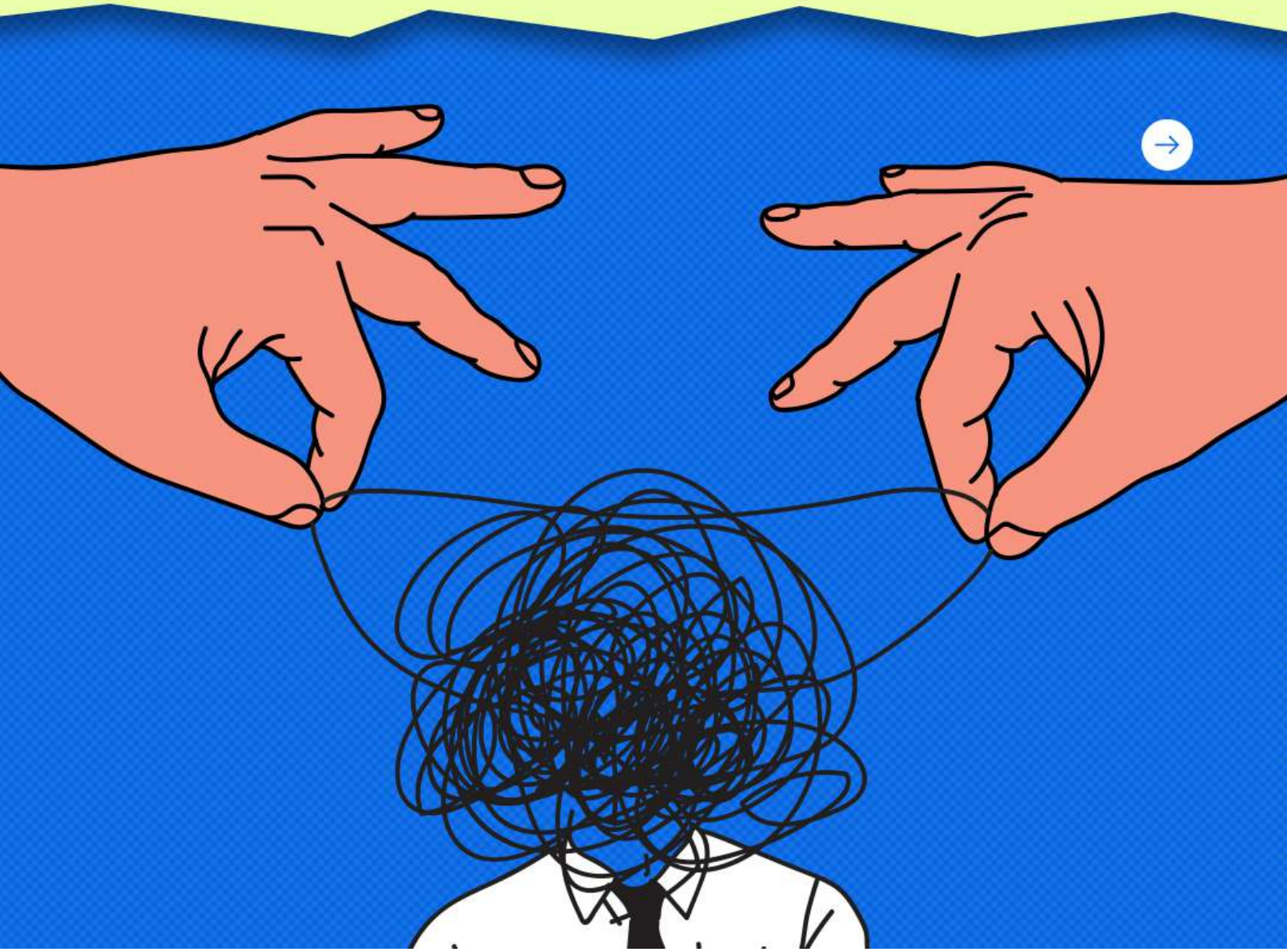
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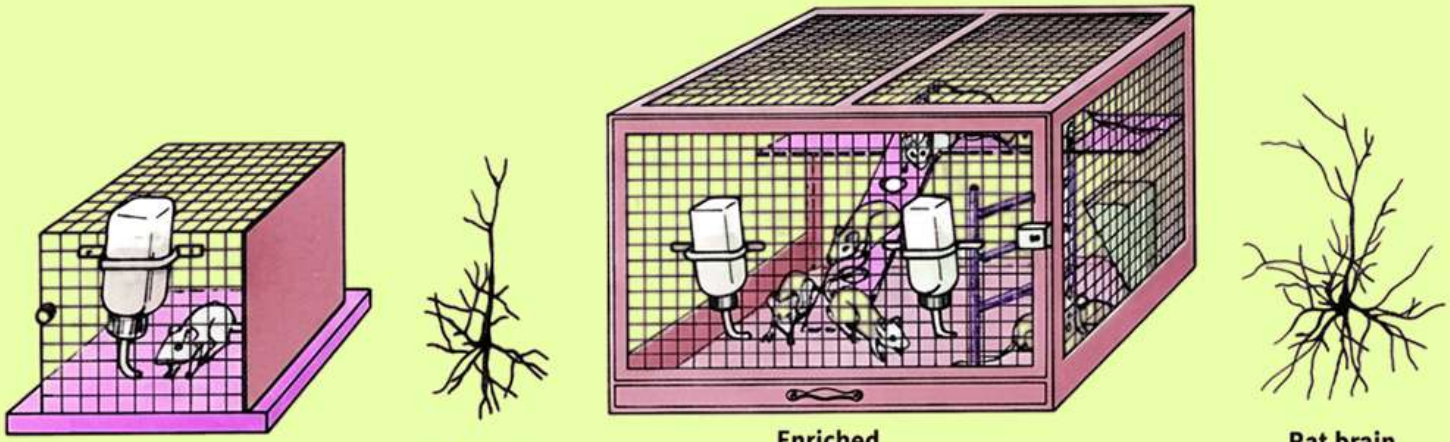
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5 FORGOTTEN EXPERIMENTS in PSYCHOLOGY



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Can Your Environment Change Your Brain?

Rosenzweig, Bennett & Diamond | 1972

Researchers raised rats in three different environments: isolated • standard • enriched

Rats in enriched environments developed greater cortical thickness, increased brain weight and more complex neural connections than those in less stimulating environments.

What it showed:

Experience doesn't just change behaviour.
The brain can physically change in response to the environment.

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Can The Way You Speak to a Child Change Their Speech?

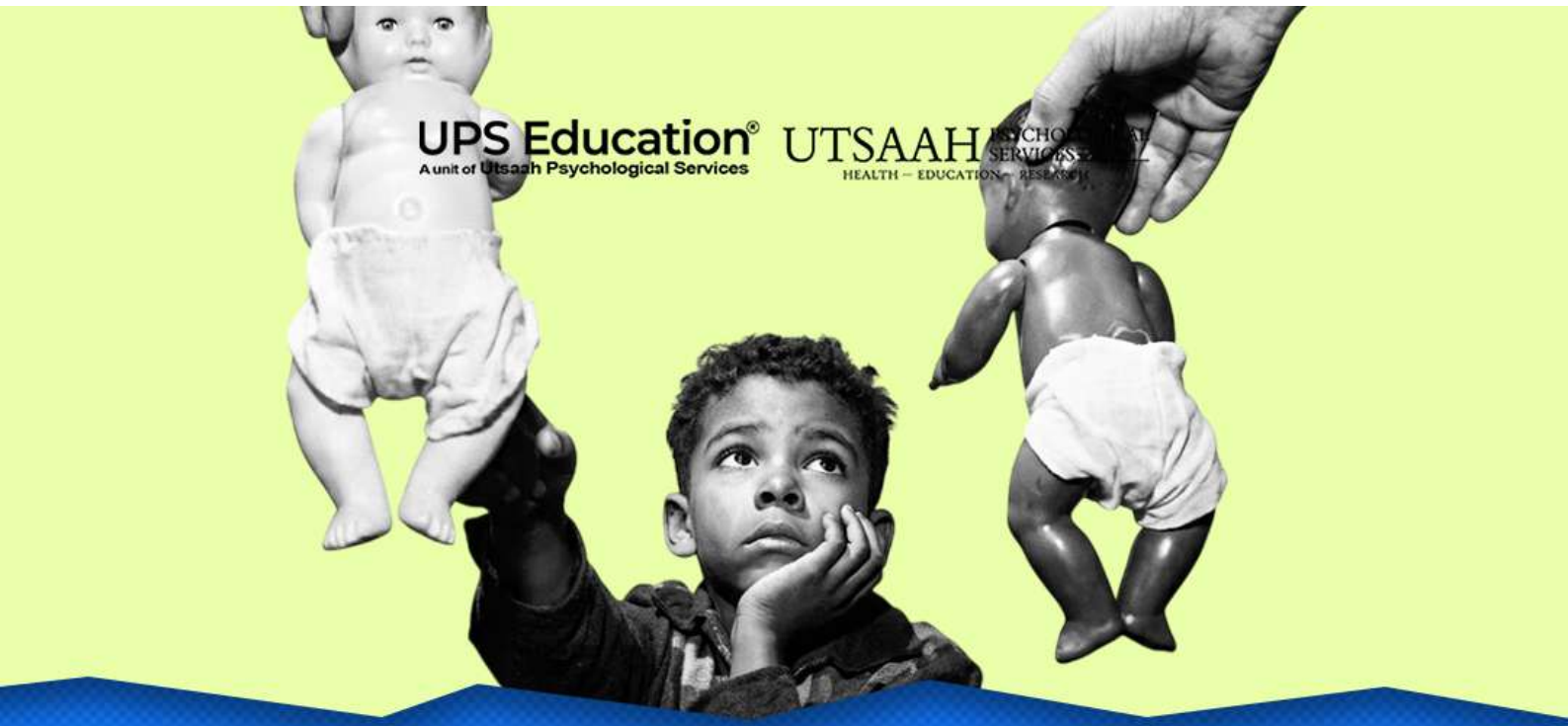
Wendell Johnson & Mary Tudor | 1939

Children in an orphanage were divided into groups and given either positive or negative feedback about their speech.

Some children who had not originally shown significant speech problems developed anxiety and negative attitudes towards their own speech after receiving repeated negative feedback.

What it showed:
Feedback and expectations can influence how people perceive and respond to their own behaviour.

The catch:
The study is now notorious for its serious ethical violations.



Can Children Learn Prejudice?

Kenneth & Mamie Clark | 1940s

Black children were shown dolls with different skin colours and asked which dolls they preferred or associated with positive and negative characteristics.

The researchers found that some children preferred white dolls and associated them with more positive characteristics.

What it showed:
Children can develop racial attitudes and self-perceptions within the social environments around them.

Why it mattered:
The findings became part of the evidence used in the legal challenge to racial segregation in American schools.

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What Stays the Same When Twins Grow Up Apart?

Minnesota Study of Twins Reared Apart | 1979 onwards

Researchers studied identical twins raised separately and compared them across cognitive abilities, personality and other characteristics.

The similarities found between some pairs highlighted the potential influence of genetic factors, while differences pointed towards the role of environment.

What it showed:
Psychological characteristics cannot be explained by nature or nurture alone. Both contribute to individual differences.

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Is Attachment Really About Food?

Harry Harlow | 1950s

Infant rhesus monkeys were raised with artificial surrogate mothers. One provided food, while another provided soft, comforting contact.

The infants spent far more time clinging to the soft surrogate, returning to it for comfort when frightened.

What it showed:
Attachment isn't simply about satisfying physical needs. Comfort and contact play a crucial role too.

The catch:
Harlow's experiments are now heavily criticised for their extreme animal suffering and ethical concerns.

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