the paraphilias in Table 13.7, "Some Paraphilias." Do they seem like disorders to you, and how would one determine if they were or were not?
3. View one of the following films and consider the diagnosis that might be given to the characters in it: *Antwone Fisher*, *Ordinary People*, *Girl Interrupted*, *Grosse Pointe Blank*, *A Beautiful Mind*, *What About Bob?*, *Sybil*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

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Image Attributions

Figure 13.16: Adapted from Laumann, Paik, & Rosen, 1999.

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Long Descriptions

Figure 13.16 long description: Prevalence of sexual dysfunction in men and women.

Type of Sexual Dysfunction	Percentage of men	Percentage of women
Low desire	16%	34%
Arousal problem	11%	19%
Lack of orgasm	8%	24%
Rapid orgasm	29%	11%
Pain during sex	3%	14%

[Return to Figure 13.16]

Notes

1. Adapted from American Psychiatric Association, 2000.

13.7 Chapter Summary

More psychologists are involved in the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorder than in any other aspect of psychology.

About 10% to 15% of Canadians are estimated to be affected by a psychological disorder during any one year. The impact of mental illness is particularly strong on people who are poorer, of lower socioeconomic class, and from disadvantaged ethnic groups.

A psychological disorder is an unusual, distressing, and dysfunctional pattern of thought, emotion, or behaviour. Psychological disorders are often comorbid, meaning that a given person suffers from more than one disorder.

The stigma of mental disorder affects people while they are ill, while they are healing, and even after they have healed. But mental illness is not a fault, and it is important to work to help overcome the stigma associated with disorder.

All psychological disorders are determined by multiple biological, psychological, and social factors.

Psychologists diagnose disorder using the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*). The *DSM* organizes the diagnosis of disorder according to five dimensions (or axes) relating to different aspects of disorder or disability. The *DSM* uses categories, and patients with close approximations to the prototype are said to have that disorder.

One critique of the *DSM* is that many disorders — for instance, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autistic disorder, and Asperger's disorder — are being diagnosed significantly more frequently than they were in the past.

Anxiety disorders are psychological disturbances marked by irrational fears, often of everyday objects and situations. They include generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, phobia, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Anxiety disorders affect about 350,000 Canadians every year.

Dissociative disorders are conditions that involve disruptions or breakdowns of memory, awareness, and identity. They include dissociative amnesia, dissociative fugue, and dissociative identity disorder.

Mood disorders are psychological disorders in which the person's mood negatively influences his or her physical, perceptual, social, and cognitive processes. They include dysthymia, major depressive disorder, and bipolar disorder. Mood disorders affect about 5% of Canadians every year.

Schizophrenia is a serious psychological disorder marked by delusions, hallucinations, loss of contact with reality, inappropriate affect, disorganized speech, social withdrawal, and deterioration of adaptive behaviour. About 350,000 Canadians have schizophrenia.

A personality disorder is a long-lasting but frequently less severe disorder characterized by inflexible

patterns of thinking, feeling, or relating to others that causes problems in personal, social, and work situations. They are characterized by odd or eccentric behaviour, by dramatic or erratic behaviour, or by anxious or inhibited behaviour. Two of the most important personality disorders are borderline personality disorder (BPD) and antisocial personality disorder (APD).

Somatization disorder is a psychological disorder in which a person experiences numerous long-lasting but seemingly unrelated physical ailments that have no identifiable physical cause. Somatization disorders include conversion disorder, body dysmorphic disorder (BDD), and hypochondriasis.

Patients with factitious disorder fake physical symptoms in large part because they enjoy the attention and treatment that they receive in the hospital.

Sexual disorders refer to a variety of problems revolving around performing or enjoying sex. Sexual dysfunctions include problems relating to loss of sexual desire, sexual response or orgasm, and pain during sex.

Gender identity disorder (GID, also called transsexualism) is diagnosed when the individual displays a repeated and strong desire to be the other sex, a persistent discomfort with one's sex, and a belief that one was born the wrong sex, accompanied by significant dysfunction and distress. The classification of GID as a mental disorder has been challenged because people who suffer from GID do not regard their own cross-gender feelings and behaviours as a disorder and do not feel that they are distressed or dysfunctional.

A paraphilia is a sexual deviation where sexual arousal is obtained from a consistent pattern of inappropriate responses to objects or people, and in which the behaviours associated with the feelings are distressing and dysfunctional.

Chapter 14. Treating Psychological Disorders

14. Treating Psychological Disorders

Therapy on Four Legs

Lucien Masson, a 60-year-old veteran, put it simply: “Sascha is the best medicine I’ve ever had.”

Lucien is speaking about his friend, companion, and perhaps even his therapist, a Russian wolfhound named Sascha. Lucien suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a disorder that has had a profoundly negative impact on his life for many years. His symptoms include panic attacks, nightmares, and road rage. Lucien has tried many solutions, consulting with doctors, psychiatrists, and psychologists, and using a combination of drugs, group therapy, and anger-management classes.

But Sascha seems to be the best therapist of all. He helps out in many ways. If a stranger gets too close to Lucien in public, Sascha will block the stranger with his body. Sascha is trained to sense when Lucien is about to have a nightmare, waking him before it starts. Before road rage can set in, Sascha gently whimpers, reminding his owner that it doesn’t pay to get upset about nutty drivers.

In the same way, former military medic Jo Hanna Schaffer speaks of her chihuahua, Cody: “I never took a pill for PTSD that did as much for me as Cody has done.” Veteran Karen Alexander feels the same way about her Bernese mountain dog, Cindy: “She’ll come up and touch me, and that is enough of a stimulus to break the loop, bring me back to reality. Sometimes I’ll scratch my hand until it’s raw and won’t realize until she comes up to me and brings me out. She’s such a grounding influence for me.”

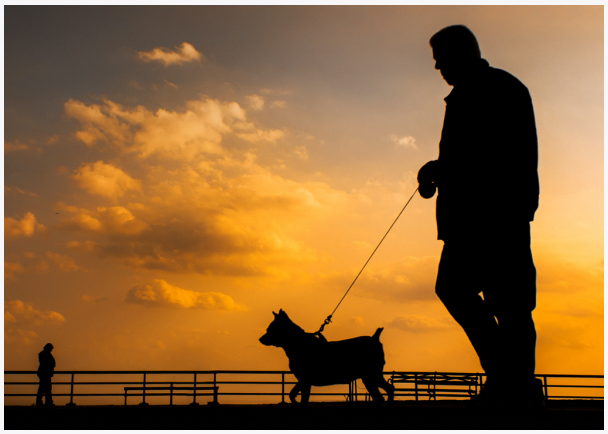


Figure 14.1 Psychiatric Therapy Dogs.

These dramatic stories of improvement from debilitating disorders can be attributed to an alternative psychological therapy, based on established behavioural principles, provided by **psychiatric service dogs**, as shown in Figure 14.1, “Psychiatric Therapy Dogs.” The *dogs are trained to help people with a variety of mental disorders, including panic attacks, anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and bipolar disorder*. They help veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan cope with their traumatic brain injuries as well as with PTSD.

The dogs are trained to perform specific behaviours that are helpful to their owners. If the dog’s owner is depressed, the dog will snuggle up and offer physical comfort; if the owner is having a panic attack, the owner can calm himself by massaging the dog’s body. The serenity shown by the dogs in all situations seems to reassure the PTSD sufferer that all must be well. Service dogs are constant, loving companions who

provide emotional support and companionship to their embattled, often isolated owners (Shim, 2008; Lorber, 2010; Alaimo, 2010; Schwartz, 2008).

Despite the reports of success from many users, it is important to keep in mind that the utility of psychiatric service dogs has not yet been tested, and thus would never be offered as a therapy by a trained clinician or paid for by an insurance company. Although interaction between humans and dogs can create positive physiological responses (Odendaal, 2000), whether the dogs actually help people recover from PTSD is not yet known.

Psychological disorders create a tremendous individual, social, and economic drain on society. Disorders make it difficult for people to engage in productive lives and effectively contribute to their family and to society. Disorders lead to disability and absenteeism in the workplace, as well as physical problems, premature death, and suicide. At a societal level the costs are staggering. As the fifth most common diagnosis for Canadians in 2008, anxiety has been experienced by 12% of Canadians in their lifetime and accounts for 6,292 visits to doctors' offices. Of those, 33% were men and 67% were women with 57% of these visits resulting in a prescription for medication (Mood Disorders Society of Canada, 2009).

The goal of this chapter is to review the techniques that are used to treat psychological disorder. Just as psychologists consider the causes of disorder in terms of the bio-psycho-social model of illness, treatment is also based on psychological, biological, and social approaches.

- The **psychological approach** to reducing disorder involves providing help to individuals or families through psychological therapy, including psychoanalysis, humanistic-oriented therapy, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), and other approaches.
- The **biomedical approach to reducing disorder** is based on the use of medications to treat mental disorders such as schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety, as well as the employment of brain intervention techniques, including *electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)*, *transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS)*, and *psychosurgery*.
- The **social approach to reducing disorder** focuses on changing the social environment in which individuals live to reduce the underlying causes of disorder. These approaches include *group, couples, and family therapy*, as well as *community outreach programs*. The community approach is likely to be the most effective of the three approaches because it focuses not only on treatment, but also on prevention of disorders (World Health Organization, 2004).

A clinician may focus on any or all of the three approaches to treatment, but in making a decision about which to use, he or she will always rely on his or her knowledge about existing empirical tests of the effectiveness of different treatments. These tests, known as *outcome studies*, carefully compare people who receive a given treatment with people who do not receive a treatment, or with people who receive a different type of treatment. Taken together, these studies have confirmed that many types of therapies are effective in treating disorder.

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Image Attributions

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14.1 Reducing Disorder by Confronting It: Psychotherapy

Learning Objectives

1. Outline and differentiate the psychodynamic, humanistic, behavioural, and cognitive approaches to psychotherapy.
2. Explain the behavioural and cognitive aspects of cognitive-behavioural therapy and how CBT is used to reduce psychological disorders.

Treatment for psychological disorder begins when the individual who is experiencing distress visits a counsellor or therapist, perhaps in a church, a community centre, a hospital, or a private practice. The therapist will begin by systematically learning about the patient's needs through a formal **psychological assessment**, which is *an evaluation of the patient's psychological and mental health*. During the assessment the psychologist may give personality tests such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personal Inventory (MMPI-2), Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory (MACI), or projective tests, and will conduct a thorough interview with the patient. The therapist may get more information from family members or school personnel.

In addition to the psychological assessment, the patient is usually seen by a physician to gain information about potential Axis III (physical) problems. In some cases of psychological disorder — and particularly for sexual problems — medical treatment is the preferred course of action. For instance, men who are experiencing erectile dysfunction disorder may need surgery to increase blood flow or local injections of muscle relaxants. Or they may be prescribed medications (Viagra, Cialis, or Levitra) that provide an increased blood supply to the penis, and are successful in increasing performance in about 70% of men who take them.

After the medical and psychological assessments are completed, the therapist will make a formal diagnosis using the detailed descriptions of the disorder provided in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*; see below). The therapist will summarize the information about the patient on each of the five *DSM* axes, and the diagnosis will likely be sent to an insurance company to justify payment for the treatment.

***DSM-5-TR* Criteria for Diagnosing Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

To be diagnosed with ADHD the individual must display either A or B below (American Psychiatric Association, 2013):

A. **Six or more of the following symptoms of inattention have been present for at least six months to a point that is disruptive and inappropriate for developmental level:**

- Often does not give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or other activities
- Often has trouble keeping attention on tasks or play activities
- Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- Often does not follow instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (not due to oppositional behaviour or failure to understand instructions)
- Often has trouble organizing activities
- Often avoids, dislikes, or doesn't want to do things that take a lot of mental effort for a long period of time (such as schoolwork or homework)
- Often loses things needed for tasks and activities (e.g., toys, school assignments, pencils, books, or tools)
- Is often easily distracted
- Is often forgetful in daily activities

B. **Six or more of the following symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsivity have been present for at least six months to an extent that is disruptive and inappropriate for developmental level:**

- Often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
- Often gets up from seat when remaining in seat is expected
- Often runs about or climbs when and where it is not appropriate (adolescents or adults may feel very restless)
- Often has trouble playing or enjoying leisure activities quietly
- Is often "on the go" or often acts as if "driven by a motor"
- Often talks excessively
- Often blurts out answers before questions have been finished
- Often has trouble waiting one's turn
- Often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g., butts into conversations or games)

If a diagnosis is made, the therapist will select a course of therapy that he or she feels will be most effective. One approach to treatment is **psychotherapy**, *the professional treatment for psychological disorder through techniques designed to encourage communication of conflicts and insight*. The fundamental aspect of psychotherapy is that the patient directly confronts the disorder and works with the therapist to help reduce it. Therapy includes assessing the patient's issues and problems, planning a course of treatment, setting goals for change, the treatment itself, and an evaluation of the patient's progress. Therapy is practised by thousands of psychologists and other trained practitioners in Canada and around the world, and is responsible for billions of dollars of the health budget.

To many people therapy involves a patient lying on a couch with a therapist sitting behind and nodding sagely as the patient speaks. Though this approach to therapy (known as *psychoanalysis*) is still practised, it is in the minority. It is estimated that there are over 400 different kinds of therapy practised by people in many fields, and the most important of these are psychodynamic, humanistic,

cognitive behavioural therapy, and eclectic (i.e., a combination of therapies). The therapists who provide these treatments include psychiatrists (who have a medical degree and can prescribe drugs) and clinical psychologists, as well as social workers, psychiatric nurses, and couples, marriage, and family therapists.

Psychology in Everyday Life: Seeking Treatment for Psychological Difficulties

Many people who would benefit from psychotherapy do not get it, either because they do not know how to find it or because they feel that they will be stigmatized and embarrassed if they seek help. The decision to not seek help is a very poor choice because the effectiveness of mental health treatments is well documented and, no matter where a person lives, there are treatments available (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2013).

The first step in seeking help for psychological problems is to accept the stigma. It is possible that some of your colleagues, friends, and family members will know that you are seeking help and some may at first think more negatively of you for it. But you must get past these unfair and close-minded responses. Feeling good about yourself is the most important thing you can do, and seeking help may be the first step in doing so.

One question is how to determine if someone needs help. This question is not always easy to answer because there is no clear demarcation between normal and abnormal behaviour. Most generally, you will know that you or others need help when the person's psychological state is negatively influencing his or her everyday behaviour, when the behaviour is adversely affecting those around the person, and when the problems continue over a period of time. Often people seek therapy as a result of a life-changing event such as diagnosis of a fatal illness, an upcoming marriage or divorce, or the death of a loved one. But therapy is also effective for general depression and anxiety, as well as for specific everyday problems.

There are a wide variety of therapy choices, many of which are free. Begin in your school, community, or church, asking about community health or counselling centres and pastoral counselling. You may want to ask friends and family members for recommendations. You'll probably be surprised at how many people have been to counselling, and how many recommend it.

There are many therapists who offer a variety of treatment options. Be sure to ask about the degrees that the therapist has earned, and about the reputation of the centre in which the therapy occurs. If you have choices, try to find a person or location that you like, respect, and trust. This will allow you to be more open, and you will get more out of the experience. Your sessions with the help provider will require discussing your family history, personality, and relationships, and you should feel comfortable sharing this information.

Remember also that confronting issues requires time to reflect, energy to get to the appointments and deal with consequential feelings, and discipline to explore your issues on your own. Success at therapy is difficult, and it takes effort.

The bottom line is that going for therapy should not be a difficult decision for you. All people have the right to appropriate mental health care just as they have a right to general health care. Just as you go to a dentist for a toothache, you may go to therapy for psychological difficulties. Furthermore, you can be confident that you will be treated with respect and that your privacy will be protected, because therapists follow ethical principles in their practices. The following provides a summary of these ethical principles as developed by the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (2007).

- General Orientation
  Counsellors adequately orient and inform clients so that evaluation and assessment results can be placed in proper perspective along with other relevant information.
- Purposes and Results of Evaluation and Assessment
  Counsellors take responsibility to inform clients about the purpose of any evaluation and

assessment instruments and procedures and the meaning of evaluation and assessment results.

- Evaluation and Assessment Competence
  Counsellors recognize the limits of their competence and offer only those evaluation and assessment services for which they have appropriate preparation and which meet established professional standards.
- Administrative and Supervisory Conditions
  Counsellors ensure that evaluation and assessment instruments and procedures are administered and supervised under established conditions consistent with professional standards. They note any departures from standard conditions and any unusual behaviour or irregularities that may affect the interpretation of results.
- Use of Technology
  Counsellors recognize that their ethical responsibilities are not altered, or in any way diminished, by the use of technology for the administration of evaluation and assessment instruments. Counsellors retain their responsibility for the maintenance of the ethical principles of privacy, confidentiality, and responsibility for decisions regardless of the technology used.
- Appropriateness of Evaluation and Assessment
  Counsellors ensure that evaluation and assessment instruments and procedures are valid, reliable, and appropriate to both the client and the intended purposes.
- Reporting Evaluation and Assessment Results
  Counsellors ensure that when reporting evaluation and assessment results to clients and other individuals care is taken to provide, in an appropriate manner, accurate and sufficient information for an understanding of any conclusions and recommendations made, and to identify the basis for any reservations that might exist.
- Release of Evaluation and Assessment Data
  Counsellors ensure that evaluation and assessment data are released appropriately and only to the client and persons qualified to interpret and use them properly.
- Integrity of Evaluation and Assessment Instruments and Procedures
  Counsellors who use psychological tests and other assessment instruments, the value of which depends on their novelty to the client, ensure that they are limited to and safeguarded by those with the professional interest and competence to do so.
- Sensitivity to Diversity when Assessing and Evaluating
  Counsellors proceed with caution when judging and interpreting the performance of minority group members and any other persons not represented in the group on which the evaluation and assessment instruments and procedures were standardized. They recognize and take into account the potential effects of age, ethnicity, disability, culture, gender, religion, sexual orientation and socio-economic status on both the administration of, and the interpretation of data from, such instruments and procedures.
- Security Maintenance
  Counsellors ensure the integrity and security of evaluation and assessment instruments and procedures consistent with any legal and contractual obligations. They refrain from appropriating, reproducing, or modifying established evaluation and assessment instruments without the expressed permission and adequate recognition of the original author, publisher and copyright holder.

Psychodynamic Therapy

Psychodynamic therapy (psychoanalysis) is *a psychological treatment based on Freudian and neo-Freudian personality theories in which the therapist helps the patient explore the unconscious dynamics of personality*. The analyst engages with the patient, usually in one-on-one sessions, often with the patient lying on a couch and facing away. The goal of the psychotherapy is for the patient to talk about his or her personal concerns and anxieties, allowing the therapist to try to understand the underlying unconscious problems that are causing the symptoms (the process of interpretation). The analyst may try out some interpretations on the patient and observe how he or she responds to them.

The patient may be asked to verbalize his or her thoughts through **free association**, in which the *therapist listens while the client talks about whatever comes to mind, without any censorship or filtering*. The client may also be asked to report on his or her dreams, and the therapist will use **dream analysis** to *analyze the symbolism of the dreams in an effort to probe the unconscious thoughts of the client and interpret their significance*. On the basis of the thoughts expressed by the patient, the analyst discovers the unconscious conflicts causing the patient's symptoms and interprets them for the patient.

The goal of psychotherapy is to help the patient develop **insight** — that is, *an understanding of the unconscious causes of the disorder* (Epstein, Stern, & Silbersweig, 2001; Lubarsky & Barrett, 2006), but the patient often shows resistance to these new understandings, *using defence mechanisms to avoid the painful feelings in his or her unconscious*. The patient might forget or miss appointments, or act out with hostile feelings toward the therapist. The therapist attempts to help the patient develop insight into the causes of the resistance. The sessions may also lead to **transference**, in which *the patient unconsciously redirects feelings experienced in an important personal relationship toward the therapist*. For instance, the patient may transfer feelings of guilt that come from the father or mother to the therapist. Some therapists believe that transference should be encouraged, as it allows the client to resolve hidden conflicts and work through feelings that are present in the relationships.

Important Characteristics and Experiences in Psychoanalysis

- **Free association.** The therapist listens while the client talks about whatever comes to mind, without any censorship or filtering. The therapist then tries to interpret these free associations, looking for unconscious causes of symptoms.
- **Dream analysis.** The therapist listens while the client describes his or her dreams and then analyzes the symbolism of the dreams in an effort to probe the unconscious thoughts of the client and interpret their significance.
- **Insight.** An understanding by the patient of the unconscious causes of his or her symptoms.
- **Interpretation.** The therapist uses the patient's expressed thoughts to try to understand the underlying unconscious problems. The analyst may try out some interpretations on the patient and observe how he or she responds to them.
- **Resistance.** The patient's use of defence mechanisms to avoid the painful feelings in his or her unconscious. The patient might forget or miss appointments, or act out with hostile feelings toward the therapist. The therapist attempts to help the patient develop insight into the causes of the resistance.

- **Transference.** The unconscious redirection of the feelings experienced in an important personal relationship toward the therapist. For instance, the patient may transfer feelings of guilt that come from the father or mother to the therapist.

One problem with traditional psychoanalysis is that the sessions may take place several times a week, go on for many years, and cost thousands of dollars. To help more people benefit, modern psychodynamic approaches frequently use shorter-term, focused, and goal-oriented approaches. In these brief psychodynamic therapies, the therapist helps the client determine the important issues to be discussed at the beginning of treatment and usually takes a more active role than in classic psychoanalysis (Levenson, 2010).

Humanistic Therapies

Just as psychoanalysis is based on the personality theories of Freud and the neo-Freudians, **humanistic therapy** is *a psychological treatment based on the personality theories of Carl Rogers and other humanistic psychologists*. Humanistic therapy is based on the idea that people develop psychological problems when they are burdened by limits and expectations placed on them by themselves and others, and the treatment emphasizes the person's capacity for self-realization and fulfillment. Humanistic therapies attempt to promote growth and responsibility by helping clients consider their own situations and the world around them and how they can work to achieve their life goals.

Carl Rogers (see Figure 14.2, "Portrait of Carl Rogers") developed **person-centred therapy** (or client-centred therapy), *an approach to treatment in which the client is helped to grow and develop as the therapist provides a comfortable, nonjudgmental environment.* In his book *A Way of Being* (1980), Rogers argued that therapy was most productive when the therapist created a positive relationship with the client — a *therapeutic alliance*. The **therapeutic alliance** is *a relationship between the client and the therapist that is facilitated when the therapist is* genuine (i.e., he or she creates no barriers to free-flowing thoughts and feelings), when the therapist treats the client with unconditional positive regard (i.e., he or she values the client without any qualifications, displaying an accepting attitude toward whatever the client is feeling at the moment), and when the therapist develops empathy with the client (i.e., he or she actively listens to and accurately perceives the personal feelings that the client experiences).

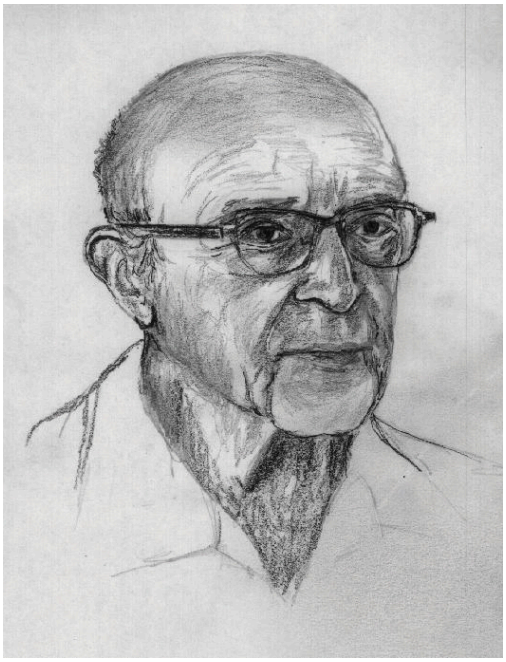


Figure 14.2 Portrait of Carl Rogers.

The development of a positive therapeutic alliance has been found to be exceedingly important to successful therapy. The ideas of genuineness, empathy, and unconditional positive regard in a nurturing relationship in which the therapist actively listens to and reflects the feelings of the client is probably the most fundamental part of contemporary psychotherapy (Prochaska & Norcross, 2007).

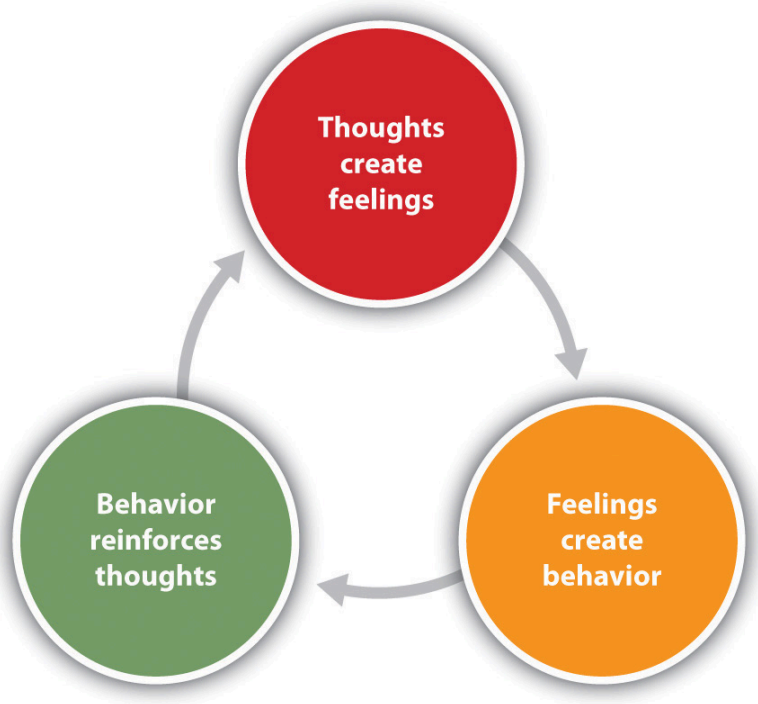


Figure 14.3 Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is based on the idea that our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour reinforce each other and that changing our thoughts or behaviour can make us feel better.

Psychodynamic and humanistic therapies are recommended primarily for people suffering from generalized anxiety or mood disorders, and who desire to feel better about themselves overall. But the goals of people with other psychological disorders, such as phobias, sexual problems, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), are more specific. A person with a social phobia may want to be able to leave his or her house, a person with a sexual dysfunction may want to improve his or her sex life, and a person with OCD may want to learn to stop letting his or her obsessions or compulsions interfere with everyday activities. In these cases it is not necessary to revisit childhood experiences or consider our capacities for self-realization — we simply want to deal with what is happening in the present. **Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)** is *a structured approach to treatment that attempts to reduce psychological disorders through systematic procedures based on cognitive and behavioural principles*. CBT is based on the idea that there is a recursive link among our thoughts, our feelings, and our behaviour (Figure 14.3, "Cognitive Behavioural Therapy"). For instance, if we are feeling depressed, our negative thoughts ("I am doing poorly in my chemistry class") lead to negative feelings ("I feel hopeless and sad"), which then contribute to negative behaviours (e.g., lethargy, lack of interest, lack of studying). When we or other people look at the negative behaviour, the negative thoughts are reinforced and the cycle repeats itself (Beck, 1976). Similarly, in panic disorder a patient may misinterpret his or her feelings of anxiety as a sign of an impending physical or mental catastrophe (such as a heart attack), leading to an avoidance of a particular place or social situation. The fact that the patient is avoiding the situation reinforces the negative thoughts. Again, the thoughts, feelings, and behaviour amplify and distort each other.

CBT is a very broad approach that is used for the treatment of a variety of problems, including mood, anxiety, personality, eating, substance abuse, attention-deficit, and psychotic disorders. CBT treats the symptoms of the disorder (the behaviours or the cognitions) and does not attempt to address the underlying issues that cause the problem. The goal is simply to stop the negative cycle by intervening to change cognition or behaviour. The client and the therapist work together to develop the goals of the therapy, the particular ways that the goals will be reached, and the timeline for reaching them. The procedures are problem-solving and action-oriented, and the client is forced to take responsibility for his or her own treatment. The client is assigned tasks to complete that will help improve the disorder and takes an active part in the therapy. The treatment usually lasts between 10 and 20 sessions. Depending on the particular disorder, some CBT treatments may be primarily behavioural in orientation, focusing on the principles of classical, operant, and observational learning, whereas other treatments are more cognitive, focused on changing negative thoughts related to the disorder. But almost all CBT treatments use a combination of behavioural and cognitive approaches.

Behavioural Aspects of CBT

In some cases the primary changes that need to be made are behavioural. **Behaviour therapy** is *psychological treatment that is based on principles of learning*. The most direct approach is through operant conditioning using reward or punishment. Reinforcement may be used to teach new skills to people, such as with those with autism or schizophrenia (Granholm et al., 2008; Herbert et al., 2005; Scattone, 2007). If the patient has trouble dressing or grooming, then reinforcement techniques, such as providing tokens that can be exchanged for snacks, are used to reinforce appropriate behaviours such as putting on one's clothes in the morning or taking a shower at night. If the patient has trouble interacting with others, reinforcement will be used to teach the client how to respond more appropriately in public, for instance, by maintaining eye contact, smiling when appropriate, and modulating tone of voice.

As the patient practises the different techniques, the appropriate behaviours are shaped through

reinforcement to allow the client to manage more complex social situations. In some cases observational learning may also be used; the client may be asked to observe the behaviour of others who are more socially skilled to acquire appropriate behaviours. People who learn to improve their interpersonal skills through skills training may be more accepted by others and this social support may have substantial positive effects on their emotions.

When the disorder is anxiety or phobia, then the goal of the CBT is to reduce the negative affective responses to the feared stimulus. **Exposure therapy** is *a behavioural therapy based on the classical conditioning principle of extinction, in which people are confronted with a feared stimulus with the goal of decreasing their negative emotional responses to it* (Wolpe, 1973). Exposure treatment can be carried out in real situations or through imagination, and it is used in the treatment of panic disorder, agoraphobia, social phobia, OCD, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In **flooding**, *a client is exposed to the source of his fear all at once*. An agoraphobic might be taken to a crowded shopping mall or someone with an extreme fear of heights to the top of a tall building. The assumption is that the fear will subside as the client habituates to the situation while receiving emotional support from the therapist during the stressful experience. An advantage of the flooding technique is that it is quick and often effective, but a disadvantage is that the patient may relapse after a short period of time.

More frequently, the exposure is done more gradually. **Systematic desensitization** is *a behavioural treatment that combines imagining or experiencing the feared object or situation with relaxation exercises* (Wolpe, 1973). The client and the therapist work together to prepare a *hierarchy of fears*, starting with the least frightening, and moving to the most frightening scenario surrounding the object (Table 14.1, “Hierarchy of Fears Used in Systematic Desensitization”). The patient then confronts the fears in a systematic manner, sometimes using his or her imagination but usually, when possible, in real life.

Table 14.1 Hierarchy of Fears Used in Systematic Desensitization.

[Skip Table]	
Behaviour	**Fear rating**
Think about a spider.	10
Look at a photo of a spider.	25
Look at a real spider in a closed box.	50
Hold the box with the spider.	60
Let a spider crawl on your desk.	70
Let a spider crawl on your shoe.	80
Let a spider crawl on your pants leg.	90
Let a spider crawl on your sleeve.	95
Let a spider crawl on your bare arm.	100

Desensitization techniques use the principle of **counterconditioning**, in which a *second incompatible response (relaxation; e.g., through deep breathing) is conditioned to an already conditioned response (the fear response)*. The continued pairing of the relaxation responses with the feared stimulus as the patient works up the hierarchy gradually leads the fear response to be extinguished and the relaxation response to take its place.

Behaviour therapy works best when people directly experience the feared object. Fears of spiders are more directly habituated when the patient interacts with a real spider, and fears of flying are best extinguished when the patient gets on a real plane. But it is often difficult and expensive to create these experiences for the patient. Recent advances in virtual reality have allowed clinicians to provide CBT in what seem like real situations to the patient. In **virtual reality CBT**, *the therapist uses computer-generated, three-dimensional, lifelike images of the feared stimulus in a systematic desensitization program*. Specially designed computer equipment, often with a head-mount display, is used to create a simulated environment. A common use is in helping patients who are experiencing PTSD return to the scene of the trauma and learn how to cope with the stress it invokes.

Some of the advantages of the virtual reality treatment approach are that it is economical, the treatment session can be held in the therapist's office with no loss of time or confidentiality, the session can easily be terminated as soon as a patient feels uncomfortable, and many patients who have resisted live exposure to the object of their fears are willing to try the new virtual reality option first.

Aversion therapy is *a type of behaviour therapy in which positive punishment is used to reduce the frequency of an undesirable behaviour*. An unpleasant stimulus is intentionally paired with a harmful or socially unacceptable behaviour until the behaviour becomes associated with unpleasant sensations and is hopefully reduced. A child who wets his bed may be required to sleep on a pad that sounds an alarm when it senses moisture. Over time, the positive punishment produced by the alarm reduces the bedwetting behaviour (Houts, Berman, & Abramson, 1994). Aversion therapy is also used to stop other specific behaviours such as nail biting (Allen, 1996).

Alcoholism has long been treated with aversion therapy (Baker & Cannon, 1988). In a standard approach, patients are treated at a hospital where they are administered a drug, *antabuse*, that makes them nauseous if they consume any alcohol. The technique works very well if the user keeps taking the drug (Krampe et al., 2006), but unless it is combined with other approaches the patients are likely to relapse after they stop the drug.

Cognitive Aspects of CBT

While behavioural approaches focus on the actions of the patient, **cognitive therapy** is *a psychological treatment that helps clients identify incorrect or distorted beliefs that are contributing to disorder*. In cognitive therapy the therapist helps the patient develop new, healthier ways of thinking about themselves and about the others around them. The idea of cognitive therapy is that changing thoughts will change emotions, and that the new emotions will then influence behaviour.

The goal of cognitive therapy is not necessarily to get people to think more positively but rather to think more accurately. For instance, a person who thinks "no one cares about me" is likely to feel rejected, isolated, and lonely. If the therapist can remind the person that she has a mother or daughter who does care about her, more positive feelings will likely follow. Similarly, changing beliefs from "I have to be

perfect" to "No one is always perfect — I'm doing pretty good," from "I am a terrible student" to "I am doing well in some of my courses," or from "She did that on purpose to hurt me" to "Maybe she didn't realize how important it was to me" may all be helpful.

The psychiatrist Aaron T. Beck and the psychologist Albert Ellis (1913-2007) together provided the basic principles of cognitive therapy. Ellis (2004) called his approach *rational emotive behaviour therapy (REBT)* or *rational emotive therapy (RET)*, and he focused on pointing out the flaws in the patient's thinking. Ellis noticed that people experiencing strong negative emotions tend to personalize and overgeneralize their beliefs, leading to an inability to see situations accurately (Leahy, 2003). In REBT, the therapist's goal is to challenge these irrational thought patterns, helping the patient replace the irrational thoughts with more rational ones, leading to the development of more appropriate emotional reactions and behaviours.

Beck's cognitive therapy was based on his observation that people who were depressed generally had a large number of highly accessible negative thoughts that influenced their thinking (Beck, 1995; Beck, Freeman, & Davis, 2004). His goal was to develop a short-term therapy for depression that would modify these unproductive thoughts. Beck's approach challenges the client to test his or her beliefs against concrete evidence. If a client claims that "everybody at work is out to get me," the therapist might ask the client to provide instances to corroborate the claim. At the same time the therapist might point out contrary evidence, such as the fact that a certain coworker is actually a loyal friend or that the patient's boss had recently praised him or her.

Combination (Eclectic) Approaches to Therapy

To this point we have considered the different approaches to psychotherapy under the assumption that a therapist will use only one approach with a given patient. But this is not the case; the most commonly practised approach to therapy is an **eclectic therapy**, *an approach to treatment in which the therapist uses whichever techniques seem most useful and relevant for a given patient*. For bipolar disorder, for instance, the therapist may use both psychological skills training to help the patient cope with the severe highs and lows, but may also suggest that the patient consider biomedical drug therapies (Newman, Leahy, Beck, Reilly-Harrington, & Gyulai, 2002). Treatment for major depressive disorder usually involves antidepressant drugs as well as CBT to help the patient deal with particular problems (McBride, Farvolden, & Swallow, 2007).

As we have seen in Chapter 13, "Defining Psychological Disorders," one of the most commonly diagnosed disorders is borderline personality disorder (BPD). Consider this description, typical of the type of borderline patient who arrives at a therapist's office:

> Even as an infant, it seemed that there was something different about Bethany. She was an intense baby, easily upset and difficult to comfort. She had very severe separation anxiety — if her mother left the room, Bethany would scream until she returned. In her early teens, Bethany became increasingly sullen and angry. She started acting out more and more — yelling at her parents and teachers and engaging in impulsive behaviour such as promiscuity and running away from home. At times Bethany would have a close friend at school, but some conflict always developed and the friendship would end.
>
> By the time Bethany turned 17, her mood changes were totally unpredictable. She was fighting with

her parents almost daily, and the fights often included violent behaviour on Bethany's part. At times she seemed terrified to be without her mother, but at other times she would leave the house in a fit of rage and not return for a few days. One day, Bethany's mother noticed scars on Bethany's arms. When confronted about them, Bethany said that one night she just got more and more lonely and nervous about a recent breakup until she finally stuck a lit cigarette into her arm. She said "I didn't really care for him that much, but I had to do something dramatic."

When she was 18, Bethany rented a motel room where she took an overdose of sleeping pills. Her suicide attempt was not successful, but the authorities required that she seek psychological help.

Most therapists will deal with a case such as Bethany's using an eclectic approach. First, because her negative mood states are so severe, they will likely recommend that she start taking antidepressant medications. These drugs are likely to help her feel better and will reduce the possibility of another suicide attempt, but they will not change the underlying psychological problems. Therefore, the therapist will also provide psychotherapy.

The first sessions of the therapy will likely be based primarily on creating trust. Person-centred approaches will be used in which the therapist attempts to create a therapeutic alliance conducive to a frank and open exchange of information.

If the therapist is trained in a psychodynamic approach, he or she will probably begin intensive face-to-face psychotherapy sessions at least three times a week. The therapist may focus on childhood experiences related to Bethany's attachment difficulties but will also focus in large part on the causes of the present behaviour. The therapist will understand that because Bethany does not have good relationships with other people, she will likely seek a close bond with the therapist, but the therapist will probably not allow the transference relationship to develop fully. The therapist will also realize that Bethany will probably try to resist the work of the therapist.

Most likely the therapist will also use principles of CBT. For one, cognitive therapy will likely be used in an attempt to change Bethany's distortions of reality. She feels that people are rejecting her, but she is probably bringing these rejections on herself. If she can learn to better understand the meaning of other people's actions, she may feel better. And the therapist will likely begin using some techniques of behaviour therapy, for instance, by rewarding Bethany for successful social interactions and progress toward meeting her important goals.

The eclectic therapist will continue to monitor Bethany's behaviour as the therapy continues, bringing into play whatever therapeutic tools seem most beneficial. Hopefully, Bethany will stay in treatment long enough to make some real progress in repairing her broken life.

One example of an eclectic treatment approach that has been shown to be successful in treating BPD is *dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT)* (Linehan & Dimeff, 2001). **DBT** is essentially *a cognitive therapy, but it includes a particular emphasis on attempting to enlist the help of the patient in his or her own treatment*. A dialectical behavioural therapist begins by attempting to develop a positive therapeutic alliance with the client, and then tries to encourage the patient to become part of the treatment process. In DBT the therapist aims to accept and validate the client's feelings at any given time while nonetheless informing the client that some feelings and behaviours are maladaptive, and showing the client better alternatives. The therapist will use both individual and group therapy, helping the patient work toward improving interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation, and distress tolerance skills.

Key Takeaways

- Psychoanalysis is based on the principles of Freudian and neo-Freudian personality theories. The goal is to explore the unconscious dynamics of personality.
- Humanist therapy, derived from the personality theory of Carl Rogers, is based on the idea that people experience psychological problems when they are burdened by limits and expectations placed on them by themselves and others. Its focus is on helping people reach their life goals.
- Behaviour therapy applies the principles of classical and operant conditioning, as well as observational learning, to the elimination of maladaptive behaviours and their replacement with more adaptive responses.
- Albert Ellis and Aaron Beck developed cognitive-based therapies to help clients stop negative thoughts and replace them with more objective thoughts.
- Eclectic therapy is the most common approach to treatment. In eclectic therapy, the therapist uses whatever treatment approaches seem most likely to be effective for the client.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Imagine that your friend has been feeling depressed for several months but refuses to consider therapy as an option. What might you tell her that might help her feel more comfortable about seeking treatment?
2. Imagine that you have developed a debilitating fear of bees after recently being attacked by a swarm of them. What type of therapy do you think would be best for your disorder?
3. Imagine that your friend has a serious drug abuse problem. Based on what you've learned in this section, what treatment options would you explore in your attempt to provide him with the best help available? Which combination of therapies might work best?

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Image Attributions

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14.2 Reducing Disorder Biologically: Drug and Brain Therapy

Learning Objectives

1. Classify the different types of drugs used in the treatment of mental disorders and explain how they each work to reduce disorder.
2. Critically evaluate direct brain intervention methods that may be used by doctors to treat patients who do not respond to drug or other therapy.

Like other medical problems, psychological disorders may in some cases be treated biologically. **Biomedical therapies** are *treatments designed to reduce psychological disorder by influencing the action of the central nervous system*. These therapies primarily involve the use of medications but also include direct methods of brain intervention, including *electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS),* and *psychosurgery*.

Drug Therapies

Psychologists understand that an appropriate balance of neurotransmitters in the brain is necessary for mental health. If there is a proper balance of chemicals, then the person's mental health will be acceptable, but psychological disorder will result if there is a chemical imbalance. The most frequently used biological treatments provide the patient with medication that influences the production and reuptake of neurotransmitters in the central nervous system (CNS). The use of these drugs is rapidly increasing, and drug therapy is now the most common approach to treatment of most psychological disorders.

Unlike some medical therapies that can be targeted toward specific symptoms, current psychological drug therapies are not so specific; they don't change particular behaviours or thought processes, and they don't really solve psychological disorders. However, although they cannot "cure" disorders, drug therapies are nevertheless useful therapeutic approaches, particularly when combined with psychological therapy, in treating a variety of psychological disorders. The best drug combination for the individual patient is usually found through trial and error (Biedermann & Fleischhacker, 2009).

The major classes and brand names of drugs used to treat psychological disorders are shown in Table 14.2.

Table 14.2 Common Medications Used to Treat Psychological Disorders.

[Skip Table]				
Class	**Type**	**Brand names**	**Disorder**	**Notes**
Psychostimulants		Ritalin, Adderall, Dexedrine	Attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	Very effective in most cases, at least in the short term, at reducing hyperactivity and inattention
Antidepressants	Tricyclics	Elavil, Tofranil	Depression and anxiety disorders	Less frequently prescribed today than are the serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)
	Monamine oxidase inhibitors (MAIOs)	Ensam, Nardil, Parnate, Marpaln	Depression and anxiety disorders	Less frequently prescribed today than are the SSRIs
	SSRIs	Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft	Depression and anxiety disorders	The most frequently prescribed antidepressant medications; work by blocking the reuptake of serotonin
	Other reuptake inhibitors	Effexor, Celexa, Wellbutrin	Depression and anxiety disorders	Prescribed in some cases; work by blocking the reuptake of serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine
Mood stabilizers		Eskalith, Lithobid, Depakene	Bipolar disorder	Effective in reducing the mood swings associated with bipolar disorder
Anti-anxiety drugs	Tranquilizers (benzodiazepines)	Valium, Xanax	Anxiety, panic, and mood disorders	Work by increasing the action of the neurotransmitter GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid)
Anti-psychotics (neuroleptics)		Thorazine, Haldol, Clozaril, Risperdal, Zyprexa	Schizophrenia	Treat the positive and to some extent, the negative symptoms of schizophrenia by reducing the transmission of dopamine and increasing the transmission of serotonin

Using Stimulants to Treat ADHD

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is frequently treated with biomedical therapy, usually along with cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). The most commonly prescribed drugs for ADHD are psychostimulants, including Ritalin, Adderall, and Dexedrine. Short-acting forms of the drugs are taken as pills and last between four and 12 hours, but some of the drugs are also available in long-acting forms (skin patches) that can be worn on the hip and last up to 12 hours. The patch is placed on the child early in the morning and worn all day.

Stimulants improve the major symptoms of ADHD, including inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity,

often dramatically, in about 75% of the children who take them (Greenhill, Halperin, & Abikof, 1999). But the effects of the drugs wear off quickly. Additionally, the best drug and best dosage varies from child to child, so it may take some time to find the correct combination.

It may seem surprising to you that a disorder that involves hyperactivity is treated with a psychostimulant, a drug that normally increases activity. The answer lies in the dosage. When large doses of stimulants are taken, they increase activity, but in smaller doses the same stimulants improve attention and decrease motor activity (Zahn, Rapoport, & Thompson, 1980).

The most common side effects of psychostimulants in children include decreased appetite, weight loss, sleeping problems, and irritability as the effect of the medication tapers off. Stimulant medications may also be associated with a slightly reduced growth rate in children, although in most cases growth isn't permanently affected (Spencer, Biederman, Harding, & O'Donnell, 1996).

Antidepressant Medications

Antidepressant medications are *drugs designed to improve moods*. Although they are used primarily in the treatment of depression, they are also effective for patients who suffer from anxiety, phobias, and obsessive-compulsive disorders. Antidepressants work by influencing the production and reuptake of neurotransmitters that relate to emotion, including serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine. Although exactly why they work is not yet known, as the amount of the neurotransmitters in the CNS is increased through the action of the drugs, the person often experiences less depression.

The original antidepressants were the **tricyclic antidepressants**, with the brand names of Tofranil and Elavil, and the **monamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs)**. These medications work by *increasing the amount of serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine at the synapses*, but they also have severe side effects including potential increases in blood pressure and the need to follow particular diets.

The antidepressants most prescribed today are the **selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)**, including Prozac, Paxil, and Zoloft, which are *designed to selectively block the reuptake of serotonin at the synapse, thereby leaving more serotonin available in the CNS*. SSRIs are safer and have fewer side effects than the tricyclics or the MAOIs (Fraser, 2000; Hollon, Thase, & Markowitz, 2002). SSRIs are effective, but patients taking them often suffer a variety of sometimes unpleasant side effects, including dry mouth, constipation, blurred vision, headache, agitation, drowsiness, as well as a reduction in sexual enjoyment.

There has been concern that SSRIs may increase the risk of suicide among teens and young adults, probably because when the medications begin working they give patients more energy, which may lead them to commit the suicide that they had been planning but lacked the energy to go through with (Barbui, Esposito, & Cipriani, 2009). This concern has led doctors to be more selective about prescribing antidepressants to this age group (Healy & Whitaker, 2003; Simon, 2006; Simon, Savarino, Operskalski, & Wang, 2006).

Because the effects of antidepressants may take weeks or even months to develop, doctors usually work with each patient to determine which medications are most effective, and may frequently change medications over the course of therapy. In some cases other types of antidepressants may be used instead of or in addition to the SSRIs. These medications also work by blocking the reuptake of

neurotransmitters, including serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine. Brand names of these medications include Effexor and Wellbutrin.

Patients who are suffering from bipolar disorder are not helped by the SSRIs or other antidepressants because their disorder also involves the experience of overly positive moods. Treatment is more complicated for these patients, often involving a combination of antipsychotics and antidepressants along with *mood stabilizing medications* (McElroy & Keck, 2000). The most well-known mood stabilizer, lithium carbonate (or lithium), is used widely to treat mania associated with bipolar disorder. Available in Canada for more than 60 years, the medication is used to treat acute manic episodes and as a long-term therapy to reduce their frequency and severity. Anticonvulsant medications can also be used as mood stabilizers. Another drug, Depakote, has also proven very effective, and some bipolar patients may do better with it than with lithium (Kowatch et al., 2000).

People who take lithium must have regular blood tests to be sure that the levels of the drug are in the appropriate range. Potential negative side effects of lithium are loss of coordination, slurred speech, frequent urination, and excessive thirst. Though side effects often cause patients to stop taking their medication, it is important that treatment be continuous, rather than intermittent. Recently, Health Canada updated safety information and treatment recommendations for lithium after finding that taking lithium carries a risk of high blood calcium, or hypercalcemia, and is sometimes associated with a hormone disorder known as hyperparathyroidism (Canadian Press, 2014). There is no cure for bipolar disorder, but drug therapy does help many people.

Antianxiety Medications

Antianxiety medications are *drugs that help relieve fear or anxiety*. They work by increasing the action of the neurotransmitter GABA. The increased level of GABA helps inhibit the action of the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system, creating a calming experience.

The most common class of antianxiety medications is the *tranquilizers*, known as *benzodiazepines*. These drugs, which are prescribed millions of times a year, include Ativan, Valium, and Xanax. The benzodiazepines act within a few minutes to treat mild anxiety disorders but also have major side effects. They are addictive, frequently leading to tolerance, and they can cause drowsiness, dizziness, and unpleasant withdrawal symptoms including relapses into increased anxiety (Otto et al., 1993). Furthermore, because the effects of the benzodiazepines are very similar to those of alcohol, they are very dangerous when combined with it.

Antipsychotic Medications

Until the middle of the 20th century, schizophrenia was inevitably accompanied by the presence of positive symptoms, including bizarre, disruptive, and potentially dangerous behaviour. As a result, schizophrenics were locked in asylums to protect them from themselves and to protect society from them. In the 1950s, a drug called chlorpromazine (Thorazine) was discovered that could reduce many of the positive symptoms of schizophrenia. Chlorpromazine was the first of many *antipsychotic drugs*.

Antipsychotic drugs (neuroleptics) are *drugs that treat the symptoms of schizophrenia and related psychotic disorders*. Today there are many antipsychotics, including Thorazine, Haldol, Clozaril,

Risperdal, and Zyprexa. Some of these drugs treat the positive symptoms of schizophrenia, and some treat the positive, negative, and cognitive symptoms.

The discovery of chlorpromazine and its use in clinics has been described as the single greatest advance in psychiatric care, because it has dramatically improved the prognosis of patients in psychiatric hospitals worldwide. Using antipsychotic medications has allowed hundreds of thousands of people to move out of asylums into individual households or community mental health centres, and in many cases to live near-normal lives.

Antipsychotics reduce the positive symptoms of schizophrenia by reducing the transmission of dopamine at the synapses in the limbic system, and they improve negative symptoms by influencing levels of serotonin (Marangell, Silver, Goff, & Yudofsky, 2003). Despite their effectiveness, antipsychotics have some negative side effects, including restlessness, muscle spasms, dizziness, and blurred vision. In addition, their long-term use can cause permanent neurological damage, a condition called **tardive dyskinesia** that *causes uncontrollable muscle movements, usually in the mouth area* (National Institute of Mental Health, 2008). Newer antipsychotics treat more symptoms with fewer side effects than older medications do (Casey, 1996).

Direct Brain Intervention Therapies

In cases of severe disorder it may be desirable to directly influence brain activity through electrical activation of the brain or through brain surgery. **Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)** is *a medical procedure designed to alleviate psychological disorder in which electric currents are passed through the brain, deliberately triggering a brief seizure* (Figure 14.4, “Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)”). ECT has been used since the 1930s to treat severe depression.

When it was first developed, the procedure involved strapping the patient to a table before the electricity was administered. The patient was knocked out by the shock, went into severe convulsions, and awoke later, usually without any memory of what had happened. Today ECT is used only in the most severe cases when all other treatments have failed, and the practice is more humane. The patient is first given muscle relaxants and a general anesthesia, and precisely calculated electrical currents are used to achieve the most benefit with the fewest possible risks.

ECT is very effective; about 80% of people who undergo three sessions of ECT report dramatic relief from their depression. ECT reduces suicidal thoughts and is assumed to have prevented many suicides (Kellner et al., 2005). On the other hand, the positive effects of ECT do not always last; over one-half of patients who undergo ECT experience relapse within one year, although antidepressant medication can help reduce this outcome (Sackheim et al., 2001). ECT may also cause short-term memory loss or cognitive impairment (Abrams, 1997; Sackheim et al., 2007).

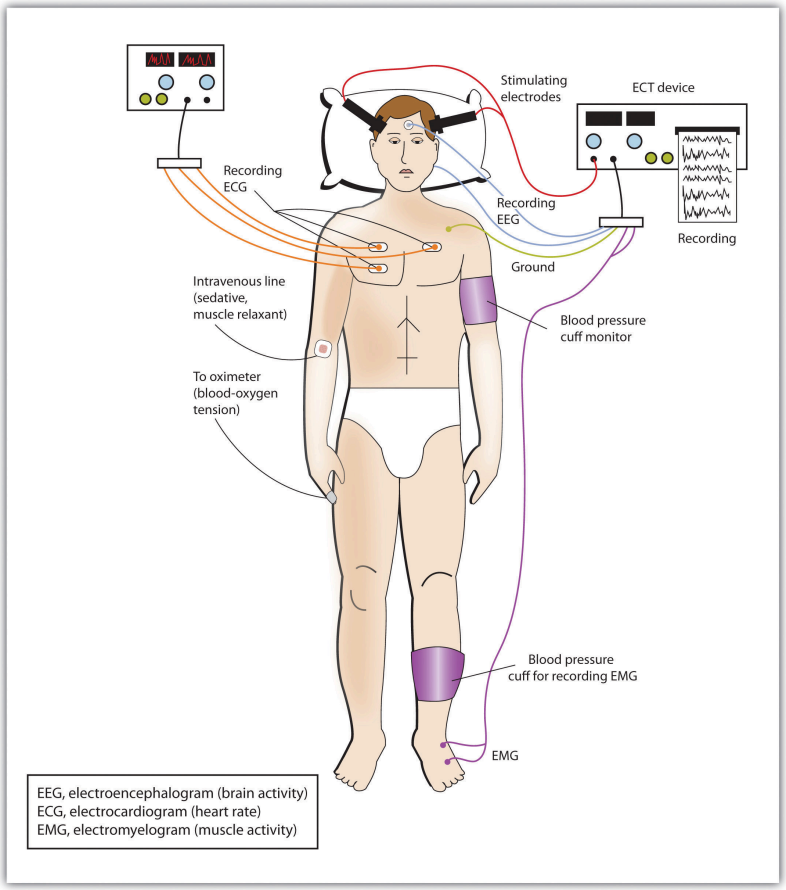


Figure 14.4 Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT). Today's ECT uses precisely calculated electrical currents to achieve the most benefit with the fewest possible risks.

Although ECT continues to be used, newer approaches to treating chronic depression are also being developed. A newer and gentler method of brain stimulation is **transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS)**, *a medical procedure designed to reduce psychological disorder that uses a pulsing magnetic coil to electrically stimulate the brain* (Figure 14.5, "Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation [TMS]"). TMS seems to work by activating neural circuits in the prefrontal cortex, which is less active in people with depression, causing an elevation of mood. TMS can be performed without sedation, does not cause seizures or memory loss, and may be as effective as ECT (Loo, Schweitzer, & Pratt, 2006; Rado, Dowd, & Janicak, 2008). TMS has also been used in the treatment of Parkinson's disease and schizophrenia.

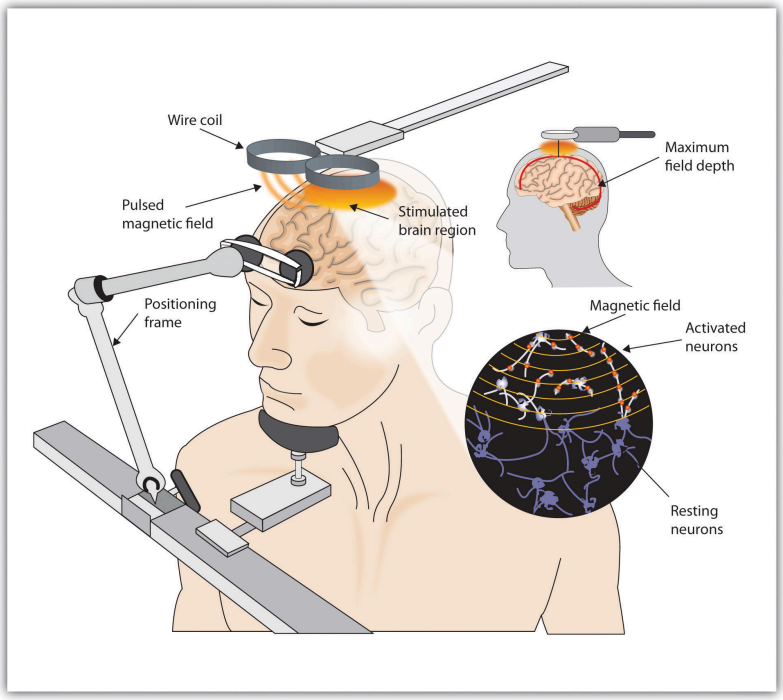


Figure 14.5 Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS). TMS is a noninvasive procedure that uses a pulsing magnetic coil to electrically stimulate the brain. Recently, TMS has been used in the treatment of Parkinson's disease.

Still other biomedical therapies are being developed for people with severe depression that persists over years. One approach involves implanting a device in the chest that stimulates the vagus nerve, a major nerve that descends from the brain stem toward the heart (Corcoran, Thomas, Phillips, & O'Keane, 2006; Nemeroff et al., 2006). When the vagus nerve is stimulated by the device, it activates brain structures that are less active in severely depressed people.

Psychosurgery, that is, *surgery that removes or destroys brain tissue in the hope of improving disorder,* is reserved for the most severe cases. The most well-known psychosurgery is the *prefrontal lobotomy*. Developed in 1935 by Nobel Prize winner Egas Moniz to treat severe phobias and anxiety, the procedure destroys the connections between the prefrontal cortex and the rest of the brain. Lobotomies were performed on thousands of patients. The procedure — which was never validated scientifically — left many patients in worse condition than before, subjecting the already suffering patients and their families to further heartbreak (Valenstein, 1986). Perhaps the most notable failure was the lobotomy performed on Rosemary Kennedy, the sister of U.S. President John F. Kennedy, which left her severely incapacitated.

There are very few centres that still conduct psychosurgery today, and when such surgeries are performed they are much more limited in nature and called *cingulotomy* (Dougherty et al., 2002). The ability to more accurately image and localize brain structures using modern neuroimaging techniques suggests that new, more accurate, and more beneficial developments in psychosurgery may soon be available (Sachdev & Chen, 2009).

Key Takeaways

- Psychostimulants are commonly prescribed to reduce the symptoms of ADHD.
- Antipsychotic drugs play a crucial role in the treatment of schizophrenia. They do not cure schizophrenia, but they help reduce the positive, negative, and cognitive symptoms, making it easier to live with the disease.
- Antidepressant drugs are used in the treatment of depression, anxiety, phobias, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. They gradually elevate mood by working to balance neurotransmitters in the CNS. The most commonly prescribed antidepressants are the SSRIs.
- Antianxiety drugs (tranquilizers) relieve apprehension, tension, and nervousness and are prescribed for people with diagnoses of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and panic disorder. The drugs are effective but have severe side effects including dependence and withdrawal symptoms.
- Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is a controversial procedure used to treat severe depression, in which electric currents are passed through the brain, deliberately triggering a brief seizure.
- A newer method of brain stimulation is transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), a noninvasive procedure that employs a pulsing magnetic coil to electrically stimulate the brain.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. What are your opinions about taking drugs to improve psychological disorders? Would you take an antidepressant or antianxiety medication if you were feeling depressed or anxious? Do you think children with ADHD should be given stimulants? Why or why not?
2. Based on what you have just read, would you be willing to undergo ECT or TMS if you were chronically depressed and drug therapy had failed? Why or why not?

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14.3 Reducing Disorder by Changing the Social Situation

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the advantages of group therapy and self-help groups for treating disorder.
2. Evaluate the procedures and goals of community mental health services.

Although the individual therapies that we have discussed so far in this chapter focus primarily on the psychological and biological aspects of the bio-psycho-social model of disorder, the social dimension is never out of the picture. Therapists understand that disorder is caused, and potentially prevented, in large part by the people with whom we interact. A person with schizophrenia does not live in a vacuum. He interacts with his family members and with the other members of the community, and the behaviour of those people may influence his disease. And depression and anxiety are created primarily by the affected individual's perceptions (and misperceptions) of the important people around them. Thus prevention and treatment are influenced in large part by the social context in which the person is living.

Group, Couples, and Family Therapy

Practitioners sometimes incorporate the social setting in which disorder occurs by conducting therapy in groups. **Group therapy** is *psychotherapy in which clients receive psychological treatment together with others*. A professionally trained therapist guides the group, usually between six and 10 participants, to create an atmosphere of support and emotional safety for the participants (Yalom & Leszcz, 2005).

Group therapy provides a safe place where people come together to share problems or concerns, to better understand their own situations, and to learn from and with each other (Figure 14.6, "Group Therapy"). Group therapy is often cheaper than individual therapy, as the therapist can treat more people at the same time, but economy is only one part of its attraction. Group therapy allows people to help each other, by sharing ideas, problems, and solutions. It provides social support, offers the knowledge that other people are facing and successfully coping with similar situations, and allows group members to model the successful behaviours of other group members. Group therapy makes explicit the idea that our interactions with others may create, intensify, and potentially alleviate disorders.

Group therapy has met with much success in the more than 50 years it has been in use, and it has generally been found to be as or more effective than individual therapy (McDermut, Miller, & Brown, 2001). Group therapy is particularly effective for people who have life-altering illness, as it helps them cope better with their disease, enhances the quality of their lives, and in some cases has even been shown to help them live longer (American Group Psychotherapy Association, 2000).



Figure 14.6 Group Therapy. Group therapy provides a therapeutic setting where people meet with others to share problems or concerns, to better understand their own situation, and to learn from and with each other.

Sometimes group therapy is conducted with people who are in close relationships. **Couples therapy** is *treatment in which two people who are cohabitating, married, or dating meet together with the practitioner to discuss their concerns and issues about their relationship*. These therapies are in some cases educational, providing the couple with information about what is to be expected in a relationship. The therapy may focus on such topics as sexual enjoyment, communication, or the symptoms of one of the partners (e.g., depression).

Family therapy involves *families meeting together with a therapist*. In some cases the meeting is precipitated by a particular problem with one family member, such as a diagnosis of bipolar disorder in a child. Family therapy is based on the assumption that the problem, even if it is primarily affecting one person, is the result of an interaction among the people in the family.

Self-Help Groups

Group therapy is based on the idea that people can be helped by the positive social relationships that others provide. One way for people to gain this social support is by joining a **self-help group**, which is *a voluntary association of people who share a common desire to overcome psychological disorder or improve their well-being* (Humphreys & Rappaport, 1994). Self-help groups have been used to help individuals cope with many types of addictive behaviours. Three of the best-known self-help groups are Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, and Overeaters Anonymous.

The idea behind self-groups is very similar to that of group therapy, but the groups are open to a broader spectrum of people. As in group therapy, the benefits include social support, education, and observational learning. Religion and spirituality are often emphasized, and self-blame is discouraged. Regular group meetings are held with the supervision of a trained leader.

Community Mental Health: Service and Prevention

The social aspect of disorder is also understood and treated at the community level. **Community mental health services** are *psychological treatments and interventions that are distributed at the community level*. Community mental health services are provided by nurses, psychologists, social workers, and other professionals in sites such as schools, hospitals, police stations, drug treatment clinics, and residential homes. The goal is to establish programs that will help people get the mental health services that they need (Gonzales, Kelly, Mowbray, Hays, & Snowden, 1991).

Unlike traditional therapy, the primary goal of community mental health services is prevention. Just as widespread vaccination of children has eliminated diseases such as polio and smallpox, mental health services are designed to prevent psychological disorder (Institute of Medicine, 1994). Community prevention can be focused on one or more of three levels: *primary prevention*, *secondary prevention*, and *tertiary prevention*.

Primary prevention is *prevention in which all members of the community receive the treatment*. Examples of primary prevention are programs designed to encourage all pregnant women to avoid cigarettes and alcohol because of the risk of health problems for the fetus, and programs designed to remove dangerous lead paint from homes.

Secondary prevention is more limited and focuses on people who are most likely to need it — those who display *risk factors* for a given disorder. **Risk factors** are *the social, environmental, and economic vulnerabilities that make it more likely than average that a given individual will develop a disorder* (Werner & Smith, 1992). The following presents a list of potential risk factors for psychological disorders.

Some Risk Factors for Psychological Disorders

Community mental health workers practising secondary prevention will focus on youths with these markers of future problems.

- Academic difficulties
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Child abuse and neglect
- Developmental disorders
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Dysfunctional family
- Early pregnancy
- Emotional immaturity
- Homelessness
- Learning disorder
- Low birth weight

- Parental mental illness
- Poor nutrition
- Poverty

Finally, **tertiary prevention** is *treatment, such as psychotherapy or biomedical therapy, that focuses on people who are already diagnosed with disorder*.

Community prevention programs are designed to provide support during childhood or early adolescence with the hope that the interventions will prevent disorders from appearing or will keep existing disorders from expanding. Interventions include such things as help with housing, counselling, group therapy, emotional regulation, job and skills training, literacy training, social responsibility training, exercise, stress management, rehabilitation, family therapy, or removal of a child from a stressful or dangerous home situation.

The goal of community interventions is to make it easier for individuals to continue to live a normal life in the face of their problems. Community mental health services are designed to make it less likely that vulnerable populations will end up in institutions or on the streets. In summary, their goal is to allow at-risk individuals to continue to participate in community life by assisting them within their own communities.

Research Focus: The Implicit Association Test as a Behavioural Marker for Suicide

Secondary prevention focuses on people who are at risk for disorder or harmful behaviours. Suicide is a leading cause of death worldwide, and prevention efforts can help people consider other alternatives, particularly if it can be determined who is most at risk. Determining whether a person is at risk of suicide is difficult, however, because people are motivated to deny or conceal such thoughts to avoid intervention or hospitalization. One recent study found that 78% of patients who die by suicide explicitly deny suicidal thoughts in their last verbal communications before killing themselves (Busch, Fawcett, & Jacobs, 2003).

Nock et al. (2010) tested the possibility that implicit measures of the association between the self-concept and death might provide a more direct behavioural marker of suicide risk that would allow professionals to more accurately determine whether a person is likely to commit suicide in comparison to existing self-report measures. They measured implicit associations about death and suicide in 157 people seeking treatment at a psychiatric emergency department.

The participants all completed a version of the Implicit Association Test (IAT), which was designed to assess the strength of a person's mental associations between death and the self (Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998). Using a notebook computer, participants classified stimuli representing the constructs of "death" (i.e., die, dead, deceased, lifeless, and suicide) and "life" (i.e., alive, survive, live, thrive, and breathing) and the attributes of "me" (i.e., I, myself, my, mine, and self) and "not me" (i.e., they, them, their, theirs, and other). Response latencies for all trials were recorded and analyzed, and the strength of each participant's association between "death" and "me" was calculated.

The researchers then followed participants over the next six months to test whether the measured implicit association of death with self could be used to predict future suicide attempts. The authors also tested whether scores on the IAT would add to prediction of risk above and beyond other measures of risk, including

questionnaire and interview measures of suicide risk. Scores on the IAT predicted suicide attempts in the next six months above all the other risk factors that were collected by the hospital staff, including past history of suicide attempts. These results suggest that measures of implicit cognition may be useful for determining risk factors for clinical behaviours such as suicide.

Key Takeaways

- Group therapy is psychotherapy in which clients receive psychological treatment together with others. A professionally trained therapist guides the group. Types of group therapy include couples therapy and family therapy.
- Self-help groups have been used to help individuals cope with many types of disorder.
- The goal of community health service programs is to act during childhood or early adolescence with the hope that interventions might prevent disorders from appearing or keep existing disorders from expanding. The prevention provided can be primary, secondary, or tertiary.

Exercise and Critical Thinking

1. Imagine the impact of a natural disaster like the 2013 floods in Calgary would have on the population of that city and cities like it. How would you expect such an event to affect the prevalence of psychological disorders in the community? What recommendations would you make in terms of setting up community support centres to help the people in the city?

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14.4 Evaluating Treatment and Prevention: What Works?

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize the ways that scientists evaluate the effectiveness of psychological, behavioural, and community service approaches to preventing and reducing disorders.
2. Summarize which types of therapy are most effective for which disorders.

We have seen that psychologists and other practitioners employ a variety of treatments in their attempts to reduce the negative outcomes of psychological disorders. But we have not yet considered the important question of whether these treatments are effective, and if they are, which approaches are most effective for which people and for which disorders. Accurate empirical answers to these questions are important as they help practitioners focus their efforts on the techniques that have been proven to be most promising and will guide societies as they make decisions about how to spend public money to improve the quality of life of their citizens (Hunsley & Di Giulio, 2002).

Psychologists use **outcome research**, that is, *studies that assess the effectiveness of medical treatments*, to determine the effectiveness of different therapies. As you can see in Figure 14.7, "Outcome Research," in these studies the independent variable is the type of the treatment — for instance, whether it was psychological or biological in orientation or how long it lasted. In most cases characteristics of the client (e.g., his or her gender, age, disease severity, and prior psychological histories) are also collected as control variables. The dependent measure is an assessment of the benefit received by the client. In some cases we might simply ask the client if he or she feels better, and in other cases we may directly measure behaviour: Can the client now get in the airplane and take a flight? Has the client remained out of juvenile detention?

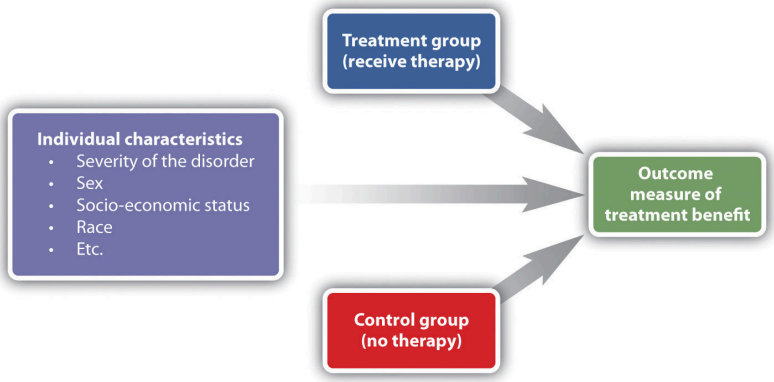


Figure 14.7 Outcome Research. The design of an outcome study includes a dependent measure of benefit received by the client, as predicted by independent variables including type of treatment and characteristics of the individual. [Long Description]

In every case the scientists evaluating the therapy must keep in mind the potential that other effects rather than the treatment itself might be important, that some treatments that seem effective might not be, and that some treatments might actually be harmful, at least in the sense that money and time are spent on programs or drugs that do not work.

One threat to the validity of outcome research studies is **natural improvement** — *the possibility that people might get better over time, even without treatment.* People who begin therapy or join a self-help group do so because they are feeling bad or engaging in unhealthy behaviours. After being in a program over a period of time, people frequently feel that they are getting better. But it is possible that they would have improved even if they had not attended the program, and that the program is not actually making a difference. To demonstrate that the treatment is effective, the people who participate in it must be compared with another group of people who do not get treatment.

Another possibility is that therapy works, but that it doesn't really matter which type of therapy it is. **Nonspecific treatment effects** occur when the *patient gets better over time simply by coming to therapy, even though it doesn't matter what actually happens at the therapy sessions*. The idea is that therapy works, in the sense that it is better than doing nothing, but that all therapies are pretty much equal in what they are able to accomplish. Finally, **placebo effects** are *improvements that occur as a result of the expectation that one will get better rather than from the actual effects of a treatment*.

Effectiveness of Psychological Therapy

Thousands of studies have been conducted to test the effectiveness of psychotherapy, and by and large they find evidence that it works. Some outcome studies compare a group that gets treatment with another (control) group that gets no treatment. For instance, Ruwaard, Broeksteeg, Schrieken, Emmelkamp, and Lange (2010) found that patients who interacted with a therapist over a website showed more reduction in symptoms of panic disorder than did a similar group of patients who were on a waiting list but did not get therapy. Although studies such as this one control for the possibility of natural improvement (the treatment group improved more than the control group, which would not have happened if both groups had only been improving naturally over time), they do not control for either nonspecific treatment effects or for placebo effects. The people in the treatment group might have improved simply by being in the therapy (nonspecific effects), or they may have improved because they expected the treatment to help them (placebo effects).

An alternative is to compare a group that gets real therapy with a group that gets only a placebo. For instance, Keller et al. (2001) had adolescents who were experiencing anxiety disorders take pills that they thought would reduce anxiety for eight weeks. However, one-half of the patients were randomly assigned to actually receive the antianxiety drug Paxil, while the other half received a placebo drug that did not have any medical properties. The researchers ruled out the possibility that only placebo effects were occurring because they found that both groups improved over the eight weeks, but the group that received Paxil improved significantly more than the placebo group did.

Studies that use a control group that gets no treatment or a group that gets only a placebo are informative, but they also raise ethical questions. If the researchers believe that their treatment is going to work, why would they deprive some of their participants, who are in need of help, of the possibility for improvement by putting them in a control group?

Another type of outcome study compares different approaches with each other. For instance, Herbert et al. (2005) tested whether social skills training could boost the results received for the treatment of social anxiety disorder with cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) alone. As you can see in Figure 14.8, they found that people in both groups improved, but CBT coupled with social skills training showed significantly greater gains than CBT alone.

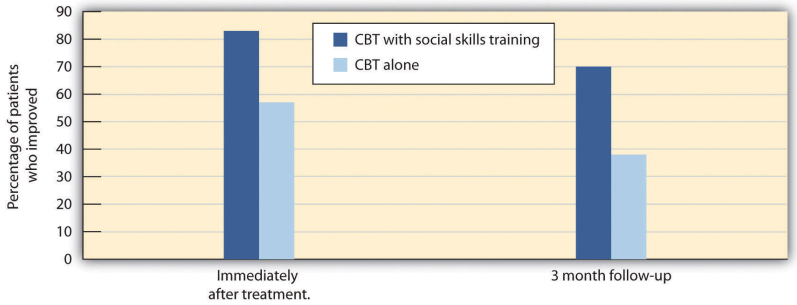


Figure 14.8 CBT Research. Herbert and colleagues compared the effectiveness of CBT alone with CBT along with social skills training. Both groups improved, but the group that received both therapies had significantly greater gains than the group that received CBT alone. [Long Description]

Other studies (Crits-Christoph, 1992; Crits-Christoph et al., 2004) have compared brief sessions of psychoanalysis with longer-term psychoanalysis in the treatment of anxiety disorder, humanistic therapy with psychodynamic therapy in treating depression, and cognitive therapy with drug therapy in treating anxiety (Dalgleish, 2004; Hollon, Thase, & Markowitz, 2002). These studies are advantageous because they compare the specific effects of one type of treatment with another, while allowing all patients to get treatment.

Research Focus: Meta-Analyzing Clinical Outcomes

Because there are thousands of studies testing the effectiveness of psychotherapy, and the independent and dependent variables in the studies vary widely, the results are often combined using a *meta-analysis*. A **meta-analysis** is *a statistical technique that uses the results of existing studies to integrate and draw conclusions about those studies*. In one important meta-analysis analyzing the effect of psychotherapy, Smith, Glass, and Miller (1980) summarized studies that compared different types of therapy or that compared the effectiveness of therapy against a control group. To find the studies, the researchers systematically searched computer databases and the reference sections of previous research reports to locate every study that met the inclusion criteria. Over 475 studies were located, and these studies used over 10,000 research participants.

The results of each of these studies were systematically coded, and *a measure of the effectiveness of treatment* known as the **effect size** was created for each study. Smith and her colleagues found that the average effect size for the influence of therapy was 0.85, indicating that psychotherapy had a relatively large positive effect on recovery. What this means is that, overall, receiving psychotherapy for behavioural problems is substantially better for the individual than not receiving therapy (Figure 14.9, “Normal Curves of Those Who Do and Do Not Get Treatment”). Although they did not measure it, psychotherapy presumably has large societal benefits as well — the cost of the therapy is likely more than made up for by the increased productivity of those who receive it.

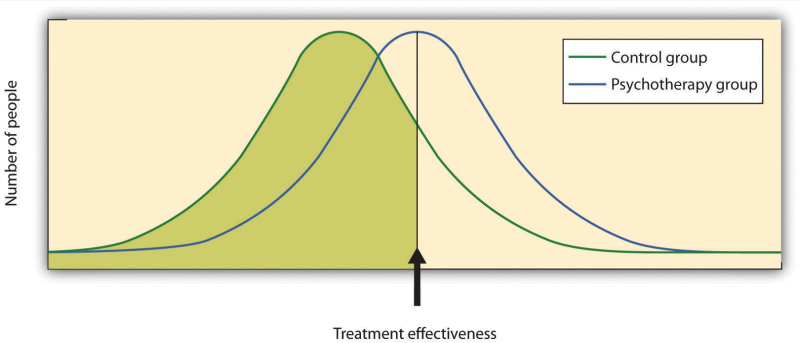


Figure 14.9 Normal Curves of Those Who Do and Do Not Get Treatment. Meta-analyses of the outcomes of psychotherapy have found that, on average, the distribution for people who get treatment is higher than for those who do not get treatment.

Other meta-analyses have also found substantial support for the effectiveness of specific therapies, including cognitive therapy, CBT (Butler, Chapman, Forman, & Beck, 2006; Deacon & Abramowitz, 2004), couples and family therapy (Shadish & Baldwin, 2002), and psychoanalysis (Shedler, 2010). On the basis of these and other meta-analyses, a list of *empirically supported therapies* — that is, therapies that are known to be effective — has been developed (Chambless & Hollon, 1998; Hollon, Stewart, & Strunk (2006). These therapies include cognitive therapy and behaviour therapy for depression; cognitive therapy, exposure therapy, and stress inoculation training for anxiety; CBT for bulimia; and behaviour modification for bed-wetting.

Smith, Glass, and Miller (1980) did not find much evidence that any one type of therapy was more effective than any other type, and more recent meta-analyses have not tended to find many differences either (Cuijpers, van Straten, Andersson, & van Oppen, 2008). What this means is that a good part of the effect of therapy is nonspecific, in the sense that simply coming to any type of therapy is helpful in comparison to not coming. This is true partly because there are fewer distinctions among the ways that different therapies are practised than the theoretical differences among them would suggest. What a good therapist practising psychodynamic approaches does in therapy is often not much different from what a humanist or a cognitive-behavioural therapist does, and so no one approach is really likely to be better than the other.

What all good therapies have in common is that they give people hope; help them think more carefully about themselves and about their relationships with others; and provide a positive, empathic, and trusting relationship with the therapist — the therapeutic alliance (Ahn & Wampold, 2001). This is why many self-help groups are also likely to be effective and perhaps why having a psychiatric service dog may also make us feel better.

Effectiveness of Biomedical Therapies

Although there are fewer of them because fewer studies have been conducted, meta-analyses also support the effectiveness of drug therapies for psychological disorder. For instance, the use of psychostimulants to reduce the symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is well known to be successful, and many studies find that the positive and negative symptoms of schizophrenia are substantially reduced by the use of antipsychotic medications (Lieberman et al., 2005).

People who take antidepressants for mood disorders or antianxiety medications for anxiety disorders almost always report feeling better, although drugs are less helpful for phobic disorder and obsessive-compulsive disorder. Some of these improvements are almost certainly the result of placebo effects (Cardeña & Kirsch, 2000), but the medications do work, at least in the short term. An analysis of the Health Canada database found a success rate of 26% for Prozac and Zoloft, 24% for Celexa, and 31% for Lexapro and Cymbalta (Deshauer et al., 2008). The overall average success rate for antidepressant medications approved by Health Canada and the FDA between 1987 and 2004 was 30% (Deshauer et al., 2008; Turner, Matthews, Linardatos, Tell, & Rosenthal, 2008).

One problem with drug therapies is that although they provide temporary relief, they don't treat the underlying cause of the disorder. Once the patient stops taking the drug, the symptoms often return in full force. In addition many drugs have negative side effects, and some also have the potential for addiction and abuse. Different people have different reactions, and all drugs carry warning labels. As a result, although these drugs are frequently prescribed, doctors attempt to prescribe the lowest doses possible for the shortest possible periods of time.

Older patients face special difficulties when they take medications for mental illness. Older people are more sensitive to drugs, and drug interactions are more likely because older patients tend to take a variety of different drugs every day. They are more likely to forget to take their pills, to take too many or too few, or to mix them up due to poor eyesight or faulty memory.

Like all types of drugs, medications used in the treatment of mental illnesses can carry risks to an unborn infant. Tranquilizers should not be taken by women who are pregnant or expecting to become pregnant, because they may cause birth defects or other infant problems, especially if taken during the first trimester. Some selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) may also increase risks to the fetus (Louik, Lin, Werler, Hernandez, & Mitchell, 2007; U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 2004), as do antipsychotics (Diav-Citrin et al., 2005).

Decisions on medication should be carefully weighed and based on each person's needs and circumstances. Medications should be selected based on available scientific research, and they should be prescribed at the lowest possible dose. All people must be monitored closely while they are on medications.

Effectiveness of Social-Community Approaches

Measuring the effectiveness of community action approaches to mental health is difficult because they occur in community settings and impact a wide variety of people, and it is difficult to find and assess valid outcome measures. Nevertheless, research has found that a variety of community interventions can be effective in preventing a variety of psychological disorders (Price, Cowen, Lorion, & Ramos-McKay,1988). Data suggest that prevention programs that provide supplemental foods, health-care referral, and nutrition education for low-income families are successful in leading to higher birth weight babies and lower infant mortality (Ripple & Zigler, 2003).

Although some of the many community-based programs designed to reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse; violence and delinquency; and mental illness have been successful, the changes brought about by even the best of these programs are, on average, modest (Wandersman & Florin, 2003; Wilson, Gottfredson, & Najaka, 2001). This does not necessarily mean that the programs are not useful.

What is important is that community members continue to work with researchers to help determine which aspects of which programs are most effective, and to concentrate efforts on the most productive approaches (Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003). The most beneficial preventive interventions for young people involve coordinated, systemic efforts to enhance their social and emotional competence and health. Many psychologists continue to work to promote policies that support community prevention as a model of preventing disorder.

Key Takeaways

- Outcome research is designed to differentiate the effects of a treatment from natural improvement, nonspecific treatment effects, and placebo effects.
- Meta-analysis is used to integrate and draw conclusions about studies.
- Research shows that getting psychological therapy is better at reducing disorder than not getting it, but many of the results are due to nonspecific effects. All good therapies give people hope and help them think more carefully about themselves and about their relationships with others.
- Biomedical treatments are effective, at least in the short term, but overall they are less effective than psychotherapy.
- One problem with drug therapies is that although they provide temporary relief, they do not treat the underlying cause of the disorder.
- Federally funded community mental health service programs are effective, but their preventive effects may in many cases be minor.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Revisit the chapter opener that focuses on the use of psychiatric service dogs. What factors might lead you to believe that such therapy would or would not be effective? How would you propose to empirically test the effectiveness of the therapy?
2. Given your knowledge about the effectiveness of therapies, what approaches would you take if you were making recommendations for a person who is seeking treatment for severe depression?

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Image Attributions

Figure 14.8: Adapted from Herbert et al., 2005.

Long Descriptions

Figure 14.7 long description: In outcome research, individual characteristics like severity of the disorder, sex, socio-economic status, and race are controlled for. The treatment group receives therapy while the control group receives no therapy. By comparing the two groups, the researcher can determine the outcome benefits of the therapy. [Return to Figure 14.7]

Figure 14.8 long description: Effectiveness of CBT combined with social skills training.

	Percentage of patients who improved with CBT alone	**Percentage of patients who improved with CBT and social skills training**
Immediately after treatment	57%	83%
3 month follow-up	38%	70%

[Return to Figure 14.8]

14.5 Chapter Summary

Psychological disorders create a tremendous individual, social, and economic drain on society. Psychologists work to reduce this burden by preventing and treating disorder. Psychologists base this treatment and prevention of disorder on the bio-psycho-social model, which proposes that disorder has biological, psychological, and social causes, and that each of these aspects can be the focus of reducing disorder.

Treatment for psychological disorder begins with a formal psychological assessment. In addition to the psychological assessment, the patient is usually seen by a physician to gain information about potential Axis III (physical) problems.

One approach to treatment is psychotherapy. The fundamental aspect of psychotherapy is that the patient directly confronts the disorder and works with the therapist to help reduce it.

Psychodynamic therapy (also known as psychoanalysis) is a psychological treatment based on Freudian and neo-Freudian personality theories. The analyst engages with the patient in one-on-one sessions during which the patient verbalizes his or her thoughts through free associations and by reporting on his or her dreams. The goal of the therapy is to help the patient develop insight — that is, an understanding of the unconscious causes of the disorder.

Humanistic therapy is a psychological treatment based on the personality theories of Carl Rogers and other humanistic psychologists. Humanistic therapies attempt to promote growth and responsibility by helping clients consider their own situations and the world around them and how they can work to achieve their life goals.

The humanistic therapy promotes the ideas of genuineness, empathy, and unconditional positive regard in a nurturing relationship in which the therapist actively listens to and reflects the feelings of the client; this relationship is probably the most fundamental part of contemporary psychotherapy

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is a structured approach to treatment that attempts to reduce psychological disorder through systematic procedures based on cognitive and behavioural principles. CBT is a very broad approach used for the treatment of a variety of problems.

Behavioural aspects of CBT may include operant conditioning using reward or punishment. When the disorder is anxiety or phobia, the goal of the CBT is to reduce the negative affective responses to the feared stimulus through exposure therapy, flooding, or systematic desensitization. Aversion therapy is a type of behaviour therapy in which positive punishment is used to reduce the frequency of an undesirable behaviour.

Cognitive aspects of CBT include treatment that helps clients identify incorrect or distorted beliefs that are contributing to disorder.

The most commonly used approaches to therapy are eclectic, such that the therapist uses whichever techniques seem most useful and relevant for a given patient.

Biomedical therapies are treatments designed to reduce psychological disorder by influencing the action of the central nervous system. These therapies primarily involve the use of medications but also include direct methods of brain intervention, including electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), and psychosurgery.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is treated using low doses of psychostimulants, including Ritalin, Adderall, and Dexedrine.

Mood disorders are most commonly treated with the antidepressant medications known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), including Prozac, Paxil, and Zoloft. The SSRIs selectively block the reuptake of serotonin at the synapse. Bipolar disorder is treated with mood stabilizing medications.

Antianxiety medications, including the tranquilizers Ativan, Valium, and Xanax, are used to treat anxiety disorders.

Schizophrenia is treated with antipsychotic drugs, including Thorazine, Haldol, Clozaril, Risperdal, and Zyprexa. Some of these drugs treat the positive symptoms of schizophrenia, and some treat the positive, negative, and cognitive symptoms.

Practitioners frequently incorporate the social setting in which disorder occurs by conducting therapy in groups, with couples, or with families. One way for people to gain social support is by joining a self-help group.

Community mental health services refer to psychological treatments and interventions that are distributed at the community level. These centres provide primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention.

Psychologists use outcome research to determine the effectiveness of different therapies. These studies help determine if improvement is due to natural improvement, nonspecific treatment effects, or placebo effects. Research finds that psychotherapy and biomedical therapies are both effective in treating disorder, but there is not much evidence that any one type of therapy is more effective than any other type. What all good therapies have in common is that they give people hope; help them think more carefully about themselves and about their relationships with others; and provide a positive, empathic, and trusting relationship with the therapist — the therapeutic alliance.

One problem with drug therapies is that although they provide temporary relief, they don’t treat the underlying cause of the disorder. Once the patient stops taking the drug, the symptoms often return in full force.

Data suggest that although some community prevention programs are successful, the changes brought about by even the best of these programs are, on average, modest.

Chapter 15. Psychology in Our Social Lives

15. Psychology in Our Social Lives

Binge Drinking and the Death of a Star Athlete

Jonathan Andrews was an honour roll student in southern Ontario, a football and rugby player, swimmer, environmentalist, and animal lover who, after graduating from high school, had travelled with friends to South America to explore the world and its cultures. Within his first week at Acadia University, he succumbed to binge drinking and died of blood alcohol poisoning (Calgary Herald, 2011).

Jonathan was not the first university student to fall victim to binge drinking repercussions. In 2010, two students died in alcohol-related accidents at Queen's University. Cameron Bruce fell out of a sixth-floor window of the Victoria Hall residence during orientation week. Then, in December, Habib Khan was killed after falling through a rooftop skylight at Duncan McArthur Hall. At St. Thomas University in Fredericton, rookie volleyball player Andrew Bartlett, 21, died in a fall down a flight of stairs in October 2010 after a team initiation party (MacQueen, 2012).

Queen's has banned its homecoming events since 2009, infamous for excessive partying that spilled off-campus and onto city streets. It joined universities like Western, Guelph, and Acadia in policing a ban on alcohol in residence rooms during orientation week, and added a host of dry events to emphasize that a blood-alcohol level isn't essential to university life. Queen's also operates a Campus Observation Room that provides a confidential, safe, nonjudgmental place to sober up.

Acadia University students and administration began formal meetings within weeks of Andrews's death to look at alcohol policies. The provincial health ministry was commissioned to write its best-practices report. Acadia's student director sent a letter to parents of newly enrolled students that August outlining new alcohol restrictions, and urging them to talk to their kids about drinking before students leave home. But one of the most innovative initiatives is the Red and Blue Crew in which volunteers take a six-hour training program that teaches CPR, skills to identify medical emergencies, and techniques for defusing risky situations. Those who complete the program sport wristbands in the school colours of red and blue.

In the health ministry's report, it was concluded that it is increasingly difficult in Western society to envision having a "good time" without alcohol being a de facto requirement, and therefore the university administration and leadership plays the largest role in shifting the culture to one of responsible fun.

The subdiscipline of psychology discussed in this chapter reflects the highest level of explanation that we will consider. This topic, known as **social psychology**, is defined as *the scientific study of how we feel about, think about, and behave toward the other people around us, and how those people influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour.*

The subject matter of social psychology is our everyday interactions with people, including the social groups to which we belong. Questions these psychologists ask include why we are often helpful to other people but at other times are unfriendly or aggressive; why we sometimes conform to the behaviours of others but at other times are able to assert our independence; and what factors help groups work together in effective and productive, rather than in ineffective and unproductive, ways. A fundamental principle of social psychology is that, although we may not always be aware of it, our cognitions, emotions,

and behaviours are substantially influenced by the **social situation**, or *the people with whom we are interacting*.

In this chapter we will introduce the principles of **social cognition** — *the part of human thinking that helps us understand and predict the behaviour of ourselves and others* — and consider the ways that our judgments about other people guide our behaviours toward them. We'll explore how we form impressions of other people, and what makes us like or dislike them. We'll also see how our **attitudes** — *our enduring evaluations of people or things* — influence, and are influenced by, our behaviour.

Then we will consider the social psychology of interpersonal relationships, including the behaviours of *altruism, aggression,* and *conformity*. We will see that humans have a natural tendency to help each other, but that we may also become aggressive if we feel that we are being threatened. And we will see how **social norms**, *the accepted beliefs about what we do or what we should do in particular social situations* (such as the norm of binge drinking common on many university campuses), influence our behaviour. Finally, we will consider the social psychology of social groups, with a particular focus on the conditions that limit and potentially increase productive group performance and decision making.

The principles of social psychology can help us understand tragic events such as the death of Jonathan Andrews. Jonathan is reported to have said to his parents that he planned on making as many friends as possible in that first week before classes. Many people might blame the tragedy on Jonathan himself, asking, for instance, "Why did he drink so much?" or "Why didn't he say no?" As we will see in this chapter, research conducted by social psychologists shows that the poor decisions Jonathan made on the night he died may have been due less to his own personal weaknesses or deficits than to his desires to fit in with and be accepted by the others around him — desires that in his case led to a disastrous outcome.

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15.1 Social Cognition: Making Sense of Ourselves and Others

Learning Objectives

1. Review the principles of social cognition, including the fundamentals of how we form judgments about other people.
2. Define the concept of attitude and review the ways that attitudes are developed and changed, and how attitudes relate to behaviour.

One important aspect of social cognition involves forming impressions of other people. Making these judgments quickly and accurately helps us guide our behaviour to interact appropriately with the people we know. If we can figure out why our roommate is angry at us, we can react to resolve the problem; if we can determine how to motivate the people in our group to work harder on a project, then the project might be better.

Perceiving Others

Our initial judgments of others are based in large part on what we see. The physical features of other people, particularly their sex, race, age, and physical attractiveness, are very salient, and we often focus our attention on these dimensions (Schneider, 2004; Zebrowitz & Montepare, 2006).

Although it may seem inappropriate or shallow to admit it, we are strongly influenced by the physical attractiveness of others, and in many cases physical attractiveness is the most important determinant of our initial liking for other people (Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, & Rottmann, 1966). Infants who are only a year old prefer to look at faces that adults consider to be attractive than at unattractive faces (Langlois, Ritter, Roggman, & Vaughn, 1991). Evolutionary psychologists have argued that our belief that "what is beautiful is also good" may be because we use attractiveness as a cue for health; people whom we find more attractive may also, evolutionarily, have been healthier (Zebrowitz, Fellous, Mignault, & Andreoletti, 2003).

One indicator of health is youth. Leslie Zebrowitz and her colleagues (Zebrowitz, 1996; Zebrowitz, Luevano, Bronstad, & Aharon, 2009) have extensively studied the tendency for both men and women to prefer people whose faces have characteristics similar to those of babies. These features include large, round, and widely spaced eyes, a small nose and chin, prominent cheekbones, and a large forehead. People who have baby faces (both men and women), like the ones in Figure 15.1, "Baby Faces," are seen as more attractive than people who are not baby-faced.



Figure 15.1 Baby Faces. People with baby faces are perceived as attractive.

Another indicator of health is symmetry. People are more attracted to faces that are more symmetrical than they are to those that are less symmetrical, and this may be due in part to the perception that symmetrical faces are perceived as healthier (Rhodes et al., 2001).

Although you might think that we would prefer faces that are unusual or unique, in fact the opposite is true. Langlois and Roggman (1990) showed university students the faces of men and women. The faces were composites made up of the average of 2, 4, 8, 16, or 32 faces. The researchers found that the more faces that were averaged into the stimulus, the more attractive it was judged. Again, our liking for average faces may be because they appear healthier.

Although preferences for youthful, symmetrical, and average faces have been observed cross-culturally, and thus appear to be common human preferences, different cultures may also have unique beliefs about what is attractive. In modern Western cultures, thin is in, and people prefer those who have little excess fat (Crandall, Merman, & Hebl, 2009). The need to be thin to be attractive is particularly strong for women in contemporary society, and the desire to maintain a low body weight can lead to low self-esteem, eating disorders, and other unhealthy behaviours. However, the norm of thinness has not always been in place; the preference for women with slender, masculine, and athletic looks has become stronger over the past 50 years. In contrast to the relatively universal preferences for youth, symmetry, and averageness, other cultures do not show such a strong propensity for thinness (Sugiyama, 2005).

Forming Judgments on the Basis of Appearance: Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Discrimination

We frequently use people's appearances to form our judgments about them and to determine our responses to them. The *tendency to attribute personality characteristics to people on the basis of their external appearance or their social group memberships* is known as **stereotyping**. Our stereotypes about physically attractive people lead us to see them as more dominant, sexually warm, mentally healthy, intelligent, and socially skilled than we perceive physically unattractive people (Langlois et al., 2000). And our stereotypes lead us to treat people differently — the physically attractive are given better

grades on essay exams, are more successful on job interviews, and receive lighter sentences in court judgments than their less attractive counterparts (Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003; Zebrowitz & McDonald, 1991).

In addition to stereotypes about physical attractiveness, we also regularly stereotype people on the basis of their sex, race, age, religion, and many other characteristics, and these stereotypes are frequently negative (Schneider, 2004). Stereotyping is unfair to the people we judge because stereotypes are based on our preconceptions and negative emotions about the members of the group. Stereotyping is closely related to **prejudice**, *the tendency to dislike people because of their appearance or group memberships*, and discrimination, *negative behaviours toward others based on prejudice.* Stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination work together. We may not vote for a gay person for public office because of our negative stereotypes about gays, and we may avoid people from other religions or those with mental illness because of our prejudices.

Some stereotypes may be accurate in part. Research has found, for instance, that attractive people are actually more sociable, more popular, and less lonely than less attractive individuals (Langlois et al., 2000). And, consistent with the stereotype that women are "emotional," women are, on average, more empathic and attuned to the emotions of others than men are (Hall & Schmid Mast, 2008). Group differences in personality traits may occur in part because people act toward others on the basis of their stereotypes, creating a *self-fulfilling prophecy*. A **self-fulfilling prophecy** occurs *when our expectations about the personality characteristics of others lead us to behave toward those others in ways that make those beliefs come true*. If I have a stereotype that attractive people are friendly, then I may act in a friendly way toward people who are attractive. This friendly behaviour may be reciprocated by the attractive person, and if many other people also engage in the same positive behaviours with the person, in the long run he or she may actually become friendlier.

But even if attractive people are on average friendlier than unattractive people, not all attractive people are friendlier than all unattractive people. And even if women are, on average, more emotional than men, not all men are less emotional than all women. Social psychologists believe that it is better to treat people as individuals rather than rely on our stereotypes and prejudices, because stereotyping and prejudice are always unfair and often inaccurate (Fiske, 1989; Stangor, 1995). Furthermore, many of our stereotypes and prejudices occur out of our awareness, such that we do not even know that we are using them.

Implicit Association Test

You might want to test your own stereotypes and prejudices by completing the Implicit Association Test, a measure of unconscious stereotyping.

https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo

We use our stereotypes and prejudices in part because they are easy; if we can quickly size up people on the basis of their physical appearance, that can save us a lot of time and effort. We may be evolutionarily disposed to stereotyping. Because our primitive ancestors needed to accurately separate members of their own kin group from those of others, categorizing people into "us" (the *ingroup*) and "them" (the *outgroup*) was useful and even necessary (Neuberg, Kenrick, & Schaller, 2010). And *the positive emotions that we experience as a result of our group memberships* — known as **social identity** — can

be an important and positive part of our everyday experiences (Hogg, 2003). We may gain social identity as members of our university, our sports teams, our religious and racial groups, and many other groups (Figure 15.2, "Social Identity").



Figure 15.2 Social Identity. Social identity is the positive emotions that we experience as a member of an important social group.

But the fact that we may use our stereotypes does not mean that we should use them. Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, whether they are consciously or unconsciously applied, make it difficult for some people to effectively contribute to society and may create both mental and physical health problems for them (Swim & Stangor, 1998). In some cases getting beyond our prejudices is required by law, as detailed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of 1982 and the American Equal Opportunity Employment Act of 1972.

There are individual differences in prejudice, such that some people are more likely to try to control and confront their stereotypes and prejudices whereas others apply them more freely (Czopp, Monteith, & Mark, 2006; Plant & Devine, 1998). For instance, some people believe in group hierarchies — that some groups are naturally better than others — whereas other people are more egalitarian and hold fewer prejudices (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Stangor & Leary, 2006).

Social psychologists believe that we should work to get past our prejudices. The tendency to hold stereotypes and prejudices and to act on them can be reduced, for instance, through positive interactions and friendships with members of other groups, through practice in avoiding using them, and through education (Hewstone, 1996).

Research Focus: Forming Judgments of People in Seconds

Research has demonstrated that people can draw very accurate conclusions about others on the basis of very limited data. Ambady and Rosenthal (1993) made videotapes of six female and seven male graduate students while they were teaching an undergraduate course. The courses covered diverse areas of the college or university curriculum, including humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. For each teacher, three

10-second video clips were taken: 10 seconds from the first 10 minutes of the class, 10 seconds from the middle of the class, and 10 seconds from the last 10 minutes of the class.

The researchers then asked nine female undergraduates to rate the clips of the teachers on 15 dimensions including *optimistic, confident*, *active*, *enthusiastic*, *dominant, likable*, *warm*, *competent,* and *supportive*. Ambady and her colleagues then compared the ratings of the participants who had seen the teacher for only 30 seconds with the ratings of the same instructors that had been made by students who had spent a whole semester with the teacher, and who had rated her at the end of the semester on scales such as "Rate the quality of the section overall" and "Rate section leader's performance overall." As you can see in Table 15.1, "Accurate Perceptions in 30 Seconds," the ratings of the participants and the ratings of the students were highly positively correlated.

Table 15.1 Accurate Perceptions in 30 Seconds. [1]

[Skip Table]	
Variable	**Pearson Correlation Coefficient (*r*)**
Accepting	0.50
Active	0.77
Attentive	0.48
Competent	0.56
Confident	0.82
Dominant	0.79
Empathic	0.45
Enthusiastic	0.76
Honest	0.32
Likable	0.73
(Not) anxious	0.26
Optimistic	0.84
Professional	0.53
Supportive	0.55
Warm	0.67
Overall, across all traits	0.76
This table shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between the impressions that a group of students made after they had seen a video of instructors teaching for only 30 seconds and the teaching ratings of the same instructors made by students who had spent a whole semester in the class. You can see that the correlations are all positive, and that many of them are quite large. The conclusion is that people are sometimes able to draw accurate impressions about other people very quickly.	

If the finding that judgments made about people in 30 seconds correlate highly with judgments made about the same people after a whole semester surprises you, then perhaps you may be even more surprised to hear that we do not even need that much time. Indeed, Willis and Todorov (2006) found that even a tenth of a

second was enough to make judgments that correlated highly with those same judgments made by other people who were given several minutes to make the judgments. Other research has found that we can make accurate judgments, for instance, about our perceptions of salespersons (Ambady, Krabbenhoft, & Hogan, 2006) and about the sexual orientation of other people (Ambady, Hallahan, & Conner, 1999), in just a few seconds. Todorov, Mandisodza, Goren, and Hall (2005) found that people voted for political candidates in large part on the basis of whether or not their faces, seen only for one second, looked like faces of competent people. Taken together, this research shows that we are well able to form initial impressions of others quickly and often quite accurately.

Close Relationships

One of the most important tasks faced by humans is to develop successful relationships with others (Figure 15.3, "Close Relationships"). These relationships include acquaintanceships and friendships but also the more important **close relationships**, which are *the long-term intimate and romantic relationships that we develop with another person — for instance, in a marriage* (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2000). Because most of us will want to enter into a close relationship at some point, and because close relationships are evolutionarily important as they form the basis for effective child rearing, it is useful to know what psychologists have learned about the principles of liking and loving within them.

A major interest of social psychologists is the study of **interpersonal attraction**, or *what makes people like, and even love, each other* (Figure 15.3, "Close Relationships"). One important factor is a perceived similarity in values and beliefs between the partners (Davis & Rusbult, 2001). Similarity is important for relationships both because it is more convenient (it's easier if both partners like to ski or go to the movies than if only one does), but also because similarity supports our values — I can feel better about myself and my choice of activities if I see that you also enjoy doing the same things that I do.



Figure 15.3 Close Relationships. Close relationships are characterized by responsiveness, disclosure, intimacy, equity, and passion.

Liking is also enhanced by **self-disclosure**, *the tendency to communicate frequently, without fear of reprisal, and in an accepting and empathetic manner*. Friends are friends because we can talk to them openly about our needs and goals, and because they listen to and respond to our needs (Reis & Aron, 2008). But self-disclosure must be balanced. If I open up to you about the concerns that are important to me, I expect you to do the same in return. If the self-disclosure is not reciprocal, the relationship may not last.

Another important determinant of liking is **proximity**, or *the extent to which people are physically near*

us. Research has found that we are more likely to develop friendships with people who are nearby, for instance, those who live in the same dorm that we do, and even with people who just happen to sit nearer to us in our classes (Back, Schmukle, & Egloff, 2008).

Proximity has its effect on liking through the principle of mere **exposure,** which is *the tendency to prefer stimuli (including but not limited to people) that we have seen more frequently*. Moreland and Beach (1992) studied mere exposure by having female confederates attend a large lecture class of over 100 students 0, 5, 10, or 15 times during a semester. At the end of the term, the other students in the class were shown pictures of the confederates and asked to indicate both if they recognized them and also how much they liked them. The number of times the confederates had attended class didn't influence the other students' ability to recognize them, but it did influence their liking for them. As predicted by the mere exposure hypothesis, students who had attended class more often were liked more (Figure 15.4, "Mere Exposure in the Classroom").

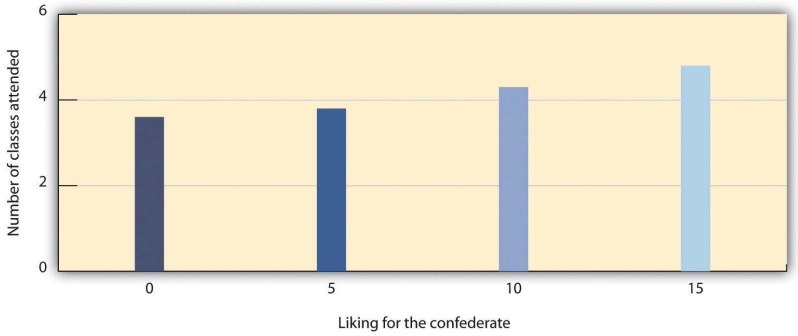


Figure 15.4 Mere Exposure in the Classroom. Richard Moreland and Scott Beach (1992) had female confederates visit classrooms 0, 5, 10, or 15 times over the course of a semester. Then the students rated their liking of the confederates. As predicted by the principles of mere exposure, confederates who had attended class more often were also liked more.

The effect of mere exposure is powerful and occurs in a wide variety of situations. Infants tend to smile at a photograph of someone they have seen before more than they smile at a photograph of someone they are seeing for the first time (Brooks-Gunn & Lewis, 1981), and people prefer side-to-side reversed images of their own faces over their normal (nonreversed) face, whereas their friends prefer their normal face over the reversed one (Mita, Dermer, & Knight, 1977). This is expected on the basis of mere exposure, since people see their own faces primarily in mirrors and thus are exposed to the reversed face more often.

Mere exposure may well have an evolutionary basis. We have an initial fear of the unknown, but as things become more familiar they seem more similar and safe, and thus produce more positive affect and seem less threatening and dangerous (Freitas, Azizian, Travers, & Berry, 2005). In fact, research has found that stimuli tend to produce more positive affect as they become more familiar (Harmon-Jones & Allen, 2001). When the stimuli are people, there may well be an added effect. Familiar people become more likely to be seen as part of the ingroup rather than the outgroup, and this may lead us to like them more. Leslie Zebrowitz and her colleagues found that we like people of our own race in part because they are perceived as similar to us (Zebrowitz, Bronstad, & Lee, 2007).

In the most successful relationships the two people begin to see themselves as a single unit. Arthur Aron

and his colleagues (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992) assessed the role of closeness in relationships using the Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale as shown in Figure 15.5, "The Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale." You might try completing the measure yourself for some different people that you know — for instance, your family members, friends, spouse, or girlfriend or boyfriend. The measure is simple to use and to interpret; if people see the circles representing the self and the other as more overlapping, this means that the relationship is close. But if they choose the circles that are less overlapping, then the relationship is less so.

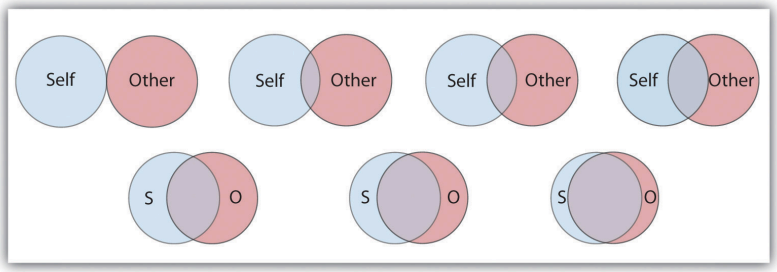


Figure 15.5 The Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale. This scale is used to determine how close two partners feel to each other. The respondent simply circles which of the seven figures he or she feels best characterizes the relationship.

Although the closeness measure is very simple, it has been found to be predictive of people's satisfaction with their close relationships, and of the tendency for couples to stay together (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991; Aron, Paris, & Aron, 1995). When the partners in a relationship feel that they are close, and when they indicate that *the relationship is based on caring, warmth, acceptance, and social support*, we can say that the relationship is **intimate** (Reis & Aron, 2008).

When a couple begins to take care of a household together, has children, and perhaps has to care for elderly parents, the requirements of the relationship become correspondingly bigger. As a result of this complexity, the partners in close relationships increasingly turn to each other for help in coordinating activities, remembering dates and appointments, and accomplishing tasks. Relationships are close in part because the couple becomes highly **interdependent**, *relying on each other to meet important goals* (Berscheid & Reis, 1998).

In relationships in which a positive rapport between the partners is developed and maintained over a period of time, the partners are naturally happy with the relationship and they become committed to it. **Commitment** *refers to the feelings and actions that keep partners working together to maintain the relationship* (Rusbult, Olsen, Davis, & Hannon, 2001) and is characterized by mutual expectations that the self and the partner will be responsive to each other's needs (Clark & Mills, 2004). Partners who are committed to the relationship see their mates as more attractive, are less able to imagine themselves with another partner, express less interest in other potential mates, and are less likely to break up (Simpson & Harris, 1994).

People also find relationships more satisfactory, and stay in them longer, when they feel that they are being rewarded by them. When the needs of either or both of the partners are not being met, the relationship is in trouble. This is not to say that people only think about the benefits they are getting; they will also consider the needs of the other. But over the long term, both partners must benefit from the relationship.

Although sexual arousal and excitement are more important early in relationships, intimacy is also determined by sexual and romantic attraction. Indeed, intimacy is also dependent on **passion —** *the partners must display positive affect toward each other*. Happy couples are in positive moods when they are around each other; they laugh with each other, express approval rather than criticism of each other's behaviours, and enjoy physical contact. People are happier in their relationships when they view the other person in a positive or even an idealized sense, rather than a more realistic and perhaps more negative one (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996).

Margaret Clark and Edward Lemay (2010) reviewed the literature on close relationships and argued that their most important characteristic is a sense of *responsiveness*. People are happy, healthy, and likely to stay in relationships in which they are sure that they can trust the other person to understand, validate, and care for them. It is this unconditional giving and receiving of love that promotes the welfare of both partners and provides the *secure base* that allows both partners to thrive.

Causal Attribution: Forming Judgments by Observing Behaviour

When we observe people's behaviour we may attempt to determine if the behaviour really reflects their underlying personality. If Frank hits Joe, we might wonder if Frank is naturally aggressive or if perhaps Joe had provoked him. If Leslie leaves a big tip for the waitress, we might wonder if she is a generous person or if the service was particularly excellent. *The process of trying to determine the causes of people's behaviour, with the goal of learning about their personalities*, is known as **causal attribution** (Jones et al., 1987).

Making causal attributions is a bit like conducting an experiment. We carefully observe the people we are interested in and note how they behave in different social situations. After we have made our observations, we draw our conclusions. Sometimes *we may decide that the behaviour was caused primarily by the person*; this is called making a **person attribution**. At other times, *we may determine that the behaviour was caused primarily by the situation*; this is called making a **situation attribution.** And at other times we may decide that the behaviour was caused by both the person and the situation.

It is easier to make person attributions when behaviour is more unusual or unexpected. Imagine that you go to a party and you are introduced to Tess. Tess shakes your hand and says "Nice to meet you!" Can you readily conclude, on the basis of this behaviour, that Tess is a friendly person? Probably not. Because the social situation demands that people act in a friendly way (shaking your hand and saying "nice to meet you"), it is difficult to know whether Tess acted friendly because of the situation or because she is really friendly. Imagine, however, that instead of shaking your hand, Tess sticks out her tongue at you and walks away. I think you would agree that it is easier in this case to infer that Tess is unfriendly because her behaviour is so contrary to what one would expect (Jones, Davis, & Gergen, 1961).

Although people are reasonably accurate in their attributions (we could say, perhaps, that they are "good enough"; Fiske, 2003), they are far from perfect. One error that we frequently make when making judgments about ourselves is to make **self-serving attributions** by *judging the causes of our own behaviours in overly positive ways*. If you did well on a test, you will probably attribute that success to person causes ("I'm smart," "I studied really hard"), but if you do poorly on the test you are more likely to make situation attributions ("The test was hard," "I had bad luck"). Although making causal attributions is expected to be logical and scientific, our emotions are not irrelevant.

Another way that our attributions are often inaccurate is that we are, by and large, too quick to attribute the behaviour of other people to something personal about them rather than to something about their situation. We are more likely to say, “Leslie left a big tip, so she must be generous” than “Leslie left a big tip, but perhaps that was because the service was really excellent.” *The common tendency to overestimate the role of person factors and overlook the impact of situations in judging others* is known as the **fundamental attribution error or correspondence bias** (Figure 15.6, “Fundamental Attribution Error”).

The fundamental attribution error occurs in part because other people are so salient in our social environments. When I look at you, I see you as my focus, and so I am likely to make person attributions about you. If the situation is reversed such that people see situations from the perspectives of others, the fundamental attribution error is reduced (Storms, 1973). And when we judge people, we often see them in only one situation. It’s easy for you to think that your math professor is “picky and detail oriented” because that describes her behaviour in class, but you don’t know how she acts with her friends and family, which might be completely different. And we also tend to make person attributions because they are easy. We are more likely to commit the fundamental attribution error — quickly jumping to the conclusion that behaviour is caused by underlying personality — when we are tired, distracted, or busy doing other things (Trope & Alfieri, 1997).



Figure 15.6 Fundamental Attribution Error. The tendency to make person attributions (such as poor people are lazy) for the behaviours of others, even where situational factors such as poor education and growing up in poverty might be better explanations, is caused by the fundamental attribution error.

An important moral about perceiving others applies here: we should not be too quick to judge other people. It is easy to think that poor people are lazy, that people who say something harsh are rude or unfriendly, and that all terrorists are insane madmen. But these attributions may frequently overemphasize the role of the person, resulting in an inappropriate and inaccurate tendency to blame the victim (Lerner, 1980; Tennen & Affleck, 1990). Sometimes people are lazy and rude, and some terrorists are probably insane, but these people may also be influenced by the situation in which they find themselves. Poor people may find it more difficult to get work and education because of the environment they grow up in, people may say rude things because they are feeling threatened or are in pain, and terrorists may have learned in their family and school that committing violence in the service of their beliefs is justified. When you find yourself making strong person attributions for the behaviours of others, I hope you will stop and think more carefully. Would you want other people to make person attributions for your behaviour in the same situation, or would you prefer that they more fully consider the situation surrounding your behaviour? Are you perhaps making the fundamental attribution error?

Attitudes and Behaviour

Attitude refer to *our relatively enduring evaluations of people and things* (Albarracín, Johnson, & Zanna, 2005). We each hold many thousands of attitudes, including those about family and friends, political parties and political figures, abortion rights, preferences for music, and much more. Some of our attitudes, including those about sports, roller coaster rides, and capital punishment, are heritable, which explains in part why we are similar to our parents on many dimensions (Olson, Vernon, Harris, & Jang, 2001). Other attitudes are learned through direct and indirect experiences with the attitude objects (De Houwer, Thomas, & Baeyens, 2001).

Attitudes are important because they frequently (but not always) predict behaviour. If we know that a person has a more positive attitude toward Frosted Flakes than toward Cheerios, then we will naturally predict that she will buy more of the former when she gets to the market. If we know that Charlie is madly in love with Charlene, then we will not be surprised when he proposes marriage. Because attitudes often predict behaviour, people who wish to change behaviour frequently try to change attitudes through the use of *persuasive communications*. Table 15.2, "Techniques That Can Be Effective in Persuading Others," presents some of the many techniques that can be used to change people's attitudes (Cialdini, 2001).

Table 15.2 Techniques That Can Be Effective in Persuading Others.

[Skip Table]	
Technique	**Examples**
Choose effective communicators.	Communicators who are attractive, expert, trustworthy, and similar to the listener are most persuasive.
Consider the goals of the listener.	If the listener wants to be entertained, then it is better to use a humourous ad; if the listener is processing the ad more carefully, use a more thoughtful one.
Use humour.	People are more easily persuaded when they are in a good mood.
Use classical conditioning.	Try to associate your product with positive stimuli such as funny jokes or attractive models.
Make use of the listener's emotions.	Humourous and fear-arousing ads can be effective because they arouse the listener's emotions.
Use the listener's behaviour to modify his or her attitude.	One approach is the *foot-in-the-door technique*. First ask for a minor request, and then ask for a larger request after the smaller request has been accepted.

Attitudes predict behaviour better for some people than for others. People who are high in **self-monitoring** — *the tendency to regulate behaviour to meet the demands of social situations* — tend to change their behaviours to match the social situation and thus do not always act on their attitudes (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). High self-monitors agree with statements such as, "In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons" and "I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people." Attitudes are more likely to predict behaviour for low self-monitors, who are more likely to act on their own attitudes even when the social situation suggests that they should behave otherwise. Low self-monitors are more likely to agree with statements such as "At parties and social

gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like" and "I can only argue for ideas that I already believe."

The match between the social situations in which the attitudes are expressed and the behaviours are engaged in also matters, such that there is a greater attitude-behaviour correlation when the social situations match. Imagine for a minute the case of Magritte, a 16-year-old high school student. Magritte tells her parents that she hates the idea of smoking cigarettes. But how sure are you that Magritte's attitude will predict her behaviour? Would you be willing to bet that she'd never try smoking when she's out with her friends?

The problem here is that Magritte's attitude is being expressed in one social situation (when she is with her parents) whereas the behaviour (trying a cigarette) is going to occur in a very different social situation (when she is out with her friends). The relevant social norms are, of course, much different in the two situations. Magritte's friends might be able to convince her to try smoking, despite her initial negative attitude, by enticing her with peer pressure. Behaviours are more likely to be consistent with attitudes when the social situation in which the behaviour occurs is similar to the situation in which the attitude is expressed (Ajzen, 1991).

Although it might not have surprised you to hear that our attitudes predict our behaviours, you might be more surprised to learn that our behaviours also have an influence on our attitudes. It makes sense that if I like Frosted Flakes I'll buy them, because my positive attitude toward the product influences my behaviour. But my attitudes toward Frosted Flakes may also become more positive if I decide — for whatever reason — to buy some. It makes sense that Charlie's love for Charlene will lead him to propose marriage, but it is also the case that he will likely love Charlene even more after he does so.

Behaviours influence attitudes in part through the process of *self-perception.* **Self-perception** occurs *when we use our own behaviour as a guide to help us determine our own thoughts and feelings* (Bem, 1972; Olson & Stone, 2005). In one demonstration of the power of self-perception, Wells and Petty (1980) assigned their research participants to shake their heads either up and down or side to side as they read newspaper editorials. The participants who had shaken their heads up and down later agreed with the content of the editorials more than the people who had shaken them side to side. Wells and Petty argued that this occurred because the participants used their own head-shaking behaviours to determine their attitudes about the editorials.

Persuaders may use the principles of self-perception to change attitudes. The **foot-in-the-door technique** is a *method of persuasion in which the person is first persuaded to accept a rather minor request and then asked for a larger one after that*. In one demonstration, Guéguen and Jacob (2002) found that students in a computer discussion group were more likely to volunteer to complete a 40-question survey on their food habits (which required 15 to 20 minutes of their time) if they had already, a few minutes earlier, agreed to help the same requester with a simple computer-related question (about how to convert a file type) than if they had not first been given the smaller opportunity to help. The idea is that when asked the second time, the people looked at their past behaviour (having agreed to the small request) and inferred that they are helpful people.

Behaviour also influences our attitudes through a more emotional process known as *cognitive dissonance.* **Cognitive dissonance** refers to *the discomfort we experience when we choose to behave in ways that we see as inappropriate* (Festinger, 1957; Harmon-Jones & Mills, 1999). If we feel that

we have wasted our time or acted against our own moral principles, we experience negative emotions (dissonance) and may change our attitudes about the behaviour to reduce the negative feelings.

Elliot Aronson and Judson Mills (1959) studied whether the cognitive dissonance created by an initiation process could explain how much commitment students felt to a group that they were part of. In their experiment, female university students volunteered to join a group that would be meeting regularly to discuss various aspects of the psychology of sex. According to random assignment, some of the women were told that they would be required to perform an embarrassing procedure (they were asked to read some obscene words and some sexually oriented passages from a novel in public) before they could join the group, whereas other women did not have to go through this initiation. Then all the women got a chance to listen to the group's conversation, which turned out to be very boring.

Aronson and Mills found that the women who had gone through the embarrassing experience subsequently reported more liking for the group than those who had not. They argued that the more effort an individual expends to become a member of the group (e.g., a severe initiation), the more they will become committed to the group, to justify the effort they have put in during the initiation. The idea is that the effort creates dissonant cognitions ("I did all this work to join the group"), which are then justified by creating more consonant ones ("Okay, this group is really pretty fun"). Thus the women who spent little effort to get into the group were able to see the group as the dull and boring conversation that it was. The women who went through the more severe initiation, however, succeeded in convincing themselves that the same discussion was a worthwhile experience.

When we put in effort for something — an initiation, a big purchase price, or even some of our precious time — we will likely end up liking the activity more than we would have if the effort had been less; not doing so would lead us to experience the unpleasant feelings of dissonance. After we buy a product, we convince ourselves that we made the right choice because the product is excellent. If we fail to lose the weight we wanted to, we decide that we look good anyway. If we hurt someone else's feelings, we may even decide that he or she is a bad person who deserves our negative behaviour. To escape from feeling poorly about themselves, people will engage in quite extraordinary rationalizing. No wonder that most of us believe that "If I had it all to do over again, I would not change anything important."

Key Takeaways

- Social psychology is the scientific study of how we influence, and are influenced by, the people around us.
- Social cognition involves forming impressions of ourselves and other people. Doing so quickly and accurately is functional for social life.
- Our initial judgments of others are based in large part on what we see. The physical features of other people — particularly their sex, race, age, and physical attractiveness — are very salient, and we often focus our attention on these dimensions.
- We are attracted to people who appear to be healthy. Indicators of health include youth, symmetry, and averageness.
- We frequently use people's appearances to form our judgments about them, and to determine our responses to them. These responses include stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. Social psychologists believe that people should get past their prejudices and judge people as individuals.

- Close relationships are based on intimacy. Intimacy is determined by similarity, self-disclosure, interdependence, commitment, rewards, and passion.
- Causal attribution is the process of trying to determine the causes of people's behaviour with the goal of learning about their personalities. Although people are reasonably accurate in their attributions, they also succumb to biases such as the fundamental attribution error.
- Attitudes refer to our relatively enduring evaluations of people and things. Attitudes are determined in part by genetic transmission from our parents and in part through direct and indirect experiences.
- Although attitudes predict behaviours, behaviours also predict attitudes. This occurs through the processes of self-perception and cognitive dissonance.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. What kinds of people are you attracted to? Do your preferences match the factors that we have just discussed?
2. What stereotypes and prejudices do you hold? Are you able to get past them and judge people as individuals? Do you think that your stereotypes influence your behaviour without your being aware of them?
3. Consider a time when your behaviour influenced your attitudes. Did this occur as a result of self-perception or cognitive dissonance?

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Figure 15.4: Adapted from Moreland & Beach, 1992.

Figure 15.5: Adapted from Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992.

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Notes

1. Adapted from Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993.

15.2 Interacting With Others: Helping, Hurting, and Conforming

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize the genetic and environmental factors that contribute to human altruism.
2. Provide an overview of the causes of human aggression.
3. Explain the situations in which people conform to others and their motivations for doing so.

Humans have developed a variety of social skills that enhance our ability to successfully interact with others. We are often helpful, even when that helping comes at some cost to ourselves, and we often change our opinions and beliefs to fit in with the opinions of those whom we care about. Yet we also are able to be aggressive if we feel the situation warrants it.

Helping Others: Altruism Helps Create Harmonious Relationships

Altruism refers to *any behaviour that is designed to increase another person's welfare, and particularly those actions that do not seem to provide a direct reward to the person who performs them* (Dovidio, Piliavin, Schroeder, & Penner, 2006). Altruism occurs when we stop to help a stranger who has been stranded on the highway, when we volunteer at a homeless shelter, or when we donate to a charity. In Canada, 47% of the population volunteers (Vézina & Crompton, 2012). Over 13.3 million Canadians aged 15 and over did volunteer work in 2010. They devoted almost 2.07 billion hours to their volunteer activities: a volume of work that is equivalent to just under 1.1 million full-time jobs. The number of volunteers in 2010 was significantly greater than in earlier years. The 13.3 million people who volunteered marked an increase of 6.4% over 2007 and of 12.5% over 2004.

Why Are We Altruistic?

Because altruism is costly, you might wonder why we engage in it at all. There are a variety of explanations for the occurrence of altruism, and Table 15.3, "Some of the Variables Known to Increase Helping," summarizes some of the variables that are known to increase helping.

Table 15.3 Some of the Variables Known to Increase Helping. [1]

[Skip Table]	
Positive moods	We help more when we are in a good mood (Guéguen & De Gail, 2003).
Similarity	We help people whom we see as similar to us, for instance, those who mimic our behaviours (van Baaren, Holland, Kawakami, & van Knippenberg, 2004).
Guilt	If we are experiencing guilt, we may help in order to relieve those negative feelings.
Empathy	We help more when we feel empathy for the other person (Batson, O'Quin, Fultz, Varnderplas, & Isen, 1983).
Benefits	We are more likely to help if we can feel good about ourselves by doing so (Snyder, Omoto, & Lindsay, 2004).
Personal responsibility	We are more likely to help if it is clear that others are not helping.
Self-presentation	We may help in order to show others that we are good people (Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006).

The tendency to help others in need is in part a functional evolutionary adaptation (Figure 15.7, "Helping Other People") . Although helping others can be costly to us as individuals, helping people who are related to us can perpetuate our own genes (Madsen et al., 2007; McAndrew, 2002; Stewart-Williams, 2007). Burnstein, Crandall, and Kitayama (1994) found that students indicated they would be more likely to help a person who was closely related to them (e.g., a sibling, parent, or child) than they would be to help a person who was more distantly related (e.g., a niece, nephew, uncle, or grandmother). People are more likely to donate kidneys to relatives than to strangers (Borgida, Conner, & Manteufel, 1992) and even children indicate that they are more likely to help their siblings than they are to help a friend (Tisak & Tisak, 1996).



Figure 15.7 Helping Other People. We help in part to make ourselves feel good, but also because we care about the welfare of others.

Although it makes evolutionary sense that we would help people to whom we are related, why would we help people to whom we are not related? One explanation for such behaviour is based on the principle

of *reciprocal altruism* (Krebs & Davies, 1987; Trivers, 1971). **Reciprocal altruism** is *the principle that, if we help other people now, those others will return the favour should we need their help in the future*. By helping others, we both increase our chances of survival and reproductive success and help others increase their survival too. Over the course of evolution, those who engage in reciprocal altruism should be able to reproduce more often than those who do not, thus enabling this kind of altruism to continue.

We also learn to help by modelling the helpful behaviour of others. Although people frequently worry about the negative impact of the violence that is seen on TV, there is also a great deal of helping behaviour shown on television. Smith et al. (2006) found that 73% of TV shows had some altruism, and that about three altruistic behaviours were shown every hour. Furthermore, the prevalence of altruism was particularly high in children's shows. But just as viewing altruism can increase helping, modelling of behaviour that is not altruistic can decrease altruism. For instance, Anderson and Bushman (2001) found that playing violent video games led to a decrease in helping.

We are more likely to help when we receive rewards for doing so and less likely to help when helping is costly. Parents praise their children who share their toys with others, and may reprimand children who are selfish. We are more likely to help when we have plenty of time than when we are in a hurry (Darley & Batson, 1973). Another potential reward is the status we gain as a result of helping. When we act altruistically, we gain a reputation as a person with high status who is able and willing to help others, and this status makes us more desirable in the eyes of others (Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006)

The outcome of the reinforcement and modelling of altruism is the development of social norms about helping — standards of behaviour that we see as appropriate and desirable regarding helping. The **reciprocity norm** reminds us that we should follow the principles of reciprocal altruism. *If someone helps us, then we should help them in the future, and we should help people now with the expectation that they will help us later if we need it.* The reciprocity norm is found in everyday adages such as "Scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" and in religious and philosophical teachings such as the "golden rule": "Do unto other as you would have them do unto you."

Because helping based on the reciprocity norm is based on the return of earlier help and the expectation of a future return from others, it might not seem like true altruism. We might hope that our children internalize another relevant social norm that seems more altruistic: the *social responsibility norm.* The **social responsibility norm** *tells us that we should try to help others who need assistance, even without any expectation of future paybacks*. The teachings of many religions are based on the social responsibility norm; that we should, as good human beings, reach out and help other people whenever we can.

How the Presence of Others Can Reduce Helping

Late at night on March 13, 1964, 28-year-old Kitty Genovese was murdered within a few yards of her apartment building in New York City after a violent fight with her killer in which she struggled and screamed. When the police interviewed Kitty's neighbours about the crime, they discovered that 38 of the neighbours indicated that they had seen or heard the fight occurring but not one of them had bothered to intervene, and only one person had called the police.

Was Kitty Genovese murdered because there were too many people who heard her cries? Watch this video for an analysis.

Watch: The Case of Kitty Genovese [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JozmWS6xYEw

Two social psychologists, Bibb Latané and John Darley, were interested in the factors that influenced people to help (or not to help) in such situations (Latané & Darley, 1968). They developed a model (see Figure 15.8 Latané & Darley Model) that took into consideration the important role of the social situation in determining helping. The model has been extensively tested in many studies, and there is substantial support for it. Social psychologists have discovered that it was the 38 people themselves that contributed to the tragedy, because people are less likely to notice, interpret, and respond to the needs of others when they are with others than they are when they are alone.

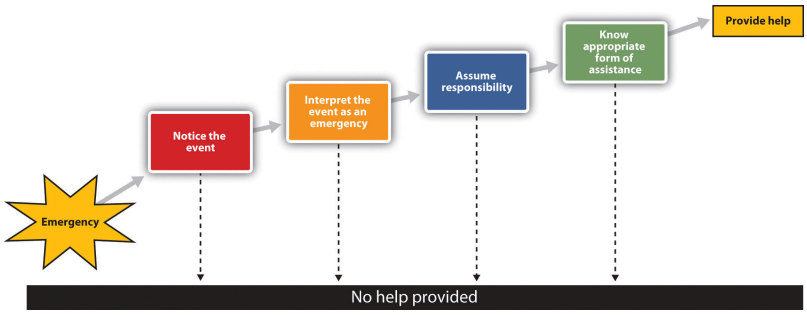


Figure 15.8 Latané & Darley Model. The Latané and Darley model of helping is based on the idea that a variety of situational factors can influence whether or not we help.

The first step in the model is noticing the event. Latané and Darley (1968) demonstrated the important role of the social situation in noticing by asking research participants to complete a questionnaire in a small room. Some of the participants completed the questionnaire alone, whereas others completed the questionnaire in small groups in which two other participants were also working on questionnaires. A few minutes after the participants had begun the questionnaires, the experimenters started to let some white smoke come into the room through a vent in the wall. The experimenters timed how long it took before the first person in the room looked up and noticed the smoke.

The people who were working alone noticed the smoke in about five seconds, and within four minutes most of the participants who were working alone had taken some action. On the other hand, on average, the first person in the group conditions did not notice the smoke until over 20 seconds had elapsed. And, although 75% of the participants who were working alone reported the smoke within four minutes, the smoke was reported in only 12% of the groups by that time. In fact, in only three of the eight groups did anyone report the smoke, even after it had filled the room. You can see that the social situation has a powerful influence on noticing; we simply don't see emergencies when other people are with us.

Even if we notice an emergency, we might not interpret it as one. The problem is compounded when others are present, because when we are unsure how to interpret events we normally look to others to help us understand them, and at the same time they are looking to us for information. The problem is that each bystander thinks that other people aren't acting because they don't see an emergency. Believing that the others know something that they don't, each observer concludes that help is not required.

Even if we have noticed the emergency and interpret it as being one, this does not necessarily mean that we will come to the rescue of the other person. We still need to decide that it is our responsibility to do something. The problem is that when we see others around, it is easy to assume that they are going to do something, and that we don't need to do anything ourselves. **Diffusion of responsibility** occurs *when we assume that others will take action and therefore we do not take action ourselves*. The irony again, of course, is that people are more likely to help when they are the only ones in the situation than when there are others around.

Perhaps you have noticed diffusion of responsibility if you participated in an Internet users' group where people asked questions of the other users. Did you find that it was easier to get help if you directed your request to a smaller set of users than when you directed it to a larger number of people? Markey (2000) found that people received help more quickly (in about 37 seconds) when they asked for help by specifying a participant's name than when no name was specified (51 seconds).

The final step in the helping model is knowing how to help. Of course, for many of us the ways to best help another person in an emergency are not that clear; we are not professionals and we have little training in how to help in emergencies. People who do have training in how to act in emergencies are more likely to help, whereas the rest of us just don't know what to do, and therefore we may simply walk by. On the other hand, today many people have cell phones, and we can do a lot with a quick call.

Human Aggression: An Adaptive Yet Potentially Damaging Behaviour

Aggression is *behaviour that is intended to harm another individual.* Aggression may occur in the heat of the moment, for instance, when a jealous lover strikes out in rage or the sports fans at a university light fires and destroy cars after an important basketball game. Or it may occur in a more cognitive, deliberate, and planned way, such as the aggression of a bully who steals another child's toys, a terrorist who kills civilians to gain political exposure, or a hired assassin who kills for money.

Not all aggression is physical. Aggression also occurs in nonphysical ways, as when children exclude others from activities, call them names, or spread rumours about them. Paquette and Underwood (1999) found that both boys and girls rated nonphysical aggression such as name-calling as making them feel more "sad and bad" than physical aggression did.

The Ability to Aggress Is Part of Human Nature

We may aggress against others in part because it allows us to gain access to valuable resources such as food, territory, and desirable mates, or to protect ourselves from direct attack by others. If aggression helps in the survival of our genes, then the process of natural selection may well have caused humans, as it would any other animal, to be aggressive (Buss & Duntley, 2006).

There is evidence for the genetics of aggression. Aggression is controlled in large part by the amygdala. One of the primary functions of the amygdala is to help us learn to associate stimuli with the rewards and the punishment that they may provide. The amygdala is particularly activated in our responses to stimuli that we see as threatening and fear-arousing. When the amygdala is stimulated, in either humans or in animals, the organism becomes more aggressive.

But just because we can aggress does not mean that we will aggress. It is not necessarily evolutionarily

adaptive to aggress in all situations. Neither people nor animals are always aggressive; they rely on aggression only when they feel that they absolutely need to (Berkowitz, 1993a). The prefrontal cortex serves as a control centre on aggression; when it is more highly activated, we are more able to control our aggressive impulses. Research has found that the cerebral cortex is less active in murderers and death row inmates, suggesting that violent crime may be caused at least in part by a failure or reduced ability to regulate aggression (Davidson, Putnam, & Larson, 2000)

Hormones are also important in regulating aggression. Most important in this regard is the male sex hormone testosterone, which is associated with increased aggression in both males and females. Research conducted on a variety of animals has found a positive correlation between levels of testosterone and aggression. This relationship seems to be weaker among humans than among animals, yet it is still significant (Dabbs, Hargrove, & Heusel, 1996).

Consuming alcohol increases the likelihood that people will respond aggressively to provocations, and even people who are not normally aggressive may react with aggression when they are intoxicated (Graham, Osgood, Wells, & Stockwell, 2006). Alcohol reduces the ability of people who have consumed it to inhibit their aggression because when people are intoxicated, they become more self-focused and less aware of the social constraints that normally prevent them from engaging aggressively (Bushman & Cooper, 1990; Steele & Southwick, 1985).

Negative Experiences Increase Aggression

If I were to ask you about the times that you have been aggressive, I bet that you would tell me that many of them occurred when you were angry, in a bad mood, tired, in pain, sick, or frustrated. And you would be right — we are much more likely to aggress when we are experiencing negative emotions. One important determinant of aggression is frustration. When we are frustrated we may lash out at others, even at people who did not cause the frustration. In some cases the aggression is **displaced aggression**, which is *aggression that is directed at an object or person other than the person who caused the frustration*.

Other negative emotions also increase aggression. Griffit and Veitch (1971) had students complete questionnaires in rooms in which the heat was at a normal temperature or in which the temperature was over 30 degrees Celsius. The students in the latter conditions expressed significantly more hostility. Aggression is greater on hot days than it is on cooler days and during hot years than during cooler years, and most violent riots occur during the hottest days of the year (Bushman, Wang, & Anderson, 2005). Pain also increases aggression (Berkowitz, 1993b).

If we are aware that we are feeling negative emotions, we might think that we could release those emotions in a relatively harmless way, such as by punching a pillow or kicking something, with the hopes that doing so will release our aggressive tendencies. **Catharsis** — *the idea that observing or engaging in less harmful aggressive actions will reduce the tendency to aggress later in a more harmful way* — has been considered by many as a way of decreasing violence, and it was an important part of the theories of Sigmund Freud.

As far as social psychologists have been able to determine, however, catharsis simply does not work. Rather than decreasing aggression, engaging in aggressive behaviours of any type increases the likelihood of later aggression. Bushman, Baumeister, and Stack (1999) first angered their research

participants by having another student insult them. Then half of the participants were allowed to engage in a cathartic behaviour: they were given boxing gloves and then got a chance to hit a punching bag for two minutes. Then all the participants played a game with the person who had insulted them earlier in which they had a chance to blast the other person with a painful blast of white noise. Contrary to the catharsis hypothesis, the students who had punched the punching bag set a higher noise level and delivered longer bursts of noise than the participants who did not get a chance to hit the punching bag. It seems that if we hit a punching bag, punch a pillow, or scream as loud as we can to release our frustration, the opposite may occur — rather than decreasing aggression, these behaviours in fact increase it.

Viewing Violent Media Increases Aggression

The average North American watches over four hours of television every day, and these programs contain a substantial amount of aggression. At the same time, children are also exposed to violence in movies and video games, as well as in popular music and music videos that include violent lyrics and imagery. Research evidence makes it very clear that, on average, people who watch violent behaviour become more aggressive. The evidence supporting this relationship comes from many studies conducted over many years using both correlational designs as well as laboratory studies in which people have been randomly assigned to view either violent or nonviolent material (Anderson et al., 2003). Viewing violent behaviour also increases aggression in part through observational learning. Children who witness violence are more likely to be aggressive. One example is in the studies of Albert Bandura, as shown in this video.

This video shows Professor Albert Bandura describing his studies on the observational learning of aggression in children.

Watch: "Aggression in Children" [YouTube]: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWsxfoJEwQQ

Another outcome of viewing large amounts of violent material is **desensitization**, which is *the tendency over time to show weaker emotional responses to emotional stimuli*. When we first see violence, we are likely to be shocked, aroused, and even repulsed by it. However, over time, as we see more and more violence, we become habituated to it, such that the subsequent exposures produce fewer and fewer negative emotional responses. Continually viewing violence also makes us more distrustful and more likely to behave aggressively (Bartholow, Bushman, & Sestir, 2006; Nabi & Sullivan, 2001).

Of course, not everyone who views violent material becomes aggressive; individual differences also matter. People who experience a lot of negative affect and who feel that they are frequently rejected by others whom they care about are more aggressive (Downey, Irwin, Ramsay, & Ayduk, 2004). People with inflated or unstable self-esteem are more prone to anger and are highly aggressive when their high self-image is threatened (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996). For instance, classroom bullies are those children who always want to be the centre of attention, who think a lot of themselves, and who cannot take criticism (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002). Bullies are highly motivated to protect their inflated self-concepts, and they react with anger and aggression when it is threatened.

There is a culturally universal tendency for men to be more physically violent than women (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Crick & Nelson, 2002). Worldwide, about 99% of rapes and about 90% of robberies, assaults, and murders are committed by men (Graham & Wells, 2001). These sex differences do not imply that women are never aggressive. Both men and women respond to insults and provocation with aggression; the differences between men and women are smaller after they have been frustrated, insulted, or threatened (Bettencourt & Miller, 1996).

Research Focus: The Culture of Honour

In addition to differences across cultures, there are also regional differences in the incidence and acceptance of violence. One explanation for these differences is variation in cultural norms about the appropriate reactions to threats against one's social status. These cultural differences apply primarily to men. In short, some men react more violently than others when they believe that others are threatening them.

The social norm that condones and even encourages responding to insults with aggression is known as the **culture of honour**. The culture of honour leads people to view even relatively minor conflicts or disputes as challenges to one's social status and reputation and can therefore trigger aggressive responses. Work by anthropologists, historians, sociologists, criminologists, social psychologists, and others reveals several shared characteristics among cultures of honour in which actors compete for status based on physical force. One common factor is that honour is a central source of status. Honour cultures are typically antipathetic to law and legal officials: a man must stand up for himself and not rely on others to do so. Traditional honour cultures tend to be highly patriarchal, subordinating women and treating their sexuality as family property. In such cultures, a second type of honour violence may be found — men beating or even killing their female relatives for loss of chastity or other conduct that threatens male rule. These cultural beliefs are concentrated in predominately Muslim nations and among their emigrants to Western countries.

There can also be regional differences that impact the culture of honour. For example, whether a man is a farmer who grows crops or raises livestock, might affect his behaviour. Unlike crops, herds are mobile and vulnerable to theft, and it is difficult for law enforcement officials to protect them. To be successful in an environment where theft was common, a man had to build a reputation for strength and toughness, and this was accomplished by a willingness to use swift, and sometimes violent, punishment against thieves (Stewart, 1994).

In one series of experiment studying the concept of honour culture, Cohen, Nisbett, Bosdle, and Schwarz (1996) investigated how white male students who had grown up either in the northern or in the southern regions of the United States, and been raised in a culture of honour, responded to insults. The experiments, which were conducted at the University of Michigan, involved an encounter in which the research participant was walking down a narrow hallway. The experimenters enlisted the help of a confederate who did not give way to the participant but rather bumped into him and insulted him. Compared with students with no culture of honour beliefs (raised in the northern U.S.), students from culture of honour regions (raised in the southern U.S.) who had been bumped were more likely to think that their masculine reputations had been threatened, exhibited greater physiological signs of being upset, had higher testosterone levels, engaged in more aggressive and dominant behaviour (e.g., gave firmer handshakes), and were less willing to yield to a subsequent confederate (Figure 15.9, "Culture of Honour Research").

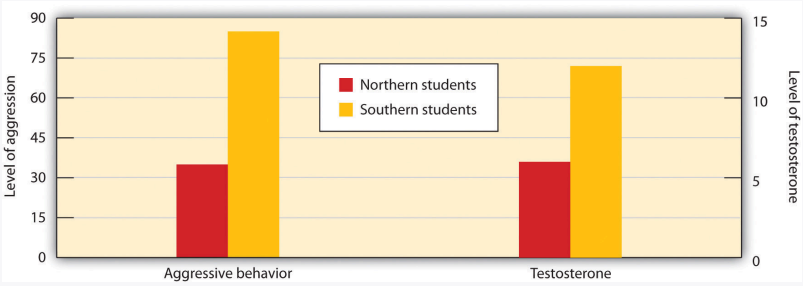


Figure 15.9 Culture of Honour Research. Students from an honour culture (southern U.S.) expressed more anger and had greater levels of testosterone after being insulted than did students from a non honour culture (northern U.S.). [Long Description]

Conformity and Obedience: How Social Influence Creates Social Norms

When we decide on what courses to enroll in by asking for advice from our friends, change our beliefs or behaviours as a result of the ideas that we hear from others, or binge drink because our friends are doing it, we are engaging in **conformity**, *a change in beliefs or behaviour that occurs as the result of the presence of the other people around us.* We *conform not only because we believe that other people have accurate information and we want to have knowledge* **(informational conformity**) but also *because we want to be liked by others* (**normative conformity**).

The typical outcome of conformity is that our beliefs and behaviours become more similar to those of others around us. But some situations create more conformity than others, and some of the factors that contribute to conformity are shown in Table 15.4, "Variables That Increase Conformity."

Table 15.4 Variables that Increase Conformity.[2]

[Skip Table]

Variable	Description	Example
Number in majority	As the number of people who are engaging in a behaviour increases, the tendency to conform to those people also increases.	People are more likely to stop and look up in the air when many, rather than few, people are also looking up (Milgram, Bickman, & Berkowitz, 1969).
Unanimity	Conformity reduces sharply when any one person deviates from the norm.	In Solomon Asch's line-matching research (1955), when any one person gave a different answer, conformity was eliminated.
Status and authority	People who have higher status, such as those in authority, create more conformity.	Milgram (1974) found that conformity in his obedience studies was greatly reduced when the person giving the command to shock was described as an "ordinary man" rather than a scientist at Yale University.

At times conformity occurs in a relatively spontaneous and unconscious way, without any obvious intent of one person to change the other, or an awareness that the conformity is occurring. Robert Cialdini and

his colleagues (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren, 1990) found that university students were more likely to throw litter on the ground themselves when they had just seen another person throw some paper on the ground, and Cheng and Chartrand (2003) found that people unconsciously mimicked the behaviours of others, such as by rubbing their face or shaking their foot, and that that mimicry was greater when the other person was of high versus low social status.

Muzafer Sherif (1936) studied how norms develop in ambiguous situations. In his studies, university students were placed in a dark room with a single point of light and were asked to indicate, each time the light was turned on, how much it appeared to move. (The movement, which is not actually real, occurs because of the saccadic movement of the eyes.) Each group member gave his or her response on each trial aloud and each time in a different random order. As you can see in Figure 15.10, "Studies on Conformity," Sherif found a conformity effect: over time, the responses of the group members became more and more similar to each other such that after four days they converged on a common norm. When the participants were interviewed after the study, they indicated that they had not realized that they were conforming.

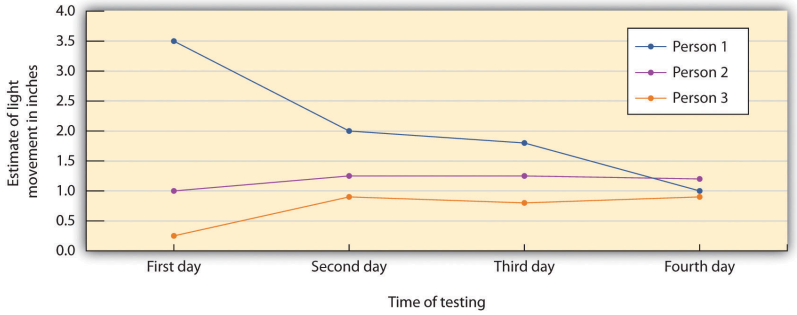


Figure 15.10 Studies on Conformity. The participants in the studies by Muzafer Sherif initially had different beliefs about the degree to which a point of light appeared to be moving. (You can see these differences as expressed on Day 1.) However, as they shared their beliefs with other group members over several days, a common group norm developed. Shown here are the estimates made by a group of three participants who met together on four different days.

Not all conformity is passive. In the research of Solomon Asch (1955) the judgments that group members were asked to make were entirely unambiguous, and the influence of the other people on judgments was apparent. The research participants were male university students who were told that they were to be participating in a test of visual abilities. The men were seated in front of a board that displayed the visual stimuli that they were going to judge. The men were told that there would be 18 trials during the experiment, and on each trial they would see two cards. The standard card had a single line that was to be compared to the three lines on the test card , which varied in length between about 5 and 25 centimeters (Figure 15.11, " Standard & Test Cards.").

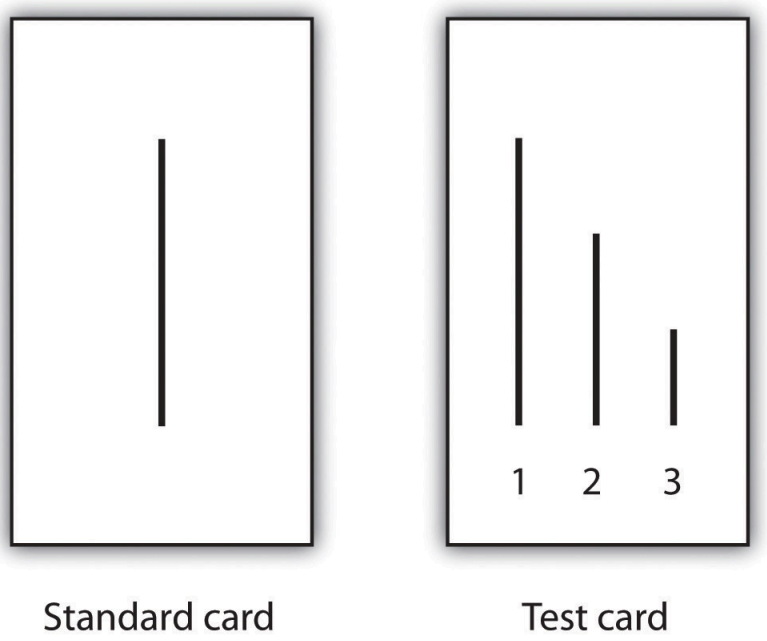


Figure 15.11 Standard & Test Cards. The standard card has a single line that was to be judged, and the test card has three lines that varied in length between about 5 and 25 centimetres.

On each trial, each person in the group answered out loud, beginning with one end of the group and moving toward the other end. Although the real research participant did not know it, the other group members were actually not participants but experimental confederates who gave predetermined answers on each trial. Because the real participant was seated next to last in the row, he always made his judgment following most of the other group members. Although on the first two trials the confederates each gave the correct answer, on the third trial, and on 11 of the subsequent trials, they all had been instructed to give the same wrong choice. For instance, even though the correct answer was Line 1, they would all say it was Line 2. Thus when it became the participant's turn to answer, he could either give the clearly correct answer or conform to the incorrect responses of the confederates.

Remarkably, in this study about 76% of the 123 men who were tested gave at least one incorrect response when it was their turn, and 37% of the responses, overall, were conforming. This is indeed evidence for the power of conformity because the participants were making clearly incorrect responses in public. However, conformity was not absolute; in addition to the 24% of the men who never conformed, only 5% of the men conformed on all 12 of the critical trials.

Watch this video to see a demonstration of Asch's line studies.

Watch: "Asch's Line Matching Studies" [YouTube]:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRh5qy09nNw

The tendency to conform to those in authority, known as **obedience**, was demonstrated in a remarkable set of studies performed by Stanley Milgram (1974). Milgram designed a study in which he could observe the extent to

which a person who presented himself as an authority would be able to produce obedience, even to the extent of leading people to cause harm to others. Like many other researchers who were interested in conformity, Milgram's interest stemmed in part from his desire to understand how the presence of a powerful social situation — in this case the directives of Adolph Hitler, the German dictator who ordered the killing of millions of Jews and other "undesirable" people during World War II — could produce obedience.

Milgram used newspaper ads to recruit men (and in one study, women) from a wide variety of backgrounds to participate in his research. When the research participant arrived at the lab, he or she was introduced to a man who was ostensibly another research participant but who actually was a confederate working with the experimenter as part of the experimental team. The experimenter explained that the goal of the research was to study the effects of punishment on learning. After the participant and the confederate both consented to be in the study, the researcher explained that one of them would be the teacher, and the other the learner. They were each given a slip of paper and asked to open it and indicate what it said. In fact both papers read "teacher," which allowed the confederate to pretend that he had been assigned to be the learner and thus to assure that the actual participant was always the teacher.

While the research participant (now the teacher) looked on, the learner was taken into the adjoining shock room and strapped to an electrode that was to deliver the punishment. The experimenter explained that the teacher's job would be to sit in the control room and read a list of word pairs to the learner. After the teacher read the list once, it would be the learner's job to remember which words went together. For instance, if the word pair was "blue sofa," the teacher would say the word "blue" on the testing trials, and the learner would have to indicate which of four possible words ("house," "sofa," "cat," or "carpet") was the correct answer by pressing one of four buttons in front of him.

After the experimenter gave the teacher a mild shock to demonstrate that the shocks really were painful, the experiment began. The research participant first read the list of words to the learner and then began the testing. The shock apparatus (Figure 15.12, "Materials Used in Milgram's Experiments on Obedience") was in front of the teacher, and the learner was not visible in the shock room. The experimenter sat behind the teacher and explained that each time the learner made a mistake the teacher was to press one of the shock switches to administer the shock. Moreover, the switch that was to be pressed increased by one level with each mistake, so that each mistake required a stronger shock.

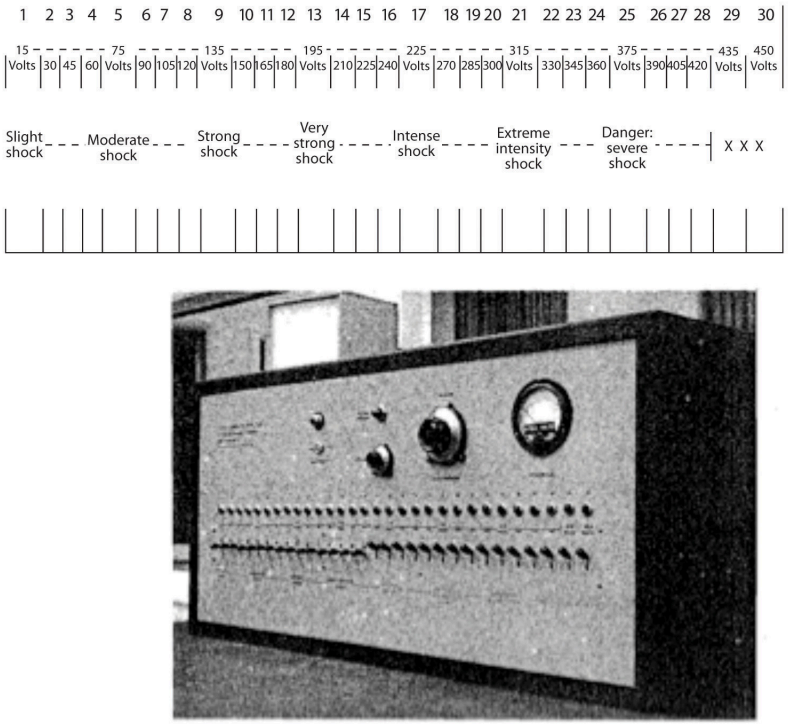


Figure 15.12 Materials Used in Milgram's Experiments on Obedience.

Once the learner (who was, of course, actually the experimental confederate) was alone in the shock room, he unstrapped himself from the shock machine and brought out a tape recorder that he used to play a prerecorded series of responses that the teacher could hear through the wall of the room.

The teacher heard the learner say "ugh!" after the first few shocks. After the next few mistakes, when the shock level reached 150 V, the learner was heard to exclaim, "Let me out of here. I have heart trouble!" As the shock reached about 270 V, the protests of the learner became more vehement, and after 300 V the learner proclaimed that he was not going to answer any more questions. From 330 V and up, the learner was silent. At this point the experimenter responded to participants' questions, if any, with a scripted response indicating that they should continue reading the questions and applying increasing shock when the learner did not respond.

The results of Milgram's research were themselves quite shocking. Although all the participants gave the initial mild levels of shock, responses varied after that. Some refused to continue after about 150 V, despite the insistence of the experimenter to continue to increase the shock level. Still others, however, continued to present the questions and to administer the shocks, under the pressure of the experimenter, who demanded that they continue. In the end, 65% of the participants continued giving the shock to the learner all the way up to the 450 V maximum, even though that shock was marked as "danger: severe shock" and no response had been heard from the participant for several trials. In other words, well over half of the men who participated had, as far as they knew, shocked another person to death, all as part of a supposed experiment on learning.

In case you are thinking that such high levels of obedience would not be observed in today's modern culture, there is fact evidence that they would. Milgram's findings were almost exactly replicated, using

men and women from a wide variety of ethnic groups, in a study conducted in the first decade of this century at Santa Clara University (Burger, 2009). In this replication of the Milgram experiment, 67% of the men and 73% of the women agreed to administer increasingly painful electric shocks when an authority figure ordered them to. The participants in this study were not, however, allowed to go beyond the 150 V shock switch.

Although it might be tempting to conclude that Burger's and Milgram's experiments demonstrate that people are innately bad creatures who are ready to shock others to death, this is not in fact the case. Rather it is the social situation, and not the people themselves, that is responsible for the behaviour. When Milgram created variations on his original procedure, he found that changes in the situation dramatically influenced the amount of conformity. Conformity was significantly reduced when people were allowed to choose their own shock level rather than being ordered to use the level required by the experimenter, when the experimenter communicated by phone rather than from within the experimental room, and when other research participants refused to give the shock. These findings are consistent with a basic principle of social psychology: the situation in which people find themselves has a major influence on their behaviour.

Do We Always Conform?

The research that we have discussed to this point suggests that most people conform to the opinions and desires of others. But it is not always the case that we blindly conform. For one, there are individual differences in conformity. People with lower self-esteem are more likely to conform than are those with higher self-esteem, and people who are dependent on and who have a strong need for approval from others are also more conforming (Bornstein, 1993). People who highly identify with or who have a high degree of commitment to a group are also more likely to conform to group norms than those who care less about the group (Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1997). Despite these individual differences among people in terms of their tendency to conform, however, research has generally found that the impact of individual difference variables on conformity is smaller than the influence of situational variables, such as the number and unanimity of the majority.

We have seen that conformity usually occurs such that the opinions and behaviours of individuals become more similar to the opinions and behaviours of the majority of the people in the group. However, and although it is much more unusual, there are cases *in which a smaller number of individuals is able to influence the opinions or behaviours of the larger group* — a phenomenon known as **minority influence**. Minorities who are consistent and confident in their opinions may in some cases be able to be persuasive (Moscovici, Mugny, & Van Avermaet, 1985).

Persuasion that comes from minorities has another, and potentially even more important, effect on the opinions of majority group members: it can lead majorities to engage in fuller, as well as more divergent, innovative, and creative thinking about the topics being discussed (Martin, Hewstone, Martin, & Gardikiotis, 2008). Nemeth and Kwan (1987) found that participants working together in groups solved problems more creatively when only one person gave a different and unusual response than the other members did (minority influence) in comparison to when three people gave the same unusual response.

It is a good thing that minorities can be influential; otherwise, the world would be pretty boring indeed. When we look back on history, we find that it is the unusual, divergent, innovative minority groups or

individuals, who — although frequently ridiculed at the time for their unusual ideas — end up being respected for producing positive changes.

Another case where conformity does not occur is when people feel that their freedom is being threatened by influence attempts, yet they also have the ability to resist that persuasion. In these cases they may develop *a strong emotional reaction that leads people to resist pressures to conform,* known as **psychological reactance** (Miron & Brehm, 2006). Reactance is aroused when our ability to choose which behaviours to engage in is eliminated or threatened with elimination. The outcome of the experience of reactance is that people may not conform at all, in fact moving their opinions or behaviours away from the desires of the influencer. Consider an experiment conducted by Pennebaker and Sanders (1976), who attempted to get people to stop writing graffiti on the walls of campus restrooms. In the first group of restrooms they put a sign that read "Do not write on these walls under any circumstances!" whereas in the second group they placed a sign that simply said "Please don't write on these walls." Two weeks later, the researchers returned to the restrooms to see if the signs had made a difference. They found that there was significantly less graffiti in the second group of restrooms than in the first one. It seems as if people who were given strong pressures to not engage in the behaviour were more likely to react against those directives than were people who were given a weaker message.

Reactance represents a desire to restore freedom that is being threatened. A child who feels that his or her parents are forcing him to eat his asparagus may react quite vehemently with a strong refusal to touch the plate. And an adult who feels that she is being pressured by a car salesperson might feel the same way and leave the showroom entirely, resulting in the opposite of the salesperson's intended outcome.

Key Takeaways

- Altruism is behaviour that is designed to increase another person's welfare, and particularly those actions that do not seem to provide a direct reward to the person who performs them. The tendency to help others in need is in part a functional evolutionary adaptation and in part determined by environmental factors.
- Although helping others can be costly to us as individuals, helping people who are related to us can perpetuate our own genes. Some helping is based on reciprocal altruism, the principle that if we help other people now, they will return the favour should we need their help in the future.
- We also learn to help through modelling and reinforcement. The result of this learning is norms about helping, including the reciprocity norm and the social responsibility norm.
- Research testing the Latané and Darley model of helping has shown the importance of the social situation in noticing, interpreting, and acting in emergency situations.
- Aggression is physical or nonphysical behaviour that is intended to harm another individual. Aggression has both genetic and environmental causes. The experience of negative emotions tends to increase aggression.
- Viewing violence tends to increase aggression.
- The social norm that condones and even encourages responding to insults with aggression is known as the culture of honour.
- Conformity, the change in beliefs or behaviour that occurs as the result of the presence of the other people around us, can occur in both active and passive ways. The typical outcome of

conformity is that our beliefs and behaviours become more similar to those of others around us.

- The situation is the most powerful determinant of conformity, but individual differences may also matter. The important influence of the social situation on conformity was demonstrated in the research by Sherif, Asch, Milgram, and others.
- Minority influence can change attitudes and change how majorities process information.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Consider a time when you were helpful. Was the behaviour truly altruistic, or did you help for selfish reasons?
2. Consider a time when you or someone you know was aggressive. What do you think caused the aggression?
3. Should parents limit the amount of violent TV shows and video games that their children are exposed to? Why or why not?
4. Is conformity a good thing or a bad thing for society? What determines whether it is good or bad? What role do you think conformity played in Jonathan Andrews's death?

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Image Attributions

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Figure 15.9: Adapted from Cohen, Nisbett, Bosdle, & Schwarz, 1996.

Figure 15.10: Adapted from Sherif, 1936.

Figure 15.12: Adapted from Milgram, 1974.

Long Descriptions

Figure 15.9 long description: Culture of Honour Research

	Northern Students	**Southern Students**
Level of aggression	34	84
Level of testosterone	6	12

[Return to Figure 15.9]

Notes

1. Adapted from: Guéguen, & De Gail, 2003; van Baaren, Holland, Kawakami, & van Knippenberg, 2004; Batson et al, 1983; Snyder, Omoto, & Lindsay (Eds.), 2004; Hardy & Van Vugt, 2006.
2. Adapted from Asch, 1955; Milgram, Bickman & Berkowitz, 1969; Milgram, 1974.

15.3 Working With Others: The Costs and Benefits of Social Groups

Learning Objectives

1. Summarize the advantages and disadvantages of working together in groups to perform tasks and make decisions.
2. Review the factors that can increase group productivity.

Just as our primitive ancestors lived together in small social groups, including families, tribes, and clans, people today still spend a great deal of time in groups (Figure 15.13, "Working Groups"). We study together in study groups, we work together on production lines, and we decide the fates of others in courtroom juries. We work in groups because groups can be beneficial. A rock band that is writing a new song or a surgical team in the middle of a complex operation may coordinate their efforts so well that it is clear that the same outcome could never have occurred if the individuals had worked alone. But group performance will only be better than individual performance to the extent that the group members are motivated to meet the group goals, effectively share information, and efficiently coordinate their efforts. Because these things do not always happen, group performance is almost never as good as we would expect, given the number of individuals in the group, and may even in some cases be inferior to that which could have been made by one or more members of the group working alone.



Figure 15.13 Working Groups. Working groups are used to perform tasks and make decisions, but are they effective?

Working in Front of Others: Social Facilitation and Social Inhibition

In an early social psychological study, Norman Triplett (1898) found that bicycle racers who were competing with other bicyclers on the same track rode significantly faster than bicyclers who were racing alone, against the clock. This led Triplett to hypothesize that people perform tasks better when there are other people present than they do when they are alone. Subsequent findings validated Triplett's results, and experiments have shown that the presence of others can increase performance on many types of tasks, including jogging, shooting pool, lifting weights, and solving problems (Bond & Titus, 1983). *The tendency to perform tasks better or faster in the presence of others* is known as **social facilitation.**

However, although people sometimes perform better when they are in groups than they do alone, the situation is not that simple. Perhaps you remember an experience when you performed a task (playing the piano, shooting basketball free throws, giving a public presentation) very well alone but poorly with, or in front of, others. Thus it seems that the conclusion that being with others increases performance cannot be entirely true. *The tendency to perform tasks more poorly or more slowly in the presence of others* is known as **social inhibition**.

Robert Zajonc (1965) explained the observed influence of others on task performance using the concept of physiological arousal. According to Zajonc, when we are with others we experience more arousal than we do when we are alone, and this arousal increases the likelihood that we will perform the **dominant response**, *the action that we are most likely to emit in any given situation* (Figure 15.14, "Drive-Arousal Model of Social Facilitation").

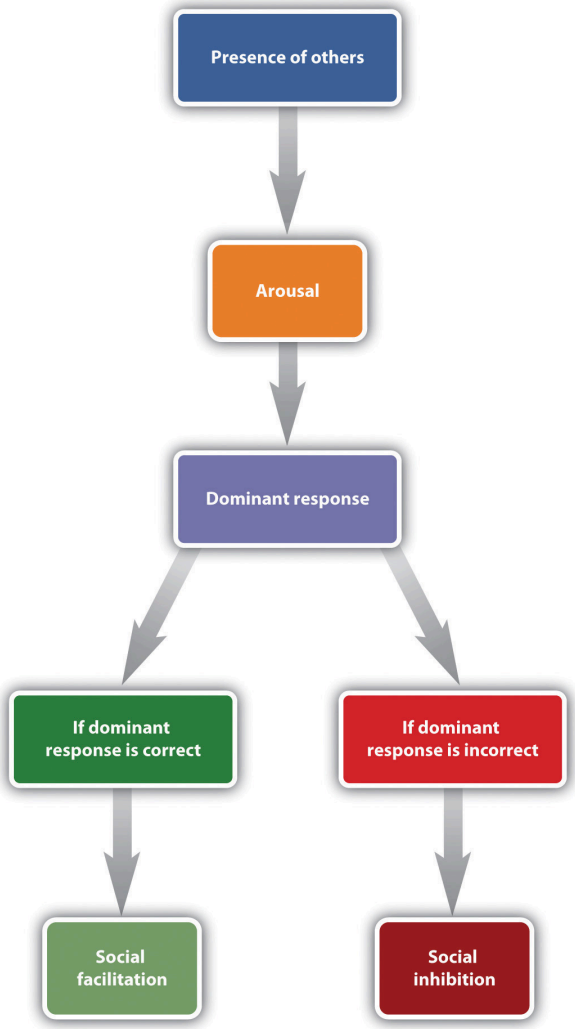


Figure 15.14 Drive-Arousal Model of Social Facilitation [Long Description]

The most important aspect of Zajonc's theory was that the experience of arousal and the resulting increase in the occurrence of the dominant response could be used to predict whether the presence of others would produce social facilitation or social inhibition. Zajonc argued that when the task to be performed was relatively easy, or if the individual had learned to perform the task very well (a

task such as pedaling a bicycle), the dominant response was likely to be the correct response, and the increase in arousal caused by the presence of others would create social facilitation. On the other hand, when the task was difficult or not well learned (a task such as giving a speech in front of others), the dominant response is likely to be the incorrect one, and thus, because the increase in arousal increases the occurrence of the (incorrect) dominant response, performance is hindered.

A great deal of experimental research has now confirmed these predictions. A meta-analysis by Bond and Titus (1983), which looked at the results of over 200 studies using over 20,000 research participants, found that the presence of others significantly increased the rate of performing on simple tasks, and also decreased both rate and quality of performance on complex tasks.

Although the arousal model proposed by Zajonc is perhaps the most elegant, other explanations have also been proposed to account for social facilitation and social inhibition. One modification argues that we are particularly influenced by others when we perceive that the others are evaluating us or competing with us (Baron, 1986). In one study supporting this idea, Strube, Miles, and Finch (1981) found that the presence of spectators increased joggers' speed only when the spectators were facing the joggers, so that the spectators could see the joggers and assess their performance. The presence of others did not influence joggers' performance when the joggers were facing in the other direction and thus could not see them.

Working Together in Groups

The ability of a group to perform well is determined by the characteristics of the group members (e.g., are they knowledgeable and skilled?) as well as by the **group process** — that is, *the events that occur while the group is working on the task*. When the outcome of group performance is better than we would expect given the individuals who form the group, we call the outcome a *group process gain*, and when the group outcome is worse than we would have expected given the individuals who form the group, we call the outcome a *group process loss.*

One group process loss that may occur in groups is that the group members may engage in **social loafing**, *a group process loss that occurs when people do not work as hard in a group as they do when they are working alone*. In one of the earliest social psychology experiments, Ringelmann (1913; reported in Kravitz & Martin, 1986) had individual men, as well as groups of various numbers of men, pull as hard as they could on ropes while he measured the maximum amount that they were able to pull. As you can see in Figure 15.15, "Group Process Loss," although larger groups pulled harder than any one individual, Ringelmann also found a substantial process loss. In fact, the loss was so large that groups of three men pulled at only 85% of their expected capability, whereas groups of eight pulled at only 37% of their expected capability. This type of process loss, in which group productivity decreases as the size of the group increases, has been found to occur on a wide variety of tasks.

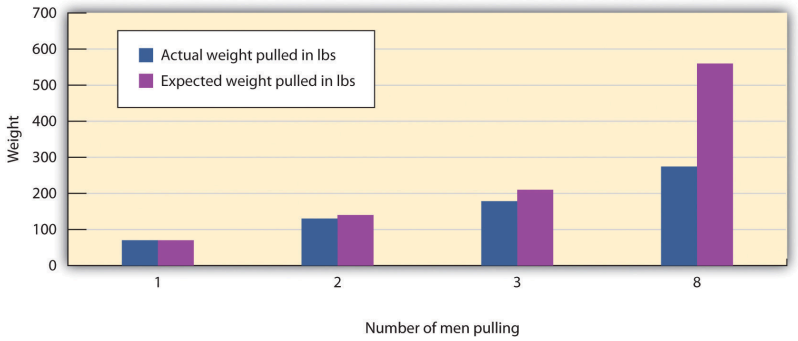


Figure 15.15 Group Process Loss. [Long Description]

Ringelmann found that although more men pulled harder on a rope than fewer men did, there was a substantial process loss in comparison to what would have been expected on the basis of their individual performances.

Group process losses can also occur when group members conform to each other rather than expressing their own divergent ideas. **Groupthink** is *a phenomenon that occurs when a group made up of members who may be very competent and thus quite capable of making excellent decisions nevertheless ends up, as a result of a flawed group process and strong conformity pressures, making a poor decision* (Baron, 2005; Janis, 2007). Groupthink is more likely to occur in groups whose members feel a strong group identity, such as the Stanley Cup riots of 1994 and 2011 in Vancouver, when there is a strong and directive leader, and when the group needs to make an important decision quickly. The problem is that groups suffering from groupthink become unwilling to seek out or discuss discrepant or unsettling information about the topic at hand, and the group members do not express contradictory opinions. Because the group members are afraid to express opinions that contradict those of the leader, or to bring in outsiders who have other information, the group is prevented from making a fully informed decision. Figure 15.16, “Causes and Outcomes of Groupthink,” summarizes the basic causes and outcomes of groupthink.

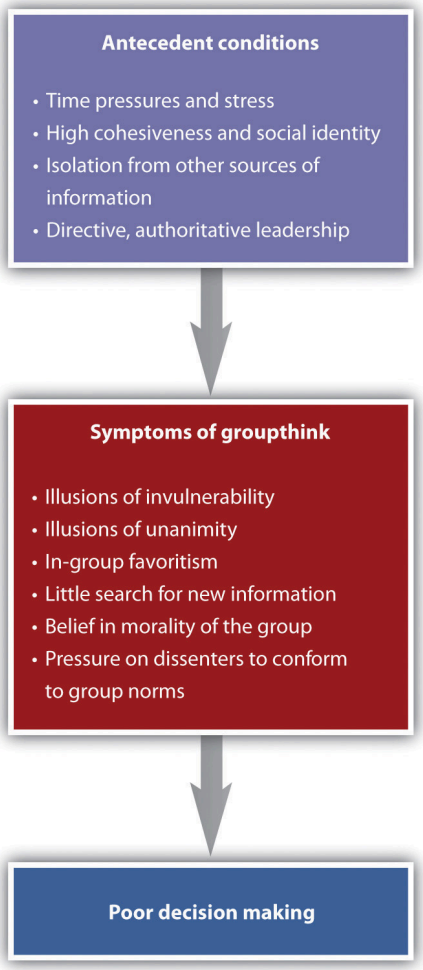


Figure 15.16 Causes and Outcomes of Groupthink [Long Description]

It has been suggested that groupthink was involved in a number of well-known and important, but very poor, decisions made by government and business groups, including the crashes of two Space Shuttle missions in 1986 and 2003. Analyses of the decision-making processes in these cases have documented the role of conformity pressures.

As a result of the high levels of conformity in these groups, the group begins to see itself as extremely valuable and important, highly capable of making high-quality decisions, and invulnerable. The group members begin to feel that they are superior and do not need to seek outside information. Such a situation is conducive to terrible decision making and resulting fiascoes.

Psychology in Everyday Life: Do Juries Make Good Decisions?

Although many other countries rely on judges to make judgments in civil and criminal trials, the jury is the oldest and most fundamental institution of the judicial system in Canada and the United States. The notion of a "trial by one's peers" is based on the assumption that average individuals can make informed and fair

decisions when they work together in groups. But given the potential for group process losses, are juries really the best way to approach these important decisions?

As a small working group, juries have the potential to produce either good or poor decisions, depending on the outcome of the characteristics of the individual members as well as the group process. In terms of individual group characteristics, people who have already served on juries are more likely to be seen as experts, are more likely to be chosen to be the jury foreman, and give more input during the deliberation. It has also been found that status matters; jury members with higher-status occupations and education, males rather than females, and those who talk first are more likely be chosen as the foreman, and these individuals also contribute more to the jury discussion (Stasser, Kerr, & Bray, 1982).

However, although at least some member characteristics have an influence on jury decision making, group process plays a more important role in the outcome of jury decisions than do member characteristics. Like any group, juries develop their own individual norms, and these norms can have a profound impact on how they reach their decision. Analysis of group process within juries shows that different juries take very different approaches to reaching a verdict. Some spend a lot of time in initial planning, whereas others immediately jump into the deliberation. Some juries base their discussion around a review and reorganization of the evidence, waiting to make a vote until it has all been considered, whereas other juries first determine which decision is preferred in the group by taking a poll and then (if the first vote does not lead to a final verdict) organize their discussion around these opinions. These two approaches are used quite equally but may in some cases lead to different decisions (Davis, Stasson, Ono, & Zimmerman, 1988).

Perhaps most importantly, conformity pressures have a strong impact on jury decision making. As you can see in Figure 15.17, “Majority Rules Research” when there are a greater number of jury members who hold the majority position, it becomes more and more certain that their opinion will prevail during the discussion. This does not mean that minorities can never be persuasive, but it is very difficult for them to do so. The strong influence of the majority is probably due to both informational conformity (i.e., that there are more arguments supporting the favoured position) and normative conformity (the people on the majority side have greater social influence).

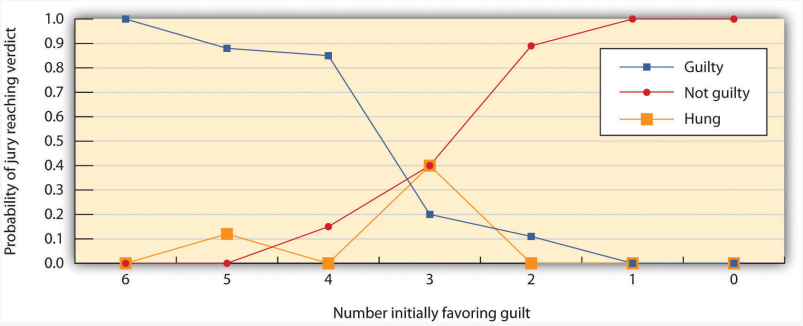


Figure 15.17 Majority Rules Research. This figure shows the decisions of six-member mock juries that made “majority rules” decisions. When the majority of the six initially favoured voting guilty, the jury almost always voted guilty; when the majority of the six initially favoured voting innocent, the jury almost always voted innocent. The juries were frequently hung (could not make a decision) when the initial split was three-three.

Given the potential difficulties that groups face in making good decisions, you might be worried that the verdicts rendered by juries may not be particularly effective, accurate, or fair. However, despite these concerns, the evidence suggests that juries may not do as badly as we would expect. The deliberation process seems to cancel out many individual juror biases, and the importance of the decision leads the jury members to carefully consider the evidence itself.

Using Groups Effectively

Taken together, working in groups has both positive and negative outcomes. On the positive side, it makes sense to use groups to make decisions because people can create outcomes working together that any one individual could not hope to accomplish alone. In addition, once a group makes a decision, the group will normally find it easier to get other people to implement it, because many people feel that decisions made by groups are fairer than those made by individuals.

Yet groups frequently succumb to process losses, leading them to be less effective than they should be. Furthermore, group members often don't realize that the process losses are occurring around them. For instance, people who participate in brainstorming groups report that they have been more productive than those who work alone, even if the group has actually not done that well (Nijstad, Stroebe, Lodewijkx, 2006; Stroebe, Diehl, & Abakoumkin, 1992). *The tendency for group members to overvalue the productivity of the groups they work in* is known as the **illusion of group productivity**, and it seems to occur for several reasons. For one, the productivity of the group as a whole is highly accessible, and this productivity generally seems quite good, at least in comparison to the contributions of single individuals. The group members hear many ideas expressed by themselves and the other group members, and this gives the impression that the group is doing very well, even if objectively it is not. And, on the affective side, group members receive a lot of positive social identity from their group memberships. These positive feelings naturally lead them to believe that the group is strong and performing well.

What we need to do, then, is to recognize both the strengths and limitations of group performance and use whatever techniques we can to increase process gains and reduce process losses. Table 15.5, "Techniques That Can Be Used to Improve Group Performance," presents some of the techniques that are known to help groups achieve their goals.

Table 15.5 Techniques That Can Be Used to Improve Group Performance.[1]

[Skip Table]	
Technique	**Example**
Provide rewards for performance.	Rewarding employees and team members with bonuses will increase their effort toward the group goal. People will also work harder in groups when they feel that they are contributing to the group goal than when they feel that their contributions are not important.
Keep group member contributions identifiable.	Group members will work harder if they feel that their contributions to the group are known and potentially seen positively by the other group members than they will if their contributions are summed into the group total and thus unknown (Szymanski & Harkins, 1987).
Maintain distributive justice (equity).	Workers who feel that their rewards are proportional to their efforts in the group will be happier and work harder than will workers who feel that they are underpaid (Geurts, Buunk, & Schaufeli, 1994).
Keep groups small.	Larger groups are more likely to suffer from coordination problems and social loafing. The most effective working groups are of relatively small size — about four or five members.
Create positive group norms.	Group performance is increased when the group members care about the ability of the group to do a good job (e.g., a cohesive sports or military team). On the other hand, some groups develop norms that prohibit members from working to their full potential and thus encourage loafing.
Improve information sharing.	Leaders must work to be sure that each member of the group is encouraged to present the information that he or she has in group discussions. One approach to increasing full discussion of the issues is to have the group break up into smaller subgroups for discussion.
Allow plenty of time.	Groups take longer to reach consensus, and allowing plenty of time will help keep the group from coming to premature consensus and making an unwise choice. Time to consider the issues fully also allows the group to gain new knowledge by seeking information and analysis from outside experts.
Set specific and attainable goals.	Groups that set specific, difficult, yet attainable goals (e.g., “improve sales by 10% over the next six months”) are more effective than groups that are given goals that are not very clear (e.g., “let’s sell as much as we can!”; Locke & Latham, 2006).

Key Takeaways

- The performance of working groups is almost never as good as we would expect, given the number of individuals in the group, and in some cases may even be inferior to the performance of one or more members of the group working alone.
- The tendency to perform tasks better or faster in the presence of others is known as social facilitation. The tendency to perform tasks more poorly or more slowly in the presence of others is known as social inhibition.
- The ability of a group to perform well is determined by the characteristics of the group members as well as by the events that occur in the group itself — the group process.

- One group process loss that may occur in groups is that the group members may engage in social loafing. Group process losses can also occur as a result of groupthink, when group members conform to each other rather than expressing their own divergent ideas.
- Taken together, working in groups has both positive and negative outcomes. It is important to recognize both the strengths and limitations of group performance and use whatever techniques we can to increase process gains and reduce process losses.

Exercise and Critical Thinking

1. Consider a time when you worked together with others in a group. Do you think the group experienced group process gains or group process losses? If the latter, what might you do now in a group to encourage effective group performance?

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Image Attributions

Figure 15.13: "Operating room" by John Crawford is in the public domain. "Staff meeting" by Robert Scoble is licensed under CC BY 2.0 license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en).

Figure 15.17: Adapted from Stasser, Kerr, & Bray, 1982.

Long Descriptions

Figure 15.14 long description: The presence of others causes arousal which produces a dominant response. If the dominant response is correct, there is social facilitation. If the dominant response is incorrect, there is social inhibition. [Return to Figure 15.14]

Figure 15.15 long description: Group Process Loss

Number of men pulling	Actual weight pulled	Expected weight pulled
1	80 pounds	80 pounds
2	140 pounds	145 pounds
3	180 pounds	205 pounds
8	275 pounds	560 pounds

[Return to Figure 15.15]

Figure 15.16 long description: Causes and outcomes of groupthink that can lead to poor decision making.

Antecedent conditions:

- Time pressure and stress
- High cohesiveness and social identity
- Isolation from other sources of information
- Directive, authoritative leadership

Symptoms of groupthink

- Illusions of invulnerability
- Illusions of unanimity
- In-group favouritism
- Little search for new information
- Belief in morality of the group
- Pressure on dissenters to conform to group norms

[Return to Figure 15.16]

Notes

1. Adapted from Szymanski & Harkins, 1987; Geurts, Buunk, & Schaufeli, 1994; Locke & Latham, 2006.

15.4 Chapter Summary

Social psychology is the scientific study of how we feel about, think about, and behave toward the people around us, and how those people influence our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. A fundamental principle of social psychology is that although we may not always be aware of it, our cognitions, emotions, and behaviours are substantially influenced by the people with whom we are interacting.

Our initial judgments of others are based in large part on what we see. The physical features of other people — particularly their sex, race, age, and physical attractiveness — are very salient, and we often focus our attention on these dimensions. At least in some cases, people can draw accurate conclusions about others on the basis of physical appearance.

Youth, symmetry, and averageness have been found to be cross-culturally consistent determinants of perceived attractiveness, although different cultures may also have unique beliefs about what is attractive.

We frequently use people's appearances to form our judgments about them, and these judgments may lead to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. We use our stereotypes and prejudices in part because they are easy and we may be evolutionarily disposed to stereotyping. We can change and learn to avoid using them through positive interaction with members of other groups, practice, and education.

Liking and loving in friendships and close relationships are determined by variables including similarity, disclosure, proximity, intimacy, interdependence, commitment, passion, and responsiveness.

Causal attribution is the process of trying to determine the causes of people's behaviour. Attributions may be made to the person, to the situation, or to a combination of both. Although people are reasonably accurate in their attributions, they may make self-serving attributions and fall victim to the fundamental attribution error.

Attitudes refer to our relatively enduring evaluations of people and things. Attitudes are important because they frequently (but not always) predict behaviour. Attitudes can be changed through persuasive communications. Attitudes predict behaviour better for some people than for others, and in some situations more than others.

Our behaviours also influence our attitudes through the cognitive processes of self-perception and the more emotional process of cognitive dissonance.

The tendency to help others in need is in part a functional evolutionary adaptation. We help others to benefit ourselves and to benefit others. Reciprocal altruism leads us to help others now with the expectation they will return the favour should we need their help in the future. The outcome of the reinforcement and modelling of altruism is the development of social norms about helping, including the reciprocity norm and the social responsibility norm. Latané and Darley's model of helping proposes that the presence of others can reduce noticing, interpreting, and responding to emergencies.

Aggression may be physical or nonphysical. Aggression is activated in large part by the amygdala and

regulated by the prefrontal cortex. Testosterone is associated with increased aggression in both males and females. Aggression is also caused by negative experiences and emotions, including frustration, pain, and heat. As predicted by principles of observational learning, research evidence makes it very clear that, on average, people who watch violent behaviour become more aggressive.

The culture of honour involves a social norm that condones and even encourages responding to insults with aggression.

We conform not only because we believe that other people have accurate information and we want to have knowledge (informational conformity) but also because we want to be liked by others (normative conformity). The typical outcome of conformity is that our beliefs and behaviours become more similar to those of others around us. Studies demonstrating the power of conformity include those by Sherif and Asch, and Milgram's work on obedience.

Although majorities are most persuasive, numerical minorities that are consistent and confident in their opinions may in some cases be able to be persuasive.

The tendency to perform tasks better or faster in the presence of others is known as social facilitation, whereas the tendency to perform tasks more poorly or more slowly in the presence of others is known as social inhibition. Zajonc explained the influence of others on task performance using the concept of physiological arousal.

Working in groups involves both costs and benefits. When the outcome of group performance is better than we would expect given the individuals who form the group, we call the outcome a group process gain, and when the group outcome is worse that we would have expected given the individuals who form the group, we call the outcome a group process loss.

Process losses are observed in phenomena such as social loafing and groupthink. Process losses can be reduced by better motivation and coordination among the group members, by keeping contributions identifiable, and by providing difficult but attainable goals.

Chapter 16. Stress, Health, and Coping

16. Health, Stress, and Coping

Jennifer Walinga

Stress has been defined as *the physiological and psychological experience of significant life events, trauma, and chronic strain* (Thoits, 2010). It has long been believed and demonstrated that the level of stress an individual experiences can negatively impact his or her health. Therefore, stress management has become an increasingly important focus from both a personal and organizational perspective. Researchers and practitioners have investigated and developed strategies to *cope* with stress effectively in an effort to address the costs of stress overload to personal and organizational health and productivity.

The Canadian government, for instance, recognizes the personal, economic, and social costs of stress and therefore declares that its role includes helping "Canadians maintain and improve their mental health, including coping with stress" (Health Canada, 2008) and offers multiple publicly accessible resources to:

- Generate and disseminate knowledge, and support both knowledge generation and dissemination activities undertaken by other organizations.
- Strengthen the capacity of the primary health care, home care, and acute care sectors to effectively deliver mental health programs and services.
- Provide leadership and governance.
- Develop social marketing campaigns.
- Conduct surveillance on health trends in the population.

In 2007, the federal government provided funding to establish and support the Mental Health Commission of Canada to lead the development of a national mental health strategy. Services developed include:

- Canadian Health Network
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Canadian Psychiatric Association
- National Network for Mental Health
- Canadian Psychological Association
- Mood Disorders Society of Canada
- It's Your Health website

Likewise, employers have acknowledged the costs associated with occupational stress and the need for wellness strategies and initiatives devoted to supporting health and stress management in the workplace (World Health Organization, 2013). A workplace wellness industry is currently thriving internationally.

These three constructs of *health*, *stress*, and *coping* are complex, both as separate concepts and as they

interact with one another. For instance, stress can be perceived both negatively and positively: it can have both a negative deleterious effect on health, and a positive health-promoting effect depending on the individual's interpretation or appraisal of the stress. The level of stress a person experiences can also determine the degree of impact on health and performance, which invites the question, At what point does the stress become just too much to take? Likewise, health is a multifaceted construct, and an individual's health is relative, perceptual, and contextual. Finally, the concept of coping has spawned many other concepts besides management of stress such as *resiliency, thriving, tolerance for ambiguity*, and *stress-related growth (SRG)*.

In this chapter, we will examine the variety of interrelated concepts that fall within or stem from the triangle of health, stress, and coping. These concepts will then be examined within personal and professional contexts and discussed in terms of social implications and outcomes.

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16.1 Health and Stress

Jennifer Walinga

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the nature of stress and its impact on personal, social, economic, and political health.
2. Describe the psychological and physiological interactions initiated by stress.
3. Identify health symptoms resulting from stress.

Stress can pose a deleterious effect on health outcomes (Thoits, 2010). In 50 years of research concerning the links between stress and health, several major findings emerge (see Figure 16.1, "The Sociopolitical-Economic Factors of Stress").

1. **Personal.** When stressors are measured comprehensively, their damaging impacts on physical and mental health are substantial.
2. **Socioeconomic.** Differential exposure to stressful experiences can produce gender, racial-ethnic, marital status, and social class inequalities in physical and mental health.
3. **Sociopolitical.** Stressors proliferate over the life course and across generations, widening health gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged group members.

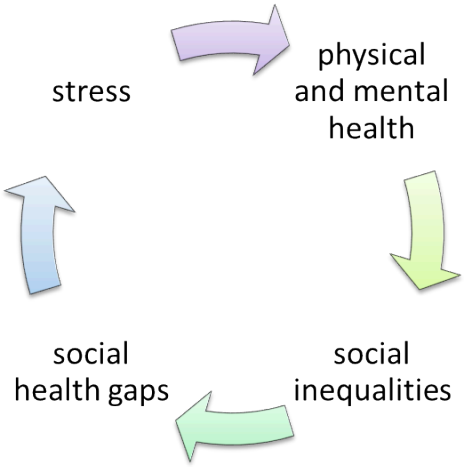


Figure 16.1 The Sociopolitical-Economic Factors of Stress. [Long Description]

Coping with stress depends on high levels of mastery, self-esteem, and/or social support that can reduce the impacts of stressors on health and well-being. Therefore, policy recommendations inspired by the snowballing impacts of stress focus on:

1. The need for more widely disseminated and employed coping and support interventions and education.
2. An increased focus of programs and policies at macro and meso levels of intervention on the structural conditions that put people at risk of stressors.
3. The development of programs and policies that target children who are at lifetime risk of ill health and distress due to exposure to poverty and stressful family circumstances.

Negative Impacts of Stress on Health

The human body is designed to react to stress in ways meant to protect against threats from predators and other aggressors. In today's society, stressors take on a more subtle but equally threatening form such as shouldering a heavy workload, providing for a family, and taking care of children or elderly relatives. The human body treats any perceived stressor as a threat.

When the body encounters a perceived threat (e.g., a near-miss accident, shocking news, a demanding assignment), the hypothalamus, a tiny region at the base of the brain, instigates the "fight-or-flight response" — a combination of nerve and hormonal signals. This system prompts the adrenal glands, located at the top of the kidneys, to release a surge of hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol.

Adrenaline *is a hormone that increases heart rate, elevates blood pressure, and boosts energy supplies*. **Cortisol,** *the primary stress hormone, increases sugars (glucose) in the bloodstream, enhances the brain's use of glucose, and increases the availability of substances that repair tissues*. Cortisol also curbs functions that would be nonessential or detrimental in a fight-or-flight situation. It alters immune system responses and suppresses the digestive system, the reproductive system, and growth processes. This complex natural alarm system also communicates with regions of the brain that control mood, motivation, and fear.

The body's stress-response system is usually temporary. Once a perceived threat has passed, hormone levels return to normal. As adrenaline and cortisol levels drop, heart rate and blood pressure return to baseline levels, and other systems resume their regular activities. But when stressors are always present, such as those we experience in a modern, fast-paced society, the body can constantly feel under attack, and the fight-or-flight reaction remains activated.

The long-term activation of the stress-response system — and the subsequent overexposure to cortisol and other stress hormones — can disrupt almost all of the body's processes and increase the risk of numerous mental and physical health problems, including:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Digestive problems
- Heart disease
- Sleep problems
- Weight gain
- Memory and concentration impairment

- Post-traumatic stress disorder

Statistics from the Canadian Mental Health Association are alarming in describing the negative health impacts of stress (Higgins, Duxbury, & Lyons, 2008):

- Stress, depression, and burnout are linked to increased absenteeism, and greater use of prescription medications and employee assistance programs.
- Work-related stress costs Canadian taxpayers an estimated $2.8 billion annually in physician visits, hospital stays, and emergency room visits.
- Additionally, 11% of those surveyed say they use drugs as a coping mechanism, with anti-depressant and tranquilizer use on the rise.
- Over half of the respondents reported high levels of perceived stress; one in three reported high levels of burnout and depressed mood.
- Only 41% were satisfied with their lives and one in five was dissatisfied. Almost one in five perceived that their physical health was fair to poor.
- The physical and mental health of Canadian employees has deteriorated over time: 1.5 times more employees reported high depressed mood in 2001 than in 1991. Similarly, 1.4 times more employees reported high levels of perceived stress in 2001 than in 1991.

Positive Impacts of Stress on Health

While research has shown that stress can be extremely deleterious in terms of health outcomes, it can also have positive impacts on health. Because stress is subjective and hinges on perception, the degree to which a person perceives an event as threatening or non-threatening determines the level of stress that person experiences. An individual's perception or appraisal of an event or instance depends on many factors, such as gender, personality, character, context, memories, upbringing, age, size, relationships, and status – all of which are relative and arbitrary. One individual may perceive a broken-down car on the highway as an extremely stressful event, whereas another individual may perceive such an incident as invigorating, exciting, or a relief.

Eustress

Hans Selye, the prominent stress psychologist, proposed the concept of **eustress** to capture *stress that is not necessarily debilitative and could be potentially facilitative to a person's sense of well-being, capacity, or performance*. Selye explained that every experience or change represents a challenge or stressor to the human system, and thus every experience is met with some degree of "alarm" or arousal (1956). It is individual difference, or "how we take it," that determines whether a stressor is interpreted as eustress (positive or challenging) or dystress (negative or threatening). Likewise, the multidimensional theory of performance anxiety (Jones & Swain, 1992, 1995; Jones & Hardy, 1993; Martens, Burton, Vealey, Bump, & Smith, 1990) includes a directional component for measuring individuals' anxiety interpretation along with the traditional intensity component.

Research Focus: Anxiety Direction

In 2007, Hanton and associates studied six high-performance athletes to better understand the role and nature of anxiety and stress as it relates to athletic performance. Specifically, the researchers were interested in understanding athletes' interpretations of competitive stress and the role that experience plays in that interpretation. Athletes were asked to reflect on the influence of positive and negative critical incidents on the interpretation and appraisal of cognitive and somatic experiences of stress and anxiety symptoms.

Six elite athletes were interviewed prior to critical athletic incidents such as an important race or game, a final game or match, or a particularly challenging event. Some athletes reported negative interpretations of their anxious or nervous feelings:

"I felt anxious thoughts like I had never experienced before. It was the new environment. The fact that we were playing at Wembley with a big crowd. That was unfamiliar and started to overwhelm me. I started to doubt myself and wonder whether I belonged there, whether I had the skills or ability to compete."

Comparatively, one participant described similar anxious thoughts and feelings but interpreted them positively:

"When I'm nervous and feeling sick inside, that means that the race is important to me and I'm there to achieve something. This time it was almost as though I could be sick, they [symptoms] were that intense. But that was positive because it showed just how important that race was to me and that I was ready to compete."

The researchers have found a number of reasons for the variation in interpretation of emotional and somatic experiences of anxiety; the factor impacting performance is not the cognitive, emotional, or somatic anxiety itself, but rather the direction or individual's interpretation of that anxiety that can influence, either facilitatively or debilitatively, performance.

Stress-Related Growth

Stress has also been associated with personal growth and development. Stress can enhance an individual's resilience or *hardiness*. The **hardiness theoretical model** was first presented by Kobasa (1979) and illustrates *resilient stress response patterns in individuals and groups*. Often regarded as a personality trait or set of traits, psychological hardiness has been described by Bartone (1999) as a style of functioning that includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioural qualities. The hardy style of functioning distinguishes people who stay healthy under stress from those who develop stress-related problems.

Hardiness includes the elements of commitment, control, and challenge. **Commitment** is the *tendency to see the world as interesting and meaningful*. **Control** is the *belief in one's own ability to control or influence events*. **Challenge** involves s*eeing change and new experiences as exciting opportunities to learn and develop*. The hardy person is considered courageous in dealing with new experiences and disappointments, and highly competent. The hardy person is not immune to stress, but is resilient in responding to a variety of stressful conditions. Individuals high in hardiness not only remain healthy, but they also perform better under stress. In this way, hardiness is a chicken-and-egg concept in that hardy people seem to be able to better tolerate and grow from stressful events or become more hardy. It is unclear whether stress fosters hardiness or hardiness is something a person is born with.

The **inverted U hypothesis** asserts that, up to a point, *stress can be growth inducing but that there is*

a turning or tipping point when stress just becomes too much and begins to become debilitative (see Figure 16.2, "The Stress Curve"). Feelings of stress (cognitive or physical) can be interpreted negatively to mean that a person is not ready, or positively to mean that a person is ready. It is the person's interpretation, not the stress itself, that influences the outcome.

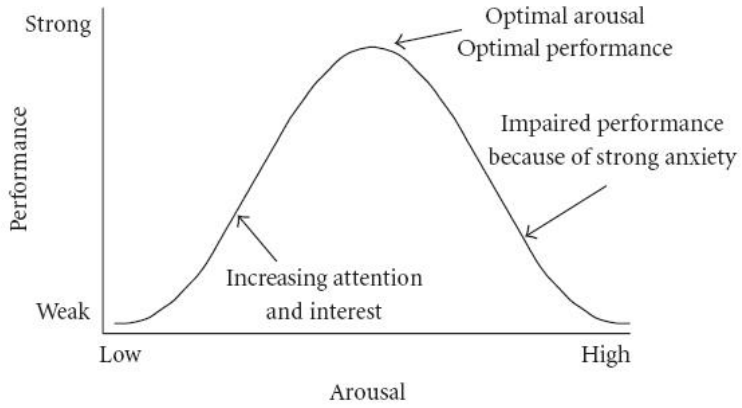


Figure 16.2 The Stress Curve.

Key Takeaways

- When stress is measured comprehensively, it can have debilitating effects on physical and mental health.
- Stress has been shown to create inequalities socioeconomically.
- Over time, stress can lead to health divisions and sociopolitical disparities.
- Policies and programming that enhance education, address structural conditions, and target children are most effective at addressing the negative impacts of stress in society.
- Long-term activation of the physiological stress-response system can disrupt almost all of the body's processes increasing the risk of numerous mental and physical health problems.
- Stress can also have a positive impact on health.
- Anxiety direction is an individual's interpretation of the stress experience (thoughts and emotions) that determine the impact of a stressor on a person's health state or performance.
- The inverted U hypothesis asserts that the degree or intensity of stress can act as a tipping point for an individual's performance or health. There is a subjective point where the stress shifts from invigorating to overwhelming and debilitating.
- Hardiness represents a trait that enables individuals to tolerate and even grow from stressful experiences due to increased commitment, control, and challenge interpretations.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Reflect on a time in your life when stress seemed to increase your negative health outcomes. Based on what you know about the stress response, what physiological factors may have been at play?
2. In a group, share a critical incident you perceived to be stressful but from which you believed you grew as a person. What factors may have helped you to tolerate the stress more effectively?
3. In what ways could we better educate people to navigate an increasingly stressful environment?
4. In a group, discuss the kinds of social and workplace policies that need to be in place to break the cycle of stress-related health problems.

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Image Attributions

Figure 16.1: By J. Walinga.

Figure 16.2: (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:HebbianYerkesDodson.JPG) is in the public domain.

Long Descriptions

Figure 16.1 long description: Stress can hurt physical and mental health which can increase social inequalities and social health gaps which can cause more stress. [Return to Figure 16.1]

16.2 Stress and Coping

Jennifer Walinga

Learning Objectives

1. Define coping and adaptation.
2. Understand the various conceptualizations of stress as stimulus, response, and transactional process.
3. Understand the role of cognition and physiology in coping with stress.
4. Recognize emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies.
5. Understand the relationships and interactions between health, stress, and coping.

In order to understand how people learn to cope with stress, it is important to first reflect on the different conceptualizations of stress and how the coping research has emerged alongside distinct approaches to stress. **Stress** has been viewed as a *response*, a *stimulus*, and a *transaction*. How an individual conceptualizes stress determines his or her response, adaptation, or coping strategies.

Stress As a Response

Stress as a **response** model, initially introduced by Hans Selye (1956), describes stress as a *physiological response pattern* and was captured within his **general adaptation syndrome (GAS)** model (Figure 16.3). This *model describes stress as a dependent variable and includes three concepts*:

1. Stress is a defensive mechanism.
2. Stress follows the three stages of *alarm, resistance,* and *exhaustion.*
3. If the stress is prolonged or severe, it could result in diseases of adaptation or even death.

Later, in *The Stress Concept: Past, Present and Future* (1983), Selye introduced the idea that the stress response could result in positive or negative outcomes based on cognitive interpretations of the physical symptoms or physiological experience (Figure 16.3, “The General Adaptation to Stress Model“). In this way, stress could be experienced as *eustress* (positive) or *dystress* (negative). However, Selye always considered stress to be a physiologically based construct or response. Gradually, other researchers expanded the thinking on stress to include and involve psychological concepts earlier in the stress model.

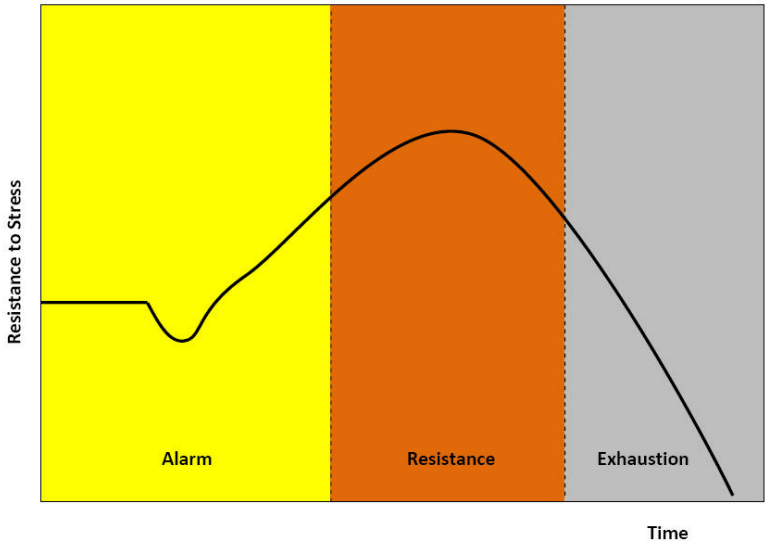


Figure 16.3 General Adaptation to Stress (GAS) Model.

The response model of stress incorporates coping within the model itself. The idea of adaptation or coping is inherent to the GAS model at both the alarm and resistance stages. When confronted with a negative stimulus, the alarm response initiates the sympathetic nervous system to combat or avoid the stressor (i.e., increased heart rate, temperature, adrenaline, and glucose levels). The resistance response then initiates physiological systems with a *fight or flight* reaction to the stressor, returning the system to homeostasis, reducing harm, or more generally accommodating the stressor, which can lead to adaptive diseases such as sleep deprivation, mental illness, hypertension, or heart disease. Thus, along with the early conceptualization of stress as a physiological response, early research on coping was also born. As early as 1932, Walter Cannon described the notion of self-regulation in his work *The Wisdom of the Body.*

Stress As a Stimulus

The theory of stress as a **stimulus** was introduced in the 1960s, and viewed stress as *a significant life event or change that demands response, adjustment, or adaptation.* Holmes and Rahe (1967) created the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) consisting of 42 life events scored according to the estimated degree of adjustment they would each demand of the person experiencing them (e.g., marriage, divorce, relocation, change or loss of job, loss of loved one). Holmes and Rahe theorized that stress was an independent variable in the health-stress-coping equation — the cause of an experience rather than the experience itself. While some correlations emerged between SRRS scores and illness (Rahe, Mahan, & Arthur, 1970; Johnson & Sarason, 1979), there were problems with the stress as stimulus theory. The stress as stimulus theory assumes:

1. Change is inherently stressful.
2. Life events demand the same levels of adjustment across the population.
3. There is a common threshold of adjustment beyond which illness will result.

Rahe and Holmes initially viewed the human subject as a passive recipient of stress, one who played no role in determining the degree, intensity, or valence of the stressor. Later, Rahe introduced the concept of interpretation into his research (Rahe & Arthur, 1978), suggesting that a change or life event could be interpreted as a positive or negative experience based on cognitive and emotional factors. However, the stress as stimulus model still ignored important variables such as prior learning, environment, support networks, personality, and life experience.

Stress As a Transaction

In attempting to explain stress as more of a dynamic process, Richard Lazarus developed the **transactional theory of stress and coping** (TTSC) (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which presents *stress as a product of a transaction between a person (including multiple systems: cognitive, physiological, affective, psychological, neurological) and his or her complex environment*. Stress as a transaction was introduced with the most impact when Dr. Susan Kobasa first used the concept of hardiness (Kobasa, 1979). Hardiness refers to a pattern of personality characteristics that distinguishes people who remain healthy under life stress compared with those who develop health problems. In the late 1970s, the concept of hardiness was further developed by Salvatore Maddi, Kobasa, and their graduate students at the University of Chicago (Kobasa, 1982; Kobasa & Maddi, 1981; Kobasa, Maddi, & Kahn, 1982; Kobasa, Maddi, Puccetti, & Zola, 1985; Maddi & Kobasa, 1984). Hardiness has some notable similarities with other personality constructs in psychology, including locus of control (Rotter, 1966), sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), and dispositional optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1985), all of which will be discussed in the next section. Researchers introduced multiple variables to the stress-as-transaction model, expanding and categorizing various factors to account for the complex systems involved in experiencing a stressor (Werner, 1993). The nature of stress was described in multiple ways: acute, episodic or intermittent, and chronic. Different types of stressors emerged, such as event, situation, cue, and condition, which then fell into categories based on locus of control, predictability, tone, impact, and duration. Figure 16.4 illustrates theories of stress as a response, stimulus, and transaction.

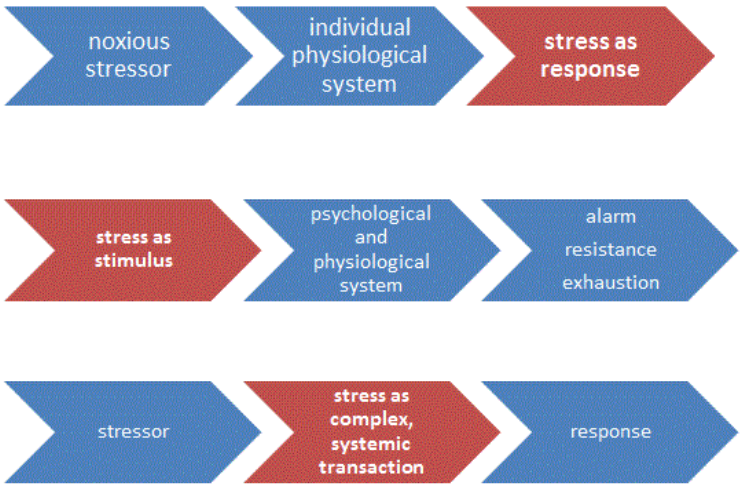


Figure 16.4 Theories of stress as response, stimulus, and transaction.

In his book *Psychological Stress and the Coping Process* (1966), Lazarus presented an elegant integration of previous research on stress, health, and coping that placed a person's appraisal of a stressor at the centre of the stress experience. How an individual appraises a stressor determines how he or she copes with or responds to the stressor. Whether or not a stressor is experienced as discomforting is influenced by a variety of personal and contextual factors including capacities, skills and abilities, constraints, resources, and norms (Mechanic, 1978). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) unpacked the concept of interpretation further in their model of stress appraisal, which includes primary, secondary, and reappraisal components (see Figure 16.5, "The Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping"). **Primary appraisal** involves *determining whether the stressor poses a threat*. **Secondary appraisal** involves *the individual's evaluation of the resources or coping strategies at his or her disposal for addressing any perceived threats*. The process of **reappraisal** is *ongoing and involves continually reappraising both the nature of the stressor and the resources available for responding to the stressor*.

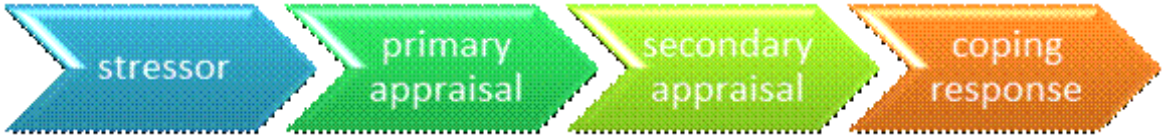


Figure 16.5 The Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping, by J. Walinga.

Coping with Stress

There are many ways that people strive to cope with stressors and feelings of stress in their lives. A host of literature, both popular and academic, extols the practice of stress management and whole industries are devoted to it. Many techniques are available to help individuals cope with the stresses that life brings. Some of the techniques listed in Figure 16.6, "Stress Management Techniques," induce a lower than usual stress level temporarily to compensate the biological tissues involved; others face the stressor at a higher level of abstraction. Stress management techniques are more general and range from cognitive (mindfulness, cognitive therapy, meditation) to physical (yoga, art, natural medicine, deep breathing) to environmental (spa visits, music, pets, nature).

Cognitive	Physical	Environmental	Other
Therapy	Artistic expression	Music	Conflict resolution
Hobbies	Deep breathing	Nature	Prayer
Meditation	Natural medicine	Pets	
Mindfulness	Physical exercise	Spa visits	
Planning	Relaxation		
Reading	Yoga		
Time management			

Figure 16.6 Stress Management Techniques [Long Description]

Stress coping, as described by researchers such as Lazarus and Folkman, implies a more specific process of cognitive appraisal to determine whether *an individual believes he or she has the resources to respond effectively to the challenges of a stressor* or change (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). The appraisal literature explains the response or coping process in terms of problem-focused coping or emotion-focused coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), also referred to as *active* and *passive* coping styles (Jex, Bliese, Buzzell, & Primeau, 2001). As well, *approach* and *avoidance-style* measures of coping exist involving assertiveness or withdrawal (Anshel, 1996; Anshel & Weinberg, 1999; Roth & Cohen, 1986). When faced with a challenge, an individual

primarily appraises the challenge as either threatening or non-threatening, and secondarily in terms of whether he or she has the resources to respond to or cope with the challenge effectively. If the individual does not believe he or she has the capacity to respond to the challenge or feels a lack of control, he or she is most likely to turn to an emotion-focused coping response such as wishful thinking (e.g., I wish that I could change what is happening or how I feel), distancing (e.g., I'll try to forget the whole thing), or emphasizing the positive (e.g., I'll just look for the silver lining) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). If the person has the resources to manage the challenge, he or she will usually develop a problem-focused coping response such as analysis (e.g., I try to analyze the problem in order to understand it better; I'm making a plan of action and following it). It is theorized and empirically demonstrated that a person's secondary appraisal then determines coping strategies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). Coping strategies vary from positive thinking to denial (see Figure 16.7, "COPE Inventory") and are measured and tested using a variety of instruments and scales such as the COPE inventory (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989).

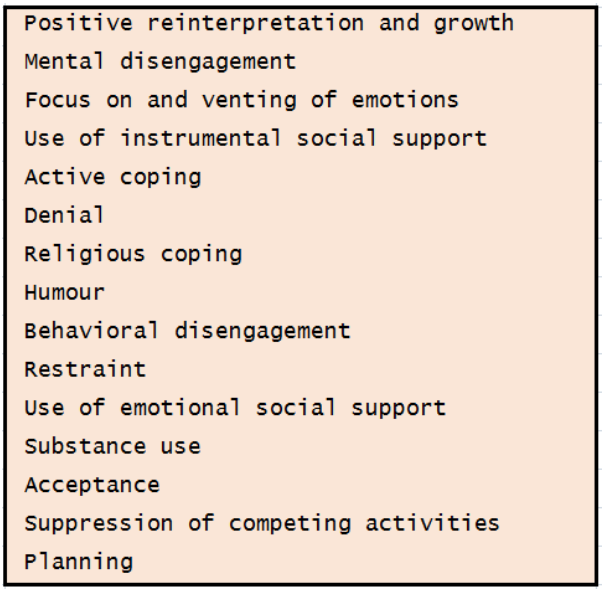


Figure 16.7 COPE Inventory. The COPE inventory scale of coping techniques. [Long Description]

Research Focus: Stress and Playing Soccer

Walinga (2008), in her work with a university soccer team that was undergoing several stressful changes in addition to the usual performance stressors, recently elaborated upon the appraisal model by suggesting that reappraisal more specifically involves a reiteration of the primary-secondary appraisal process. Once a person determines that a stressor is indeed a threat, and secondarily appraises resources as lacking, he or she then primarily appraises the secondary appraisal. In other words, the person determines whether having a lack of resources indeed poses some sort of threat. If lack of resources is deemed not to be a threat, the person is much more likely to generate creative solutions to the initial stressor and therefore cope effectively. But if a lack of resources is deemed to be a threat, then the person tends to focus on finding resources rather than addressing the initial stressor, and arrives at ineffective control-focused coping strategies.

In the case of the university soccer players, some initial stressors were identified as "a particularly challenging or sizable opponent," "rainy conditions," "the cold," "not connecting with the coach," or "negative attitudes on the field." Typical emotion- or control-focused coping strategies included "working

harder" and "sucking it up," as well as avoidance or passivity. One player who struggled with her opponent's size felt that she had little control over the fact that her opponent was taller and thus "beat her to the header balls." She explained how she would "just kinda fade away when we play that team…get passive and just fade into the background." Her coping response signified a withdrawal subscale on the emotion-focused coping scale, and when asked about her degree of satisfaction with her chosen path of response, she replied that she was "unhappy but could see no other alternative." However, generally the team and several of the key leaders expressed alternative coping strategies not accounted for in the transactional theory of stress and coping. While several members of the team had a negative secondary appraisal, believing themselves to be lacking in the resources required to deal with the changes that occurred to the team, during the interviews it became apparent that such powerlessness did not, as was expected, lead only to emotion-focused coping, such as defensiveness, blame, or withdrawal; an acknowledged lack of control often resulted in an ability to move on and solve the challenges of change effectively.

Many of the team members believed "hitting rock bottom" accounted for their successful transformation, acting as a sort of "trigger" or "restart" and enabling them to gain greater clarity about their goals, as well as strategies for achieving these goals. Rather than focusing on increasing control or controlling the barrier or threat itself, the tolerant individual accepts the barrier as reality and accepts the lack of control as a reality. This person can now attend to and identify the challenges that the barrier poses to attaining her goals. For instance, the goalkeeper focused not on regretting or blaming herself for a missed save, or even trying harder next time, but instead focused on the challenges that a difficult shot posed for her and how she might resolve an unexpected spin on the ball. When faced with rainy conditions, the tolerant player focused not on denying or pushing through the rain, but on the problems the rain creates for her and how to resolve the resulting lack of ball control or slippery field conditions:

- "I guess the spin on the ball was out of my control, but I had total control in terms of adjusting to it."
- "I was not in control of what my opponent did with the ball or could have done to ensure that I did not win the ball, but I was in control of making sure I did not dive into the tackle, I held my check up so we could get numbers back and avoid a counterattack."
- "I went forward when I probably shouldn't have and I left our defenders outnumbered in the back, so I made sure I won the ball so that we would not be faced with a 3-on-2."
- "Despite my fatigue, I decided to make better decisions on when to commit myself and made sure I communicated when I needed help so that my opponent wouldn't get a breakaway."
- "The lights in my eyes were beyond my control, but I could control my focus on the ball and my positioning."
- "I was not in control of the fact that they were fast; I was in control of my positioning and my decision making."

By extending the theory of stress and coping, it is hypothesized here that when an individual perceives that he or she is lacking in resources to manage a threat, the perceived lack of control, and not necessarily anxiety, becomes the new challenge and focal point. If the person deems the perceived lack of control to be threatening or problematic for any reason, this would hypothetically cause him or her to fixate on increasing resources for managing the threat (control-focused coping), and impede any kind of response to the particular threats the challenge itself generates. If, on the other hand, the person accepts the lack of control, deeming the lack of resources to be a benign reality, he or she would be able to move the focus to the problems this threat creates and consider options for resolution and goal achievement (problem-focused coping). Control-focused coping seems to be a more generalizable construct for explaining an individual's inability to focus on the problem at hand. The readiness model proposes that the appraisal process continues to cycle through the primary and secondary phases to determine an individual's coping response (i.e., primary appraisal = Is it a

threat?; secondary appraisal = Do I have the resources to change or control the threat?; if not, we find ourselves back at primary appraisal = Is my lack of control a threat?), and it is this cyclical process of appraisal that offers leverage for facilitating effective coping.

Related concepts to stress coping include locus of control (Rotter, 1966), sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), and stress-related growth (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Rotter posited that a person with an **internal locus of control** *believes that their achievements and outcomes are determined by their own decisions and efforts.* If they do not succeed, they believe it is due to their own lack of effort. Whereas, a person with an **external locus of control** *believes that achievements and outcomes are determined by fate, luck, or other*. If the person does not succeed, he or she believes it is due to external forces outside of the person's control. Aaron Antonovsky (1987) defined **sense of coherence** as:

> a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable and explicable; (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement (pg. 19).

Self-efficacy is often confused with self-confidence, but in fact confidence is merely one of the many factors that make up a strong sense of self-efficacy. Albert Bandura (1997) defined **self-efficacy** as *the extent or strength of one's belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals*. Self-confidence is a trait measure (a quality that is built over time) whereas self-efficacy is a state measure (a capacity experienced at a specific point in time and concerning a specific task). **Stress-related growth** or thriving is *a dispositional response to stress that enables the individual to see opportunities for growth as opposed to threat or debilitation*. Spreitzer and colleagues (2005) offered a preliminary definition of **thriving** as a "psychological state in which individuals experience both a sense of vitality and a sense of learning at work" (p. 538). Carver (1998) described thriving as being "better off after adversity" (p. 247). There are many examples of individuals surpassing previous performances when faced with particularly stressful scenarios, showing increased growth and strength in the face of adversity.

Coping and Health

The capacity for thriving, resilience, or stress-related growth has been associated with improved health outcomes. For example, building on Carver's work on dispositional optimism and thriving, Shepperd, Maroto, and Pbert (1996) found, in their longitudinal study of cardiac patients, that optimism predicts success in making health changes associated with lower risk of cardiac disease. Optimism was significantly and directly correlated with improved health outcomes, including lower levels of saturated fat, body fat, and global coronary risk, and positively associated with success in increasing aerobic capacity. Billings and colleagues (2000) showed that coping affected positive and negative affect among men who were caregiving for AIDS patients. Social support coping predicted increases in positive affect, which in turn were related to fewer physical symptoms. Avoidant coping, however, was related to increases in negative affect, which were related to more physical symptoms.

Research Focus: Coping with Melanoma

Perhaps the most dramatic of stress coping interventions studies was conducted by Fawzy and his colleagues (Fawzy, Cousins, Fawzy, Kemeny, & Morton, 1990; Fawzy, Kemeny, et al., 1990; Fawzy, et al., 1993; Fawzy & Fawzy, 1994), who did specific coping skills interventions with melanoma patients. During a six-week structured program, participants experienced multiple program components including health education, psychological support, problem-solving, and stress management training. In the short term, the experimental subjects were more likely to use active behaviour coping than the controls, and also had more positive affect. Differences in immune functioning were evident between the two groups at the six-month assessment. Specifically, experimental subjects had a greater percentage of large granular lymphocytes, more NK cells, and better NK cytotoxicity. While coping strategies were not directly associated with immune cell changes, they were correlated with affect, which in turn was associated with immune functioning. The studies supported the hypothesis that effects of coping on biomedical outcomes may be mediated through affect. At a five-year follow-up, a third of the control group had died, compared with less than 10% of the experimental group. Longer survival was associated with more active coping at baseline.

Key Takeaways

- Stress has been conceived of in different ways: as a response, as a stimulus, and as a transaction.
- Stress as response treats stress as the physiological dependent variable.
- Stress as stimulus treats stress as a life event or change that acts as an independent variable.
- Stress as transaction considers the myriad personal, social, and environmental factors that come into play in determining the nature, degree, and impact of the stress experience.
- There are a variety of stress management techniques deriving from a multitude of theoretical derivations and philosophies.
- Coping with stress can be a trait or state-based process — an inherent quality or ability or a learned skill or capacity.
- How people appraise a stressor determines how they will attempt to cope with the stressor.
- Appraisal hinges on multiple human, social, and environmental factors.
- Concepts related to coping include optimism, thriving, hardiness, locus of control, and self-efficacy, all qualities and capacities that can influence the coping strategies an individual chooses to apply to a stressor.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. Reflect on a recent emotionally or physiologically impactful stressor that you perceived to be threatening or negative. What social, environmental, and personal factors contributed to your appraisal of the stressor? Referencing the list of coping items on the COPE inventory, what types of coping strategies did you apply?

2. Imagine a stressful situation that you believe you coped with positively. Can you identify some coping strategies you used? Can you determine whether you were able to grow through the experience? What factors facilitated a positive outcome for you?
3. What are some major life events you have experienced? Can you identify differences in how you appraised these events? How you coped with these events?

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Image Attributions

Figure 16.3: A diagram of the General Adaptation syndrome model by David G. Myers (http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:General_Adaptation_Syndrome.jpg) used under the CC-BY 3.0 (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/deed.en).

Figure 16.4: by J. Walinga.

Figure 16.5: by J. Walinga.

Figure 16.6: by J. Walinga.

Figure 16.7: Adapted by J. Walinga from Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989.

Long Descriptions

Figure 16.6 long description: Stress Management Techniques.

Cognitive	Physical	Environmental	Other
• Therapy • Hobbies • Meditation • Mindfulness • Planning • Reading • Time management	• Artistic expression • Deep breating • Natural medicine • Physical excersize • Relaxation • Yoga	• Music • Nature • Pets • Spa visits	• Conflict resolution • Prayer

[Return to Figure 16.6]

Figure 16.7 long description: COPE Inventory scale of coping techniques

- positive reinterpretation and growth
- mental disengagement
- focus on and venting of emotions
- use of instrumental social support
- active coping
- denial
- religious coping
- humour
- behavioural disengagement
- restraint
- use of emotional social support
- substance use
- acceptance
- suppression of competing activities
- planning

[Return to Figure 16.7]

16.3 Stress, Health, and Coping in the Workplace

Jennifer Walinga

Learning Objectives

1. Appreciate the costs associated with stress-related illness in the workplace.
2. Understand the unique role that organizational change plays in the growing levels of workplace stress.
3. Gain a general understanding of prevalent stress management and workplace wellness strategies.

The Costs of Stress in the Workplace

Stress in the workplace is increasing along with the pace of global change. Bacharach & Bamberger (2007) found that stress is associated with work overload, role conflicts, and job insecurity. Some of the common health outcomes resulting from stress overload are depression, memory loss, poor attention, and anger. Sustained stress leads to cynicism, inefficiency, and exhaustion (Maslach, Schaufelo, & Leiter, 2001; Snyder, 2001). Mental health concerns resulting from stress overload can result in lost workdays, lower employee productivity, and high job turnover rates. These conditions can increase the costs of organizational staffing and health benefits. The inability to cope or adapt to stressful conditions results in poor leadership performance and has repercussions for the stability of organizations (Maki, Moore, Grunberg, & Greenberg, 2005).

Recent studies have confirmed that workplace stressors are associated with physical health impacts such as a greater coronary heart disease risk (Chandola, Heraclides, & Kumari, 2009). Physiological measures that are considered indicators of stress-related disorders such as coronary disease and peptic ulcers include higher levels of serum cholesterol, triglyceride serum, uric acid, blood pressure, and post-morning cortisol levels (Steffy & Jones, 1988). Psychological and social consequences of workplace stress are given a wide exposure in the literature (Barling, Dupre, & Kelloway, 2009; Henning, Hawken, & Hill, 2009, Kumar, Fischer, Robinson, Hatcher, & Bhagat, 2007; Srivastava et al., 2007). Some of the obvious psycho-social indicators of workplace stress include problems with personal and professional relationships, insomnia, headaches, anxiety, panic attacks, and depression (Deckard, Meterko, & Field, 1994; Srivastava et al., 2007). Owens (2001) also explored the prevalence of sleep loss and fatigue among medical personnel and noted links with stress, the incidence of medical errors, and quality of patient care. At one extreme of the continuum, there is also evidence to suggest that job stress is linked to workplace aggression and violence (Barling, Dupre, & Kelloway, 2009). In particular, health professions were shown to have higher rates of workplace stress and the negative outcomes associated with it. Dellasega (2009) found in her survey of over 1,000 health workers that 44% of nurses in the United Kingdom had experienced “peer bullying.”

Common Stress-Coping Strategies in the Workplace

Typically, techniques for coping with workplace stress involve working harder, pushing through, or toughing it out. Such strategies can prove unsustainable over the long term. In fact, some short-term coping strategies, such as **presenteeism**, which involves *working while ill or injured* (Aronsson, Gustafsson, & Dallner, 2000), *or working harder by putting in longer hours* (Worrall & Cooper, 2004) actually exacerbate the costs of stress (Caverley, Cunningham, & MacGregor, 2007; Goetzel et al., 2004; Kivimäki et al., 2005). Researchers have identified three primary domains of human adaptation in stressful situations:

1. Emotional management strategies
2. Cognitive strategies
3. Social support strategies

In a review of literature on organizational factors mediating work stress, key practices found to contribute to improved performance in a stressful workplace included:

- Clarity of roles and tasks
- Opportunity for control and empowerment in relation to work processes
- Open communication and transparency
- Supervisory support in terms of providing constructive feedback and learning opportunities
- Congruency with the organizational vision and values (McAllister & McKinnon, 2009; Schneider, Alexander, Salerno, Rainforth, & Nidich, 2005).

Emotional management strategies can be central to the initial stress response and include *how individuals appraise the situation and its degree of threat, how they control the emotional response of fight-or-flight, and what actions they take to reach emotional equilibrium*. Critical emotive skills include self-awareness and skills in controlling emotional responses (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Ciarocchi & Scott, 2006; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2004).

Cognitive action strategies reflect *the mental approaches that can be taken to confront and resolve stressors* and include the following:

- Analyzing the problem to understand what is happening.
- Establishing who is accountable and for what.
- Analyzing evidence to separate facts from assumptions.
- Acting to establish control over events.
- Reducing confusion and conflict by improving lines of communication.
- Setting goals and engaging in learning strategies that support change and growth.
- Asking questions, observing what works, and adjusting strategies (Siebert, 2005; Stolz, 2000).

Social supports and strong social networks enhance some individuals' capacity to adapt to stressful work environments. Individuals demonstrate greater ability to achieve effective control over their emotions and behaviours when they access external resources such as friends, social service helping systems, or colleagues and superiors in their organizations (Glicken, 2006; Siebert 2005; Stoltz, 2000). Additionally, organizational supports play a significant role in fostering the ability of the individual to adapt to stressful work conditions (Bacharach & Bamberger, 2007; Bell, 2002; Coutu, 2002; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007; Norman, Luthans, & Luthans, 2005; Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). Gretchen Spreitzer and colleagues (2005) provide evidence that employees engage in more task focus, exploration, and relating with others when working in an environment that features discretion, information sharing, and a climate of trust and respect.

Interventions to Promote Workplace Health

Ironically, productive workplaces and healthy cultures are often described as being associated with high complexity, rapid change, and risk-taking innovation. Challenge and stress can also support growth. The current literature describes employees who survive in high-demand environments as "resilient" (Maddi, 2006). Likewise, "thriving" denotes sustainable growth in the face of adversity (Carver, 1998; O'Leary, 1998; Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005).

In order to facilitate a capacity for greater resilience or thriving in the workplace, many workplaces have adopted a variety of wellness programs, supported to various degrees by the health benefit supplier. Offering gyms, exercise programs, health leaders, health promotion specialists, and vouchers for external programs in or near the workplace are common initiatives.

Walinga and Rowe (2013) found a variety of strategies facilitated a thriving response to workplace stress in a work environment. Most important was offering training in the use of coping strategies to address the underlying issues rather than simply fixing the problem in an effort to make it go away quickly. Other workplace initiatives that can foster a thriving resilience to stress include:

- Cognitive appraisal training to help individuals recognize and see beyond what they cannot control in order to frame the problem more systemically and inclusively.
- Social and organizational initiatives that support a culture of open communication, psychological safety, and the capacity to identify the main problem and reveal sources of personal power and control, which are needed to support the problem solving, communication, and reflection necessary to thrive amid stress.
- Communication and problem-solving strategies being developed and enhanced through training in communication planning and in the design of communication systems that facilitate problem solving and implementing solutions.

The organizational culture of a workplace can likely have more impact in fostering an environment that helps employees be more resilient to stress within a fast-paced, quickly changing, complex environment. Organizational culture is the values, beliefs, and assumptions of an organization enacted through its various structural, political, and communication channels and artifacts (e.g., organizational chart, power structures, roles and responsibilities, types and timing of communications, layout of office space, access and availability of resources all communicate various beliefs, values and assumptions) (Schein, 2004). Fostering a climate and culture that values health, offers psychological safety, and

promotes learning from errors or failure is critical to developing a stress-resilient, thriving, or coping capacity within employees.

Research Focus: Coping with Workplace Stress

The notion of adaptation and resilience resonates within the health profession literature. Sisley and colleagues (2010) developed a model and intervention based on the cognitive appraisal theory of stress and coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) designed to address chronic workplace stress and the resulting state and consequences of over-arousal. In a review of resilience in relation to health professions and their adaptation to the health workplace, McAllister and McKinnon (2009) found that resilience has personal and cultural aspects that are required when faced with demanding work environments. For example, every day nurses and paramedics are placed in traumatic or crisis situations that are extremely adverse. The researchers point to the accumulation of stress over time as the biggest threat to the health and well-being of health professionals. People tend to have a reasonably constant normal state of arousal when awake until some event or activity changes their state of arousal significantly. Sleep is one such change; the fight-or-flight response to an acute stressor is another.

Ideally, individuals would have an opportunity to recover fully from the physiological changes produced by the stress response, and their arousal profile would return in due course to its normal levels. However, in many workplace environments, and especially in the health professions, the frequency of stressors is high enough to prevent recovery. In these cases, individuals begin to recover from one acute stress response but have not yet completed the process when another stressor occurs, producing an overlapping stress response. In a high-stress environment, the frequency of stressful events can prevent individuals from fully recovering from or ameliorating the stressor and consequently returning to the original state of arousal until they have finished work for the day. Recovery at this stage is likely to take longer than it would from a single stressful event — a product of accumulative stress. If the workplace is chronically stressful, the result can be an enduring change in arousal state, with that a higher level becoming the new "normal" state, interrupted only by sleep.

The researchers suggest that practising effective relaxation can reverse this cumulative process and actually lower a person's "normal" arousal state, making the individual more resilient overall. The concept is that after a session of, say, tai chi, progressive muscle relaxation, or transcendental meditation, the person's arousal index will have fallen significantly, and when that person returns to usual activities he or she will retain a slightly more relaxed state than normal. Over time, typically several months, this change can become lasting, resulting in a new lower "normal" state of arousal — almost a mirror image of the higher arousal produced by long-term stress.

Key Takeaways

- Stress in the workplace has many physical, psychological, and social costs to the individual with associated social, cultural, and financial costs to the organization.
- Common coping strategies typically include working harder. Presenteeism is the concept of attending work despite illness or injury and has been shown to have negative effects on productivity and health of the organization.
- Other coping strategies include emotional management, cognitive strategies, and social support networks.

- Interventions to stress resilience or thriving in the workplace include building wellness programs, a healthy organizational culture, access to social support networks, system-wide communication strategies, and a process for reframing the core issue or stressor as an opportunity for growth.
- A unique approach to building stress resilience in the workplace is to monitor acute stress events and arousal state and offer regular opportunities to recover or relax fully from these events in order to return an individual's arousal state to a normal.

Exercises and Critical Thinking

1. In your group, conduct a stress audit of one of your workplaces. That is, in general how stressful would you rate this workplace on a scale of 1 to 10? What are some of the stressors inherent in the nature of the work or in the nature of the work environment? What stressors might lead to chronic stress? What stressors might be perceived by some individuals as negative and by others as positive?
2. What workplace stress management strategies are you most familiar with? What alternative stress management strategy might you be comfortable using? What would make this strategy effective in your opinion?
3. Think of a particularly stressful incident you have experienced in your workplace that you believe you handled well. Reflect on what stress management strategies may have come into play in facilitating a positive outcome: emotional management, cognitive management, and/or social support.

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16.4 Chapter Summary

Jennifer Walinga



Figure 16.8 The Interaction of Health, Stress, and Coping, by J. Walinga

Whether stress is considered a response, a stimulus, or a transaction, how a person experiences stress is a complex interweaving of individual health, the capacity to cope, and the stress itself. Heavy or chronic stress is associated with negative physiological or health outcomes.

Stress level and experience are mediated by an individual's perception based on the cognitive appraisal of the stressor. If a stressor is perceived to be threatening and an individual believes he or she does not have the resources to cope with that stressor, then the stress experienced will be debilitative. But if a person is able to interpret the stressor positively, or believes he or she has the resources to cope, then the outcome can be neutral or even facilitative, as in the case of *stress-related growth*.

Not only the stressor, but the physiological stress response itself (e.g., increased heart rate, sweating, and trembling), can produce anxiety based on interpretation. If a person interprets the physiological response to a stressor negatively,as worrisome, the impact on health or performance will be debilitative. But if the person interprets the physiological response positively, as a sign of readiness or preparation, the impact can be neutral, positive, or even facilitative.

Mental and physical health appear to be the greatest leverage points for helping individuals cope with or perceive stress positively. If a person is healthy, he or she is more likely to perceive a stressor positively and/or cope well with negative stressors. If a person is able to cope productively (i.e., problem-focused coping) with negative stress, his or her health is more likely to remain strong. If a person is able to perceive stress facilitatively, he or she is more likely to retain health and cope productively.

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Adapting Author



Jennifer Walinga, PhD, is the Director of the the School of Communication and Culture at Royal Roads University in Victoria, British Columbia. After teaching English for 20 years, she combined her passion for communication and athletics in pursuing an MA in Leadership where her research focused on the impact of experiential training programs on organizational performance. She went on to earn her PhD in Organizational Studies from the University of Victoria where she developed a problem solving and coaching strategy called Integrated Focus that she continues to apply with individuals and organizations from a variety of realms.

In designing communication, change, and performance interventions, Dr. Walinga blends theories from organizational, educational, and sport psychology and draws heavily on her experience as a member of Canada's Commonwealth, World, and Olympic gold medalist rowing teams (1983-1992).

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Dr. Stangor's research interests concern the development of stereotypes and prejudice and their influences upon individuals who are potential victims of discrimination. Dr. Stangor regularly teaches Social Psychology, Research Methods, and at the graduate level, Fundamentals of Social Psychology and Group Processes. Dr. Stangor is chair of the undergraduate committee in the psychology department and has won the distinguished teaching award from the University of Maryland. Dr. Stangor also serves as the chair of the department's human subjects committee.

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Version	Date	Change	Details
1.00	October 17, 2014	Added book to B.C. Open Textbook Collection.	
2.00	January 17, 2017	Book edited for accessibility.	Substantial edits were done to make this book conform to web accessibility standards. These edits include things like adding and editing things like alt tags, long descriptions, headings, link text, and table markup.
2.01	March 20, 2018	Corrected licence type in chapters 2 and 16 from CC BY to CC BY-NC-SA	
2.02	May 28, 2019	Updated broken link.	The link to the “Why Einstein’s Brain?” reference in Chapter 4.3 was replaced with an updated link.
2.03	June 11, 2019	Updated the book’s theme.	The styles of this book have been updated, which may affect the page numbers of the PDF and print copy.
2.04	January 16, 2020	Error corrected and the book’s Front Matter updated.	• In Chapter 1.2 The Evolution of Psychology: History, Approaches, and Questions, “Halifax, New Brunswick” was corrected to “Halifax, Nova Scotia.” • Copyright information was edited to conform to the revised BCcampus style guide • The “About the Book” page was renamed “About BCcampus Open Education” and the content of the page was replaced with updated information.
2.05	December 15, 2021	Updated language.	In chapters 7, 10, and 13, language was updated to either replace or contextualize the outdated and offensive use of “mental retardation.” When replaced, intellectual disability is used instead.