Causes of Abnormal Behavior

Chapter 2

Paradigms
- Paradigm: a set of shared assumptions that include a theory and how data should be collected.
- Four Basic Paradigms:
  - Biological
  - Psychodynamic
  - Cognitive-Behavioral
  - Humanistic

Biological
Definition: abnormal behavior is caused by biological abnormalities

Cause of Abnormality: Genes, neurochemistry, head injury.

Treatment: Medication or other physical treatments (ECT).

Focus: Functions of the body and brain structures.
**Psychodynamic Paradigm**

**Definition:** Abnormal behavior stems from unconscious conflicts from early childhood experiences.
- **Id:** Unconscious psychic energy strives to satisfy basic drives to survive, reproduce, and aggress (Pleasure principle)
- **Ego:** Large conscious, executive part of personality (Reality Principle)
- **Superego:** Voice of conscious forces the ego to consider not only the real but the ideal. Operates on conscious and unconscious level.

**Cause:** Early Childhood Experiences
**Treatment:** Psychoanalysis
**Focus:** Unconscious Mind

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**Cognitive Behavioral**

**Definition:** All behavior is the result of different forms of learning.
- Classical Conditioning
- Operant Conditioning
- Social Learning

**Cause:** Experiences (Nurture)
**Treatment:** Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
**Focus:** Observable Behavior

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**Humanistic**

**Definition:** Emphasis on the Present and Future, and conscious rather than unconscious.

**Cause:** Frustrations in Society
**Type of Treatment:** Non-directive Therapy
**Focus:** Free Will
**Systems Theory**

**Def.** Integrates causes of abnormal behavior across biological, psychological and social factors.

**Diathesis-Stress Model and Multiple Risk Factors**

**Equifinality**

**Reciprocal Causality**

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**Biological Factors**

Neuron—basic building block of the nervous system.

- Components that make up the neuron
  - Cell Body
  - Dendrite
  - Axon

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**Action Potential**

Neuron at rest—semi-permeable barrier between the fluids that are inside and outside the neuron. These fluids contain electrically charged particles called ions. Interior fluid is mostly negative and the exterior fluid is mostly positive.

- Resting Potential
- Polarization
- Depolarization
- Firing Of the Action-Potential
- Release of Neurotransmitter
- Return to Resting State
Neurotransmitters and the Etiology of Psychopathology –

- Biological research has found that there is a disruption in the functioning of certain neurotransmitters among some people with mental disorders.
- Cannot currently measure neurotransmitter levels in a living brain.
- Does not imply causality.
- Causes of disorders are multifactorial.
Major Brain Structures

Central and Peripheral Nervous System: Central-
Brain and Spinal Cord. Peripheral is the sensory and 
motor neurons that connect the CNS to the rest of 
the body.

Three Main Subdivisions:

Hindbrain
Midbrain
Forebrain
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Limbic System
Links the higher mental processes of the forebrain with the hindbrain and midbrain.

- Thalamus
- Hypothalamus

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Peripheral Nervous System

- Autonomic –
  - Sympathetic-arousing-prepares the body for emergency
  - Parasympathetic-calming-slow everything down after the emergency
- Somatic

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Etiology of Autonomic nervous system and abnormal behavior:

- Overarousal
- Underarousal
ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

chemical communication system, that consists of glands that secrete hormones into the bloodstream.

→ hormones

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Behavioral Genetics

Basic Principles of Genetics:

- Genotype - actual genetic structure of the individual.
- Phenotype is the expression of a given genotype.
- Allele
- Locus
- Dominant/Recessive Inheritance

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Family Incidence Studies

- Twin Studies - monozygotic vs. dizygotic twins.
- Concordance rates
- Adoption Studies
- Genetics and Etiology
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Psychological Factors
- Species-Typical Characteristics
- Attachment Theory
- Dominance

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Psychological Factors
- Temperament
  - Openness to experience
  - Conscientiousness
  - Extraversion
  - Agreeable
  - Neuroticism
- Emotion
  - Positive
  - Negative
- Learning and Cognition

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Social Factors
- Social Support
- Gender Roles
- Prejudice and Poverty
- Societal Values
Psychological Factors
- Sense of Self
- Development and Developmental Transitions: