

Psychology: Abnormality - Notes for 24/09/03

The Behavioural Model of Abnormality

- Not concerned with conscious/unconscious feelings, only observable behaviour.
- Behaviour is learned and abnormal behaviour must be unlearned.
- Adaptive Behaviour – something that helps you function in the world.
- Learning by conditioning:
 - Operant conditioning – reinforcement based on rewards. There are two types of reinforcement, positive and negative. The former is associated with rewards, whereas the latter is associated with the ceasing of something bad.
 - Eating disorders are brought on by operant conditioning – “Wow, you look great, have you lost some weight?”
 - Punishment does not teach, just causes someone to stop doing something.
 - New behaviour is learned through operant conditioning.
 - Classical conditioning – association made with instinctive reactions - phobias occur through classical conditioning
- Social learning – Bandura – “You can't ignore mental processes”
 - Learning from watching other people:
 - Acquisition – witnessing
 - Performance – trying it out for oneself
 - Maintenance – if desirable reaction, keep the behaviour going.
 - Anorexia occurs through social learning – models on TV, parental dieting, peer pressure etc.
 - Some phobias occur through social learning – a fear of heights can be created by a parent getting angry when a child climbs onto a high surface when they first start to crawl.
- Vicarious learning – learning second hand by watching others.
- Maladaptive behaviour – abnormal behaviour that prevents the individual from functioning adequately.