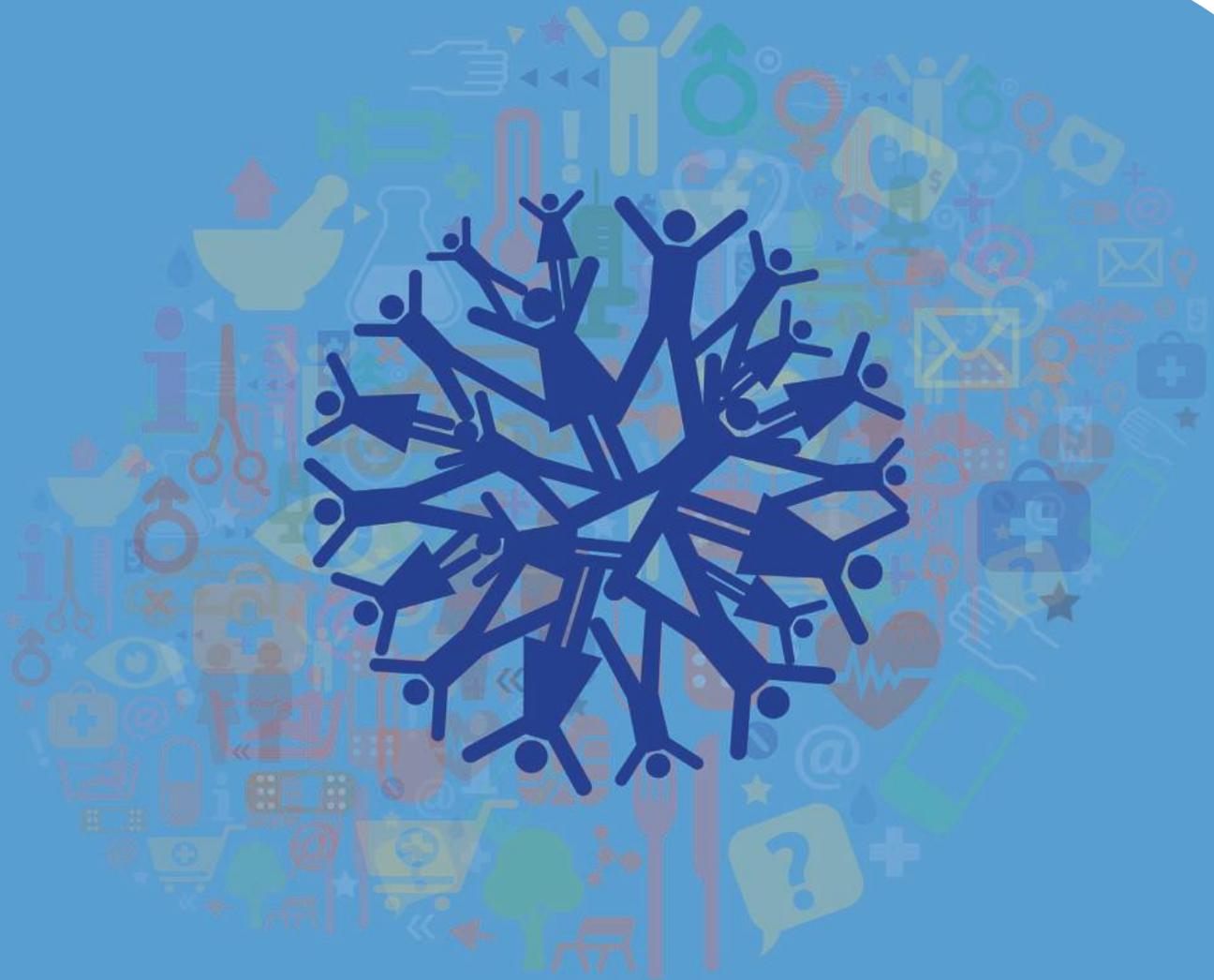


CHCCSL004

Research and apply personality and development theories

Release 1



Learner guide

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Learner guide

Aspire Version 1.2



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Version control and modification history

Version	Release date	Modification
Release 1, version 1.1	April 2017	First release
Release 1, version 1.2	February 2019	Minor corrections as part of our continuous improvement program. Updated broken URL links.

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CHCCSL004 Research and apply personality and development theories

Release 1

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCCSL004 Research and apply personality and development theories*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples and case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. You can use these examples as models to help you complete practice tasks and learning checkpoints. ▶ Case studies highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where QR codes appear, learners can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help 
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities ▶ Managing your work and seeing how well you are going and making goals for yourself at work ▶ Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents ▶ Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology ▶ Interpreting key information in relevant documents ▶ Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents ▶ Communicating through written letters, email and online ▶ Recording progress; reporting incidents
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clarifying instructions ▶ Providing information ▶ Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution ▶ Using body language to model desired behaviour and responding to others' body language
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance ▶ Interpreting measurements
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Planning your workload and commitments ▶ Implementing tasks ▶ Completing work on time ▶ Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks
Making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding and applying decision-making processes ▶ Reviewing the impact of your decisions
Problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identifying problems ▶ Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes and reviewing the outcome
Innovation and creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas ▶ Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something ▶ Making suggestions to improve work

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Technology and digital literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely ▶ Accessing, organising and presenting information ▶ Using equipment correctly and safely

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1 Research theories of personality and human development	1A Identify and access sources of information on theories of personality and human development	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Read and interpret information, distilling key themes and messages for counselling work	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Document and organise information to support current and future practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2 Link theories to your own practice	2A Evaluate potential applications of personality and life span development theories in the counselling process	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Analyse individual behaviour using theoretical concepts of personality and life span development	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Assist clients to understand their personal history drawing on theoretical approaches	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3 Update and maintain knowledge of theoretical trends	3A Identify and use opportunities to update and expand own knowledge of theory	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Incorporate and integrate knowledge into own practice	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

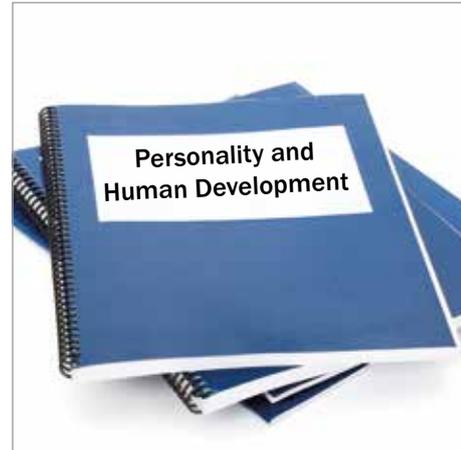
- 1A Identify and access sources of information on theories of personality and human development**
- 1B Read and interpret information, distilling key themes and messages for counselling work**
- 1C Document and organise information to support current and future practice**

Research theories of personality and human development

The study of personality and human development includes various perspectives of a human life span – from conception to old age. There have been a variety of researchers that have developed theories of development. The diversity of theories makes understanding the life span development difficult, because no single theory is able to account for all aspects of life span development. This topic will discuss ways to conduct research by using critical thinking and analysis and how to use information to support counselling practice.

1A Identify and access sources of information on theories of personality and human development

Depending on the personal and psychological issues of the person receiving counselling, research may be required to locate the most appropriate and current method of support. Research sources may include journal articles, websites and published papers relating to theories or personality and human development. In order to locate the most appropriate and current information, research skills need to be developed.



Identify and access appropriate information

Deciding on the appropriate approach to a person's counselling needs may not always be clear. Needs may be complex or undefined and research may be required to clarify what approach (or approaches) best suit the needs of the person. It is possible that there is no single or absolute correct approach to the situation. In order to locate the information needed to find the best solution, skills in critical thinking must be used.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is a process for reasoning. It involves weighing up different sides of an argument, using logic to determine the merit of the argument and then drawing a conclusion. The conclusion should be based on facts rather than guesswork or speculation. Using critical thinking skills in research can provide a range of solutions appropriate to the situation.

In order to demonstrate critical thinking, you need to develop skills in:

- ▶ interpreting and understanding the importance of the information
- ▶ breaking down information
- ▶ creating a logical argument
- ▶ evaluating the credibility and worth of the position or argument.

Access sources of information

Information regarding theories of personality and human development can be accessed from a range of sources. It is important to understand the difference between sources of information and the way in which they can be assessed.

Here are some sources where information may be accessed.

Books

- ▶ Books usually provide in-depth information covering a subject. Books are not as current as journals because they are not published as frequently. They usually contain a bibliography, which contains other information that may be useful. Books may be accessed through a physical library or an online library. Online libraries may have e-books available for download. Depending on which library is accessed, there may be a cost involved for accessing the PDF version of the book.

Journals

- ▶ Journals are published regularly and will contain the latest research. Other names for journals are magazines or periodicals. Usually journals are industry- or topic-specific and can be accessed by searching a database. For example, a research paper discussing Piaget's theories may be found in journals such as *World Applied Sciences Journal* 12 (8): 1260-1265, 2011 or in the *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 36, 407-430.

Websites

- ▶ Websites may contain recent information regarding emerging trends or recent research results. There are no standards required for publishing information on the web, so the information needs to be evaluated carefully for reliability. An example of a website holding information about Piaget is the Jean Piaget Society: Society for the Study of Knowledge and Development at: <http://aspirelr.link/piaget-society>.

Industry networks

- ▶ Networks can provide valuable information regarding current and emerging theories of personality and human development. Accessing the network's resources may involve a membership fee. An example of a network is the Australian Psychological Society at: <http://aspirelr.link/aps>.
- ▶ Network sites may have information regarding:
 - new research
 - opportunities to update theoretical knowledge
 - members that can provide mentoring
 - peers and colleagues with industry experience.

Example

Identify and access sources of information on theories of personality and human development

Robin has been providing counselling support for Crystal, a single mother who is at risk of homelessness. Crystal's support needs have been defined as complex and Robin realises that she will need to draw on a combination of theories to provide appropriate counselling support for Crystal.

Robin accesses industry journals and case studies to see how industry experts have treated people with similar needs and what approaches have been successful. Robin breaks down the information to make sure she understands it correctly and carefully weighs up different sides of the information, to determine the merit of the outcomes described in the journal articles.

Robin further analyses the information by evaluating the credibility of the approaches in order to determine the most appropriate and current method of support she can offer Crystal.



Practice task 1

1. Provide one aspect of the critical thinking process.

.....

.....

2. Provide one aspect of using books as a source of research for personality and development theories.

.....

.....

Click to complete Practice task 1

1B Read and interpret information, distilling key themes and messages for counselling work

In order to use the information that has been accessed, it is critical to understand and interpret it correctly. Not all research is reliable and sound and it can be challenging to understand and interpret the information. Interpreting information means deciding and analysing the intended meaning of the information.



Interpret information

Analysing or interpreting information involves using critical thinking skills to break down and recombine information in different ways.

Interpreting information may include:

- ▶ skimming the information
- ▶ identifying themes in the information
- ▶ recognising any information that is biased or omitted
- ▶ determining the accuracy and relevance of the information
- ▶ checking to see if the information source is reliable.

Skim

Skimming takes place when only the general or main information is read. When skimming information, reading the first sentence of each paragraph will give an idea of the paragraph content. Skimming can help locate relevant information quickly and help identify themes that are in the information. Skimming can help identify whether the information is relevant and meaningful.

Identify themes

Identifying themes within information is an important skill to help analyse research information. A theme may be described as a statement or a simple explanation of what the information is about. It may also be a major aspect of the information that is expressed more simply. In order to identify a theme or message, the information may be distilled by simplifying the information and condensing it to the key meaning.

Some researchers give themes a descriptive name, such as:

- ▶ basic theme
- ▶ central theme
- ▶ factual theme
- ▶ core theme.

Biased or missing information

When interpreting information, it is critical to identify biased or missing information. When information is based on the author's personal feelings and belief in the research, the information may be biased. Researchers can also select the population that they study in order to prove their theory. Bias is usually one-sided and presents the information from one perspective.

When information is missing, that is expected to be included, it may indicate that it has been omitted on purpose. For example, some researchers may be reluctant to publish negative results. Understanding research bias and omissions will allow you to read the information critically, which is essential when making counselling practice decisions.

Accuracy and relevance of information

When reading information, it is important to think critically about the accuracy and relevance of the information. This may require accessing several sources of similar information to compare different perspectives. Checking references to see what sources information supported the research can help identify the accuracy and the credibility of what has been written. Examining the themes in the text will help identify whether or not the information is relevant to what you need. Also check the date of the information to ensure that it is current.

Check information source

Always check the source of the information that you are using to base your counselling decision upon. Remember that websites do not have standards and regulations regarding information, so information must be evaluated very carefully.

Academic papers, journal articles and industry websites are the most reliable sources of information. For example, the Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors (<http://aspirelr.link/aipc>) and the Australian Psychological Society (<http://aspirelr.link/aps>) provide published information that has been reviewed and deemed reliable.

Example

Read and interpret information, distilling key themes and messages for counselling work



Jacob is a young man receiving counselling support for an addiction. Franco provides Jacob’s counselling support and has been looking for research material on new approaches and new ways of managing addiction. He has accessed information from digital databases and online industry networks, but has difficulty identifying whether the information is relevant and valid.

Franco approaches his supervisor for advice on how to make an informed decision about the research he has collected. Franco’s supervisor advises him to search the information for key themes and distil the information so that it is condensed into thoughts and meanings.

Jacob is glad for his supervisor’s help, as it gives him a place to start interpreting the information.



Practice task 2

1. Provide one explanation of what it means to distil information.

2. Provide one way to check if information is accurate and relevant.

Click to complete Practice task 2

1C Document and organise information to support current and future practice

When information regarding theories of personality and human development has been identified, accessed and interpreted, it must be documented and organised so that it can be used to support current and future counselling practices. Information may be shared with work colleagues to contribute to updating theoretical knowledge in your service.



Document information

For information to be useful and effective, it must be documented in a way that can be understood and accessed by everyone who needs it. Documentation may include:

- ▶ a context for the research
- ▶ summary of information
- ▶ how research supports current practice
- ▶ how research influences future practice
- ▶ how research adds to the understanding of theoretical knowledge.

Organise information

The information should be organised in a manner that ensures that it is easily accessible to people who need it. For example, it may be included in an existing database; stored electronically in appropriate folders; stored physically in file folders; or placed on the workplace intranet. The information may be organised alphabetically, key words, subject or topic, currency or date.

To ensure information is used to support current and future practice, it may be necessary to incorporate it into workplace policy regarding counselling practices.

Example

Document and organise information to support current and future practice

Sophie has been looking for information regarding the processes of grief. She has accessed some information that she feels will help Patricia, a lady that is going through deep grief following the loss of a close family member. Sophie has critically analysed the information and feels that it could be worked into the service's current practice to improve the current grief counselling processes.



Sophie documents her analysis of the information by including the context of the research, a brief summary and what references were used as a foundation for the research. She also includes a dot-point outline, which indicates how the research can support current grief counselling processes and how it can help future practices.

Practice task 3

1. Provide one aspect of information that may be included when it is documented.

.....

.....

2. Provide one way that information may be organised to make it easily accessible to people who need it.

.....

.....

Click to complete Practice task 3

Summary

1. In order to locate the information needed to find the best solution, skills in critical thinking need to be used.
2. Not all research is reliable and sound and it can be challenging to understand and interpret information. Interpreting information means deciding and analysing the intended meaning of the information.
3. When information regarding theories of personality and human development has been identified, accessed and interpreted, it must be documented and organised so that it can be used to support current and future counselling practices.

Learning checkpoint 1

Research theories of personality and human development

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in researching theories of personality and human development.

Part A

1. Provide one example of a skill needed to demonstrate critical thinking skills.

.....
.....

2. Provide one example of information that can be accessed using industry networks.

.....
.....

3. Provide a brief description of a key information theme.

.....
.....

4. Provide one reason that research information should be documented and organised.

.....
.....

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Jordan has been working as a counsellor with a service that provides support for personality disorders. Jordan is concerned that he does not understand all of the ways that the current counselling approach can be used. He conducts some research to help him understand how to use the counselling method more effectively.

Jordan accesses two journals that have recent research findings on the effectiveness of the counselling approach he has been using. When reading the information, Jordan looks for information that will indicate whether the information is relevant and meaningful. He also reads the simple explanation of what the information is about and checks what sources of information supported the research findings described in the journal.

Jordan takes notes about the research he has read. He summarises the research and notes how he could use the information and how the research has helped him understand the method of counselling he currently uses.

1. Provide one method Jordan used to analyse and interpret the information.

.....

.....

2. Provide one aspect of the research information that Jordan included in his documentation.

.....

.....



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Evaluate potential applications of personality and life span development theories in the counselling process**

- 2B Analyse individual behaviour using theoretical concepts of personality and life span development**

- 2C Assist clients to understand their personal history drawing on theoretical approaches**

Link theories to your own practice

Early philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle laid the foundations for Western and Middle Eastern philosophy and science. These philosophical foundations influenced historical, current and emerging theories of personality and human development. When working with people on personal and psychological issues, understanding underpinning theories will help to identify and access sources of information that will inform the best counselling approach to take.

2A Evaluate potential applications of personality and life span development theories in the counselling process

Information regarding the key concepts of theoretical models will help you understand different types of therapy, which underpin current theories of personality and human development. Other aspects of personal and psychological development to research are the notions of nature versus nurture and genetic inheritance. Theorists may be categorised as psychodynamic, behavioural, cognitive, humanistic and ethological, as outlined below.

Theorists
Psychodynamic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sigmund Freud ▶ Erik Erikson
Behavioural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ B.F. Skinner
Cognitive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Jean Piaget
Humanistic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Abraham Maslow
Ethological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ John Bowlby

Theories of personality and human development

Early philosophers provided the foundation that theorists of personality and human development built on. The following is an overview of contributing theorists.

Plato

Plato (424/423–348/347BC)

Plato was a Greek philosopher and is considered a pivotal person in the development of philosophy that underpins Western philosophy and science.

Locke

John Locke (1632–1704)

Locke was an English philosopher who coined the phrase ‘Nature versus Nurture.’ John believed that a person’s DNA and genotype determined what personality and traits a person will have (nature) rather than traits acquired from their surroundings (nurture).

Sir Francis Galton

Sir Francis Galton (1822–1911)

Galton was an English psychologist and pioneered research focusing on whether human ability was hereditary. This research examined the nature versus nurture elements of mental abilities.

Mendel

Gregor Mendel (1822–1884)

Mendel was an Austrian scientist who was the founder of the modern science of genetics. Mendel's work identified many of the rules of heredity that determine how traits are passed on from parents to offspring. This was later called the theory of genetic inheritance.

Freud

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)

Freud was an Austrian psychologist who founded psychoanalysis, whereby people talked about their issues in an attempt to make behavioural changes.

Piaget

Jean Piaget (1896–1980)

Piaget was the first psychologist to make a systematic study of cognitive development. Piaget's theory of cognitive development is based on three basic components: schemas, adaptation and stages of development.

Maslow

Abraham Maslow (1908–1970)

Maslow was a psychologist who focused on human potential and how human potential is fulfilled. Maslow's theory specifies that people are motivated to achieve certain needs through hierarchical levels. This theory is now commonly known as Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Skinner

B.F. Skinner (1904–1990)

Skinner's behaviourist theory was based on the notion that behaviours that are reinforced will tend to continue and behaviours that are punished will eventually end. This theory has been used in childhood development.

Bowlby

John Bowlby (1907–1990)

Bowlby's attachment theory of development suggests that childhood development depended on the child's ability to form a strong relationship with at least one primary caregiver. The quality of the relationship is determined by the capacity of the caregiver to respond to the child's needs.

Theories of genetic inheritance and nature versus nurture

There are two other important theories that impact the study of personality and human development. Genetic inheritance refers to the belief that genetic makeup has a large role in determining human behaviour. Nature versus nurture refers to the ongoing controversy about whether human behaviour and personality is caused by genetic influences (nature) or by the environment or experiences (nurture) of the person.

Here is some more information about both theories.

Genetic inheritance

- ▶ The belief that genes have an influence on behaviour has been well established. Genes may not determine the behaviour of a person, but they do play a role in what they do and how they do it.
- ▶ Genetic inheritance includes the concept of classical or Mendelian genetics based on Gregor Mendel's research in the 1800s and focused on hereditary traits or factors. Some mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, have been shown to have a genetic basis, which then is evident in illness-related behaviours. More recently behavioural genetic studies have included studies which involve families, twins and children who have been adopted.

Nature versus nurture

- ▶ The nature versus nurture theory debates the influence genes (nature) have on a person's personality as opposed to environmental (nurture). The origins of this theory stem from Frances Galton who was influenced by the work of Charles Darwin.
- ▶ Do inherited traits or life experiences have the greatest effect on personality and life span development? Nature and genetics have proved to be important factors in the development of some mental health issues. Genetics may play a role in the predisposition to some addictions, but environmental (nurture) factors may influence the probability of the addiction occurring. Environmental factors may include a partner, parents, friends or life events.
- ▶ More recently it is widely accepted that both nature and nurture cannot necessarily be separated and do not in fact act independently.

Theories of personality and human development

The theories of personality and human development broadly fit into four categories: psychodynamic, behavioural, cognitive and ethological. It is important to become familiar with all theories as they provide different perspectives of personality and human development. The theories of Freud, Erikson, Skinner, Piaget and Bowlby all link to counselling practice.



Psychodynamic theory

A psychodynamic approach to psychology is one that focuses on the unconscious and how the unconscious interacts with different parts of the personality. Sigmund Freud developed the original psychodynamic theory in the late 1800s and early 1900s, which influenced the work of Erik Erikson in the 1950s. The origin of Freud's work was influenced by Josef Breuer who used a 'talking' method of therapy.

Sigmund Freud

Freud's concepts were based on the theory that personality has three components:

- ▶ The id: consists of instincts and the unconscious
- ▶ The ego: uses reasoning to make decisions
- ▶ The superego: makes moral decisions of what is right and wrong

Freud believed that the adult personality was shaped by conscious and unconscious early childhood experiences and the experiences were handled during the stages of human development. The stages are described below.

Freud's stages of development

Oral (0–1.5 years of age)

The first 18 months of life when an infant's pleasure comes from reducing tension by chewing, sucking and biting.

Anal (1.5–3 years of age)

The child's pleasure comes from the functions of the anus and the exercise of anal muscles reduces tension.

Phallic (3–5 years of age)

Children discover that self-manipulation of the genitals is enjoyable.

Latency (5–12 years of age)

The child represses all interest in sexuality and develops social and intellectual skills.

Genital (12–adulthood)

The time of sexual awakening.

Erik Erikson

Erikson's life span development theory differed from Freud's. While Freud believed that human behaviour was sexual in nature, Erikson believed that human development took place over a life span of eight stages through the process of ego identity. He believed that each stage contained a conflict that developed our identity and competence in that area of conflict.

Erikson's stages of psychosocial development are explained below.

Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development

- 1** **Infancy (birth–18 months)**
Basic conflict: Trust vs Mistrust

The most fundamental stage where the development of trust is based on the dependability and quality of care from the caregiver. A lack of care will lead to mistrust.
- 2** **Early childhood (2–3 years)**
Basic conflict: Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt

This stage focuses on the child developing a greater sense of control and independence where success leads to feelings of independence and failure leads to feelings of shame and doubt.
- 3** **Preschool (3–5 years)**
Basic conflict: Initiative vs Guilt

This stage is when children begin to assert power and control over their environment. Success in this stage leads to a sense of purpose. If a child asserts too much power, it results in disapproval and a sense of guilt.
- 4** **School age (6–11 years)**
Basic conflict: Industry vs Inferiority

A sense of pride in accomplishments is developed in this stage. Children who are encouraged by parents develop a feeling of competence and belief in their skills, whereas children who are not commended will doubt their abilities to be successful.
- 5** **Adolescence (12–18 years)**
Basic conflict: Identity vs Confusion

This stage is when children explore a sense of independence and develop a sense of self. During this stage Erikson believed those who receive encouragement and reinforcement will develop a strong sense of self and independence. Whereas, children who do not receive encouragement and reinforcement will feel insecure and confused about themselves and their future.
- 6** **Young adulthood (19–40 years)**
Basic conflict: Intimacy vs Isolation

This is the stage of exploring personal relationships. During this stage Erikson believed that it was vital for people to develop close and committed relationships with other people. He believed that a strong sense of identity was important for developing intimate relationships.
- 7** **Middle adulthood (40–65 years)**
Basic conflict: Generativity vs Stagnation

This is the stage of continuing to build the adult life and focusing on career and family. Those who are successful during this stage will feel they are contributing to the world by being active. Erikson believed that those who did not have the skills to continue to contribute would feel unproductive and uninvolved.
- 8** **Maturity (65 years–death)**
Basic conflict: Integrity vs Despair

This phase occurs at old age and is focused on reflection of life. Erikson believed that those who are unsuccessful at this stage will feel that their life has been wasted and will experience regrets and feelings of despair. Those who feel proud of their accomplishments will feel a sense of integrity. Successfully completing this step will lead to a general feeling of satisfaction.

Behavioural theory

B.F. Skinner studied behavioural change, which focused on how behaviours in people can be changed by using positive and negative reinforcement. The behavioural perspective is based on people being affected by their environment resulting in actions or responses. For example, a person may have been bitten by a dog (environment). After the event, every time the person sees a dog, it may cause a response such as anxiety or fear.

Here are aspects of positive and negative reinforcement.

Positive reinforcement	Negative reinforcement
▶ Demonstrated by giving the person something they like or want	▶ Demonstrated by taking away something the person does not like or want
▶ Designed to reinforce good behaviour	▶ Designed to decrease the undesired behaviour
▶ A person displays good behaviour and is given extra time to do an activity they love	▶ A person displays good behaviour and does not have to put away materials after the activity is finished

Cognitive theory

Jean Piaget was the first psychologist to study the theory of cognitive development. The origins of Piaget’s theory stemmed from his research into developmental and genetic epistemology. Cognitive theory is based on changing thought processes in order to change behaviours. It incorporates a process of learning new ways of thinking and gaining more effective ways of coping with problems. Piaget’s cognitive theory is made up of three components: schemas, adaptation and stages of development, which are explained below.

Schemas

Schemas are commonly described as building blocks of knowledge or a way of organising knowledge.

Through a person’s life span, the schemas get more numerous and complex. A schema can be described as a set of linked representations that are stored in our mind until we need to understand or respond to a situation.

Adaptation

The adaptation component has processes that enable the transition from one stage to another. These processes are equilibrium, assimilation and accommodation.

Stages of development

Piaget believed that childhood development was biologically-based and changes as the child matures. He also believed that cognition develops in all children in a sequence of the following stages:

- ▶ Sensorimotor
- ▶ Preoperational
- ▶ Concrete operational
- ▶ Formal operational

Piaget's stages of development

Piaget believed that all children, regardless of culture, pass through the stages in the same order and that no stage can be missed out. He also believed that some people may never attain the later stages.

Here are the key concepts of Piaget's stages of development.

Sensorimotor (From birth to age 2)

- ▶ Infants and toddlers gain knowledge through sensory experiences and manipulating objects. Piaget believed this is when children learned that the objects were still there even when they couldn't see them.

Preoperational (From age 2 to age 7)

- ▶ Children start playing make-believe but struggle with logic.

Concrete operational (From age 7 to age 11)

- ▶ Children are able to think logically but may struggle with concepts. Piaget believed that children in this stage begin to understand their thoughts are unique to them and not everyone will share their opinions and feelings.

Formal operational (From adolescence to adulthood)

- ▶ At this point Piaget believed that there is an increase in logic and reasoning. In this stage, people are able to see solutions to problems and think scientifically.

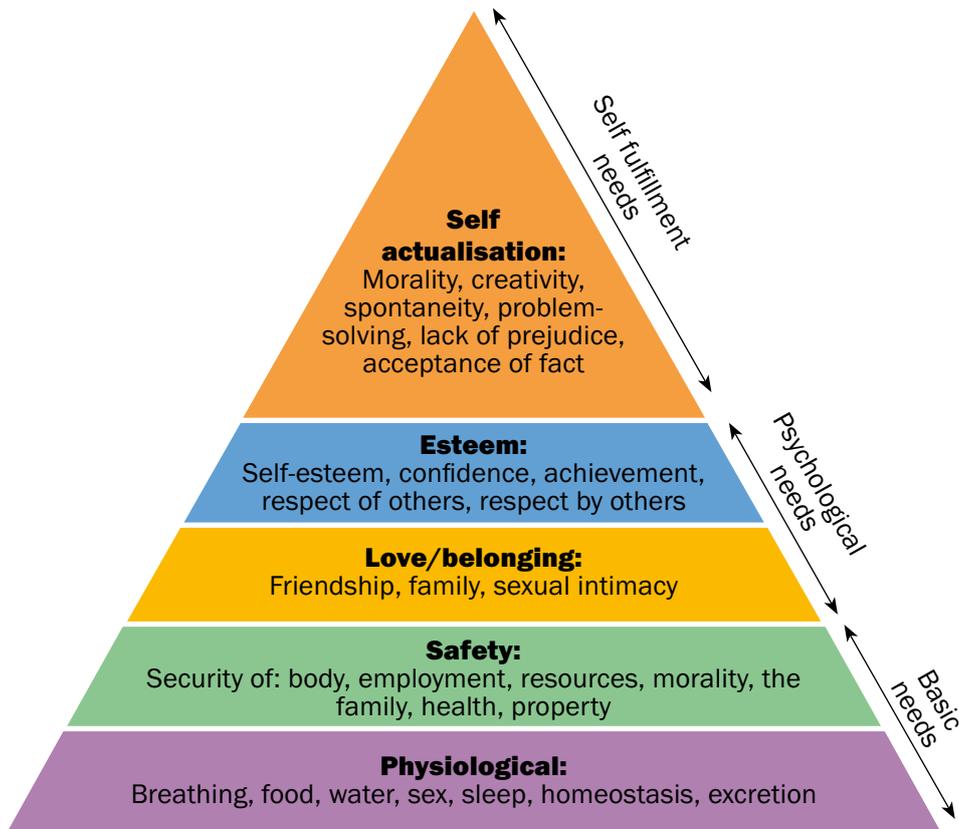
Humanistic theory

Abraham Maslow studied the motivational systems of people as he believed that people are motivated to achieve certain needs.

The origins of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory was influenced by Max Wertheimer and Gestalt psychology, which focuses on the totality of the mind and behaviour.

Maslow developed a hierarchy of needs that includes five motivational needs. The five-level model is divided into basic needs (physiological, safety, love and esteem) and growth needs (self-actualisation). Maslow believed that the lower basic needs motivated people when they were unmet. He also believed that the lower levels must be met before progressing to a higher level as illustrated here on the hierarchy.

Recent research has been critical of this model, arguing that many people who live in poverty and have not fully attained their basic needs are capable of meeting higher-level needs, such as love and belongingness.



Ethological theory

John Bowlby was a psychoanalyst who believed that mental health and behavioural issues stemmed from early childhood.

The origins of this theory were based upon his own experiences and observations of children who were separated from their parents and experienced intense distress.

He developed the attachment theory that looked at the bonds and attachments between the caregiver and the child. According to Bowlby, infants have the need to seek closeness with their caregiver when they are under stress or threatened. In his view, if attachments were negative and insecure, it would impact the person's life span development and the ability to deal with stressors throughout the person's life.

Bowlby also believed that a child's attachment with their caregiver contributed to the child's future social and emotional behaviour and may act as a prototype for future relationships; for example, early attachment may predict the ability to trust and to form emotional and physical relationships.



Emerging development theories

A recent theory of personality development involves the concept that during the span of one's life, a personality development may be observed from three different standpoints:

- ▶ The person as an actor (behaving)
- ▶ The person as an agent (striving)
- ▶ The person as an author (narrating)

This theory traces the development of traits and goals from early childhood to old age.

The abstract, entitled 'Personality development: continuity and change over the life course' can be located at: <http://aspirelr.link/annual-reviews>, with a full paper available for purchase.

Research regarding genetic and caregiving-based contributions to attachment has been published in *Psychological Science* July 24, 2012. The abstract entitled 'Genetic and caregiving-based contributions to infant attachment' can be read at:

- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/genetic-caregiving-abstract>



Evaluate potential applications of theories

During the counselling process, you will need to evaluate how the theories of personality and human development can be linked to your counselling practice. Not all aspects of a particular theory may be appropriate, and more than one theory may need to be combined to provide best practice counselling for the specific needs of the person. There are a lot of different therapies each with its own focus, which can be overwhelming. It is important when applying a therapy that you are comfortable using it and that it will work best for the individual person. A therapy that works well with one person may not be the appropriate option for another so it is important that all aspects of the theory are evaluated and considered.

Psychodynamic theory



Psychodynamic psychotherapy may be used to assist a person to reflect on their feelings, thoughts, emotions and beliefs to gain understanding of issues they are experiencing. This also involves identifying defence mechanisms used to avoid distress in order to cope. The Freudian belief of drawing on early life experiences and accessing the unconscious may be used in this therapy. A counsellor may encourage the person to speak about their emotions and fears in order to bring forward feelings that have been kept in the unconscious.

Erik Erikson's life span development theory suggests that in the preschool stage there may be inhibition because of fear of failure, guilt and punishment. A counsellor may enable enjoyment of learning and encourage a child to initiate activities. This may be reinforced by instilling a sense of pride in the child's achievements.

Behavioural theory

The behavioural theory is based on Skinner's view that behaviour is learnt and can be changed by using positive and negative reinforcement. When applying this therapy, techniques that may be used are relaxation methods, reinforcement and coaching. This approach may be applied to family counselling, phobic disorders and behavioural disorders in children. This approach can be applied to many cultures as there is a focus on the person setting goals and learning self-management strategies. However, this theory focuses on behaviours – not feelings – making this approach limited in its application.

Cognitive theory

Cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) is effective treatment for anxiety disorders. CBT can help a person to change unhelpful thoughts that may contribute to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) behaviours such as aggression, addiction, anxiety, apathy or hyper vigilance. The counsellor may look at the thought processes of a person and develop strategies to change the thought patterns, which in turn will change the person's feelings and behaviour. CBT has a wide range of applications, including depression, anxiety, marital problems, substance abuse and panic attacks. CBT can be applied to people with specific problems.



Humanistic theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a useful tool for understanding and handling human behaviour situations. For example, if a person has a safety issue (Level 2 Safety), such as domestic violence or child abuse, it would be difficult to motivate them to reach self-esteem needs (Level 5 Esteem), such as achievement until Level 2 Safety is addressed.

Maslow also believed that people have the ability to heal and grow within themselves. This theory supports positive physiology, which integrates strengths-based approaches to counselling. This approach may be successful when counselling people with depression or anxiety. Instead of focusing on what is wrong, the counsellor focuses on what is right.

Ethological theory

Bowlby believed that a child's attachment or lack of attachment to the primary caregiver may affect the child's adult relationships and behaviours. He also believed that disruption of attachment between a child and caregiver could impact their cognitive, social and emotional development and have long-term consequences such as increased aggression, depression and affectionless psychopathy. The theory of attachment could provide a foundation for understanding a person's behaviour in a counselling situation.



Example

Evaluate potential applications of personality and life span development theories in the counselling process

Andrew has a history of obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and has developed a variety of rituals that he follows before he leaves the house. He feels ashamed of his behaviour and hides it when he can. Andrew seeks help from a service in order to understand his behaviour and receive assistance to change his behaviour. His counsellor David evaluates the approaches that he can take to assist Andrew. David decides to use the cognitive behavioural theory as the basis for his counselling, as he is comfortable using it and it will work best for Andrew.

In conversation with David, Andrew realises that the rituals he uses are safety seeking and reassurance seeking in order to help his deal with anxiety. Over the next few weeks, Andrew starts to minimise his rituals and, with David's support, starts to control his anxiety.



Practice task 4

1. List one way that genetics may play a role in the behaviour of a person.

2. Provide one example of an environmental factor that may come up in the nature versus nurture debate.

3. Provide one category that the theories of personality and human development broadly fit into.

4. Provide one aspect of Freud's anal stage of development.

5. Provide one aspect of Erikson's maturity stage of human development.

6. Provide one aspect of Piaget's formal operational stage of development.

7. List one basic need outlined in Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

8. Provide one aspect of behaviour that Bowlby believed would be impacted by a child's attachment to their caregiver.

Click to complete Practice task 4

2B Analyse individual behaviour using theoretical concepts of personality and life span development

The different theoretical concepts of personality and life span development have varied perspectives and focuses. Some theories are more appropriate for specific behaviours while others may have a broader application. The analytical phase focuses on identifying factors that shape behaviour, influence behaviour and use critical thinking skills to identify the best theoretical approach to influence desired behaviour. It is important not only to understand the theories themselves, but to also understand the practical application of the theory.



Behavioural analysis

Applying a personality and life span development theory in a practical manner can be difficult. In real life, a behaviour or issue is presented and the counsellor has to find the appropriate theory that will be the most helpful to implement behavioural change.

Behavioural analysis uses the key features of a person’s behaviour and applies principles and theories to these behaviours. People behave differently and, as a counsellor, it is necessary to look at the behaviour of each individual to determine the reasons behind their behaviour.

Different counselling situations will require different analytical approaches. Here are some examples.

Human development	Erik Erikson
	<p>This theory may be used to analyse the behaviour of a specific age group. For example, it may be appropriate for analysing the behaviour of an adolescent who feels confused about themselves and their future. According to this theory, lack of encouragement and reinforcement will contribute to a lack of a sense of self and independence, and a conflict of identity versus confusion.</p> <p>Erikson believed that if the conflict in the prior stage was not resolved, then the present conflict could not be resolved. In this case, it would indicate that the conflict of industry versus inferiority resulting in a sense of pride in accomplishments was not resolved.</p> <p>This may indicate a starting point for the counselling process.</p>

<p>Cognitive therapy</p>	<p>Jean Piaget</p> <p>This theory may be used to analyse the behaviour of a person who is undergoing counselling for social phobia. Cognitive therapy can be used to analyse the person's thought processes and develop a strategy to change the pattern of the person's thinking.</p> <p>For example, a person may perceive that other people think they are stupid, making the person feel anxious in a social situation. This feeds feelings of shame and negative self-talk, which make the situation worse. Using cognitive therapy in counselling can give the person strategies to change their thought processes into healthy and helpful thoughts.</p>
<p>Hierarchy of needs</p>	<p>Abraham Maslow</p> <p>This theory may be used to analyse the behaviour of a person who has difficulty maintaining a social structure with family members. By referring to the hierarchy, Maslow believed that if Level 2 safety was not in place, the person would not be able to progress to a higher level; in this case, Level 3 belongingness and love needs.</p> <p>For example a person may display reluctance or the inability to seek out relationships with family or friends. To a counsellor, this may indicate that needs of safety and security have not been met, which may highlight an urgent need that must be addressed.</p>
<p>Attachment theory</p>	<p>John Bowlby</p> <p>This theory addresses the bond between a caregiver and a child. Bowlby suggested that if the child had disrupted or broken attachment in the first 2.5 to 3 years, that the child could have long-term cognitive, social or emotional difficulties.</p> <p>For example, a person displaying depression or anxiety may have been insecurely attached to their caregiver.</p>
<p>Behavioural therapy</p>	<p>B. F. Skinner</p> <p>This theory may be used to analyse the behaviour of a person that displays anxiety or fear who is connected to a past event in their environment. Skinner believed that events that have taken place in a person's environment can evoke a response.</p> <p>For example, if a child is afraid of playing a ball game because they were struck by the ball previously, positive reinforcement may be used to encourage the child to watch the game, throw the ball and then catch the ball to reduce the connection between the ball and being hurt.</p>

Example

Analyse individual behaviour using theoretical concepts of personality and life span development

Caroline is a school counsellor who works with Carly who has a mild intellectual disorder. Caroline notices that in the classroom Carly hangs back and does not participate in activities with other children. She often appears despondent and uninterested. This puzzles Caroline, as Carly was once engaged and interested in joining in.



Caroline remembers Erikson’s life span development theory regarding the 6–11 age group when a sense of pride in accomplishments is developed. Caroline speaks with Carly and finds that she has lost confidence in her ability to complete activities.

Caroline develops a strategy to encourage Carly’s feeling of competence and belief in her skills. She makes a note to remember to commend Carly on all of her achievements to minimise and eliminate Carly’s feeling of inferiority and incompetence.

Practice task 5

1. Provide one aspect that the analytical phase focuses on.

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2. Describe one way Piaget’s cognitive theory could be used to analyse the behaviour of a person who is undergoing counselling for social phobia.

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Click to complete Practice task 5

2C Assist clients to understand their personal history and draw on theoretical approaches to address issues

Who we are today is a compilation of our experiences from birth until now. Some experiences affect people more significantly than others. Past experiences can influence the grief process; how relationships are formed and maintained; how children are parented; and a person's predisposition to substance abuse. A counsellor needs to take into account the link between the person's issues and their personal history. Assisting the person to understand their history can provide them with a deeper understanding of their current problems and challenges.



Understand personal history to address issues

The personal history of a person holds valuable information regarding how their personalities were developed, why they respond to experiences in a certain way, why patterns appear in relationships and why stages of personality and life span development are unique to them.

Here are some ways that personality and development theories can help a person understand how their personal history has shaped their current issues and challenges.

Repression

Human development: Freud

Freud suggested that people used defence mechanisms to keep unpleasant thoughts, memories and feelings in their unconscious. This defence mechanism may be used to repress a traumatic event or incident.

Assisting a person to understand the impact of a repressed event can help them understand the current impact on their behaviours and feelings.

This aspect of Freud's theory may be relevant for a person with dissociative identity disorder whereby abuse is repressed and submerged beneath conscious perception.

Depression

Cognitive therapy: Jean Piaget

Depression can stem from a range of issues; life events; family history; personality; medical illness; and a history of drug and alcohol use are factors that can contribute to depression.

Piaget's cognitive behaviour theory focuses on changing thought and behaviour patterns by identifying them and shifting from unhelpful thoughts and patterns to a positive problem-solving approach. Assisting a person to understand their historical ways of thinking, can help the person understand that thought patterns can be changed.

This aspect of Piaget's theory may be relevant for a person demonstrating negative self-labelling, such as, 'I feel like a failure. I am flawed. If people knew the real me, they wouldn't like me.'

Low self-esteem

Hierarchy of needs: Abraham Maslow

Low self-esteem may stem from a wide range of experiences, events and environments. Maslow suggested that a sense of self-esteem was linked to the person's sense of love and belonging which needed to be in place before esteem needs could be met.

Assisting a person to understand the innate nature of self-esteem and how it can be diminished or enhanced based on historical events in the environment, in parenting and in relationships, can help identify and highlight factors that had negative impacts.

This aspect of Maslow's theory may be relevant for a person presenting eating disorders or body dysmorphic disorder stemming from esteem issues associated with the person's sense of love and belonging.

Grief

Attachment theory: John Bowlby

Model of bereavement: Sigmund Freud

Freud's view on grief suggests that, in grief, a person is seeking an attachment that has been lost and that in the grieving process the person is letting go of multiple attachments that have formed during a relationship.

Bowlby suggested that attachments developed in early life offer security and when these are lost it creates distress, anxiety, crying and anger.

Assisting a grieving person to understand their personal history of attachments and emotional relationships may help them progress through the grieving process.

The aspects of attachment theories may be relevant to a person who is undergoing prolonged grief with separation or distress, or is displaying intense yearning for the deceased.

Trauma

Behavioural therapy: B.F. Skinner

Trauma is an occurrence that has caused a person to feel threatened emotionally, psychologically or physically. The effects of trauma can be long-lasting and cause a person to live with the effects for many years. Skinner's behavioural theory was used to analyse the behaviour of a person who displays anxiety or fear that is still connected to a past event.

Assisting a person to understand how this historical event impacts their current behaviour will help to identify appropriate counselling strategies.

Aspects of Skinner's theory may be relevant to a person who displays distress that impairs their relationships, work and/or other functioning.

Substance abuse

Nature versus nurture

Nature versus nurture is a highly debated notion that focuses on the question of whether nature or nurture plays the biggest role in human development. Both aspects are historical in nature and in their own way influence the behaviours.

Assisting a person to participate in this debate may help them to understand the impact of both aspects on their behaviour.

This notion may be helpful for a young person who wonders if their substance abuse can be attributed to a predisposition (nature) or has developed because of environmental factors (nurture).

Bipolar disorder

Genetic inheritance

Genetic inheritance is the belief that genes have an influence on behaviour. For example, if a family has a history of bipolar disorder it may appear in more than one individual in a family.

This notion may be helpful to assist a person to understand the historical nature of their genetic disorder and to plan ways to reduce and manage the risk of their behaviour becoming more complex. It may also help them to understand that they are not to blame for having this illness.

Example

Assist clients to understand their personal history drawing on theoretical approaches

Teri came to Phillipa for counselling after she had a depressive episode that resulted in her admittance to hospital. When speaking with Teri about her past, Phillipa identified patterns of current behaviour that linked to past behaviours and thought patterns. Phillipa helped Teri to see and understand her current pattern of behaviour and how it was linked to emotions, feelings and experiences of her unsettled childhood and unsatisfying teenage relationships. Throughout her teenage years Teri used pills as a coping mechanism. Phillipa helped Teri to untangle what she was feeling in her teens and helped her to recognise how those feelings linked to her current patterns of emotions which led to the depressive episode. With Teri, Phillipa developed a strategy to assist her to identify historical thought patterns and recognise historical behavioural patterns and consequently change the patterns minimising the occurrence of depressive episode.



Practice task 6

1. Refer to Piaget’s cognitive theory and provide one aspect of a person’s history that can impact their current behaviour.

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2. Refer to Bowlby’s attachment theory and provide one aspect of a person’s history that can impact their current behaviour.

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3. If a person you are counselling uses a defence mechanism to avoid issues, provide one aspect of Freud’s theory you could draw on to understand the person’s behaviour.

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Click to complete Practice task 6

Summary

1. The theories of personality and human development broadly fit into four categories: psychodynamic, behavioural, cognitive and ethological. It is important to become familiar with all theories, as they provide different perspectives of personality and human development.
2. Genetic inheritance refers to the belief that genetic makeup has a large role in determining human behaviour.
3. Nature versus nature refers to the ongoing controversy about whether human behaviour and personality is caused by genetic influences (nature) or by the environment or experiences (nurture) of the person.
4. Some theories are more appropriate for specific behaviours while others may have a broader application. It is important to understand the theories themselves, and also understand the practical application of the theory.
5. Past experiences can influence the grief process, how relationships are formed and maintained, how children are parented and a person’s predisposition to substance abuse. A counsellor needs to take into account the link between the person’s issues and their personal history.

Learning checkpoint 2

Link theories to your own practice

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in linking theories to own practice.

Part A

1. Provide one reason why it is important to evaluate the potential application of theories.

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2. Provide one component of Freud's psychodynamic approach to personality.

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3. Provide one aspect that the theory of genetic inheritance is based on.

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4. Provide one key point of the debate regarding the nature versus nurture theory.

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5. Describe one theorist who provided a historical foundation for the nature versus nurture debate.

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6. Describe one aspect of the adolescence stage of Erikson's life span development theory.

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7. List one aspect that an emerging theory of personality development suggests personality development may be observed from.

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8. Provide one aspect of Piaget’s sensorimotor stage of child development.

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9. List one aspect that Maslow’s safety level applies to.

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10. Provide one aspect of how Bowlby suggested that the attachment theory could impact a person later in life.

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Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Clare counsels Tess, a person who has experienced trauma due to a severe car accident in which her younger sister Sharon was killed. Tess displays emotional signs of post-traumatic stress such as depression and intense guilt, and avoids reminders of the experience. She is experiencing deep grief due to the death of Sharon and displays intense yearning for her. Tess cannot remember the accident and she is angry that she can’t remember her last conversation with her sister. The last thing she can remember is a song that was playing in the car when she was driving. She is also afraid that the rest of her family blame her because, as a child, she was often responsible for her younger sister and would get into trouble from her parents if anything happened to Sharon. She tells Clare that she feels like she is a failure and has been a terrible sister because of Sharon’s death. Since the accident, Tess is afraid to listen to the radio in case she hears the song that she remembers just before the accident. Whenever she hears it, she feels intense anxiety and panic.

1. Provide one example of how Tess’s personal history impacts her current issues.

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2. Provide one theory that Clare could refer to in order to analyse Tess’s behaviour.

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3. Provide one theory that Clare could draw on to address Tess's specific issue of feeling panic and anxiety when hearing the song on the radio.

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Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

3A Identify and use opportunities to update and expand own knowledge of theory

3B Incorporate and integrate knowledge into own practice

Update and maintain knowledge of theoretical trends

Keeping updated with theoretical trends and practices of personality and development is critical to ensure that best practice counselling is demonstrated in a service. Updating and maintaining knowledge contributes to ongoing improvement and can be used to inform counselling practices. It is important that when new trends and knowledge are identified that they are contextualised into policy and implemented into current practice.

3A Identify and use opportunities to update and expand own knowledge of theory

The goal of research is to inform action and provide knowledge that can be translated into counselling practice. It is important that opportunities are identified and knowledge is kept current and relevant. Research also provides opportunities for evaluation and the review of current practice. It can be a challenge to keep up-to-date with emerging theories and revised practices.



Identify opportunities to expand knowledge

Lifelong learning is the concept that learning and development takes place over a lifetime. Lifelong learning requires identifying opportunities to learn. In counselling practice, the concepts of continual learning and embracing change to current practice will contribute to ensuring that practice methods are updated and current.

Identifying opportunities to expand knowledge may involve:

- ▶ searching for relevant conferences
- ▶ accessing networks that can provide industry contacts
- ▶ gathering information regarding learning pathways
- ▶ sourcing professional development workshops
- ▶ utilising a supervisor or mentor for feedback and evaluation
- ▶ gaining membership in a relevant association to access industry standard information.

Use opportunities to expand knowledge

Once opportunities are identified, it is important to use the opportunities to develop your professional skills and widen your knowledge base.

Opportunities may include:

- ▶ seeking coaching and feedback from your supervisor regarding current skills and skills development
- ▶ using an industry membership to access workshops and courses
- ▶ attending conferences to gain information regarding emerging trends in counselling practice
- ▶ forming a peer support group with work colleagues for support and resource sharing
- ▶ maintaining network connections to share and exchange knowledge.

Example

Identify and use opportunities to update and expand own knowledge of theory

Jacob works as a counsellor in a centre for older people. He assists people to transition from independent living to living in a residential aged care facility. This involves developing and implementing individual support plans for the residents as well as supporting them through the transition process.



An older man, Aaron, has been referred to Jacob as he is finding the transition to the facility difficult. When Jacob speaks with Aaron he realises that he has a complex history that contributes to his distress of living in the residential aged care facility. Jacob realises that he needs to expand his understanding of Aaron’s culture to fully understand what triggers his distress. Jacob searches for professional development workshops that focus on Aaron’s past experiences. When attending the workshop Jacob networks with the other participants to identify a conference he can attend in order to expand his knowledge.

Practice task 7

1. Provide one concept that will contribute to ensuring practice methods are updated and current.

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2. Provide one reason why it is important to use opportunities to expand your knowledge.

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Click to complete Practice task 7

3B Incorporate and integrate knowledge into own practice

Translating knowledge into practice may not be a fast process. It requires careful consideration, skill and planning. Applying knowledge in a practical manner may involve the collaboration of other people and there may be barriers to the new information being implemented into practice. Before information regarding new theories can be incorporated into your practice, it may need to be presented to colleagues and supervisors for discussion and approval. Information may need to be examined and considered before the integration process.



Consider the knowledge

To decide whether the information is appropriate for integration, the following aspects may need to be discussed:

- ▶ The feasibility of incorporating the information into practice
- ▶ How the integration of new information can be monitored for effectiveness and suitability
- ▶ What mid-course interventions can be taken if there are problems after integration
- ▶ Whether the new information fits in with organisational policies and procedures
- ▶ If the information does not fit, what policies and procedures need to be reviewed
- ▶ A time line for when and how integrated knowledge will be reviewed

Barriers to incorporating knowledge

Barriers to incorporating and integrating knowledge into practice may occur at various levels. Depending on the extent of the new knowledge, implications for implementation could be significant.

Here are some examples of barriers that may come up when incorporating knowledge into practice.

Managers and colleagues

- ▶ Lack of motivation to implement change
- ▶ Reluctance to change methods that are in place
- ▶ Do not understand why the change is necessary
- ▶ Do not have the skills to competently carry out the change

Organisation

- ▶ Policies and procedures need to be adjusted and changed

Integrate knowledge into practice

Once the information has been discussed, barriers to the integration must be removed or minimised. This may be done by developing a method for addressing the barrier.

Here are some examples.

Barrier	Method of addressing barrier
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lack of motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Present good feedback from other industry experts that have incorporated the knowledge into practice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reluctance to change methods that are in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encourage colleagues to read underpinning benefits of knowledge. ▶ Encourage colleagues to see the long-term benefits of integrating the knowledge into practice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Do not understand why the change is necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Explain the positive impact of the change to people receiving counselling support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Do not have the skills to competently carry out the change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organise workshops and training to enable colleagues to develop required skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Policies and procedures need to be adjusted and changed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Discuss changes to policy with appropriate colleagues and work together to make any changes as required. ▶ Discuss how changes to policy and procedures will benefit all people who will be affected by the changes.

Example

Incorporate and integrate knowledge into own practice

Whitney is a school counsellor and has conducted research into new approaches dealing with substance abuse among young school children. She discovers research that suggests the early onset of substance abuse will likely impact the children's ability to adjust in the adolescent years. The study focused on the use of prevention programs that would target children at an early age who displayed certain characteristics that could indicate the development of substance abuse.



This research interests Whitney because of the proactive nature of the study. She discusses this with her supervisor to see if it is feasible to integrate this approach into their current counselling processes. Together they discuss how the new method would be monitored for effectiveness and suitability and how it would fit with the current policies and procedures.

To ensure all colleagues are able to use this approach, Whitney conducts more research to find workshops or conferences the staff can attend to gain skills in competently identifying characteristics that could indicate the development of substance abuse.

Practice task 8

1. Provide one aspect that must be considered before incorporating the research into your practice.

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2. Provide one way that knowledge could be integrated into practice when there is reluctance to change methods that are in place.

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Click to complete Practice task 8

Summary

1. Updating and maintaining knowledge contributes to ongoing improvement and can be used to inform counselling practices.
2. In counselling practice, the concept of continual learning and embracing change to current practice will ensure that practice methods are updated and current.
3. Translating knowledge into practice may not be a fast process. It requires careful consideration, skill and planning.
4. Before information regarding new theories can be incorporated into your practice, it may need to be presented to colleagues and supervisors for discussion and approval.

Learning checkpoint 3

Update and maintain knowledge of theoretical trends

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in updating and maintaining knowledge of theoretical trends.

1. Provide one goal of research.

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2. Provide one way to identify opportunities to expand knowledge of theoretical trends.

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3. Provide one opportunity you could use to expand your knowledge of theoretical trends.

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4. Provide one aspect that must be considered to decide whether information is appropriate for integration.

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5. Provide one barrier to incorporating knowledge into practice.

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6. Provide one way that knowledge could be integrated into practice when policies and procedures need to be adjusted and changed.

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