**Introduction to Psychology**

Introduction to Psychology is a journey through all of the major psychological concepts and principles. The knowledge gained from this course will allow students to critically evaluate psychological research and have a more in-depth understanding of human thought and behavior.

**Psychology**

The word "psychology" comes from the Greek word psyche meaning "life, spirit, soul", and the Greek word logia meaning the study of something. Thus we can conclude that psychology is the study of soul.

**“Psychology** is the scientific study of the mental processes and its effect on human behavior”.

**Mental process** or **mental** function are terms often used interchangeably for all the things that individuals can do with their minds. These include perception, memory, thinking (such as ideation, imagination, belief, reasoning, etc.), desire, and emotion. Sometimes the term cognitive function is used instead. The discipline embraces all aspects of the human experience — from the functions of the brain to the actions of nations, from child development to care for the aged.

**Primary Goals of Psychology**

The four main goals of psychology are to **describe**, explain, **predict** and control the behavior and mental processes of others.

**Describe**

Psychology  aims to understand the behaviour of others and gather information about the way the brain works in order to better serve humanity. By observing different human behaviours, psychologists determine what is normal and healthy and what is unhealthy. Psychology analyzes the thoughts, feelings, actions and goals of people through the help of various case studies, observations and surveys.

**Explain**

Why does this behaviour occur? Under what circumstances will it occur again? In order to explain a behaviour, psychologists must conduct experiments to ensure that the behaviour is not an anomaly.

**Predict**

Based on past observed behaviour, a psychologist aims to predict how that behaviour will appear again in the future and if other people will exhibit the same behaviour.

**Control**

The final goal of psychology is to control or modify certain types of behavior based on observation. Researchers take cue from what they have observed and predicted to rectify or improve someone’s behavior. Any form of control can often be unknowingly misused without knowledge of the patient or psychologist, which is why there are strict guidelines that counselors have to follow while attempting to rectify a patient’s behavior.

**Perspectives**

**Biological**

The biological perspective is a way of looking at psychological issues by studying the physical basis for animal and human behavior. It is one of the major perspectives in psychology and involves such things as studying the brain, immune system, nervous system, and genetics.

**The psychoanalytic perspective**

The psychoanalytic perspective, most frequently associated with the renowned psychologist, **Sigmund Freud**, is a psychological theory that revolves around the unconscious mind and how an individual’s childhood experiences have shaped it. The unconscious is a primary focus in psychoanalytic theory due to its typical development in youth and the ways in which it influences nearly every aspect of an individual’s life. The unconscious mind also holds repressed memories and unexpressed urges that make their way into the conscious mind through a variety of different means, further explained in the defense mechanisms section below.

**Elements of Psychoanalytic Perspective**

* **Id**

The “Id” refers to the innate instincts and urges that are present in every human being from birth. During the first few years of life, an infant’s personality is entirely made up of the Id, which causes the child to act in ways that are directed towards immediate gratification. If an infant is in pain or uncomfortable, he or she will scream and cry regardless of what time it is or how much inconvenience the child will be causing its caretakers. Instant gratification and the pleasure principle are the focus of the Id, which functions in the unconscious mind and may be said to act as the “devil on your shoulder”

### ****Superego****

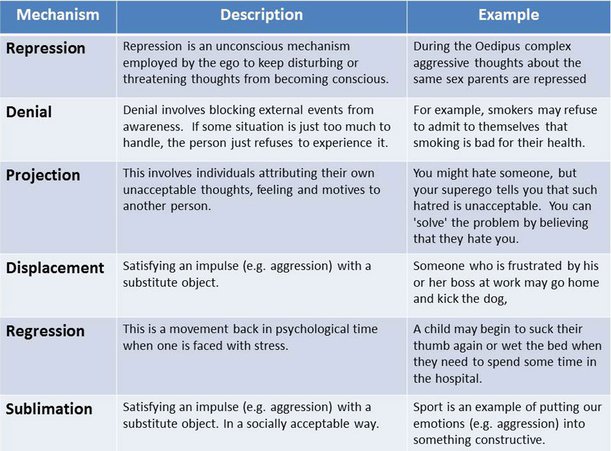
The “Superego”, which functions as the direct opposite of the id, works to force an individual to conform to societal norms and standards. The superego, which could be termed the “angel on your shoulder” acts as a moral guide and is frequently targeted in spiritual settings

### ****Ego****

The “Ego”, the only of the three elements that functions in the conscious mind, works to balance and compromise between the demanding id and superego. Adhering to the angel/devil metaphor mentioned above, the ego acts as the individual between the two, attempting to decide which advice to take. Ideally, a mentally stable individual will find a method of satisfying both parties through the means of a compromise.

**Defense mechanisms**

**Defense mechanisms** are behaviors people use to separate themselves from unpleasant events, actions, or thoughts.



**Humanistic Perspective**

During the 1950s, a school of thought known as humanistic psychology emerged. Influenced greatly by the work of prominent humanists such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, this perspective emphasizes the role of motivation on thought and behavior.

**Maslow’s Theory of Hierarchy of Needs**

1. Physiological Needs• Mostly, literal requirements for human survival• If not met, the human body cannot function like air, water, food, rest, Clothing, shelter.
2. Safety Needs• Once physical needs are met, safety needs take over. Health and well-being• Financial, job security• Safety of property against natural disasters, calamities, wars, etc• Law & order
3. Social Needs• Need to love and be loved• Need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance•
4. Esteem Needs• Need to be respected by others and in turn respect them• Sense of contribution, to feel self-valued, in profession or hobby
5. **Self-actualization** refers to the need for personal growth and development that exists throughout your life. If you are self-actualized, you work hard to grow and become who you want to be in life and reach your full potential.

**Behavioral Perspective**

Behavioral psychology is a perspective that focuses on learned behaviors. Today, the behavioral perspective is still concerned with how behaviors are learned and reinforced. John Watson founded behaviorism in the early 1900's. Watson emphasized the scientific study of observable behaviors rather than the study of subjective mental process.

**Cognitive Perspective:**

During the 1960s, a new perspective known as cognitive psychology began to take hold. This area of psychology focuses on mental processes such as memory, thinking, problem solving, language and decision-making.

**Social cultural Perspective:**

The sociocultural perspective maintains that behavior and mental processes are shaped not only by prior learning experiences (the behavioral perspective) or intra-psychic forces (for instance, the unconscious) but also by the social or cultural context.